



Strasbourg, 23 December 2024

T-PVS(2024)21

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

44<sup>th</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 2 – 6 December 2024

Strasbourg

---

**- Meeting Report -**

*Document prepared by  
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

## Table of Contents

<b>PART I – OPENING</b> .....	4
<b>1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA</b> .....	4
<b>2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DELEGATIONS AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT</b> .....	4
<b>2.1. Follow up to the Summit of the Heads of States and Government of the Council of Europe on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland</b> .....	4
2.1.1. <i>Creation of the Department on the Reykjavik process and the environment / Directorate of social rights, health and environment</i> .....	4
2.1.2. <i>Involvement of the Bern Convention in the Reykjavik process</i> .....	4
2.1.3. <i>Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment</i> .....	4
<b>3. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION</b> .....	5
<b>3.1. Financing of the Bern Convention</b> .....	5
<b>3.3. Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030</b> .....	6
<b>PART II – MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL ASPECTS</b> .....	6
<b>4. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION</b> .....	6
<b>4.1. Biennial reports 2021-2022 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8</b> .....	6
<b>4.2. Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention</b> .....	6
<b>5. MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS</b> .....	7
<b>5.1. Conservation of Birds &amp; Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (IKB)</b> .....	7
<b>5.2. Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck</b> .....	8
<b>5.3. Conservation of Large Carnivores</b> .....	8
<b>5.4. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of Sturgeons</b> .....	8
<b>5.5. Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)</b> .....	9
<b>5.6. Conservation of Habitats</b> .....	9
5.6.1. <i>Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest</i> .....	9
5.6.2. <i>European Diploma for Protected Areas</i> .....	10
<b>5.7. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats</b> .....	10
<b>6. SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS</b> .....	11
<b>6.1. Open Files</b> .....	11
<b>6.2. Possible Files</b> .....	17
<b>6.4. Follow-up of Recommendations</b> .....	21
<b>8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2025 - 2026</b> .....	22
<b>9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING</b> .....	22
<b>10. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND BUREAU MEMBERS</b> .....	22
<b>11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING</b> .....	22
<b>12. ADOPTION OF THE MAIN DECISIONS OF THE MEETING</b> .....	22
<b>13. CLOSING OF THE MEETING</b> .....	22
Appendix I - Agenda .....	23
Appendix II - Terms of reference of the Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention .....	29

Appendix III - Terms of Reference of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention..... 31

Appendix IV - Recommendation No. 222 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons..... 33

Appendix V - Recommendation No. 223 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on sturgeon population monitoring..... 34

Appendix VI - Recommendation No. 224 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024 on ex situ conservation measures for sturgeons ..... 35

Appendix VII - Recommendation No. 225 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on the further clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of Emerald Network sites ..... 36

Appendix VIII - Targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030 ..... 39

Appendix IX - Updated list of officially nominated candidate Emerald Sites ..... 40

Appendix X - List of Invasive Alien Species to be considered within the frame of the Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) ..... 41

Appendix XI - Recommendation No. 226 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on Mersin Anamur Beach..... 46

Annexe XII - Provisional Calendar of Meetings for 2025 ..... 48

Appendix XIII - Statements..... 50

Appendix XIV - List of Participants..... 77

## **PART I – OPENING**

### **1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Relevant document: T-PVS/Agenda(2024)13 – draft agenda of 44<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee

The Standing Committee welcomed its new observer, the Born Free Foundation.

It was reminded that the Bern Convention celebrated its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The Committee was informed by its Chair, Ms Merike Linnamägi, of staff changes since its last meeting, with departures of Mr Eoghan Kelly, Junior professional, and the arrivals of Ms Marta Medlinska, administrator, Mr Pep Amengual, policy adviser seconded from Spain, Mr Mark Barlow, administrative assistant, Ms Irina Spioala, administrative assistant and trainees Ms Inès Carter and Mr Hugh O'Reilly.

The Standing Committee took note of the welcoming remarks of the Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Mr Rafael Benitez, and of the European Union (EU) and its Member States.

The Committee adopted its agenda ([Appendix I](#)).

### **2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DELEGATIONS AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2023)32 - 43rd Standing Committee meeting report  
T-PVS(2024)01 - Report of the March Bureau meeting  
T-PVS(2024)04 - Report of the June Bureau meeting  
T-PVS(2024)11 - Report of the September Bureau meeting

The Standing Committee took note of the meeting reports and the information presented.

It was reminded that Belarus denounced the Bern Convention with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

#### **2.1. Follow up to the Summit of the Heads of States and Government of the Council of Europe on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland**

*2.1.1. Creation of the Department on the Reykjavik process and the environment / Directorate of social rights, health and environment*

*2.1.2. Involvement of the Bern Convention in the Reykjavik process*

*2.1.3. Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment*

Relevant documents: GME(2024)1 – Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)  
GME(2024)ARI – Abridged report of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GME

The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Mr Rafael Benitez, about the follow-up given to the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe held on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavík, Iceland, and confirmed its support to the Reykjavík process. It welcomed the creation of the Department on the Reykjavík process and the environment within the new Directorate, as well as information on the involvement of the Bern Convention in the Reykjavík process and on the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME).

Furthermore, the Committee took note of the terms of reference of the GME according to which the GME is instructed to prepare a draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related Action Plan for its implementation in accordance with the Reykjavík Declaration. These are expected to be finalised in due time for their possible adoption at the ministerial session of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in Luxembourg in May 2025. The GME has already met once, for preparatory work on 25-27 September 2024. Its 2nd meeting is on 9-11 December 2024 and a 3rd meeting will be held on 11-13 February 2025 where the Strategy and its Action Plan are expected to be adopted. The Standing Committee acknowledged the importance of a Council of Europe Strategy on the environment but stressed that biodiversity should be fully integrated in the six overarching themes and the need to duly consider the key role of the Bern Convention.

The Standing Committee was informed by its Chair about her participation in the 1<sup>st</sup> GME meeting (25-27 September 2024).

### **3. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION**

#### **3.1. Financing of the Bern Convention**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2024)13 - Report of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *ad hoc* Drafting Group of an Amending Protocol  
T-PVS(2024)10 - Fourth draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention  
T-PVS/Inf(2024)19 - The Bern Convention financial situation

The Standing Committee was informed by the Chair of the *Ad hoc* Drafting Group of an Amending Protocol, Mr Charles-Henri de Barsac, that the *Ad hoc* Drafting Group discussed the state of play on the issue. He highlighted that the Secretariat presented a revised version of the Protocol amending the Bern Convention (document T-PVS(2024)10), which was aligned with the concerns expressed by the Council of Europe legal services. He also referred to the discussions held between the legal services of the Council of Europe and the EU to find a solution regarding the contribution rate of the EU, which remained unresolved. Finally, he referred to the suggestion to create a voluntary Council of Europe Environmental Trust Fund which would collect funds for activities linked to the environment, including the Bern Convention.

The Committee was informed that its Chair participated in two meetings of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group in charge of the Bern Convention (the Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment, GR-C) to discuss the Bern Convention financial situation.

The Secretariat referred to document T-PVS/Inf(2024)19 which sets out problems posed by the draft Amending Protocol, such as its alignment with the institutional and regulatory framework of the Council of Europe. It was also stressed that the entry into force of the amending protocol remains very hypothetical.

The Standing Committee decided that, because of the uncertainties related to the Trust Fund, work on the amending protocol should be pursued, to fulfil the mandate given by the Committee of Ministers to ensure stable, sufficient, predictable, long-lasting and fair financing of the Convention. It adopted terms of reference of a Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention for that effect. The Standing Committee entrusted also the Working Group to consider any decisions that may be taken at the May 2025 session of the Committee of Ministers on the establishment of a Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF), and to propose the most appropriate solutions regarding financing options for the Bern Convention (see [Appendix II](#)).

#### **3.2. Voluntary contributions received in 2024: state of play**

Relevant document: T-PVS/Inf(2024)08Rev – Table of the voluntary contributions received

The Standing Committee took note with regret that the number of Parties making voluntary contributions had decreased, and the level of those contributions had dropped from 387 000 euros in 2023 to 242 000 euros in 2024.

The Committee also took note of the statistics provided by the Secretariat highlighting the annual amounts of voluntary contributions, the annual number of voluntary contributors and how often Parties had paid a voluntary contribution since 2011.

Moreover, the Standing Committee took note that while several Parties make regular contributions, 19 Contracting Parties had never paid a voluntary contribution. There was still a need to improve the stability and level of the finances of the Convention. The Committee urged all Contracting Parties to regularly support the Convention according to their capacities.

Lastly, the Standing Committee agreed on the suggested scale of voluntary contributions for 2025 as set in [Resolution No. 9 \(2019\)](#) and invited Parties to continue paying voluntary contributions and to provide the Secretariat with the necessary resources to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan of the Bern Convention for the period to 2030.

### 3.3. Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2024)02 - Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan  
 T-PVS(2024)08 – Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan  
 T-PVS(2024)12 – Operationalising the Strategic Plan’s indicators – next steps  
 T-PVS(2024)14 – Compilation of the national voluntary updates on the Strategic Plan implementation

The Standing Committee welcomed the outcomes of both meetings of the Working Group, in particular the suggested approach for each of the sixteen agreed indicators in the Strategic Plan and the design of a dedicated webpage.

It supported the proposed specific actions to be taken to bring each of the indicators into practical operation (document [T-PVS\(2024\)12](#)) and which would serve as a basis for drafting a roadmap of the forthcoming work of Working Group overseeing implementation of the Strategic Plan.

It took note of the compilation of the national voluntary updates (document [T-PVS\(2024\)14](#)) aimed to understand whether the implementation of the Strategic Plan was underway and whether Parties were facing challenges.

The Committee invited the Working Group to consider leaving more time to Parties to provide informed national voluntary updates and to ask Parties whether they agree to make their voluntary updates public.

It recalled that the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan should be streamlined with other mechanisms such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework or existing reporting exercises under the EU legislation or the Bern Convention.

Lastly, it thanked the Consultant, Mr Dave Pritchard for his dedicated work and Parties which provided national voluntary updates.

## PART II – MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL ASPECTS

### 4. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION

#### 4.1. Biennial reports 2021-2022 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8

The Standing Committee was reminded that Article 9.2 of the Bern Convention requests Parties to report on the exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, in the form of biennial reports. Last year had marked the end of the 2021-2022 biennium. The deadline for submitting reports of this period as well as any older unsubmitted reports had been set end of October 2023.

It was informed that, to date, 30 Contracting Parties had submitted either a report via the Online Reporting System (ORS), or, for EU Member States, the Habides+ tool.

Moreover, it was informed that the new version of the ORS which was being developed by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) should be fully operational by December 2024.

The Committee was informed that a transition plan would provide for technical support, user guidance, documentation and training sessions.

The Standing Committee took note that the questionnaire for the reporting on the period 2023 -2024 should be developed on the new version of the ORS and launched in 2025.

#### 4.2. Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Inf(2024)15 – Proposal by the European Union to amend Appendices II and III of the Bern Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats by moving the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III  
 The Bern Convention and the protection of the Wolf – FAQ

[Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments

The Standing Committee took note of the EU proposal to downlist the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Bern Convention and positions of Parties and Observers in relation to this matter.

At the request of the EU representative, Contracting Parties were asked to vote.

The EU on behalf of its 27 Member States and Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine supported the amendment.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Monaco, Montenegro and the United Kingdom opposed the amendment. Tunisia and Türkiye abstained.

With a majority of 38 votes in favour, the required two-thirds majority of the Contracting Parties was reached and the proposed amendment was adopted.

The Committee concluded that the change would enter into force three months after the date of the formal adoption of the amendment, counted as of 6 December 2024, unless at least one third of the Parties to the Council of Europe's Bern Convention (17) object, in which case it will not enter into force. If fewer than one third of the Parties object, the decision will enter into force only for those Parties which have not objected.

The Committee reminded the Contracting Parties that despite the change in the wolf's protection status, the rules of the Bern Convention still apply and need to be observed, notably Art 1(1), Art. 2, Art. 7 and Art. 9. The wolf populations need to be maintained at, or brought to, a level which corresponds to ecological and scientific requirements in accordance with Article 2. Their populations need to be kept out of danger and measures to be taken shall include the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation, as appropriate, in order to restore satisfactory population levels. Exceptions are only possible under the specific circumstances mentioned in Art.9 (1).

It asked Contracting Parties to continue reporting on exceptions for the wolf every two years in accordance with Article 9(2). The Standing Committee requested the Expert Group on Large Carnivores to closely monitor the population of the wolf, in close cooperation with the Large Carnivores Initiative for Europe, and to report to the Standing Committee after each meeting of the Expert Group.

The Standing Committee created a Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention to reflect on a dedicated evidence-based mechanism and criteria for granting or changing the protection status of a species (see the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention in [Appendix III](#) of the list of decisions).

## **PART III – MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS**

### **5. MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS**

#### **5.1. Conservation of Birds & Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (IKB)**

The Standing Committee welcomed further Parties' contributions to the IKB Scoreboard and stressed its importance for assessing the progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds and for enabling national governments to adapt their policies and practices to ensure the overall objective of eradicating IKB is achieved.

It took note of the joint Bern Convention IKB Focal Points and CMS MIKT meeting, where the Scoreboard results, the progress in the implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan, litigation and enforcement, technological advancements in tracing IKB were to be discussed.

It took note of the planned thematic scope of the meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Wild Birds, including lowering the negative impact of power lines and wind turbines on birds.

Furthermore, the Committee regretted that the two meetings could not be held in Türkiye in 2024 and thanked all the stakeholders for their efforts to organise the meetings in 2024.

The Standing Committee took note of the call to Parties to host the joint meeting with the CMS MIKT on IKB to be held in 2025 and invited Contracting Parties to actively engage by participating at the meeting.

## 5.2. Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck

The Standing Committee took note of the oral report of the expert meeting on the implementation of the Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palaearctic, 2021-2025, held online on 22nd November 2024.

It welcomed the progress in the eradication of the invasive Ruddy Duck in Europe, in light of the results presented during the meeting of the expert group on the species and the conclusions of the 2023 Progress Report on the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* in the Western Palaearctic on the implementation of the 2021–2025 action plan.

The Committee agreed that considering 1) the current situation in the European countries which reported to the expert meeting, 2) the mobility of the species, 3) the growing efforts that the eradication of the last remnants of an introduced species supposes, the target of Ruddy Duck being functionally extinct in the wild in Europe will not be reached by 2025, end of the current action plan.

It considered that, in the light of these facts, more efforts should continue to be invested in the future with a follow-up Action Plan for the coming years.

The Standing Committee tasked the expert group to prepare a progress review of the implementation of the Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck in Europe 2021–2025 and a draft revised Action Plan for the period 2026-2030.

## 5.3. Conservation of Large Carnivores

The Standing Committee took note of the information presented regarding the involvement of the Bern Convention Secretariat in activities related to Large Carnivores: in the joint conference of the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions for the exchange of practices on management of large carnivores, which took place in March 2024 in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, within the project LECA; in the “Challenges & opportunities for the conservation of reptiles and large carnivores during linear infrastructure development in South-East Europe” which took place in April 2024 in Kresna, Bulgaria; and in the “Transnational exchange platform for the management of large carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region” which took place in June 2024 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

It took note of the CMS decision on listing the Balkan Lynx in Appendix I of CMS and Eurasian Lynx in Appendix II and expressed support for the cooperation of the Bern Convention and its Group of Experts on Large Carnivores with the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group in their work on developing guidelines, strategies or action plans for the conservation of the relevant Lynx sub-species.

The Committee welcomed the preparations for the meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores in the first semester 2025, at which lynx protection will be discussed in cooperation with the IUCN and CMS, a.o., before presenting draft Conservation Strategies for the Carpathian Lynx and the Balkan Lynx to the Standing Committee for its initial consideration.

The Standing Committee encouraged all Contracting Parties of the Bern Convention to further develop cooperation for effective conservation, management and monitoring of transboundary populations of large carnivores in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

## 5.4. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of Sturgeons

Relevant documents: T-PVS (2024)07 – Draft recommendation on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons/ on sturgeon population monitoring / on ex situ conservation measures for sturgeons  
 T-PVS(2024)16 – Technical guideline on habitat assessment  
 T-PVS(2024)17 – Technical guideline on population monitoring  
 T-PVS(2024)18 – Technical guideline on ex-situ conservation measures  
 T-PVS/PA(2024)05 – Report of the second meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for sturgeons



The Standing Committee was informed by the Chair of the national focal points, Ms. Salome Nozadze, of the outcomes of the second meeting of the Focal Points of Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons, which had taken place in-person on June 10-11 June 2024 in Strasbourg.

The Committee took note of the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons, as a protected species under the Bern Convention.

It welcomed the technical guidelines supporting the effective implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of sturgeons and backed them up by adopting Recommendation No. 222 (2024) on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons ([Appendix IV](#)), Recommendation No. 223 (2024) on sturgeon population monitoring ([Appendix V](#)) and Recommendation No. 224 (2024) on ex situ conservation measures for sturgeons ([Appendix VI](#)).

The Committee, invited range Contracting Parties to raise awareness about the guidelines and to encourage their application.

It instructed the Secretariat to enhance the visibility of and ensure accessibility to the guidelines.

The Standing Committee recommended that reference to these guidelines serve as a criterion in the development and funding of project proposals related to sturgeon conservation.

## 5.5. Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

The Standing Committee was informed by its Chair of the outcome of the joint meeting held with the Chair of the Groups of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles and the Chair of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species to discuss possible synergies between the two Groups of Experts on issues of common interest. Recalling that the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species didn't meet for five years, it was suggested to organise such a meeting in 2025 in Strasbourg, depending on the Secretariat's capacity and possibly back-to-back with the Groups of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles, with an overlapping part of the agenda and a field visit.

## 5.6. Conservation of Habitats

### 5.6.1. Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

Relevant document: T-PVS/PA(2024)09 – meeting report of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks

#### 1. Legal framework of the Emerald Network

Relevant document: T-PVS/PA(2024)11 – Draft recommendation on the further clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of Emerald Network sites

#### 2. Targets of the post-2020 Emerald Network Strategic Workplan

Relevant document: T-PVS/PA(2024)05 – Revisited targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030

#### 3. Proposed revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF)

Relevant document: T-PVS/PA(2024)04 – Implications of and options for revising the Emerald Network Standard Data Form

#### 4. Draft updated list of adopted Emerald Network sites and draft updated list of candidate Emerald Network sites

Relevant documents: T-PVS/PA(2024)18 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network candidate sites  
T-PVS/PA(2024)19 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network adopted sites

The Standing Committee took note of the outcomes of the 14th meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and thanked the authorities of Liechtenstein for hosting it.

It adopted with amendments Recommendation No. 225 (2024) on the further clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of Emerald Network sites ([Appendix VII](#)).

The Committee endorsed the proposed targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030 ([Appendix VIII](#)) consisting in the submission of updated and improved Emerald Network databases resulting in biogeographical evaluations, the improvement of the sufficiency index and the adoption and management of

sites. It noted with regret the lack of new site designations and database updates in recent years in most Contracting Parties, and further encouraged Parties to be more ambitious in order to meet the targets on protected areas of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

It mandated the Secretariat, in relation with the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, to revise the Emerald Network Standard Data Form to keep it harmonised with the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form and to enable the development of the appropriate processes needed to designate Emerald Network sites in the future. A revised Emerald Network Standard Data Form should be presented to the 45th Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee welcomed the request of the authorities of Liechtenstein to adopt their two candidate Emerald Network sites and adopted the updated list of adopted Emerald Network sites and updated list of candidate Emerald Network sites ([Appendix IX](#)).

It instructed the Secretariat to identify ways to support the engaged actors and stakeholders at national level involved in the Emerald Network in the relevant Contracting Parties to ensure updated databases are submitted to the Bern Convention over the next couple of years.

### 5.6.2. *European Diploma for Protected Areas*

Relevant document: T-PVS/DE(2024)12 – Report of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The Committee was informed by the Chair of the Group of Specialists, Mr Jan Plesnik, of the outcomes of the annual meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas which had taken place in-person on 20-21 February 2024 in Strasbourg.

It welcomed the recommendation of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma to renew the European Diploma of six areas following on-the-spot appraisal visits and the decision of the Committee of Ministers of June 2024 formally renewing the Diploma of these 6 areas.

The Standing Committee took note that the Secretariat followed up with areas requiring special attention: Wurzacher Ried Nature Reserve (Germany), Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany), Krimml Waterfalls Natural Site (Austria) and Doñana National Park (Spain).

It welcomed the application of the Sierra Nevada National Park (Spain) for the European Diploma and took note that in 2024 an on-the-spot appraisal visit had been organised to the area, and that in the light of this visit, the application would be re-examined in 2025.

The Committee took note of the on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Regional Park Gallipoli Cognato (Italy) to assess the opportunity to renew its European Diploma for the first time.

It welcomed the confirmation that Spain would host the celebration event organised within the frame of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Diploma provisionally scheduled on 21-22 May 2025 in Granada, and that the meeting would showcase good practices of interest to the community of the Diploma holding areas.

Finally, the Standing Committee took note of the state of preparation of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Diploma in particular the update of a publication and a communication and awareness raising campaign on the achievements of the European Diploma and its contribution to human well-being.

## 5.7. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats

Relevant documents: T-PVS/PA(2024)10 – Report of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting  
T-PVS/PA(2024)17 – Report of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting  
T-PVS/PA(2024)14 – Reporting Format  
T-PVS/PA(2024)15 – Checklists of Species and Habitats  
T-PVS/PA(2024)12 – List of Invasive Alien Species  
T-PVS/PA(2024)13 – Reporting guidelines – Explanatory notes  
T-PVS/PA(2024)16 – Reporting guidelines – Concepts and definitions

The Committee welcomed the progress achieved by the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting.

It endorsed the reporting format ([T-PVS/PA\(2024\)14](#)) and welcomed its alignment on the format of the reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive. It acknowledged that a harmonised reporting for all Parties will allow measuring how well they comply with their obligations under the Convention.

The Committee endorsed the Checklist of species and habitats ([T-PVS/PA\(2024\)15](#)) considered for the reporting, took note that bird species were excluded, that reporting on marine features would be optional and that only habitats with a 1:1 relationship with the EU Habitats Directive were included.

The Standing Committee endorsed the Guidelines on Explanatory Notes ([T-PVS/PA\(2024\)13](#)) and on Concepts and Definitions ([T-PVS/PA\(2024\)16](#)).

It endorsed the list of Invasive Alien Species considered as a possible threat to species and habitats protected by the Bern Convention included in the Checklist of species and habitats ([Appendix X](#)).

The Committee thanked the European Environment Agency for its technical support and the adaptation of the delivery platform (Reportnet 3) to the specificities of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

It mandated the Secretariat to draft, in liaison with the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting, Terms of Reference of a full-fledged Group of Experts on Reporting for the consideration of the 45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee.

## PART IV – MONITORING OF SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

### 6. SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

#### 6.1. Open Files

- **1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas bay, Zakynthos**

Relevant documents:            T-PVS/Files(2024)50 - Government Report  
   T-PVS/Files(2024)51 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee took note of the reports of both parties and the NGO ARCHELON, and thanked both the authorities and MEDASSET, the complainant, for their presentations.

It noted some improvements reported by the authorities, the complainant and the NGO. These included increased signage and warden presence, a trend (over two consecutive years) of increased nesting, and the successful limitation of vehicles and horses on the beach, thanks to the placement of wooden poles.

It acknowledged also the improvements from the Greek government regarding the application of the principles of adapted management and the Bern Convention guidelines, as well as the effectiveness of applied protection measures demonstrated by the rising trend of nesting activities.

However, it regretted the persistence of some of the key concerns of the case brought forward by the complainant and the NGO. These included turtle stranding, the increased issuing of boat licenses leading to turtle spotting, the increasing uses of beaches and beach furniture, human presence on the nesting beach at night, delayed and partial application of roping to prevent human trampling of nests, light pollution, inconsistencies in the application of management measures across the whole ZNMP, illegal developments despite court orders for demolition and environmental restoration, and illegal constructions despite fines.

Regarding the landfill in the ‘Skopos’ area, the Committee noted that it was the subject of a referral from the European Commission in 2023 (C-600/12) to the European Court of Justice for non-compliance. An Environmental Impact Assessment on its restoration is under public consultation, and the local Management Unit of NECCA/OFYPECA is currently formulating its opinion.

The Committee acknowledged the recent developments regarding the penal follow-up on the road opening case between Gerakas and Daphne. The person concerned was convicted by the court of appeal for misdemeanours, and the subsequent appeal filed was rejected, thus rendering the decision final. Furthermore, that same landowner concerned was condemned in July 2024 by the Court of first instance in Zakynthos, but the decision was appealed and will be examined in the coming months.

It welcomed the recent progress reported on the file but noted the ongoing issues.

The Standing Committee decided to mandate an on-the-spot appraisal (together with the OSA in Thines Kiparissias). The Committee noted that **the file remains open** and both parties were invited to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2025**.

➤ **1995/06: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)XX - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)48 - Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)80 – NGO ARCHELON Report

The Standing Committee took note of the report from the Republic of Cyprus and thanked both of the parties for their presentations.

It noted the progress that represented the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which involved an active role for the complainant in the protection of marine turtles. However, it regretted that no progress was reported on this initiative.

It took note of the concerns presented by the complainant, including the insufficient designation of Natura 2000 sites, and insufficient patrolling. Furthermore, the complainant was alarmed by the new Quarry Zone in the area of Androlikou adjacent to the Natura 2000 sites, which is currently pending.

It welcomed the prosecution of offenders concerning illegal restaurants around the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra, and that one of the court's decisions on the dismantlement of a bar was implemented. However, it was informed by the complainant that illegal restaurants were still operating.

The Committee noted the European Commission's (EC) intervention regarding its Reasoned Opinion of 13 March 2024 (INFR(2019)2303) against Cyprus for the inadequate management of Natura 2000 Network protected areas as SACs and SPAs are not adequately protected. Additionally, adequate conservation objectives and measures have not been established for the Akamas Peninsula. On the same day, (INFR(2021)2064) the EC referred Cyprus to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to designate sites of community importance (SCIs) as special areas of conservation (SACs) for the protected areas of the Natura 2000 Network and to establish the necessary conservation objectives and measures for these sites. It was noted that conservation objectives have been established for the Peninsula, but not conservation measures. The Committee requested to be informed of the follow-up given to this.

It expressed serious concern that after so many years, the majority of the thirteen points of [Recommendation No. 191 \(2016\)](#) had still not been fully followed-up by the authorities and that, according to interested actors, the main threats remain. The Committee asked the Cypriot authorities to step up efforts in implementing the Recommendation.

The Standing Committee noted that **the file remains open**, and both parties were invited to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2025**. The Committee encourages the government to use the points of the Recommendation as a basis for their reporting.

➤ **2010/05: Greece: threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)46 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)47 - Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)81 – NGO ARCHELON Report

The Standing Committee took note of the reports provided by both parties and the NGO ARCHELON, and thanked both the authorities and MEDASSET, the complainant, for their presentation.

It recognised the Greek Government's commitment to implementing [Recommendation No. 174 \(2014\)](#), and to finalising the Management Plan for Kyparissia Bay. The Committee also acknowledged the Government's commitment to making use of the adopted guidance tool on the conservation of sea turtles nesting sites.

It noted data suggesting the number of reproductive adults now exceeds conservation targets set in national legislation in 2023, and welcomed the progress being made in this area.

Furthermore, it recognised that other positive steps are being taken including the completion of the study on regulation and limitation of anthropogenic within the protected area, the hiring of personnel to reinforce patrols and surveillance, the placement of informative signs on the nesting beaches, and the removal of a canteen in the 'Vounaki' site.

It noted also the completion and findings of the assessment on potential implications of constructions and roads in the protected area, published in November, following a meeting with the European Commission in April 2024. The Committee also acknowledged that a Joint Ministerial Decision had been issued in April 2024 aimed at setting terms and restrictions in highly protected beaches and coasts, including the Natura-2000 site.

The Committee, regretted the persistence however, of key concerns brought forward by the complainant and ARCHELON, demonstrating failure to fully implement [Recommendation No. 174 \(2014\)](#). These concerns include vehicle activity on the nesting beaches, the presence of invasive species, sand dune destruction due to agricultural use, light pollution, poor beach equipment management, construction in the protected area, and a lack of action being taken by the authorities to prevent human activity in protected areas. The Committee also noted concerns raised by the complainant on the delay of the Special Environmental Study including the Thines Kiparissias site, due to be completed in October 2021.

It urged the Greek Government to adhere to a full and meaningful implementation of [Recommendation No. 174 \(2014\)](#), along with enforcing the Presidential Decree regulations. The Committee strongly encouraged the authorities to finalise and implement the Management Plan for the protected area, covering unresolved issues not addressed in the P.D regulations. The Committee also encouraged prompt implementation of proposed measures following the completion of the study on regulation and limitation of anthropogenic within the protected area and awaited deliverables of the Monitoring and Assessment Project on the conservation status of species and habitats in Greece, due in 2025. The Standing Committee requested to be informed about progress in the implementation of the above recommendations and share the study on regulation and limitation of anthropogenic impacts within the protected area after its adoption by the competent authority.

The Standing Committee decided to **mandate an on-the-spot appraisal** (together with the OSA in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos). The Standing Committee noted that **the file remains open** and both parties were invited to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2025**.

➤ **2012/09: Türkiye: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)69 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)49 Complainant- Report

The Standing Committee took note of the reports by both parties and thanked them for their presentations.

It invited the Turkish Government to pursue their efforts to implement [Recommendation No. 182 \(2015\)](#) and [No. 183 \(2015\)](#) and welcomed both the initiation of sea turtle monitoring and conservation studies, and conservation management plan studies.

It also recognised that some improvements have been made, although noted that these are primarily limited to the Patara Main Beach, while other areas are neglected and conservation issues affecting the nesting beaches remained.

The Committee regretted the persistence of a large number of key concerns brought forward by the complainant including construction in protected areas, failure to remove illegal facilities, poor management of beach furniture, light pollution, marine violations, camping in restricted areas, horse riding and vehicle activity on the beach, beach litter, inadequate enforcement of fines, and inadequate implementation of conservation measures.

It urged the Turkish Government to finalise the Management Plan for Patara, to report on the findings of the sea turtle monitoring and conservation and management plan studies, to maintain adherence to the Recommendations and continue their implementation without delay.

The Standing Committee noted that **the file remains open**. Both parties were invited to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2025**.

➤ **2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of the Mavrovo National Park**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)62 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)61 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the representatives of the government and the complainant for their contributions but regretted that no reports were provided by the government.

It recalled that urgent progress is needed regarding certain areas of [Recommendation No. 211 \(2021\)](#), as expressed by the Standing Committee in December 2023 and reiterated by the complainant.

It took note from the complainant that there was still no ban on hydropower in the draft Water Law, contrary to what is required by international standards. The New Nature Law is still under preparation and consultations are expected in 2025, this could constitute an advancement.

The Committee noted that in November 2024 the Government extended the concession contract for several SHPP, one of them in the Shar Mountain NP, although the contracts have expired. Regarding the two SHPP concessions in Mavrovo that were cancelled in February 2023, the decision is still not in effect as the contracts have not been cancelled. Lastly, concerning SHPP Ribnicka, the concession had not been revoked and no process has been initiated in that sense.

It was concerned that there were no significant updates since the last report concerning the proclamation of Mavrovo NP. The zoning has still not been finalised, and no work has started on the Management Plan. Regarding the study for the revalorisation of the NP noted that nothing has been reported since the public hearings last June 2024 with the stakeholders. Furthermore, regarding the Lynx Action Plan, no progress has been made, and no state funding is available.

It stressed the importance for the national authorities to apply [Recommendation No. 211\(2021\)](#) and to respect its international reporting under the Bern Convention, as well as to further reinforce cooperation between State authorities, civil society organisations, and stakeholder groups. However, it welcomed that cooperation between the parties was enhanced through informal meetings.

Furthermore, it took note of the remarks of the European Commission (EC) on the inadequacy of the legislation with EU environmental law as well as the negative impacts on other sectors such as infrastructure or democratic participation. The EC stressed the importance of such compliance for EU accession.

Therefore, in light of the ongoing urgent situation, the Standing Committee asked for progress reports to be provided at the **Spring Bureau in 2025**, in which the government is asked to use the basis of the 13 points of [Recommendation No. 211 \(2021\)](#). It also proposed to hold a coordination meeting with the government of North Macedonia to discuss the implementation of the recommendation. **The File remains open.**

➤ **2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)55 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)75 Complainant- Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities and the complainant for their presentations on the implementation of [Recommendation No. 201 \(2018\)](#).

It took note of the positive ongoing work and reiterated the request of the Bureau to the authorities to provide a timeline for the finalisation of the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Skadar Lake National Park and the preparation of deriving spatial planning documents.

It welcomed the efforts for improving the enforcement of existing laws.

It encouraged the authorities to update their Emerald Network database in the light of the new data available and to submit it to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention. The meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks hosted by Montenegro in 2025 could be a timely occasion for delivering updated data on the Emerald Network.

The Committee took note of the information of the complainant that still little meaningful progress in the implementation of [Recommendation No. 201 \(2018\)](#) had been accomplished and that the revocation of the building permits in the State Location Study "Mihailovići" was subject to a political decision.

The Standing Committee announced that **the file remains open** and both parties were requested to provide updates for the **Autumn Bureau meeting in 2025**. Both parties should use the 12 points of [Recommendation No. 201 \(2018\)](#) as the basis for their reporting.

➤ **2016/05: Albania: Presumed negative impact of developments on the Vjosa river including hydro-power plant development and Vlora International Airport**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)13 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)14 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee extended its gratitude to the authorities and the complainant for their comprehensive presentations on the implementation of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#).

It applauded the Albanian government for suspending work on the water supply project in the Himara municipality, following the guidance provided by IUCN expert, and including local communities in discussions and decision-making processes.

It expressed nevertheless its strong regret that the construction of the airport continued despite the clear provisions of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#) and repeated calls from the Bureau to suspend construction until a new and sufficient Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure and the proper evaluation of environmental impacts have been conducted.

It expressed furthermore deep concern that the new law on protected areas may conflict with the principles and obligations enshrined in the Bern Convention, potentially facilitating violations of its provisions. The Committee urged reconsideration to ensure compliance with the Convention.

The Committee regretted the decision of the Council of Ministers to authorise the additional activities in the protected landscapes and the removal of the zonation, as this will pose significant threats to biodiversity protection. As the decision came from the new law on protected areas, the Committee urged immediate reconsideration of this decision as well and requested the parties to report on the relevant court decisions.

With reference to the Bureau's decision from its September 2024 meeting, requested concrete data on measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of the ongoing airport construction and related developments. It urged the submission of specific, actionable mitigation plans addressing these concerns.

It requested an update on the management plan for the area. This update should include detailed information about the plan's contents and the measures to ensure its effective implementation to safeguard the environment.

The Standing Committee sought clarification on how the precautionary principles were applied to current and future development activities, with a focus on minimising environmental risks and ensuring long-term ecological sustainability.

It encouraged the authorities to actively engage with civil society and other relevant stakeholders to advance the implementation of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#).

It encouraged the authorities to engage with and include civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the wildlife monitoring of the area.

The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to offering continued support and expertise to all parties.

It announced that **the file remained open** and, due to the urgency of the matter, requested of both parties to provide updates for the **Spring Bureau meeting in 2025**. It encouraged the parties to use the 11 points of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#) as the basis for their reporting.

➤ **2017/02: North Macedonia: Negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)09 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)10 Complainant- Report

The Standing Committee thanked the representatives of the government and the complainant for their contributions but regretted that no reports had been provided by the government.

The Committee was concerned about the continued non-transparency of legislative processes, the legalisation of illegal constructions, new illegal developments, and increased urbanisation of the site. It is especially worried by the development of an urban complex within the RAMSAR site Studenchiste Marsh and the start of construction, in April 2024, of a new hotel complex based on urban plans dating back to 2007 and carried out without a legally binding EIA.

It welcomed the information provided by the complainant regarding the Law on the proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature, and the Law on the proclamation of Studenchiste Marsh as a Park of Nature. Indeed, following a petition filed by the complainant in August 2024, the relevant Assembly Commission decided to halt the process and align the laws with the Bern Convention and the OSA conducted in 2023. However, there has been no action since.

The Committee noted as encouraging that some financial support had been allocated for projects monitoring habitats and species as well as the development of sustainable tourism.

It stressed the importance for national authorities to urgently implement the Recommendation and respect its international reporting obligations under the Bern Convention as well as to reinforce cooperation between the central government and municipal governments.

Due to the ongoing and worsening situation of some aspects, the Standing Committee asked for progress reports for the **Spring Bureau in 2025**. The government was asked to use [Recommendation No. 221 \(2023\)](#) as a basis for their reports. Furthermore, the term “alleged” was suppressed from the title of the case file. **The file remains open.**

➤ **2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach– on the spot appraisal (OSA)**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)31 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)06 - Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Inf (2024)13 – Report of the on-the-spot appraisal  
T-PVS(2024)15 – Draft Recommendation on Mersin Anamur Beach

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and contribution to the on-the-spot appraisal (OSA) on 2-4 July 2024, the results of which were positively evaluated by the different stakeholders.

It regretted that some of the issues discussed at the OSA did not seem to evolve since and that some new negative developments occurred.

It encouraged cooperation of all relevant stakeholders in restoring and preserving the habitats of the three turtle species concerned: the Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and Nile soft-shelled turtles (*Trionyx triunguis*).

It thanked the independent consultant, Dr Alan Rees, for his involvement in the OSA and his report with conclusions, recommendations and a draft monitoring plan.

The Committee unanimously **adopted Recommendation No. 226 (2024)** ([T-PVS\(2024\)15](#)) on Mersin Anamur Beach (Türkiye), available in [Appendix XI](#).

It requested both parties to provide their update reports to the **Bureau** for its **meeting in Spring 2025**. **The file remains open.**

➤ **2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)07 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)21 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports.

It regretted that the construction of the HPP Ulog was finalised and the reservoir was filled. Invited the authorities to consider mitigation measures related to the construction and functioning of Ulog HPP.

It noted with concern and the construction of the Upper Horizons HPP scheme continued, as a priority project for the Republika Srpska authorities.

It acknowledged the rejected and pending lawsuits filed against construction permits issued for HPP Dabar and the pending case in relation to access to information related to it.

The Committee reiterated the call of the 43rd Standing Committee for the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to respect and implement the [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#), including by cancelling



concessions for the hydroelectric system Gornja Neretva, and halting other planned HPP projects such as the Upper Horizons project, until the valuable Gornja Neretva area has received an appropriate nature protection.

It appreciated the readiness of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfil the obligations towards the Bern Convention and invited them to strengthen the cooperation between the relevant entities and with civil society.

It proposed to also hold a coordination meeting with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss the implementation of the [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#).

The Standing Committee announced that **the file remains open** and invited both parties to send progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2025**.

## 6.2. Possible Files

### ➤ 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)34 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)35 Complainant- Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities of Bulgaria and the complainant “Save Kresna Gorge” coalition for their oral presentations, and for their written reports sent throughout the year.

It welcomed the information that the [Technical Workshop](#) which was called for by [Recommendation 212 \(2021\)](#) was held on 22-24 April 2024 in the town of Sandanski with a field visit to the Kresna Gorge. It noted that the workshop went well, with both parties demonstrating a constructive spirit, and that [joint conclusions](#) were approved by the participants in the workshop.

It took note of the agreed way forward reached between the Bulgarian authorities and the European Commission to make progress on the project without any delay and, in particular, to start the construction of the Eastern lane, going from Kulata to Sofia outside the gorge (as included in the G10.50 alternative). Following the principle of good faith and taking note of the consistent efforts of the Bulgarian authorities to align the Struma Motorway project with the recommendations of the Bern Convention, the Standing Committee recognised the call of the Bulgarian authorities on the need to balance the protection of species and habitats in the Kresna Gorge with vital socio-economic needs.

It took note of the position of the complainant that the construction of the Eastern lane can be considered as an important step to ease the pressure from traffic on species and habitats in the gorge and as a prerequisite for the implementation of appropriate defragmentation and conservation measures on the existing road. It took note that the construction of the Eastern lane, going from Kulata to Sofia outside of the Kresna Gorge, as included in the Eastern G10.50 alternative, should start as soon as possible, after discussing the technical design of the bypass of Kresna town with the complainant with regard to the passing of the Vlahina River.

The Committee noted that the Minister of Environment and Water issued, on 11 June 2024, an EIA/AA screening Decision No 5-PR/2024, which concluded that there was no need for a new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out for the modifications of the project, which, according to the authorities, was unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the environment and natural habitats, populations and habitats species subject to conservation in the protected site.

It recognised that the maintenance and adaptation of existing culverts and the road safety measures on the existing road through the Kresna Gorge are necessary to minimise mortality of protected species but also to ensure that there are no deadly traffic accidents. The Standing Committee took note of the information that there is a Contract signed for their implementation and supported the proposal that the Road Infrastructure Agency, the Ministry of Environment and Water and the complainant review the measures and, if necessary, adapt them before implementation.

The Committee also took note of the complainant’s concerns with regard to the construction of the Western lane from Sofia to Kulata. The Standing Committee urged the Bulgarian authorities to focus on finding technically feasible routes for this lane outside the Kresna Gorge. The Committee urged the Bulgarian Authorities to reformulate the current ToR (for identifying a complementing road to the Struma Motorway) to focus on how the second lane of the Motorway (from Sofia to Kulata) can be constructed (phased) next to the Eastern lane (Kulata-Sofia) with effective mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on the integrity of the

sites and leave the existing E79 and the bypass of Kresna town as a complementary road. The ToR should also include a competent environmental team to perform environmental studies in parallel with the technical design. The studies and future EIA procedure must be implemented as soon as possible and must not consider the existing road as the Western lane of the planned Struma Motorway from Sofia to Kulata. The construction of a western lane next to the eastern will further decrease the pressure inside the gorge.

It invited the parties to jointly elaborate a roadmap for the implementation of the project respecting the timelines under the TEN-T Regulation (by 2030), and the Bulgarian authorities to take a legally binding commitment to enact it.

It called on all parties, including the NGO complainants and the European Commission, to give their utmost support to the implementation of this decision.

It expected that the European Commission will continue to monitor the development of the project.

The Standing Committee noted that **the file remained possible**, and that both parties were invited to send progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2025** with information on the implantation of the described way forward.

➤ **2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and its impacts on Emerald Network sites**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)67 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)16 Complainant- Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their presentations.

Regarding the Amulsar gold mine:

It took note of the contradictory information provided by the authorities and the complainant regarding the operation of the gold mine. While the authorities stated that the works at the mine had been stopped in 2018, according to the complainant the commencement of operations of the mine had been announced for 2025.

It requested the authorities to ensure a new Environmental Impact Assessment, which considers all the species and habitats present in the area.

It looked forward to the outcomes of the study carried out by the Scientific Centre of Zoology and Hydroecology aimed to assess the recent biodiversity findings in the area of Amulsar.

Regarding the revision process of the Emerald Network in Armenia:

The Standing Committee reiterated its concern regarding the process to drastically reduce the territory of the Emerald Network in Armenia and asked the authorities to include the complainant in the consultation process.

It invited the authorities to swiftly revitalise the discussions concerning the Jermuk National Park within the frame of the "Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Development in Armenia" project funded by the KFW Development Bank.

It took note of the request of the complainant to mandate an on-the-spot appraisal, however due to ongoing processes decided to postpone the decision to 2025.

The Standing Committee announced that **the file remained possible**, and both parties were invited to send progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2025** with information on the two separate issues of the Amulsar gold mine, and the revision of the candidate Emerald Network sites in Armenia.

➤ **2022/03: Norway: Wolf culling policy**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)41 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)63 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee expressed strong concern with the extremely restricted population target in spite of the vulnerable status of the Scandinavian population of *Canis lupus*, and the species being listed as

“critically endangered” (CR) on the Norwegian Red List of Species in 2021, due to the small number of animals and a very high inbreeding coefficient.

It stressed that considering lethal prevention measures a norm, on the grounds of „overriding public interests“, where alternative means are not exhausted, is contrary to the Bern Convention Article 9 regardless of the status of protection of the species, especially if practiced also within the wolf management zone as small as 5% of the national territory, where the presence of the species is meant to be prioritised.

It called upon the government of Norway to abstain from culling entire wolf packs and territory-marking pairs in the wolf zone, so as to allow the population to recover to a more satisfactory conservation status and ensure its long-term survival and viability, as well as its positive impact on the ecosystem as a whole.

It invited the government of Norway to prioritise proven, non-lethal measures of damage reduction and conflict mitigation, and to step up the promotion of long-term co-existence between humans and wolves based on the available best practice. This would contribute to meeting the goals and targets agreed upon in the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, and in the Vision and the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030.

The Standing Committee, considering all the elements brought to its attention, **elevated the status of the complaint to an Open File** and invited both parties to send progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2025**.

➤ **2022/06: Serbia: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Bosilegrad and in the Homolje Mt region**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)22 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)23 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and presentations.

It was concerned about the irregularities observed near both mines and their alleged impact on protected flora, fauna and the habitats around and downstream from the mines, in particular the water pollution and the illegal use of local water bodies, which require close and regular monitoring and an adequate assessment of the impact on species and habitats.

It called on the authorities to prevent SLAPPS, smear campaigns and guarantee a fair treatment for environmental defenders and further enhancing possibilities of public participation.

It called on the Government of the Republic of Serbia to pursue close cooperation with the Bulgarian authorities, in view of a high risk of transboundary heavy pollution of water. Expressed interest in the results of the cooperation in the framework of the Espoo Convention.

The Committee urged the authorities to reject proposals for resuming and expanding mining activities in fragile natural environments and to adequately assess the already existing, as well as potential negative impact on protected species and habitats. Stressed that the Bern Convention Secretariat proposed to focus on minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity, aimed at sharing of expertise and providing assistance to the parties. Encouraged the authorities to engage in a possible event on this matter.

In view of the already stated negative impact and allegedly high risk of further severe, transboundary consequences of the mining, from exploration, to extraction, to processing activities, the Standing Committee announced **the file remains possible** and requested both parties to provide their update reports to the **Bureau** for its meeting in **Spring 2025**.

➤ **2023/03: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)68 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)70 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and presentations.

It expressed strong concern about the new wolf culling policy posing a risk of a large scale, culling of – theoretically up to 65% of the population, the minimum threshold being currently fixed at 12 packs, as well as its concern for the pack whose territory contains the Swiss National Park.

It reminded the authorities that, if the decision of the Standing Committee on downgrading the protection status of the wolf comes into force, following the 3-month period after its adoption, the provisions of the Bern Convention still apply and need to be observed, notably Art 1(1), Art. 2, Art. 7 and Art. 9. The wolf populations need to be maintained at, or brought to, a level which corresponds to ecological and scientific requirements in accordance with Article 2. The populations need to be kept out of danger and measures to be taken shall include the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation, as appropriate, in order to restore satisfactory population levels. Exceptions are only possible under the specific circumstances mentioned in Art.9 (1).

The Committee stressed that sound knowledge, based on the best available scientific findings, should be considered in devising wolf management policy. The current minimum population threshold of 12 wolf packs is far below the threshold recommended for the Alpine region.

In terms of managing the wolf population, the Committee recognised the distinct, complementary roles of the federal government, responsible for the compliance with the provisions of the Bern Convention, and cantonal authorities, in charge of implementing the wolf management policy. It stressed that the consistency of the overall approach had to be safeguarded.

It strongly encouraged further investment into livestock protection measures, as a proven method of limiting depredation, and efforts in promoting coexistence with the wolf, leading to an increase in the social acceptance of the species.

In view of the facts presented by both the complainant and the authorities, and regardless of the species protection status being “protected” or “strictly protected”, the Standing Committee **elevated the complaint to an Open File** and invited both parties to send their progress reports for consideration by the **Spring Bureau in 2025**.

### **6.3. Complaint on stand-by**

#### **➤ 2021/07: Serbia: Alleged threat to fauna species and protected sites due to the proposed construction of a lithium mine in Jadar River Valley**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2024)57 - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)54 - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities and the complainants for their reports and presentations.

It noted that, as confirmed by the EIA request submitted by the company, several protected species of flora and fauna, including some listed in the Bern Convention Annexes, as well as water quality and soil may be heavily impacted by the mining project. Concluded that no protected areas are in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project location.

The Committee acknowledged swift developments related to the preparatory process leading to creation of the underground mine of the jadarite ore, in the context of increasing importance of lithium for achieving climate neutrality and energy sufficiency.

It noted the existing legal framework safeguarding the assessment of the environmental impact of such projects and requested information on the results of the environmental assessments in progress and further developments in relation to the project, including estimated risk of a spill, contingency plan with envisaged prevention and mitigation measures, also bearing in mind the potential transboundary impact of the extraction and processing of the lithium ore.

It expressed concern with the limited scope of public engagement in the decision-making process and strong social tensions around the project and encouraged the authorities to engage with researchers, activists and civil society at large.

The Committee stressed that the Bern Convention Secretariat proposed to focus on minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity, aimed at sharing of expertise and providing assistance to the parties. Encouraged the authorities to engage in a possible event on this matter.

It decided to **maintain the file on stand-by** and requested both parties to submit their update reports for the **Bureau meeting in Spring 2025**.

#### 6.4. Follow-up of Recommendations

- Recommendation No. 169 (2013) on the Rhone streber (Zingel asper) in the Doubs (France) and in the canton of Jura (Switzerland) in the framework of a case-file on stand-by 2011/05: France / Switzerland

Relevant document: T-PVS/Files(2024)82 – French Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)79f – Swiss Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)76f – Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Files(2024)77f – Complainant Report

The Standing Committee welcomed the progress presented in the implementation of [Recommendation No. 169 \(2013\)](#) and thanked the authorities and NGOs for their commitment. It specifically welcomed the prolongation of the Swiss Action plan on the Doubs until 2030. However, it noted with great concern that to date, the measures implemented have not enabled the Apron population to recover.

It called on the authorities to pursue their actions and follow up on previous recommendations, in particular:

- The Swiss authorities to organise the planned agricultural seminar without further delay;
- The French and Swiss authorities to increase their collaboration, further advance in the research on the key threats responsible for the current conservation status of the Rhone Streber and continue to work on suitable environmental conditions, including in relation to the negative impacts of agriculture and forestry, for the Apron and
- to convene the binational “Water Quality” group in 2025 and continue its work with the effective participation of NGOs.

It took note of the complainants’ proposal to set up an expert group meeting on the genus Zingel, which encompassed several threatened species in Europe with a similar ecology, to exchange on the reasons for decline and look for possible ways to improve their situation.

The Standing Committee considered that the **file should remain on stand-by** with a continuation of the current two-year reporting cycle and invited the Contracting Parties and the complainants to report on the results of their efforts at the **46th Standing Committee meeting in 2026**.

## PART V – COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025 - 2026

### 7. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION WITH OTHER MEAS AND ORGANISATIONS

The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and expressed its appreciation of the continued international cooperation developed throughout the year with other MEAs and organisations such as the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), Birdlife international, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the European Commission, Infrastructure and Ecology Network Europe (IENE), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Ramsar Convention, the United Nations' Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage Centre (UNESCO WHC) and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT). It thanked more particularly the European Environment Agency (EEA) which offered to cover the resource needs for the transition from Reportnet 2 to Reportnet 3 of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and Emerald data submission which saved the Bern Convention budget tens of thousands of euros.

## **8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2025 - 2026**

Relevant document: T-PVS(2024)09– Draft Programme of Activities and budget for 2025-2026

The Standing Committee welcomed that the increase of the allocation of the Ordinary Budget adopted in 2024 had been reconducted by the Committee of Ministers in 2025.

It was informed of the two-year programme of activities ([T-PVS\(2024\)09](#)) and took note that over the next biennium the European Diploma for Protected Areas would celebrate its 60th anniversary; that the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats would mobilise significant resources; that strengthened communication with youth organisations and the design of cooperation activities aimed to support Contracting Parties to resolve or prevent case-files had been planned.

It revised the provisional calendar of meetings ([Appendix XII](#)) to maximise efficiency and help the Secretariat prioritise human and financial resources.

It invited Parties interested in hosting Groups of Experts in 2025 to inform the Secretariat.

The Standing Committee invited the Secretariat to consider adding the objectives and expected outcomes of the meetings when preparing the calendar of the meetings in the future.

## **9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

The Standing Committee decided unanimously to invite the following States to attend its 45<sup>th</sup> meeting: San Marino, Egypt, the Holy See and Jordan.

## **PART VI – OTHER ITEMS**

### **10. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND BUREAU MEMBERS**

Relevant document: T-PVS(2022)29 – Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee in accordance with Article 18(e) of the Rules of Procedure, elected:

- Mr Carl Amirgulashvili (Georgia) as Chair;
- Mr Claude Origer (Luxembourg) as Vice-Chair;
- Mr Burak Tatar (Türkiye) as Bureau member;
- Mr Charles-Henri de Barsac (France) as Bureau member, pending a formal nomination is received by the Secretariat by 31 January 2025. It unanimously agreed to deviate exceptionally for its Rules of Procedures to fulfill all the positions of the Bureau and enable its optimal functioning.

The Standing Committee acknowledged, according to Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure, the automatic nomination of the previous Chair, Ms Merike Linnamägi (Estonia) as a Bureau member.

### **11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

The Standing Committee agreed to hold its next meeting during the week of 8 December 2025 in Strasbourg (exact format of the meeting to be decided).

### **12. ADOPTION OF THE MAIN DECISIONS OF THE MEETING**

The Standing Committee adopted document T-PVS(2024)Misc.

### **13. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

The Standing Committee closed the meeting.

**Appendix I**  
**- Agenda -**  
**- T-PVS/Agenda(2024)13 -**

**PART I – OPENING**

- 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
- 2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DELEGATIONS AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

- 2.1. Follow up to the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavík, Iceland**

- 2.1.1. Creation of the Department on the Reykjavík process and the environment / Directorate of social rights, health and environment*

- 2.1.2. Involvement of the Bern Convention in the Reykjavík process*

- 2.1.3. Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)*

*[GME(2024)1 – Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)]*  
*[GME(2024)AR1 – Abridged report of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GME]*

- 3. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION**

- 3.1. Financing of the Bern Convention**

*[T-PVS(2024)13 – Report of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ad hoc Drafting group of an Amending Protocol]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)10 - Fourth draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention]*  
*[T-PVS/Inf(2024)19- The Bern Convention financial situation]*

- 3.2. Voluntary contributions received in 2024: state of play**

*[T-PVS/Inf(2024)08Rev - Table of the voluntary contributions received]*

- 3.3. Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030**

*[T-PVS(2024)02 – Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)08 – Report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)12 - Operationalising the Strategic Plan's indicators – next steps]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)14 – Compilation of the national voluntary updates on the Strategic Plan implementation]*

**PART II – MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL ASPECTS**

- 4. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION**

- 4.1. Biennial reports 2021-2022 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8**

- 4.2. Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (Canis lupus) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention**

*[T-PVS/Inf(2024)15 – Proposal by the European Union to amend Appendices II and III of the Bern Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats by moving the wolf (Canis lupus) from Appendix II to Appendix III]*  
*[The Bern Convention and the protection of the wolf - FAQ]*

**PART III – MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS**

- 5. MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS**

- 5.1. Conservation of Birds & IKB**

- 5.2. Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck**

- 5.3. Conservation of Large Carnivores**

## 5.4. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of Sturgeons

*[T-PVS(2024)07 - Draft recommendation on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons / on sturgeon population monitoring / on ex situ conservation measures for sturgeons]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)16 - Technical guideline on habitat assessment; T-PVS(2024)17 - Technical guideline on population monitoring; T-PVS(2024)18 - Technical guideline on ex-situ conservation measures]*  
*[T-PVS(2024)05 – Report of the second meeting of the National Focal Points for the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons]*

## 5.5. Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

### 5.6. Conservation of Habitats

#### 5.6.1. Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)09 - meeting report of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks]*

##### a) Legal framework of the Emerald Network

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)11 - Draft recommendation on the further clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of Emerald Network sites]*

##### b) Targets of the post-2020 Emerald Network Strategic Workplan

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)05 - Revisited targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030]*

##### c) Proposed revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF)

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)20 – Implications of and options for revising the Emerald Network Standard Data Form]*

##### d) Draft updated list of adopted Emerald Network sites and draft updated list of candidate Emerald Network sites

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)18 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network candidate sites]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)19 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network adopted sites]*

#### 5.6.2. European Diploma for Protected Area

*[T-PVS/DE(2024)12 – Report of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas]*

## 5.7. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)10 – Report of the 5th meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)17 – Report of the 6th meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)14 – Reporting format]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)15 rev Checklists of Species and Habitats]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)12 rev – List of Invasive Alien Species]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)13 – Reporting guidelines – Explanatory notes]*

*[T-PVS/PA(2024)16 – Reporting guidelines – Concepts and definitions]*

## PART IV – MONITORING OF SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

### 6. SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

#### 6.1. Open Files

- 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas bay, Zakynthos

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)50– Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)51– Complainant Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)80– Archelon NGO Report]*

- 1995/06: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)XX– Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)48– Complainant Report]*



- 2010/05: Greece: Threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)46– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)47– Complainant Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)81– Archelon NGO Report]
- 2012/09: Türkiye: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)69– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)49– Complainant Report]
- 2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of the Mavrovo National Park
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)62– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)61– Complainant Report]
- 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)55– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)75– Complainant Report]
- 2016/05: Albania: Presumed negative impact of developments on the Vjosa river including hydro-power plant development and Vlora International Airport
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)13– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)14– Complainant Report]
- 2017/02: North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)09– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)10– Complainant Report]
- 2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach - *on-the-spot appraisal (OSA)*
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)31– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)06– Complainant Report]
  - [T-PVS/Inf(2024)13– Report of the on-the-spot appraisal]
  - [T-PVS(2024)15 - Draft Recommendation on the Mersin Anamur Beach]
- 2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva River
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)07– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)21– Complainant Report]

## 6.2. Possible Files

- 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)34– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)35– Complainant Report]
- 2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and its impacts on Emerald Network sites
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)67– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)16– Complainant Report]
- 2022/03: Norway: Wolf culling policy
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)41– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)63– Complainant Report]
- 2022/06: Serbia: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Bosilegrad and in the Homolje Mt region
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)22– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)23– Complainant Report]
- 2023/03: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)68– Government Report]
  - [T-PVS/Files(2024)70– Complainant Report]

### **6.3. Complaint on stand-by**

- 2021/07: Serbia: Alleged threat to fauna species and protected sites due to the proposed construction of a lithium mine in the Jadar River Valley

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)57– Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2024)54– Complainant Report]*

### **6.4. Follow-up of previous complaints and Recommendations**

- Recommendation No. 169 (2013) on the Rhone streber (Zingel asper) in the Doubs (France) and in the canton of Jura (Switzerland) in the framework of a case-file on stand-by 2011/05: France / Switzerland

*T-PVS/Files(2024)79 – French Government Report*

*T-PVS/Files(2024)76 – Swiss Government Report*

*T-PVS/Files(2024)77 - Complainant Report*

## **PART V – COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK 2025**

### **7. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION WITH OTHER MEAS AND ORGANISATIONS**

### **8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2025-2026**

*[T-PVS(2024)09 – Draft Programme of activities and budget 2025 - 2026]*

### **9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

## **PART VI – OTHER ITEMS**

### **10. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND BUREAU MEMBERS**

### **11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

### **12. ADOPTION OF THE MAIN DECISIONS OF THE MEETING**

### **13. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

**DRAFT PLAN FOR DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA<sup>1</sup>**

<b>MORNINGS 9.00 am - 12.30 pm (CET)</b>	<b>AFTERNOONS 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm (CET)</b>
<b>Monday 2 December 2024</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA</b></li> <li><b>2. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DELEGATIONS AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT</b></li> <li><b>2.1 Follow up to the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavík, Iceland</b></li> <li><b>3. FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION</b></li> <li><b>3.1 Financing of the Bern Convention</b></li> <li><b>3.2. Voluntary contributions received in 2024: state of play</b></li> <li><b>3.3 Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention</b></li> <li><b>4. MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION</b></li> <li><b>4.1. Biennial reports 2021/2022 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8</b></li> </ol>
<b>Tuesday 3 December 2024</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>4.2. Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention</b></li> <li><b>5. MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS</b></li> <li><b>5.1. Conservation of Birds &amp; IKB</b></li> <li><b>5.2. Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck</b></li> <li><b>5.3. Conservation of Large Carnivores</b></li> <li><b>5.4. Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of Sturgeons</b></li> <li><b>5.5. Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5.6. Conservation of Habitats</b></li> <li><i>5.6.1 Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest</i></li> <li><i>5.6.2 European Diploma for Protected Areas</i></li> <li><b>5.7. Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats</b></li> <li><b>6. SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS</b></li> <li><b>6.1. Open Files</b></li> <li>➤ 2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach - OSA</li> <li>➤ 2012/09: Türkiye: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> Time slots are indicative only- certain agenda items may be reshuffled during the meeting when necessary.

<b>MORNINGS 9.00 am - 12.30 pm (CET)</b>	<b>AFTERNOONS 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm (CET)</b>
<b>Wednesday 4 December 2024</b>	
<p><b>6.1 Open Files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2013/10: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of the Mavrovo National Park</li> <li>➤ 2017/02: North Macedonia: Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments</li> <li>➤ 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site</li> <li>➤ 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of Caretta Caretta in Laganas bay, Zakynthos</li> <li>➤ 2010/05: Greece: threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias</li> <li>➤ 1995/06: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.1 Open Files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2016/05: Albania: Presumed negative impact of developments on the Vjosa river including hydro-power plant development and Vlora International Airport</li> <li>➤ 2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river</li> </ul> <p><b>6.2. Possible files</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and its impacts on Emerald Network sites</li> <li>➤ 2022/06: Serbia: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Bosilegrad and in the Homolje Mt region</li> </ul> <p><b>6.3. Complaint on stand-by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2021/07: Serbia: Alleged threat to fauna species and protected sites due to the proposed construction of a lithium mine in the Jadar River Valley</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday 5 December 2024</b>	
<p><b>6.2. Possible files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2022/03: Norway: Wolf culling policy</li> <li>➤ 2023/03: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy</li> <li>➤ 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge</li> </ul> <p><b>6.4. Follow-up of previous complaints and Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recommendation No. 169 (2013) on the Rhone streber (Zingel asper) in the Doubs (France) and in the canton of Jura (Switzerland) in the framework of a case-file on stand-by 2011/5: France / Switzerland</li> </ul> <p><b>7. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION WITH OTHER MEAS AND ORGANISATIONS</b></p> <p><b>8. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2024</b></p>	<i>Possible continuation of unfinished business</i>
<b>Friday 6 December 2024</b>	
<p><b>9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING</b></p> <p><b>10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR, AND BUREAU MEMBERS</b></p> <p><b>11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING</b></p> <p><b>12. ADOPTION OF THE MAIN DECISIONS OF THE MEETING</b></p> <p><b>13. CLOSING OF THE MEETING</b></p>	

## **Appendix II**

### **Terms of reference of the Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted [Resolution No. 9 \(2019\)](#) on the financing of the Bern Convention and on initiating the establishment of a new system for obligatory financial contributions by Parties setting up an Intersessional Working Group on Finances entrusted with the drafting of proposals for amending the Convention and for a Partial Agreement, in order to ensure viable and predictable financial support to the Convention work and activities

After three years of operation, the Intersessional Working Group on Finances assessed the feasibility of establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement, prepared several financial scenarios in relation to the Enlarged Partial Agreement, drafted an amendment to the Bern Convention in view of Article 16 of the Convention, prepared a financial simulation tool in relation to the draft amendment and reviewed other institutional, legal options.

On 19 October 2022, the Committee of Ministers ([CM/Del/Dec\(2022\)1446/9.1](#)) entrusted the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention to elaborate a protocol amending the Bern Convention as it appeared to be the best available option to secure long-term funding of the Convention. To achieve this task, the Standing Committee decided to set up an *Ad-hoc* Drafting Group of the Amending Protocol which replaced the Intersessional Working Group on Finances.

At its session in May 2024, following the Reykjavík Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (2023), the Committee of Ministers launched the elaboration of a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment. As part of the exploration of sustainable financing options for related activities and conventions, particularly the Bern Convention, the upcoming session of the Committee of Ministers in May 2025 will consider the establishment of a dedicated Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF).

#### **II. SCOPE**

The Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention is entrusted with the finalisation of the draft protocol amending the Bern Convention and creating a mechanism of compulsory financial contributions and its explanatory report. Under its mandate, the Working Group is also tasked to consider any decisions that may be taken at the May 2025 session of the Committee of Ministers on the establishment of a dedicated Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF), and in particular how the Trust Fund could respond to the financial needs of the Bern Convention and to propose the most appropriate solutions regarding financing options for the Bern Convention for consideration by the September meeting of the Bureau of the Convention and the Standing Committee at its 45<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Working Group will replace the *Ad-hoc* Drafting Group of the Amending Protocol.

#### **III. COMPOSITION**

The Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention will comprise relevant representatives of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention and may invite relevant third parties as deemed necessary.

The Working Group will select one Chair from amongst its members.

#### **IV. WORKING METHODS**

The working language will be English.

The Working Group will meet at least once, before the meeting of the Bureau in September 2025.

The working group shall operate by online means.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee will review and evaluate the work of the Working Group at the Bureau's meetings.

The Working Group will report to the 45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee to the Bern Committee.

In co-operation with the Chair, the Secretariat will coordinate and assist with the organisation and preparation of the agenda for the meetings of the Working Group and any other support activities deemed necessary.

## **Appendix III**

### **Terms of Reference of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

At its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting in December 2024, the Bern Convention Standing Committee discussed the possibility of devising a dedicated evidence-based mechanism and criteria for granting or changing the protection status of a species in order to ensure that the process is objective, transparent and supports the Standing Committee in fulfilling its role. The Standing Committee also considered that it could be time to review Recommendation No. 56 (1997) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments.

Advancing towards that goal, bearing in mind Recommendation No. 56 (1997), the Standing Committee decided to set up a Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention, particularly to develop criteria for amending appendices I, II & III to the Bern Convention.

#### **II. SCOPE**

Considering Bern Convention Standing Committee Recommendation No. 56 (1997) concerning guidelines to be taken into account while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments, and the need expressed by the Bern Convention Standing Committee for a dedicated evidenced-based mechanism and criteria for granting or changing the protection status of a species, the Working Group is requested to:

- Make recommendations to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention on setting up, as appropriate, a mechanism to evaluate proposals for granting or modifying the protection status of fauna and flora species in the framework of the Bern Convention and, if deemed appropriate, to advise on other evidence-based decisions, bearing in mind the framework of the Bern Convention and the practice in other international treaties related to nature conservation.
- Advise the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention on any changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee deemed necessary to implement such a mechanism.

#### **III. COMPOSITION**

The Working Group will comprise representatives of Contracting Parties and Observers to the Bern Convention and may comprise other relevant third parties as deemed necessary.

The Working Group will select one Chair from amongst its members.

#### **IV. WORKING METHODS**

The members of the Working Group will provide input through meetings, conference calls, written contributions to draft papers, reports, and other means as appropriate.

The working language will be English.

The Working Group will determine its own meeting frequency. The Working Group shall operate by online means.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee will review and evaluate the work of the Working Group at the Bureau's meetings through the year.

The Working Group will report to the 45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

In co-operation with the Chair, the Secretariat will coordinate and assist with the organisation and preparation of the agenda for the meetings of the Working Group and any other support activities deemed necessary.



## Appendix IV

### **Recommendation No. 222 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons**

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention requires Parties to take the necessary steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats;

Recalling that Article 4.1 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the Drafting and Implementation of Action Plans of Wild Fauna Species;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 41 (1993) on the protection of freshwater fish;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 116 (2005) on the conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 127 (2007) of the Standing Committee on the conservation and restoration of the European sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*);

Recalling the report on the status of implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin, prepared by DSTF [document [T-PVS/Inf\(2017\)22](#)] and presented at its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting in December 2017;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 199 (2018) on the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons [document [T-PVS\(2018\)6](#)];

Desirous to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons;

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

Make use to the extent possible of the technical guidelines on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons supporting the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of sturgeons and all activities in relation to the conservation of sturgeons;

Raise awareness among competent authorities and relevant stakeholders about the guidelines on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons and encourage them to put them into practice;

Refer to the guidelines on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons as criteria to develop and fund project proposals related to their conservation;

Recommends that the Secretariat promotes and gives appropriate visibility to the [guidelines on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons](#).

## Appendix V

### **Recommendation No. 223 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on sturgeon population monitoring**

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention requires Parties to take the necessary steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats;

Recalling that Article 4.1 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the Drafting and Implementation of Action Plans of Wild Fauna Species;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 41 (1993) on the protection of freshwater fish;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 116 (2005) on the conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 127 (2007) of the Standing Committee on the conservation and restoration of the European sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*);

Recalling the report on the status of implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin, prepared by DSTF [document [T-PVS/Inf\(2017\)22](#)] and presented at its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting in December 2017;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 199 (2018) on the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons [document [T-PVS\(2018\)6](#)];

Desirous to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons;

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

Make use to the extent possible of the technical guidelines on sturgeon population monitoring supporting the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of sturgeons and all activities in relation to the conservation of sturgeons;

Raise awareness among competent authorities and relevant stakeholders about the guidelines on sturgeon population monitoring and encourage them to put them into practice;

Refer to the guidelines on sturgeon population monitoring as criteria to develop and fund project proposals related to their conservation;

Recommends that the Secretariat promotes and gives appropriate visibility to the [guidelines on the monitoring of the population of sturgeon](#).

## Appendix VI

### **Recommendation No. 224 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024 on *ex situ* conservation measures for sturgeons**

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention requires Parties to take the necessary steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats;

Recalling that Article 4.1 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 59 (1997) on the Drafting and Implementation of Action Plans of Wild Fauna Species;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 41 (1993) on the protection of freshwater fish;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 116 (2005) on the conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 127 (2007) of the Standing Committee on the conservation and restoration of the European sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*);

Recalling the report on the status of implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of sturgeons (*Acipenseridae*) in the Danube River Basin, prepared by DSTF [document [T-PVS/Inf\(2017\)22](#)] and presented at its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting in December 2017;

Recalling its Recommendation No. 199 (2018) on the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons [document [T-PVS\(2018\)6](#)];

Desirous to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons;

Recommends that Contracting Parties:

Make use to the extent possible of the technical guidelines on *ex situ* conservation measures for sturgeons supporting the implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of sturgeons and all activities in relation to the conservation of sturgeons;

Raise awareness among competent authorities and relevant stakeholders about the guidelines on *ex situ* conservation measures for sturgeons and encourage them to put them into practice;

Refer to the guidelines on *ex situ* conservation measures for sturgeons as criteria to develop and fund project proposals related to their conservation;

Recommends that the Secretariat promotes and gives appropriate visibility to the [guidelines on \*ex situ\* conservation measures for sturgeons](#).

## Appendix VII

### **Recommendation No. 225 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on the further clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of Emerald Network sites**

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Recalling Article 2 of the Convention, which requires each Contracting Party to “take requisite measures to maintain the population of wild flora and fauna at, or adapt it to, a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements and the needs of sub-species, varieties or forms at risk locally”;

Recalling Article 4 of the Convention, which requires each Contracting Party to “take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats”;

Recalling Resolutions No. 1 (1989), No. 3 (1996), No. 4 (1996), No. 5 (1998), No. 6 (1998) and No. 8 (2012), on habitat conservation and the Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network);

Recalling in particular the common interpretation of Article 4 of the Convention adopted by the Standing Committee in Resolution No. 1 (1989), which confirms that Article 4 lays down an obligation requiring Contracting Parties to take those measures “which are able” and “which are required” to “ensure the conservation” of “the habitats of those species which have been identified by the Standing Committee” as “requiring specific habitat conservation measures” and of “those natural habitats which have been identified by the Standing Committee” as “requiring specific conservation measures”;

Recalling that the Standing Committee has subsequently, in Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998), identified these species and natural habitats requiring specific conservation measures, and that Article 4 therefore applies to the Areas of Special Conservation Interest that Contracting Parties have identified, and continue to identify, for these species and natural habitats as part of the Emerald Network;

Recalling also Recommendations No. 14 (1989), No. 15 (1989), No. 16 (1989), No. 25 (1991), No. 157 (2011, revised 2019), No. 172 (2014), No. 207 (2019) and No. 208 (2019), on habitat conservation and the Emerald Network, as well as other Recommendations and guidance documents relating to these issues;

Stressing the importance of clarity concerning the nature and scope of the framework that Contracting Parties have established in Article 4 and in relevant resolutions and recommendations with regard to the conservation of habitats, in particular the Areas of Special Conservation Interest that Contracting Parties have identified as part of the Emerald Network on their territories;

Noting the analysis conducted by a legal expert in 2020 of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of candidate and adopted Emerald Network sites (T-PVS/PA(2020)7);

Noting also the subsequent exploration of possible next steps regarding the legal framework of the Emerald Network (T-PVS/PA(2021)01), and the outcomes of several rounds of consultations of Contracting Parties and the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks on how to follow up on the conclusions of the legal analysis (T-PVS/PA(2021)02 and T-PVS/PA(2021)09), and on challenges faced when implementing the Emerald Network (T-PVS/PA(2024)03);

Recalling that the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, at its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting held 17-18 April 2024 in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, called for a Standing Committee recommendation reiterating concisely, in accessible language, the binding and non-binding obligations of Contracting parties concerning the

conservation of Emerald Network sites, as well as identifying requirements that may require development of further guidance;

- Recommends that Contracting Parties, the Bureau and the Secretariat take note of the following overview of legally binding and non-binding commitments of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of the candidate and adopted Emerald Network sites on their territories:

***Commitments that are legally binding***

The following commitments are legally binding. They involve requirements which must be met by Contracting Parties in order to comply with Article 4 of the Convention.

- Under Article 4, each Contracting Party has an obligation to “take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats”.
- This obligation entails that for each candidate and adopted site of the Emerald Network, the authorities concerned shall take those **measures** which are **necessary and able to effectively ensure the conservation of the habitats** of species and the natural habitats for which the site has been selected.<sup>2</sup>
- Authorities are required to take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures, to maintain and, where appropriate, restore or improve the **abiotic and biotic features which form the habitats** concerned, including, where appropriate, the control of activities which may indirectly result in the deterioration of such habitats.<sup>3</sup>
- Article 9 of the Convention sets out the conditions under which **exceptions** may be made from this obligation.

***Measures to support compliance with Article 4***

What it takes to meet the obligations in Article 4 will depend on the circumstances of each case. However, *inter alia*, the following can support compliance in the context of specific sites:

- **site protection regime:** applying a suitable site protection regime under national law;<sup>4</sup>
- **site management measures:** taking the management measures necessary to preserve or restore the habitats involved and involving various national, regional and/or local stakeholders in site management;<sup>5</sup>
- **management resources:** the agencies who are responsible for the designation and/or conservation of areas have sufficient staff, training, equipment and resources (including financial resources) to enable them properly to manage, conserve and survey such areas;<sup>6</sup>
- **monitoring:** providing for an adequate degree of monitoring of these habitats and of threats posed to them;<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Resolution No. 1 (1989), par. 2(a)-(b).

<sup>3</sup> Resolution No. 1 (1989), par. 2(c).

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation No. 16 (1989), par. 3(1) and 5; Resolution No. 8 (2012), par. 2(1).

<sup>5</sup> Resolution No. 1 (1989), par. 2(c); Recommendation No. 16 (1989), par. 3(d); Recommendation No. 157 (2011/2019), par. 1; Resolution No. 8 (2012), par. 2(3) and 2(4).

<sup>6</sup> Recommendation No. 16, par 3(b).

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation No. 16 (1989), par. 2, 4(e) and 3(c); Resolution No. 5 (1998), par. 4(1); Resolution No. 8 (2012), par. 3; Recommendation No. 208 (2019).

- **anticipating and responding to specific threats:**<sup>8</sup>
  - **screening:** actively identifying potentially harmful projects or activities;
  - **timely and comprehensive impact assessment:** obtaining sufficient clarity regarding the potential consequences of any such project or activity for the habitat(s) involved, *before* taking a decision regarding its approval;
  - **authorising only activities compatible with conservation objectives:** refusing authorization of projects and activities that are incompatible with conservation objectives;

### ***Other relevant commitments***

Contracting Parties are encouraged to comply with the following commitments. They involve actions which have been recommended to Contracting Parties by the Standing Committee. Taking these actions is considered conducive to achieving the aims of the Convention, and the effectiveness of the Emerald Network, but does not appear strictly necessary in order to comply with Article 4 of the Convention.

- Reporting every six years on the conservation status of species and habitats in Emerald Network sites;<sup>9</sup>
  - Informing the Secretariat of important changes likely to affect negatively in a substantial way the ecological character of such sites.<sup>10</sup>
- Recommends the development of additional guidance in order to further clarify and/or concretize the following aspects of the legal framework concerning Emerald Network sites, and instructs the Secretariat to work with Contracting Parties and the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks towards this end:
- The nature of the result to be achieved under Article 4 of the Convention;
  - The nature of required site management measures;
  - The screening, prior assessment and authorization of potentially harmful projects;
  - The requirements regarding monitoring and reporting;
  - The scope for exceptions under Article 9 of the Convention.

---

<sup>8</sup> Resolution No. 1 (1989), par. 2; Recommendation No. 16 (1989), par. 3(d); Recommendation No. 25 (1991), Appendix, par. II (1)(b)-(e); Resolution No. 8 (2012), par. 2(1); Recommendation No. 157 (2011/2019), par. 1; Recommendation No. 208 (2019).

<sup>9</sup> Resolution No. 8 (2012), par. 4(1)-(2).

<sup>10</sup> Resolution No. 5 (1998), Art. 4(2).

**Appendix VIII**  
**Targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030**

<b>Number of indicator</b>	<b>Indicator description</b>	<b>2030 minimum target value</b>
1	Number of new or updated Emerald Network databases followed by biogeographical evaluations	2
2	Sufficiency Index A proportion of “sufficient” conclusions versus all conclusions	Group 0 (no biogeographical evaluation as of 2024): 25% Group 1 (1 biogeographical evaluation as of 2024): 35% Group 2 (2 biogeographical evaluations as of 2024): 50% Group 3 (3 biogeographical evaluations as of 2024): 60%
3	All Emerald Network sites which went through the biogeographical evaluation process until 2028 should be adopted by the Standing Committee by 2030.	Qualitative: yes
4	A proportion of Emerald Network sites with site management plans	40%

---

## **Appendix IX**

**- Updated list of officially nominated candidate Emerald Sites –**

**- [T-PVS/PA\(2024\)18](#) -**

**- [T-PVS/PA\(2024\)19](#) -**



## Appendix X

### List of Invasive Alien Species to be considered within the frame of the Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

N	Species	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Habitat
1.	<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i> Medik.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Malvales	Malvaceae	terrestrial
2.	<i>Acer negundo</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Sapindales	Sapindaceae	terrestrial
3.	<i>Aedes albopictus</i> (Skuse, 1894)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Diptera	Culicidae	terrestrial
4.	<i>Aix galericulata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Animalia	Chordata	Aves	Anseriformes	Anatidae	terrestrial freshwater
5.	<i>Amaranthus albus</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Amaranthaceae	terrestrial
6.	<i>Amaranthus blitoides</i> S.Watson	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Amaranthaceae	terrestrial
7.	<i>Amaranthus deflexus</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Amaranthaceae	terrestrial
8.	<i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Amaranthaceae	terrestrial
9.	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
10.	<i>Ambrosia polystachya</i> DC.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
11.	<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> (Lesueur, 1819)	Animalia	Chordata		Siluriformes	Ictaluridae	freshwater brackish
12.	<i>Amelanchier ×lamarckii</i> F.G.Schroed.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Rosaceae	terrestrial
13.	<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Fabales	Fabaceae	terrestrial
14.	<i>Amphibalanus improvisus</i> (Darwin, 1854)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Maxillopoda	Sessilia	Balanidae	marine
15.	<i>Anguillicola crassus</i> Kuwahara, Niimi & Itagaki, 1974	Animalia	Nematoda	Chromadorea	Rhabditida	Anguillicolidae	freshwater
16.	<i>Aphanomyces astaci</i> Schikora	Chromista	Oomycota	Peronospora	Saprolegniales	Leptolegniaceae	freshwater
17.	<i>Arcuatula senhousia</i> (W.H.Benson, 1842)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Mytilida	Mytilidae	marine
18.	<i>Artemisia verlotiorum</i> Lamotte	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
19.	<i>Asparagopsis armata</i> Harv.	Plantae	Rhodophyta	Florideophyceae	Bonnemaisoniales	Bonnemaisoniaceae	marine
20.	<i>Austrominius modestus</i> (Darwin, 1854)	Animalia	Arthropoda			Elminiidae	marine
21.	<i>Azolla filiculoides</i> Lam.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Polypodiopsida	Salviniales	Salviniaceae	freshwater
22.	<i>Bidens frondosa</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
23.	<i>Bidens subalternans</i> DC.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
24.	<i>Bonnemaisonia hamifera</i> Hariot	Plantae	Rhodophyta	Florideophyceae	Bonnemaisoniales	Bonnemaisoniaceae	marine
25.	<i>Botrylloides violaceus</i> Oka, 1927	Animalia	Chordata	Ascidiacea	Stolidobranchia	Styelidae	marine
26.	<i>Branta canadensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Animalia	Chordata	Aves	Anseriformes	Anatidae	terrestrial freshwater
27.	<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i> (L.) L'Hér. ex Vent.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Moraceae	terrestrial
28.	<i>Buddleja davidii</i> Franch.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Lamiales	Scrophulariaceae	terrestrial

N	Species	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Habitat
29.	<i>Campylopus introflexus</i> (Hedw.) Brid.	Plantae	Bryophyta	Bryopsida	Dicranales	Leucobryaceae	brackish marine
30.	<i>Caprella mutica</i> Schurin, 1935	Animalia	Arthropoda	Malacostraca	Amphipoda	Caprellidae	marine
31.	<i>Carassius auratus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Animalia	Chordata		Cypriniformes	Cyprinidae	freshwater brackish
32.	<i>Carpobrotus acinaciformis</i> (L.) L.Bolus	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Aizoaceae	terrestrial
33.	<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i> (L.) N.E.Br.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Aizoaceae	terrestrial
34.	<i>Caulerpa racemosa</i> (Forssk.) J.Agardh	Plantae	Chlorophyta	Ulvophyceae	Bryopsidales	Caulerpaceae	marine
35.	<i>Cervus nippon</i> Temminck, 1838	Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Artiodactyla	Cervidae	terrestrial
36.	<i>Codium fragile</i> (Suringar) Har.	Plantae	Chlorophyta	Ulvophyceae	Bryopsidales	Codiaceae	marine
37.	<i>Commelina communis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Commelinales	Commelinaceae	terrestrial
38.	<i>Corbicula fluminalis</i> (O.F.Müller, 1774)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Venerida	Cyrenidae	freshwater
39.	<i>Corbicula fluminea</i> (O.F.Müller, 1774)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Venerida	Cyrenidae	freshwater
40.	<i>Coregonus peled</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Animalia	Chordata		Salmoniformes	Salmonidae	freshwater
41.	<i>Corella eumyota</i> Traustedt, 1882	Animalia	Chordata	Ascidiacea	Phlebobranchia	Corellidae	marine
42.	<i>Cornus sericea</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Cornales	Cornaceae	terrestrial
43.	<i>Corythucha arcuata</i> (Say, 1832)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Hemiptera	Tingidae	terrestrial
44.	<i>Corythucha ciliata</i> (Say, 1832)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Hemiptera	Tingidae	terrestrial
45.	<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> Decne.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Rosaceae	terrestrial
46.	<i>Crassula helmsii</i> (Kirk) Cockayne	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Saxifragales	Crassulaceae	terrestrial freshwater
47.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Animalia	Mollusca	Gastropoda	Littorinimorpha	Calyptraeidae	marine
48.	<i>Cuscuta campestris</i> Yunck.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Solanales	Convolvulaceae	host
49.	<i>Cyclachaena xanthiifolia</i> (Nutt.) Fresen.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
50.	<i>Cydalima perspectalis</i> (Walker, 1859)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Lepidoptera	Crambidae	terrestrial
51.	<i>Dasysiphonia japonica</i> (Yendo) H.-S.Kim	Plantae	Rhodophyta	Florideophyceae	Ceramiales	Dasyaceae	marine
52.	<i>Datura stramonium</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Solanales	Solanaceae	terrestrial
53.	<i>Diabrotica virgifera</i> LeConte, 1868	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Coleoptera	Crysomelidae	terrestrial
54.	<i>Didemnum vexillum</i> Kott, 2002	Animalia	Chordata	Ascidiacea	Aplousobranchia	Didemnidae	marine
55.	<i>Dysphania ambrosioides</i> (L.) Mosyakin & Clemants	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Amaranthaceae	terrestrial
56.	<i>Echinocystis lobata</i> (Michx.) Torr. & A.Gray	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Cucurbitales	Cucurbitaceae	terrestrial
57.	<i>Eleusine indica</i> (L.) Gaertn.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
58.	<i>Eleusine tristachya</i> (Lam.) Lam.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
59.	<i>Elodea canadensis</i> Michx.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Alismatales	Hydrocharitaceae	freshwater

N	Species	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Habitat
60.	<i>Elodea densa</i> (Planch.) Casp.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Alismatales	Hydrocharitaceae	freshwater
61.	<i>Erasmoneura vulnerata</i> (Fitch, 1851)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Hemiptera	Cicadellidae	terrestrial
62.	<i>Erigeron annuus</i> (L.) Pers.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
63.	<i>Erigeron bonariensis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
64.	<i>Erigeron canadensis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
65.	<i>Erigeron floribundus</i> (Kunth) Sch.Bip.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
66.	<i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i> Retz.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
67.	<i>Euphorbia maculata</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Malpighiales	Euphorbiaceae	terrestrial
68.	<i>Euphorbia prostrata</i> Aiton	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Malpighiales	Euphorbiaceae	terrestrial
69.	<i>Frankliniella occidentalis</i> (Pergande, 1895)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Thysanoptera	Thripidae	host
70.	<i>Galinsoga parviflora</i> Cav.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
71.	<i>Galinsoga quadriradiata</i> Ruiz & Pav.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
72.	<i>Gammarus tigrinus</i> Sexton, 1939	Animalia	Arthropoda	Malacostraca	Amphipoda	Gammaridae	marine
73.	<i>Grateloupia turuturu</i> Yamada	Plantae	Rhodophyta	Florideophyceae	Halymeniales	Halymeniaceae	marine
74.	<i>Grindelia squarrosa</i> (Pursh) Dunal	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
75.	<i>Halyomorpha halys</i> (Stål, 1855)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Hemiptera	Pentatomidae	host
76.	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i> (Pallas, 1773)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	terrestrial
77.	<i>Helianthus pauciflorus</i> Nutt.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
78.	<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
79.	<i>Helianthus</i> × <i>laetiflorus</i> Pers.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
80.	<i>Hemigrapsus sanguineus</i> (De Haan, 1835)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Malacostraca	Decapoda	Varunidae	marine
81.	<i>Hemigrapsus takanoi</i> Asakura & Watanabe, 2005	Animalia	Arthropoda	Malacostraca	Decapoda	Varunidae	marine
82.	<i>Hyphantria cunea</i> (Drury, 1773)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Lepidoptera	Erebidae	terrestrial
83.	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i> (Rafinesque, 1818)	Animalia	Chordata		Siluriformes	Ictaluridae	freshwater
84.	<i>Impatiens balfourii</i> Hook.fil.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Ericales	Balsaminaceae	terrestrial
85.	<i>Impatiens parviflora</i> DC.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Ericales	Balsaminaceae	terrestrial
86.	<i>Juncus tenuis</i> Willd.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Juncaceae	terrestrial
87.	<i>Koeleruteria paniculata</i> Laxm.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Sapindales	Sapindaceae	terrestrial
88.	<i>Lepidium virginicum</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Brassicales	Brassicaceae	terrestrial
89.	<i>Linepithema humile</i> (Mayr, 1868)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Hymenoptera	Formicidae	terrestrial
90.	<i>Lupinus nootkatensis</i> Donn ex Sims	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Fabales	Fabaceae	terrestrial

N	Species	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Habitat
91.	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i> Lindl.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Fabales	Fabaceae	terrestrial
92.	<i>Magallana gigas</i> (Thunberg, 1793)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Ostreida	Ostreidae	brackish marine
93.	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i> DC.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
94.	<i>Mnemiopsis leidyi</i> A.Agassiz, 1865	Animalia	Ctenophora	Tentaculata	Lobata	Bolinopsidae	brackish marine
95.	<i>Mustela vison</i> Schreber, 1777	Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Mustelidae	terrestrial freshwater
96.	<i>Mytilopsis leucophaeata</i> (Conrad, 1831)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Myida	Dreissenidae	marine
97.	<i>Oenothera biennis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Myrtales	Onagraceae	terrestrial
98.	<i>Oenothera glazioviana</i> Micheli	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Myrtales	Onagraceae	terrestrial
99.	<i>Oenothera ×fallax</i> Renner	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Myrtales	Onagraceae	terrestrial
100.	<i>Oncorhynchus gorbusha</i> (Walbaum, 1792)	Animalia	Chordata		Salmoniformes	Salmonidae	freshwater marine
101.	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i> (Walbaum, 1792)	Animalia	Chordata		Salmoniformes	Salmonidae	freshwater marine
102.	<i>Ophiostoma novo-ulmi</i> Brasier	Fungi	Ascomycota	Sordariomycetes	Microascales	Ceratocystidaceae	host
103.	<i>Opuntia humifusa</i> (Raf.) Raf.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Cactaceae	terrestrial
104.	<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i> (L.) Mill.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Cactaceae	terrestrial
105.	<i>Opuntia humifusa</i> (Raf.) Raf.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Cactaceae	terrestrial
106.	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Oxalidales	Oxalidaceae	terrestrial
107.	<i>Oxalis stricta</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Oxalidales	Oxalidaceae	terrestrial
108.	<i>Panicum capillare</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
109.	<i>Panicum dichotomiflorum</i> Michx.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
110.	<i>Parthenocissus inserta</i> (A.Kern.) Fritsch	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Vitales	Vitaceae	terrestrial
111.	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (L.) Planch.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Vitales	Vitaceae	terrestrial
112.	<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i> Poir.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
113.	<i>Paspalum distichum</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
114.	<i>Periplaneta americana</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Insecta	Blattodea	Blattidae	terrestrial
115.	<i>Physella acuta</i> (Draparnaud, 1805)	Animalia	Mollusca	Gastropoda		Physidae	freshwater
116.	<i>Phytolacca americana</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Phytolaccaceae	terrestrial
117.	<i>Potamopyrgus antipodarum</i> (J.E.Gray, 1843)	Animalia	Mollusca	Gastropoda	Littorinimorpha	Tateidae	freshwater
118.	<i>Prunus serotina</i> Ehrh.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Rosaceae	terrestrial
119.	<i>Pseudosasa japonica</i> (Siebold & Zucc. ex Steud.) Makino ex Nakai	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
120.	<i>Rapana venosa</i> (Valenciennes, 1846)	Animalia	Mollusca	Gastropoda	Neogastropoda	Muricidae	marine
121.	<i>Reynoutria ×bohemica</i> Chrtek & Chrtková	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Polygonaceae	terrestrial

N	Species	Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family	Habitat
122.	<i>Reynoutria japonica</i> Houtt.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Polygonaceae	terrestrial
123.	<i>Reynoutria sachalinensis</i> (F.Schmidt) Nakai	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Polygonaceae	terrestrial
124.	<i>Rhithropanopeus harrisi</i> (Gould, 1841)	Animalia	Arthropoda	Malacostraca	Decapoda	Panopeidae	marine
125.	<i>Rhus typhina</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Sapindales	Anacardiaceae	terrestrial
126.	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Fabales	Fabaceae	terrestrial
127.	<i>Rosa rugosa</i> Thunb.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Rosaceae	terrestrial
128.	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
129.	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> (Mitchill, 1814)	Animalia	Chordata		Salmoniformes	Salmonidae	freshwater
130.	<i>Sargassum muticum</i> (Yendo) Fensholt	Chromista	Ochrophyta	Phaeophyceae	Fucales	Sargassaceae	marine
131.	<i>Schizoporella japonica</i> Ortmann, 1890	Animalia	Bryozoa	Gymnolaemata	Cheilostomatida	Schizoporellidae	marine
132.	<i>Senecio inaequidens</i> DC.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
133.	<i>Sicyos angulatus</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Cucurbitales	Cucurbitaceae	terrestrial
134.	<i>Sigesbeckia orientalis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
135.	<i>Sinanodonta woodiana</i> (I.Lea, 1834)	Animalia	Mollusca	Bivalvia	Unionida	Unionidae	freshwater
136.	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i> Cav.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Solanales	Solanaceae	terrestrial
137.	<i>Solidago canadensis</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
138.	<i>Solidago gigantea</i> Aiton	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
139.	<i>Sorghum halepense</i> (L.) Pers.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
140.	<i>Sporobolus junceus</i> (P.Beauv.) Kunth	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
141.	<i>Sporobolus vaginiflorus</i> (Torr. ex A.Gray) Alph.Wood	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Liliopsida	Poales	Poaceae	terrestrial
142.	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> (L.) K.Koch	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Dipsacales	Caprifoliaceae	terrestrial
143.	<i>Symphyotrichum lanceolatum</i> (Willd.) G.L.Nesom	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
144.	<i>Symphyotrichum novi-belgii</i> (L.) G.L.Nesom	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
145.	<i>Symphyotrichum squamatatum</i> (Spreng.) G.L.Nesom	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
146.	<i>Tricellaria inopinata</i> d'Hondt & Occhipinti Ambrogi, 1985	Animalia	Bryozoa	Gymnolaemata	Cheilostomatida	Candidae	marine
147.	<i>Ulmus pumila</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Rosales	Ulmaceae	terrestrial
148.	<i>Undaria pinnatifida</i> (Harv.) Suringar	Chromista	Ochrophyta	Phaeophyceae	Laminariales	Alariaceae	marine
149.	<i>Veronica persica</i> Poir.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Lamiales	Plantaginaceae	terrestrial
150.	<i>Xanthium orientale</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial
151.	<i>Xanthium spinosum</i> L.	Plantae	Tracheophyta	Magnoliopsida	Asterales	Asteraceae	terrestrial

## Appendix XI

### Recommendation No. 226 (2024) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2024, on Mersin Anamur Beach

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Convention requires Parties to give particular emphasis to the conservation of endangered and vulnerable species;

Recalling that Article 3, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that each Contracting Parties shall take steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats;

Recalling that Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild fauna species, especially those listed in Appendix II to the Convention;

Recalling that Article 4, paragraph 2, further stipulates that Contracting Parties, in their planning and development policies, shall have regard to the conservation requirements of the areas protected under the preceding paragraph, so as to avoid or minimise as far as possible any deterioration of such areas;

Recalling that Article 6 of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix II to the Convention, particularly by prohibiting the deliberate damage to or destruction of breeding sites;

Noting that *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas* and *Trionyx triunguis* are strictly protected turtle species listed in Appendix II to the Convention;

Recalling the Guidance Tool on conservation of sea turtle nesting sites ([T-PVS\(2023\)30](#)), providing guidance to Contracting Parties in the Mediterranean;

Recognising the high natural value of the Anamur Mersin Beach as an important nesting area for *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, and possibly *Trionyx triunguis*, the species observed in the area, reportedly inhabiting rivers near to the mouth to the sea and nesting on sandy coastal beaches;

Noting that the future of the populations of the above-mentioned three species of turtles in the Mediterranean are largely dependent on the maintenance of conservation activities, including those in Anamur Mersin;

Recalling the [Resolution \(78\) 22](#) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on threatened amphibians and reptiles in Europe;

Recalling the following recommendations of the Standing Committee:

- [No. 7 \(1987\)](#) on the protection of marine turtles and their habitat;
- [No. 8 \(1987\)](#) on the protection of marine turtles in Dalyan and other important areas in Türkiye;
- [No. 12 \(1988\)](#) concerning the protection of important turtle nesting beaches in Türkiye;
- No. 13 (1988) concerning measures for the protection of critical biotopes of endangered amphibians and reptiles;
- [No. 24 \(1991\)](#) on the protection of some beaches in Türkiye of particular importance to marine turtles;
- [No. 54 \(1996\)](#) on the conservation of *Caretta caretta* at Patara;
- [No. 66 \(1998\)](#) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Türkiye.

Recalling Turkish national and regional legislation aiming to protect habitats and species;

Recognising the efforts of the Government of Türkiye to protect the nesting beaches for marine turtles;

Taking note of the report of the on-the-spot appraisal carried out by an independent expert on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (document [T-PVS/Inf\(2024\)13](#));

Recommends to the Government of Türkiye, in cooperation with local and regional authorities when relevant, to:

1. Remedy Stage 1 and 2 design issues, which mainly relate to poor lighting choices and light control. Consider erecting a fence along the beach edge to deter people from entering the beach at night.
2. Review the remaining Stage 2 and Stage 3 development plans to ensure they are necessary and are compatible with preservation of successful, undisturbed turtle nesting.
3. Enforce existing legislation by removal of illegal development, structures and impactful lighting from all areas of beach but especially the area of bungalows and restaurant on beach section 2 that may act as a catalyst for similar such developments away from the urban centre.
4. Increase number of signs that have information on sea turtles and the dos and don'ts for behaviour on the nesting beach at beach entrances. Create new signs to attach to each protective nest cage so that each nest has key information associated with it.
5. Improve turtle monitoring and protection capacity through training and increasing the number of people involved in daily surveys. Collect all relevant data indicated in Guidance Tool, starting as soon as possible by recording the location of each turtle nest using GPS to support scientific analyses and interpretation of the status of turtles and their habitats.
6. Design a hatchling management plan to be prepared for occurrences of hatchling disorientation caused by artificial lighting and respond promptly and strongly to adjust, revise or eliminate problematic lighting.
7. Undertake surveys for presence of Nile soft shelled turtles at all historically known sites along Anamur beach and commission ecological study for feasibility of restoring sites where presence remains, and nesting was previously reported.
8. Create a turtle protection network composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals that regularly meet to discuss issues and their solutions.
9. Create a turtle monitoring group composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals to better monitor the turtle nesting activity. Investigate the potential for bringing in academic and voluntary teams to contribute to the monitoring. Given that Anamur beach potentially hosts one of the top five loggerhead turtle nesting areas in the Mediterranean accurate assessment of activity is strongly warranted.

## Annexe XII

### PROVISIONAL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2025

	Activities of low priority
	Activities of high priority

Meeting / Réunion		Tentative Date <i>Date provisoire</i>	Venue <i>Lieu</i>
1.	Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species back-to-back with the Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles	1.5 day in February/March	online
2.	<i>1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Bureau</i>	3 days in March, tbd	Strasbourg
3.	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention	End of March	online
4.	3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan back-to-back with the 7 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting (back-to-back with a training course on reporting for non-EU Contracting Parties (tbc))	8 April	tbd
5.	Joint meeting with the CMS MIKT on IKB	March/April, tbd	tbd
6.	Group of Experts on the Conservation of Birds	March/April, tbd	tbd
7.	Meeting of Group of Specialists on EDPA	20 May	Granada
8.	60 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EDPA	21-22 May	Granada
9.	Group of Experts on Large Carnivores	May, date tbd	tbd
10.	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of the Bureau</i>	2 days in June, tbd	online
11.	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention	1 day late June	online
12.	Expert Meeting on the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck	Half day late June	online
13.	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the Bureau</i>	3 days in September, tbd	Strasbourg
14.	<i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on the conservation of marine turtles	September	online
15.	2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention	September	online
16.	Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks	7-8 October	Montenegro
17.	4 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan	23 October	online
18.	Workshop on minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity	2 days, October/November tbd	tbd
19.	8 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the <i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on Reporting back - to-back with a training course on reporting for non-EU Contracting Parties	4-5 November	Strasbourg or Paris



20.	<i>45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee</i>	Week starting on 8 December	Strasbourg
-----	---	--------------------------------	------------

## Appendix XIII - Statements<sup>11</sup>

<b>Item 2.1: Follow up to the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland</b>
--

### **-Statement by the EU and its members States-**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) confirm their support to the Reykjavik Ministerial Declaration and express their strong support for strengthening of the Council of Europe's activities in the field of environment in general, and nature conservation in particular, through the Bern Convention. In this regard, the EU+MS strongly emphasise that the future Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and related Action Plan for its implementation should duly consider the activities that are already ongoing within the Bern Convention, so that nature conservation is fully reflected, but without creating any duplication of tasks. In particular, the EU+MS consider that the Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030 should be integrated into the Strategy and Action Plan.

The EU+MS advocate for integrating environmental protection directly into human rights frameworks, in line with Reykjavik process, which aims to reinforce environmental protections and establish a clearer legal basis for the right to a healthy environment across Europe, and to advance coordinated actions to address the "triple planetary crisis" of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, particularly through regional and international cooperation.

The EU+MS thus favour ongoing dialogue and multilateral cooperation to ensure comprehensive and enforceable measures to protect the natural environment for current and future generations, and welcome the outcomes from the Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME) and look forward to the continuation of this discussion.

The EU+MS note with concern that following the formation of the Department on the Reykjavik process and the Environment, the Bern Secretariat faces additional workload, as the GME Secretariat is mostly consisting of / overlapping with the Bern Convention Secretariat. The EU+MS are of the view that the new momentum for the environment within the Council of Europe should in no way hamper the activities of the Bern Convention. Therefore, the EU+MS request the Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment to ensure that the core staff of the Bern Convention Secretariat is not burdened with additional workload that is not related to the implementation of the Convention.

The EU+MS also acknowledge the close connection of this issue to the agenda items of financing and budget and might come back with further reflections in this regard under these points.

### **-Statement by Switzerland –**

Merci madame la présidente,

(Je suis consciente que ce point à l'ordre du jour est davantage prévu comme point informatif. Cependant, nous tenons à relever ce qui est important pour nous, la Suisse, concernant ce processus de Reykjavik.)

La Suisse salue le lancement du « processus de Reykjavik » visant à renforcer les travaux du Conseil de l'Europe dans le domaine de l'environnement et félicite Mme Tanja Kleinsorge pour sa nomination à la tête du

---

<sup>11</sup> Only *viva voce* statements that were submitted in writing to the Secretariat for the appendix of this report are included.

service du processus de Reykjavík et de l'environnement. Nous lui souhaitons beaucoup de succès et nous réjouissons de collaborer avec elle. Nous prenons note avec satisfaction du mandat et du programme de travail du groupe intergouvernemental multidisciplinaire ad hoc (GME).

Le compendium donne un aperçu utile des processus et activités en cours touchant l'Environnement au sein du Conseil de l'Europe mais certaines activités importantes, dont le « Plan stratégique pour la Convention de Berne à l'horizon 2030 », manquent. Il convient d'y remédier et de compléter les informations manquantes dans le cadre de la révision actuelle.

La structure du projet de Stratégie pour l'environnement du conseil de l'Europe fournit une approche précieuse pour intégrer l'environnement dans le travail du Conseil de l'Europe et renforcer sa place. Nous saluons cette approche d'internalisation des questions environnementales dans la structure existante du Conseil de l'Europe. Cela dit, il serait utile de disposer de plus d'informations sur les mécanismes qui permettront à la stratégie de soutenir la mise en œuvre des quatre objectifs définis dans la déclaration du sommet de Reykjavík et de parvenir à un changement durable au sein de l'ensemble du Conseil de l'Europe. Cette question pourrait être abordée en incluant une théorie du changement dans la stratégie.

La Stratégie porte sur l'environnement, un vaste domaine dans lequel la biodiversité n'est qu'une question parmi d'autres. Néanmoins, la perte de biodiversité est l'une des trois crises planétaires majeures qu'il convient de contrer. Actuellement, les travaux de la Convention sont énumérés uniquement dans le cadre de l'objectif « Faire progresser la justice sociale, la santé et un environnement durable ». Or, l'état actuel est insuffisant, car il ne permet pas d'intégrer la biodiversité dans l'ensemble des travaux du Conseil de l'Europe. Le Comité permanent devrait lancer un appel fort au GME, demandant que les activités relatives à la biodiversité soient intégrées dans l'ensemble des 6 thèmes primordiaux, c'est-à-dire y compris dans la « garantie des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales », le « maintien de la sûreté, de la sécurité et de l'intégrité de la société et des personnes », et l' « ancrage des valeurs démocratiques dans les sociétés européennes » afin d'atteindre les 4 objectifs définis dans la déclaration du sommet de Reykjavík. Dans la Stratégie, la Biodiversité doit être reconnue comme le fondement même de la vie humaine, puisque la biodiversité est essentielle à la vie humaine et à une bonne qualité de vie comme confirmé dans le rapport 2019 de l'IPBES ([Plateforme intergouvernementale scientifique et politique sur la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques](#)).

#### **-Statement by Tunisia-**

Au nom de la Tunisie, pays membre de la Convention de Berne depuis 1996, je tiens à exprimer notre attachement profond aux principes de cette convention. Bien que notre pays ne soit pas membre de l'Union européenne, nous partageons avec tous les États parties la conviction que la protection de la biodiversité est un enjeu mondial qui dépasse les frontières géographiques." , je souhaite aujourd'hui porter la voix des nations qui, comme la nôtre, sont particulièrement vulnérables aux effets du changement climatique et de la perte de biodiversité et de la dégradation des terres. Nos écosystèmes uniques, riches d'une biodiversité exceptionnelle, sont des trésors inestimables qu'il nous faut préserver pour les générations futures." "La Tunisie, pays membre de la Convention de berne, est fière de contribuer à cet effort collectif en faveur de la conservation de la nature. Nous sommes convaincus que la coopération internationale est essentielle pour relever les défis environnementaux auxquels nous sommes confrontés. C'est pourquoi nous appelons à renforcer les synergies entre les différents acteurs impliqués dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention.

**-Statement by Ukraine-**

Madame la Présidente,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Délégués,

Permettez-moi de souligner l'importance cruciale pour l'Ukraine de mettre en œuvre les décisions adoptées lors du Sommet de Reykjavik du Conseil de l'Europe, en particulier en ce qui concerne la protection de l'environnement. Dans la déclaration du Sommet, le droit à un environnement sain, propre et durable a été reconnu comme un droit fondamental de l'homme. Cette reconnaissance arrive à un moment où l'agression de la Russie contre l'Ukraine a causé des dommages écologiques catastrophiques, mettant en péril des écosystèmes entiers et menaçant la santé des générations futures.

Pour l'Ukraine, il ne s'agit pas seulement de réparer les dégâts matériels, mais de garantir un avenir durable et respectueux des principes démocratiques.

Le soutien de la communauté européenne est essentiel pour renforcer les efforts visant à documenter les crimes écologiques, restaurer les zones touchées et prévenir de nouvelles catastrophes. Nous appelons à une coopération accrue pour traduire en actes concrets les engagements du Sommet, notamment à travers des initiatives ciblées et des investissements dans des infrastructures écologiques résilientes.

Nous soutenons l'activité dans le cadre de de la Convention de Berne y compris [le Plan stratégique](#).

Ensemble, en tant que communauté engagée, nous pouvons montrer que la justice environnementale est non seulement une valeur partagée, mais aussi une réalité pour tous les citoyens européens. Travaillons pour un avenir où la protection de l'environnement ira de pair avec la défense de la dignité humaine.

Merci.

**Item 3.1: Financing of the Bern Convention****-Statement by Switzerland –**

Merci madame la présidente.

Notre but à tous ici est de garantir un futur mécanisme financier pour la Convention qui soit stable, suffisant, prévisible, durable et équitable comme décidé lors du Comité permanent de 2018. C'est pour cela que nous avons lancé cette année-là tout ce processus sur les différentes options juridique pour améliorer la situation financière de la Convention.

Ce processus s'est révélé plus long que prévu comme le résume très clairement le document « situation financière de la Convention de Berne » T-PVS/Inf(2024)19.

Nous avons tout d'abord analysé en 2019 différentes options juridiques possibles au sein de la Convention et les avons proposé au GR-C.

Le Conseil des ministres a ensuite été impliqué et a tout d'abord décidé d'établir un fond pour les contributions volontaires en 2022. Il s'agissait ici plutôt d'utiliser un compte spécial préexistant et de le rebaptiser « Fond » afin de faciliter le versement des contributions volontaires. En 2022, nous nous sommes félicités de la création de ce fond tout en soulignant qu'il ne doit pas conduire à une réduction des efforts dans la recherche d'un mécanismes financier durable institutionnel, ni à une diminution des ressources fournies par le budget ordinaire du Conseil de l'Europe.

Le Conseil des ministres nous a également demandé de développer un protocole amendant la Convention mettant en place un mécanisme de contributions financières obligatoires des Parties. Cette solution est, à notre

avis, une bonne solution qui permet de garantir les finances de la Convention à long terme. Il est en effet essentiel que le budget ordinaire du Conseil de l'Europe fournisse les ressources financières nécessaires au fonctionnement du secrétariat de la Convention de Berne et que les contributions des Parties contractantes soient assurées. Sans contributions obligatoires, il est difficile pour certains pays de pouvoir ajouter un montant à leur budget pour la Convention et, même si un budget est prévu pour la Convention, une contribution volontaire est toujours sujette à discussion et peut être aisément supprimée, ce qui n'est pas le cas d'une contribution obligatoire. La Convention de Berne n'exige pas de montants excessivement élevés, nous soutenons donc la recherche de solutions pour rendre les contributions obligatoires.

L'éventuel nouveau fond fiduciaire pour financer les activités sur les droits humains et la protection de l'environnement proposé par le Secrétariat général représente, à notre avis, une solution utile à court et moyen terme. Cela ne résout cependant en rien le problème pour assurer des finances stables et durables.

- En effet, dans cette solution, les contributions resteraient volontaires, même si l'adhésion sera officialisée et que les Parties s'engageront à verser les montants prévus annuellement.
- Le Fond ne garantit pas que le secrétariat de la Convention reste financé par le budget ordinaire du Conseil de l'Europe.
- Et, plus important encore, il est essentiel d'assurer que des montants versés pour la Convention soit bel et bien alloués uniquement à la Convention.

Nous avons certes remarqué une amélioration de la situation de la Convention de Berne à partir de la Déclaration de Reykjavik et notamment pour le secrétariat mais ces changements sont récents et doivent s'ancrer dans le long terme. Il ne faut pas oublier non plus que ce processus de Reykjavik génère beaucoup de travail pour le secrétariat de la Convention de Berne.

Nous sommes d'avis qu'une solution à long terme pour financer la Convention doit absolument être trouvée maintenant que le Conseil de l'Europe est attentif au développement du thème « Droits humains et environnement ». Le protocole amendant la Convention semble la meilleure option puisque décidé par le Conseil de Ministres. Cette solution doit continuer d'être développée et des solutions doivent être trouvées pour les derniers points encore à clarifier.

Pour que la Convention soit fonctionnelle, il faut garantir 3 niveaux à long terme :

- 1) Les fonctions de base du secrétariat doivent être assurées par le budget ordinaire du Conseil de l'Europe. Nous avons vu que ce premier point est déjà un challenge. Le secrétariat de la Convention de Berne était soutenu en 2020 et 2021 à 80% par des contributions volontaires. Le secrétariat de la Convention paysage a même été mis en stand-by pendant une période. Cela n'est pas acceptable. Une institution doit assurer un secrétariat opérationnel pour toutes ces conventions. Même si la situation s'est améliorée ces dernières années il faut absolument éviter de se retrouver dans la même situation dans le futur.
- 2) Le programme prévu par la Convention doit pouvoir être réalisé. Cela pourrait être assuré avec des contributions obligatoires qui seraient prévues par le protocole amendant la Convention.
- 3) Des contributions volontaires peuvent soutenir des projets supplémentaires spécifiques.

Ces 3 niveaux peuvent être garantis grâce au protocole amendant la Convention. La Suisse soutient donc la poursuite des travaux sur ce protocole en discutant étroitement avec le groupe sur le Programme, le Budget et l'Administration (GR-PBA) du Conseil de l'Europe afin de régler les derniers points qu'il reste à clarifier et notamment le barème ainsi que les questions liées à l'entrée en vigueur du protocole.

Nous soutenons également la création du Fond fiduciaire. En effet, il peut permettre de faciliter la transition jusqu'à ce que la solution à long terme soit mise en œuvre à condition que les versements transmis pour la Convention aillent bien en intégralité à la Convention de Berne.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

**Item 4.2 Proposal for amendment: Downlisting of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Convention**

**-Statement by the EU and its member States-**

The EU submits to the attention of the Standing Committee a proposal for the reduction of the protection status of the wolf under the Convention, proposing to move it from Appendix II to Appendix III. The EU and its Member States appreciate the quick processing of the proposal by the Convention Secretariat and the Treaty office of the Council of Europe, allowing for its transmission to all Parties for consideration at this 44<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting.

The initial listing of animal species in Appendix II or III of the Convention was based on the available scientific data at the time of negotiation of the Convention in 1979. Article 1(2) of the Convention provides that “*particular emphasis is given to endangered and vulnerable species*”. Based on these premises, the wolf has been listed in Appendix II as strictly protected species since its entry into force in 1982.

The Bern Convention does not set out explicitly which criteria govern the listing in Appendix II or III, but recommendation No. 56 (1997) sets guidelines to be considered while making proposals for amendment of Appendices I and II of the Convention and while adopting amendments to these Appendices. According to the Recommendation, relevant considerations for listing species in the Appendices to the Bern Convention include ecological and scientific factors, such as conservation status, population trends and threats.

Together, two reports provide the most up-to-date data on the species’ status on the continent, including range, population, and threats, along with data on damages to livestock resulting from wolf predation. In 2022 the Large Carnivores Initiative for Europe (LCIE) assessed the situation of the wolf in Europe for the Bern Convention. In 2023, the European Commission published the study “The situation of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the European Union – an In-depth Analysis”.

While all Parties have had access to the most recent numbers available in these reports and in the EU proposal communicated to them, we want to stress that both reports confirm the conservation status of the wolf has shown a positive trend over the last few decades. The species has successfully recovered across the European continent, with a significant expansion of its range, confirmed as well by comparison of its distribution maps over the last 20 years. Today, the species is present in all mainland European countries, some hosting large populations of over 1,000 individuals. In 2022, the LCIE study for the Bern Convention showed the total number of wolves in the EU was likely to be in the order of 19, 000 (compared to about 14,300 in 2016) and the number of wolves in Europe (excluding Belarus and the Russian Federation) was likely to exceed 21,500 (compared to about 17,000 in 2016). Wolf numbers were increasing in 19 out of 34 countries.

The wolf continues to be qualified as “Least Concern” at both the European and EU 27 levels. At the population level, the LCIE concludes that only the Scandinavian sub-population now belongs to the category “Vulnerable”, which is a further improvement compared to the 2018 Red List assessment, where three sub-populations – Scandinavian, Central European and Western-Central Alps – were assessed as ‘Vulnerable’ due to the limited size of their population.

In 2023, the in-depth analysis of the status of the wolf in the EU reviewed once again the available scientific data on the species and confirmed the upward trend in population size as well as the ongoing expansion of the wolf's range. A total of about 20,300 wolves have been estimated in the EU in 2023, an estimation higher than the one in the LCIE report, and higher than the population estimated at around 11,000-17,000 reported under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for the period 2013-2018.

With respect of threats to wolves, both reports conclude that these remain multiple and diverse in nature. The most important threats and pressures reported by Parties are linked to wolf poaching, alongside the impact of linear infrastructure on the species covering both direct mortality and fragmentation of populations. Hunting and interactions with agriculture are also frequently reported pressures. New emerging threats include border fences and wolf-dog hybridization.

Despite remaining threats to the wolf, the successful recovery of its population and its increased range across the continent in recent decades are evidence of the strong adaptability and resilience of the species. At the same time, the continued expansion of the wolf's range in Europe and its recolonisation of new territories have led to increasing socio-economic challenges with regard to coexistence with human activities. This is due, in particular, to harm to livestock, which has reached significant levels, affecting more and more regions in EU Member States and beyond across the Continent.

The main difference between the regimes of protection of Appendix II and Appendix III listed species in relation to the identified threats to wolves is that the protection regime under Appendix III maintains more flexibility concerning the appropriate measures the Contracting Parties to the Convention shall put in place. While Contracting Parties have the possibility to decide on the measures to put in place under the Appendix III regime, the overall objective to be achieved is to ensure the protection of the species and keep it out of danger, as prescribed in Article 2 of the Convention. The overall objective of the Convention applies to all species irrespective of which Appendix they are listed in. In the European Union, the Habitats Directive aims to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora on the European territory. To do so, measures must be taken to maintain or restore at a favorable conservation status natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest, again irrespective of which Annex they are listed in under the Directive.

Both the hunting and poaching of wolves are threats to be addressed, as appropriate, by legislative and administrative measures to be taken in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention, which governs the protection regime of Appendix III species. It is key to stress that a listing of a species in Appendix III maintains the objective of result to attain or restore the population of the species to a level which corresponds to its ecological requirements.

Therefore, the EU considers that it is appropriate to adapt the protection level of the wolf and place it under the species protection regime of Appendix III. The EU and its Member States acknowledge however that with more flexibility comes more responsibility for each Party. The fundamental principle of co-existence with wildlife, which is also a specific target (Target 4) of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), remains a key commitment for the EU and its Member States. Efforts to promote and implement prevention and other available coexistence measures and practices will need to be stepped up.

The Convention's main objective as per Article 1 is "to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, especially those species and habitats whose conservation requires the co-operation of several States". Cooperation in conservation, management and monitoring efforts among states is of particular importance for species that know no borders such as the wolf. The EU and its Member States stand ready to enhance cooperation on transboundary populations with neighbouring states, to guarantee wolves continue to play their key role as an apex predator in ecosystems across Europe. We are prepared to also

contribute to any upcoming meeting of the Convention Group of Experts on large Carnivores in 2025 in this regard.

In conclusion, the EU and its Member States call on the Standing Committee to vote in favor of the EU proposal to reduce the protection status of the wolf and place it in Appendix III of the Convention.

**-Statement by Monaco -**

Merci Madame la Présidente,

Monaco remercie le Comité et l'ensemble des parties pour leur engagement continu en faveur de la conservation de la biodiversité en Europe.

Concernant la proposition de déclassement du loup, Monaco souhaite également exprimer son opposition à cette initiative, et ce pour les raisons suivantes :

Tout d'abord, comme mentionné par l'Union européenne dans son intervention à l'ouverture de cette session, cette proposition semble être principalement motivée par des préoccupations sociales et économiques, en particulier les conflits entre les hommes et la faune sauvage, plutôt que basée sur des données scientifiques robustes.

En effet, bien que les populations de loups aient augmenté dans certaines régions ces dernières années, elles demeurent fragmentées et vulnérables dans d'autres. Les menaces persistent, notamment la fragmentation et la perte de leurs habitats due à la déforestation, l'urbanisation ou encore le développement d'infrastructures, ainsi que les conflits avec les activités humaines.

De plus, nous regrettons que le rôle écologique que joue cette espèce n'ait pas été suffisamment pris en considération. En tant que prédateurs apex, les loups jouent un rôle crucial dans l'équilibre et la résilience de nos écosystèmes. Résilience d'autant plus nécessaire prenant en compte la triple crise planétaire actuelle. En effet, si l'objectif de cette proposition est de répondre aux tensions socio-économiques, cette approche présente un risque : celui de marginaliser la place fondamentale du loup en tant qu'espèce clé pour la santé de nos écosystèmes.

Cette initiative pourrait également compromettre les efforts significatifs déployés par les états membres de la Convention de Berne pour la reconstruction des populations de loups. Le déclassement en Annexe III pourrait ouvrir la voie à des mesures de gestion des populations moins durables et potentiellement plus dommageables.

Nous réaffirmons notre engagement en faveur des principes fondamentaux de la Convention de Berne et sur la nécessité de baser nos décisions sur les meilleures données scientifiques possibles.

Enfin, Monaco soutient la proposition du Royaume-Uni relative à l'établissement d'un groupe de travail pour réfléchir à un mécanisme ou processus d'examen des propositions d'amendement des annexes de notre convention afin de garantir que les décisions prise par notre comité soient basées sur les meilleures données scientifiques disponibles, à l'instar de ce qui existe dans le cadre d'autres convention (CMS, CITES, ...).

Je vous remercie.



**-Statement by the United Kingdom-**

- The UK does not have wolves therefore, I want to stress our views are purely based on the evidence presented in support of the EU proposal.
- Changes to species listings should be objective, based on robust evidence and shouldn't be made for political reasons. However, the evidence presented to Standing Committee regarding the wolf is, in our view, inadequate and doesn't align with Bern Recommendation 56 and the guidance for amending the appendices of the Convention. Specifically, it:
  - Fails to provide a sufficient evidence-based assessment of the conservation status of the nine biological populations of the wolf in Europe, some of which are not in favourable conservation status despite of the reported positive trends. Most notably the evidence provided does not articulate what has changed since 2022 when the EU opposed down-listing of the species on conservation grounds.
  - Secondly, while increased flexibility in managing wolves has been given as a reason as to why the species should be downlisted, no evidence has been presented as to why/how the current level of protection acts as a barrier to management. Nor, unfortunately, has this issue been referred to the large carnivores working group for discussion. It is notable that evidence shows that non-lethal methods which would allow wolves and humans to co-exist are poorly adopted. Also shows lethal control is likely to exacerbate rather than resolve conflict issues and risks of regional extinction of the species.
- We note that the EC's own ombudsman, has in response to complaint from Client earth, has launched an investigation into the process by which the evidence to support this proposal was gathered. However, this has yet to conclude so there is a risk that Standing Committee could be making decisions based on evidence gathered and presented by the EU as a result of a process which could subsequently be found to be flawed.
- We're aware that EU Parties will be reporting under the Habitats Directive next year which will provide the most up-to-date figures on the wolf population. So it is not clear to us why this proposal is being brought to the Standing Committee this year.
- Based on our concerns with the evidence the UK will be opposing the proposal and, to avoid setting a precedent which could undermine the convention, urge other Parties to do the same.
- Whether or not this proposal is adopted there is clearly a lack of clarity around the evidence and criteria needed to change the protected status of species under the convention. Therefore, we **STONGLY URGE** parties to establish a working group to develop options, to be presented to STC45, for a new objective evidence-led process for changing protection of species under the convention bringing BERN in line with the objective evidence-based processes that occur in other MEA's.

### **-Joint Statement by NGOs -**

*Held on behalf of Pro Natura, FoE Europe with its 34 member groups, WWF, EEB, BirdLife, Client Earth, Humane Society, Balkani Wildlife Society, NOAH, CEEBankwatch, Euronatur, PPNEA, Riverwatch, Hnuti Duha, Pro Wildlife, Eurogroup for Animals, Tierschutz Austria, IFAW and many other conservation organisations*

Dear delegates, today is likely to be a sad day both for the wolf and the Bern Convention. You are about to take a political decision that ignores both science and the objectives of the Bern Convention. Never before since its adoption in 1979 has a species been downlisted. My statement consists of two parts: arguments why you should reject the EU proposal to change the wolf's protection status, and a set of demands if that decision is still taken.

#### **A. Why lowering the Wolf's protection status is not adequate.**

a). After more than a century where the wolf has been exterminated in large parts of its former range, it is now recovering and expanding its range. However, **the species is still not in a good conservation status**, and out of 9 subpopulations identified by the LCIEI in their report to the Convention in 2022, only 3 are not in Danger and classified as "Least Concern" in the red list. It therefore runs counter the Bern Convention's objective, which is **to conserve Europe's wild flora and fauna, and bring it to a favourable conservation status so that their level corresponds to the ecological and scientific requirements**. According to the resolution 56 (1997) which the secretary just quoted, **only the threat and the ecological role shall be taken into account when changing the protection status of a species**.

b). The proposal to downlist the wolf and with this, to increase hunting and killing of wolves, is **not supported by the two reports** submitted to the BC or the report commissioned by the EU in 2022 and 2023, or by any scientific evidence.

c.) Reports from Spain and Switzerland show that **increased hunting could even be counterproductive** and increase attacks on farmed animals since it risks disrupting the wolves' social structure

d.) Existing **prevention measures**, such as fencing, guarding dogs and reinforcing human presence, **have been shown to be very effective**. Making them even more accessible for animal owners and supporting them with the appropriate prevention tools is essential to reduce wolf attacks,

e.) Recent surveys **indicate strong public support across Member States for maintaining stringent protections** and promoting coexistence with wolves, even among rural communities most affected by the presence of large carnivores. A petition launched by Avaaz collected over 315.000 signatures opposing the downlisting of wolves. Hundreds of scientists, including those who drew up the expertise for the Bern Convention in 2022, wrote letters and raised serious concerns about this proposal.

We therefore call on you to reject or at least postpone the EU's proposal to downscale the wolf's protection status.

#### **B. [Conditions that continue to apply if the species' protection status is lowered]**

However if this does not happen, we would propose to include in the report a reminder that lowering of protection level of the wolf does not mean that you can kill the species at will. There still are many conditions which need to be observed. In light of the current situation, we ask the Contracting parties to

accompany the wolf decision with the following considerations to clarify and underline that:

1. The **objective of the Bern Convention remains to conserve wild flora and fauna** and their natural habitats (Art. 1. 1)
2. Therefore, it remains essential for Contracting Parties to implement measures to ensure the conservation of **wolf populations**, which in accordance with Article 2 of the Bern Convention<sup>12</sup>, **shall be maintained in, or brought to, a favourable conservation status so that their level corresponds to the ecological and scientific requirements established.**
3. Contracting Parties must fully implement Article 7 of the Bern Convention<sup>13</sup> and take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix III and **keep their populations out of danger.** For the wolf in particular, Contracting Parties shall take measures for the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation in order to restore satisfactory population levels, pursuant to Article 7(3)(b) of the Convention.
4. **Article 9 continues to apply:** derogations are only possible if there is no other satisfactory solution and if the exception will not be detrimental to the survival of the population concerned, and if one of the 5 reasons mentioned applies<sup>14</sup>. Contracting Parties shall continue the reporting on these exceptions according to Article 9(2)<sup>15</sup> every two years.
5. **Contracting Parties should continue working towards coexistence with wild fauna**, as it constitutes our natural heritage of a strong cultural and economic value, and as it is widely

---

<sup>12</sup> Article 2, Bern Convention: The Contracting Parties shall take requisite measures to maintain the population of wild flora and fauna at, or adapt it to, a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements and the needs of sub-species, varieties or forms at risk locally.

<sup>13</sup> Article 7, Bern Convention: Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix III. Any exploitation of wild fauna specified in Appendix III shall be regulated in order to keep the populations out of danger, taking into account the requirements of Article 2. Measures to be taken shall include: a closed seasons and/or other procedures regulating the exploitation; b the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation, as appropriate, in order to restore satisfactory population levels; c the regulation as appropriate of sale, keeping for sale, transport for sale or offering for sale of live and dead wild animals.

<sup>14</sup> Article 9, para 1, Bern Convention: Each Contracting Party may make exceptions from the provisions of Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and from the prohibition of the use of the means mentioned in Article 8 provided that there is no other satisfactory solution and that the exception will not be detrimental to the survival of the population concerned: – for the protection of flora and fauna; – to prevent serious damage to crops, livestock, forests, fisheries, water and other forms of property; – in the interests of public health and safety, air safety or other overriding public interests; – for the purposes of research and education, of repopulation, of reintroduction and for the necessary breeding; – to permit, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking, keeping or other judicious exploitation of certain wild animals and plants in small numbers.

<sup>15</sup> Article 9, para 2, Bern Convention: The Contracting Parties shall report every two years to the Standing Committee on the exceptions made under the preceding paragraph. These reports must specify:  
– the populations which are or have been subject to the exceptions and, when practical, the number of specimens involved;  
– the means authorised for the killing or capture; – the conditions of risk and the circumstances of time and place under which such exceptions were granted; – the authority empowered to declare that these conditions have been fulfilled, and to take decisions in respect of the means that may be used, their limits and the persons instructed to carry them out; – the controls involved.

integrated by many local communities and could further support rural livelihoods if coexistence measures are effectively supported.

6. Therefore, **it remains essential for all Contracting Parties to invest in and support wolf coexistence measures, and in particular livestock protection measures to protect livestock from wolf depredation**, as prevention measures are the only effective measures to decrease livestock vulnerability to wolf attacks and to secure the livelihoods of rural communities dependent on livestock farming.
7. The **rules and criteria for changing the protection status of species and habitats** need to be clarified. They must be based on the scientific criteria. An expert group under the Bern Convention needs to be established to develop a proposal that will be submitted to the Standing Committee.

We have submitted a text proposal that reflects these demands to the secretariat and to parties beforehand and **kindly ask parties to support our statement and proposal**, or the part thereof that recalls the conditions that continue to apply if the species' protection status is lowered, the need for a regular monitoring and the establishment of clear rules for down- or upscaling the protection status of a species.

#### **-Statement by Youth and Environment Europe-**

The fact that wolves are now present in nearly all EU member states is in no small part thanks to conservation efforts and the legal protection provided by instruments like the Bern convention. This proposal to lower the protection status of wolf populations can't be justified based on current scientific evidence if we look at the threats wolves still face. In addition, for wolves to effectively fulfill their ecological function, they must persist in ecologically sufficient numbers. Which is not the case everywhere. Current data also indicates no notable increase in livestock damage or public safety risks caused by wolves since 2022. When a proposal to lower the protective status was brought to this committee.

The Swiss proposal in 2022 to downlist wolves I am referring to, was rejected by the Standing Committee, based on a report by the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE) highlighting the conservation status of European wolf populations at the time. The LCIE again released a statement on November 13th expressing their concern and highlighting what seems to be cherry picking of scientific evidence in the current proposal. In justifying their decision to vote against the Swiss proposal the EU said the following, and I quote.

*“Based on current data, lowering the protection status of all wolf populations is not justified from a scientific and conservation point of view. The conservation status of the species remains divergent across the continent, with a favorable conservation status assessment in only 18 out of 39 national parts of biogeographical regions in the Union. Continuing threats to the species, including emerging ones such as border fences and wolfdog hybridization, also call for maintaining the strict protection status.”*

This begs the question, what has changed 2 years since? The answer, virtually nothing. At Least as far as the wolves are concerned. What has changed however is the political climate.

So, the European Union's current decision to propose downlisting wolves appears inconsistent with its earlier stance. The same arguments that prompted the EU to oppose the Swiss proposal two years ago remain relevant today, raising concerns about the rationale behind the EU's shift in position.

In light of ecological reasoning and prior political commitments, the proposed downlisting of wolves threatens to undermine the progress made in their conservation and sets a troubling precedent for future proposals for downgrading the protected status of other species in Appendix II. Given the fact that the convention does not set out specific science-based guidelines for such an action.

Downgrading the protective status of the wolf will make it easier to implement lethal control measures. The science is clear on this, the decision to kill, legally or not, individuals of a protected species, such as wolves, risks diminishing their perceived value and undermining conservation efforts. As a young person from a country where most of my generation did not grow up with these amazing animals, this is not the right step toward coexistence with large carnivores, and nature as a whole, I want to see.

**-Statement by MEDASSET-**

MEDASSET wants to emphasize that it is important that the Standing Committee takes decisions based solely on the facts related to the protection of the environment and the species and not on politics. As such we fully support the statement of Pronatura and the positions expressed by the UK, Monaco and Bosnia-Herzegovina to reject the move to downgrade the protection status of the wolf.

**Item 5.1: Conservation of Birds & Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (IKB)**

**-Statement by the EU and its member States –**

The EU and its Member States regret that the planned joint Bern Convention IKB Focal Points and CMS MIKT meeting could not take place in 2024. We stress the importance for the IKB Scoreboard for assessing the progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds and for enabling national governments to adapt their policies and practices to ensure the overall objective of eradicating IKB is achieved. The EU+MS welcome the fact that the meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Wild Birds as well as the joint meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on IKB and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on IKB of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean are to be held back-to-back in 2025. We invite Contracting Parties to actively engage by participating at the meeting. The EU and its Member States thank all the stakeholders for their efforts to organise the two meetings.

**Item 5.2: Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck**

**-Statement by the EU and its member States -**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note of the progress in the implementation of the action plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck, and would like to thank the countries involved for their efforts. We acknowledge that, despite the significant progress made, the goals of this Action Plan have not yet been reached. Next year marks the final year of the current Action Plan. The EU and its Member States therefore encourage, the development of a new action plan for the period after 2025 that supports and guides the actions of parties involved.

**Item 5.3: Conservation of large carnivores**

**-Statement by the EU and its member States -**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) welcome the decision of CMS on listing the Balkan Lynx in Appendix I of CMS and Eurasian Lynx in Appendix II. In this context, the EU+MS support the cooperation

of the Bern Convention and its Group of Experts on Large Carnivores with the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group in their work on developing guidelines, strategies or action plans for the conservation of the relevant Lynx sub-species.

The EU+MS acknowledge the information provided by the Secretariat and welcome the planned to organize the meeting of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores in 2025. The EU+MS further welcome the idea of a draft questionnaire on the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee pertaining to large carnivores is prepared and circulated well ahead of the meeting. We recognise the importance of accessible and up-to-date information on large carnivores, to inform decision-making on their conservation and management.

The EU+MS encourage Contracting Parties of the Bern Convention to further develop dialogues between experts, NGOs and government officials in the field of large carnivore conservation similarly to those organised in Slovenia, namely the joint conference of the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions for the exchange of practices on management of large carnivores, which took place in March 2024 in Brdo pri Kranju within the project LECA, and in Bulgaria on the “Challenges & opportunities for the conservation of reptiles and large carnivores during linear infrastructure development in South-East Europe”, which took place on 22–24 April 2024 in Kresna and the “Transnational exchange platform for the management of large carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region”, which took place between 11-13 June 2024 in Sofia.

The EU+MS encourage all Contracting Parties of the Bern Convention to further develop cooperation for effective conservation and management of transboundary populations of large carnivores in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

#### **Item 5.4: Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of Sturgeons**

##### **-Statement by the EU and its member States -**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) welcome the technical guidelines on the assessment of the habitat of sturgeons, on sturgeon monitoring, and on *ex situ* conservation measures for sturgeons, and support their adoption at the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. These guidelines offer science-based guidance essential for the effective implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of sturgeons.

EU+MS invite all range Contracting Parties to raise awareness among relevant authorities and stakeholders regarding the guidelines and to encourage their application to further the development and implementation of conservation measures.

EU+MS also recommend that the Secretariat promote and enhance the visibility of these guidelines to ensure accessibility for all stakeholders engaged in the conservation of sturgeons.

Furthermore, EU+MS recommend that reference to these guidelines serve as a criterion in the development and funding of project proposals related to sturgeon conservation.

#### **Item 5.5: Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**

##### **-Statement by the EU and its members States-**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note of the information provided regarding the steps undertaken to reinforce the cooperation between the Groups of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles and on IAS.

The EU+MS welcome the proposal that meetings of both groups could be organized back-to-back in 2025, with a view to having a joint session to further discuss the topics of possible collaboration.

Concerning the agenda of the upcoming meetings, the EU+MS consider the importance of following up on topics that were addressed at past meetings, such as the ongoing issue of spreading amphibian diseases, in particular the Chytridiomycosis caused by the Bsal chytrid fungus, or the work on important herpetofauna areas, as also confirmed by the replies to the respective questionnaire in 2024.

Regarding the activities on IAS, the EU+MS reiterate their invitation to the Group of Experts to consider in their work the key messages of the summary for policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and Their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Finally, the EU+MS also welcome the foreseen online meeting of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the conservation of marine turtles, which could consider the implementation of the Guidance tool on the conservation of sea turtle nesting sites.

### **Item 5.6.1: Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest**

#### **-Statement by the EU and its member States-**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) appreciate the hosting of the meeting of the Group of Experts by Liechtenstein and its outcomes and wish the newly elected Chair of the Group every success in her new role.

The EU+MS are satisfied that, as per the request of the Standing Committee, work on the legal requirements of the Emerald Network was given priority in 2024. This has resulted in the submission of a draft Recommendation collating all relevant requirements through the Convention text itself or additional interpretative Resolutions and Recommendations adopted over the last few decades. This is an excellent basis for engaging into further work on the potential strengthening of these requirements and the EU + MS support its adoption with one amendment proposal. The amendment proposal concerns the removal of a part of the first bullet point in the *Commitments that are legally binding* section to align it with Article 4 of the Convention.

The EU+MS support the setting of clear and realistic targets for the Emerald Network for the period to 2030, pertaining to the submission of updated and improved Emerald databases, improvement of the sufficiency index of the Network and the adoption of sites by concerned Parties. The EU+MS would nevertheless like to remind that the global commitments on protected areas of all Bern Convention Parties under the Kunming-Montreal GBF targets are more ambitious with respect to both the designation and establishment for efficient management of these areas. The targets also appear as not fully aligned with the targets of the Strategic Plan of the Convention (target 1.2 and 1.3 in particular).

The EU and its MS support the decision on a clear mandate for a revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form, to ensure the complete alignment of the Form with the one used within the EU Natura 2000 Network. We want to stress that the formal use of the new SDF for EU MS is to start as of 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2025. We consider it essential that the Convention secures the quickest possible alignment of the Emerald and Natura 2000 SDFs, to ensure the progress in the Network designation continues. The revision of the Emerald SDF is also a prerequisite for the compatibility of the Emerald Network database with EEA's

Reportnet 3 platform and the ever-evolving online Viewer technology. It is also necessary that the appropriate financial provisions for these tasks are included in the Programme and Budget of the Convention.

The EU+MS fully support the adoption of two sites in Liechtenstein and we congratulate the country for this progress.

However, the EU+MS note the lack of progress in the establishment of the Network in Contracting Parties. For some countries, the last update of their Emerald database dates back to several years, even decades. This situation is very worrying, and it jeopardises the credibility of the Convention in its role of catalyst of progress towards the achievement of the Kunming Montreal GBF targets on PAs at regional continental level. Many projects implemented for example in EU candidate countries have led to an improved knowledge on the listed species and habitats, to be subject to site-based conservation. Nonetheless, the gathered data is not used for an update of the Emerald Network databases and therefore there is no progress towards the Network completion, while valuable nature rich areas are left with no legal protection for the time being.

In order to address this situation, the EU+MS suggest that the Standing Committee ensures the mobilisation of the necessary resources, including financial ones, allowing for consultants to support the engaged actors and stakeholders at national level in the relevant countries and ensure updated databases are submitted over the next couple of years.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Item 5.7: Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats</b></p>
--

**-Statement by the EU and its member States -**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) welcome the progress achieved by the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting (WG). We are pleased that the recommendation of the WG aims at ensuring the necessary compatibility of the data gathered through the reporting by non-EU CPs under Resolution No. 8 (2012) with the one gathered by EU MS under Art 17/12 of the Nature Directives. Using the same format will facilitate this, even if the recommendations of the WG are to reduce the number of features reported on. We accept the reasoning behind this recommendation, based on the fact that a fully-fledged reporting would create financial and staff capacity issues for non-EU CPs. We therefore support the recommendations of the WG. We recall once again that these decisions will allow for the Convention to have a mechanism for measuring how well all Contracting Parties are complying with their obligations under the Convention and provide a pan-European overview of how the species and habitats the Convention protects are faring.

As for the list of invasive alien species ([T-PVS/PA\(2024\)12](#)), we agree with the steps of shortlisting the potentially long list of invasive alien species that will be subject to voluntary reporting, and with the overall result. In the Recommendation chapter, Parties are requested to check the shortlist of invasive alien species from several aspects (native to any Party; necessity to add species from the GRIIS datasets; single-country IAS to place back; any other species to add). In addition to the aspects listed in the Recommendations chapter of the document, we would like to draw attention to the fact that the list of species of Union concern as of Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 is regularly updated, so the shortlist of the Bern Convention will need to be checked against it regularly (just like against the other aspects listed). We also note that *Ludwigia grandiflora* is listed as a species of Union concern, therefore, it should be deleted from the shortlist of the Bern Convention (based on Step 6 of the shortlisting exercise).

The EU and its Member States agree with the endorsement of the reporting documentation presented to the Standing Committee. We warmly thank all Parties that participated in the preparation of the reporting



documentation, including the EEA for the support provided to the Convention, recalling that Reporting under Resolution No. 8 is a priority dataflow for the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its EIONET Network.

The EU and its MS consider that given the iterative and continuous nature of the reporting exercise, it is strongly advisable that the Ad-Hoc Group on Reporting is transformed into a full-fledged Group of Experts, which would benefit from regular meetings. A revision of the Ad-Hoc Group of experts' ToR in this respect might be necessary. The EU+MS remain available during the Standing Committee meeting for contributing to their revision, to ensure they are adopted already during the 44<sup>th</sup> SC meeting.

**-Statement by Tunisia-**

Merci Mr le président, Je voudrais revenir sur la question des rapports sur la mise en œuvre de la Convention de Berne et de respect de ses annexes. Comme il a été mentionné à l'instant, cette obligation est inscrite soit dans le texte lui-même de la convention soit dans des résolutions rattachées sur des espèces et des habitats, et je pense que cela s'applique à tous les États parties, sans exception. Or, je me pose une question : Les États non-membres de l'Union européenne et parties à la convention de Berne sont-ils tenus de respecter cette même obligation de manière aussi rigoureuse ? Il me semble important de souligner que la comparabilité des données sont essentielles pour évaluer l'efficacité de la convention à l'échelle internationale. Enfin je voulais dire la Tunisie est active dans la production de rapports dans le cadre d'autres conventions internationales et il serait intéressant de comparer les pratiques de la Tunisie avec celles des États membres de l'UE. Et je vous remercie.

**Item 6.1: Open Files**

➤ **1995/06: CYPRUS: AKAMAS PENINSULA**

**-Statement by Cyprus-**

Thank you, Madame chair,

Let me start with the golf project in the Limni area:

As was previously stated we consider that this part of the Recommendation has been implemented. The project was appropriately assessed and a safe distance for no light pollution has been set. We have provided the Standing Committee and the complainant with scientific studies regarding impacts and mitigation measures and have included in the permits of the project all necessary elements to ensure that the nesting site of Limni will not be affected by the construction or operation of the project (points 11 & 12). The relevant infringement procedure by the CION has been closed.

The project has not commenced. Actually, the ownership of the land and permits has changed and the project is not expected to move forward. If there is an application to renew the permits, or any new applications, we will ensure that relevant provisions of the legislation are implemented.

With regards to the Polis-Gialia Natura 2000 area:

The Department of Fisheries and Marine Research continues to rigorously and strictly implement the existing legislation for the protection of the marine turtles which is in force since 1989. The nesting beach of Limni is in excellent condition and the conservation status of the marine turtles in Cyprus according to Article 17 Report of the Habitats Directive is Excellent. Two patrol officers have been employed by the Department to patrol the area on a permanent basis and there is also close collaboration with NGOs and the local authorities who are assisting with the patrolling and monitoring of the area.

Also, in addition to the beach restoration that took place in the previous years, eradication of the invasive alien species *Acacia saligna* is taking place in the area and local plants are being planted to replace the vegetation. Additionally, through a LIFE project, actions have been implemented to restore sand dune habitats and to control access to the beach, using fencing, gabions and strategically placed wooden boardwalks. This way cars are not allowed access to the beach and people are directed away from sensitive dune habitats.

The Department of Fisheries and Marine Research is also in the process of establishing an Environmental Center next to Limni Beach, using old mine buildings, to increase awareness and establish a more permanent presence in the area, to increase protection.

Another important development in this Natura 2000 site is the implementation of Court Decision to demolish an illegal beach bar that has been operating on the beach.

For the area of Akamas:

Since Recommendation No. 191 was issued in 2016, the progress achieved in the matters of the Akamas peninsula and its protection was quite significant, especially considering the long history and the difficulties the authorities had to face over the years.

At this point, we would like to restate that our goal is to reach the best possible solution in the area of Akamas, to allow for the protection of nature and its co-existence with human activity. Retaining human activity in the area (within a legal framework) is an integral element for the success of the Akamas vision.

As the SC was informed in previous reports the sustainable development plan for the National Forest Park is being implemented. The works for the closing of the illegal roads and improvement of a controlled road network have commenced as well. These works have undergone appropriate assessment and specific terms and conditions to ensure mitigation and minimization of impacts.

[We will not be commenting on the issues presented by the complainant regarding the road works at this point as there is an ongoing review of the works and relevant internal investigations. We would like to reassure the SC that all measures will be implemented to ensure the protection of the area and any restoration actions that may be required will be implemented as well.]

Regarding the claims for insufficient or inadequate management and law enforcement, it is noted that the competent authorities patrol the areas and implement monitoring schemes. Specifically, regarding the illegal restaurants, the operators have been prosecuted and we are expecting the outcome of the judicial procedure, as is foreseen in our constitution.

Just a note for Lara beach, which is one of the most important nesting sites, and the operation of the park:

- All illegal roads leading to the Lara area will be closed off and restored, leaving only one access road for the park shuttles and authorised park personnel.
- A Park ranger team will be patrolling the Lara area to ensure enforcement and management of the measures in the area. Additionally at the entrance of the Lara road, Park rangers will be present during working hours of the park to ensure no access of private vehicles.
- Patrolling will also take place during the night especially in peak periods such as the turtle nesting period.

We are confident that the operation of the National Forest Park will improve the conservation status of habitats and flora and fauna species in the area.

With regards to the Akamas Local (Development) Plan, as we have already informed the SC, it has undergone environmental assessment and has been approved. The Plan concentrates development around the communities and restricts scattered development outside build-up areas.

Dear Members of the SC,

The Akamas file has been open since 1995. It is now the longest standing file in the SC. The initial complaint was for the protection of the Akamas peninsula and in particular of the nesting beaches of the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). The main ones are Lara, Toxeftra and Limni,

which show the highest numbers of nesting, making the north-western shores of Cyprus some of the most important nesting sites for sea turtles in the Mediterranean.

The on-the-spot appraisals that have been carried out through the Convention have identified potential threats to the nesting beaches, including light pollution, development of the golf complex, beach visitation and illegal activities causing disturbance of the beach and nests. Through our reports and presentations over the last few years we have successfully tackled these issues and continue to implement our turtle conservation program with great success. The numbers do not lie, ladies and gentlemen.

However, this file keeps evolving and going beyond its original purpose which was turtle conservation and every year we have new additions to the complaint, that no longer involve turtle conservation. Regrettably, this can no longer be accepted.

Taking into consideration that we have been implementing one of the oldest and most successful turtle conservation programs in Europe, with the species showing positive trends and are evaluated to be in excellent conservation status, we request the closing of this file.

THANK YOU

➤ **2013/01: NORTH MACEDONIA: HYDRO POWER DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF THE MAVROVO NATIONAL PARK**

**-Statement by North Macedonia-**

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) implements activities for the valorization or revalorization of protected areas and the declaration of protected areas in accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, the National Strategy for Nature Protection with the Action Plan and the National Strategy for biodiversity.

In relation to the open case No.2013 the Development of Hydropower Facilities on the territory of NP Mavrovo, North Macedonia acts on the recommendations of the Bern Convention No. 211 (2021). In this respect, the following key progress has been achieved:

- The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, in cooperation with the Public Institution NP Mavrovo, the Macedonian Ecological Society and Global Conservation, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on 4 April 2023, with the aim to revise/supplement the Study for the revalorization of NP Mavrovo (2011), revise the Catalogue (List) of species registered on the territory of NP Mavrovo, as well as the development of a Draft-Management Plan with NP Mavrovo.
- The revised/supplemented study will enable the MOEPP to continue the procedure for the proclamation of Mavrovo as a protected area and further development and adoption of the Management Plan of NP Mavrovo.

Draft valorization study was discussed with all stakeholders in a public hearing on June 10, 2024 with all. The zoning has not been officially presented. Based on

communication with the Ministry officials, Ribnicka HPP is still within strictly protected zone (as in the previous Vaolrisation study).

- The process of cancellation of concession for the HPPs Zirovnica 5 and Zirovnica 6 in NP Mavrovo has not been finished yet, but both parties have agreed to terminate the contract.

- For the HPPs Ribnicka 7, changes in the technical solution were submitted in order to enable the realization of the Project.

- The realization of HPP concessions in Shar Mountain NP will be carried out in accordance with the law and with the national park management plan.

The Ministry has established regular communication with the NGO Eko Svest, as a complainant in this case.

➤ **2016/05: ALBANIA: PRESUMED NEGATIVE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE VJOSA RIVER INCLUDING HYDRO-POWER PLANT DEVELOPMENT AND VLORA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**-Statement by Youth and Environment Europe on behalf an Albanian environmentalist-**

As a young Albanian environmentalist, I can't stress enough how vital the Vjosa River is to the country's ecosystems and environmental sustainability.

We must encourage the close cooperation amongst all parties involved, particularly NGOs and governmental institutions. I strongly advocate for cooperative environmental impact assessment, as this approach ensures the preservation of our natural resources and guarantees informed decision-making.

Furthermore, these decision-making processes will be enhanced by the active involvement of youth, particularly young environmental professionals. Their viewpoints and expertise are crucial to guaranteeing sustainable development.

We need to have a visionary approach when it comes to managing Vjosa River, to guarantee applying sustainable development principles without sacrificing the ecological value of this national treasure or the species that it supports.

We should not forget that the Vjosa is a cross-border river, and collaboration with the neighboring country we share the Vjosa with is essential to ensure its ecological integrity. The EU, as a mediator, should support and enable initiatives to build bridges of collaboration between the two governments and stakeholders from both sides. This establishes the foundation for guaranteeing a greater degree of protection for Vjosa.

➤ **2017/02: NORTH MACEDONIA: NEGATIVE IMPACTS TO LAKE OHRID AND GALICHICA NATIONAL PARK CANDIDATE EMERALD SITES DUE TO INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

**-Statement by North Macedonia-**

In relation to open case 2017/02 Alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments, North Macedonia acts on the recommendations of the Bern Convention No. 211 (2021) and 221 (2023).

MOEPP activities on this issue, in addition to the above recommendations, are based on the Strategic Plan for the rehabilitation of the natural and cultural heritage in the Ohrid region and the recommendations of UNESCO. As regards the activities for the declaration of protected areas, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning prepared a draft Law for the declaration of Studenchiško Blato as a protected area in category IV - Nature Park and a Draft Law on the declaration of Lake Ohrid in category III - Monument of nature. Although the National Parliament held a first reading of these draft laws on 13 August 2024, they have been withdrawn from the parliamentary procedure. As soon as there are new developments in respect of these two pieces of legislation, we will report accordingly.

Financial support has been provided from the MOEPP Budget for the public institution NP Galichica to implement the project with specific objectives for monitoring habitats and species, developing ecotourism, and raising public awareness.

The first Map of habitats in North Macedonia has been prepared.

In order to improve the national legislation for the protection and preservation of wild plants, fungi and animals in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Nature, and based on scientific analysis, a List of Strictly Protected Wild Species and a List of Protected Wild Species have been prepared.

A draft list of invasive species has been prepared in line with the EU Regulation 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Since the parliamentary and presidential elections have been held this year, not at all of the planned actions have been carried out.

The Ministry has established regular communication with the NGO – Front, a complainant in this case.

## Item 6.2: Possible Files

### ➤ 2001/04: BULGARIA: MOTORWAY THROUGH THE KRESNA GORGE

#### **-Statement by the complainant Infrastructure & Ecology Network Europe (IENE)-**

#### **The planned Struma motorway and its potential impact on the Natura 2000 sites of the Kresna Gorge area**

*Infrastructure & Ecology Network Europe (IENE, <https://www.iene.info/>) is a network of experts working since 1996 with various aspects of transportation, infrastructure, and ecology. IENE provides an independent, international, and interdisciplinary arena for the exchange and development of expert knowledge with the aim to promote a safe and ecologically sustainable pan-European transport infrastructure.*

*IENE arranges international conferences, workshops, training seminars and symposia, initiates collaboration projects and helps answering questions that require a joint international expertise. IENE workshops aim to support the exchange of knowledge and best practices on specific topics or geographical areas in order to foster multisector cooperation and decision-making based on the best available information.*

Following its mission, IENE fully supported the organization of the Kresna Technical Workshop (22-24 April 2024) in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, the Bulgarian Government, the Balkani Wildlife Society and with the support of JASPERS and CEDR, in line with Recommendation 212 (2021) of the Bern Convention: “Challenges & opportunities for the conservation of reptiles and large carnivores during linear infrastructure development in South-East Europe: a case study for the Kresna area, Bulgaria”.

In cooperation with the Bern Convention, we recommended three experts (Djuro Huber, professor emeritus at University of Zagreb, Croatia; Lars Briggs, an executive of AmphiConsult, Denmark; and Niki Voumvoulaki, an executive of Egnatia Odos S.A., Greece) to be engaged as fully independent experts, based on their expertise on transport ecology matching the specific of the Kresna case – reptile and large carnivore species, strategic planning, design, building and maintenance of appropriate mitigation measures.

While we fully acknowledge the importance of both the transport and biodiversity objectives from local/national and European perspective and the complexity of the overall Kresna case, we believe that the best solution could only be based and supported by:

- a) a real collaboration between stakeholders;
- b) a commonly shared scientific knowledge on biodiversity in the area;
- c) applying the principles of sustainable strategic planning; and
- d) the best practices of decision making.

Considering both the Advising Memo of the three independent experts and the results of the Workshop with its Joint Conclusions and the Draft Action Plan,

- **IENE recognise the results of the Workshop – the Joint Conclusions and the Draft Action Plan – and encourages both the Bulgarian authorities and European institutions to transfer them into practice,**
- **IENE encourage the Bulgarian and European stakeholders to aim for a solution that avoids irreversible impacts on the European Key Biodiversity Kresna Area and to ensure that decisions are based on the principles of sustainability,**
- **it is important that the planning of the motorway fully complies with the requirements of EU environmental and habitat legislation which is designed to protect Natura 2000 sites and their coherence,**
- **in this respect, IENE fully supports the conclusions and the recommendations of the experts presented in their Advising Memo and recommends for them to be taken into consideration.**

We are confident that if the interested parties take the opportunity of learning from relevant past cases, the combined European experience together with the valuable knowledge of the Bulgarian experts and stakeholders will ensure that this project could become a best-practice example, not only for Bulgaria, but also for the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

*With best regards, on behalf of the IENE Governance Board,*



*Elke Hahn,*

*IENE GB chair*

*December 3rd, 2024*

➤ **2022/03: NORWAY: WOLF CULLING POLICY**

**-Statement by Norway-**

- Norway is committed to ensure the survival of the wolf in Norwegian nature.
- The wolf population in Scandinavia is cross-boundary, living in both Norway and Sweden. Norway is committed to take responsibility for a part of this population.

- The legal basis for the management of wolves in Norway is the Bern Convention and the Norwegian Nature Diversity Act.
- Within the boundaries following from these legal instruments, the Norwegian Parliament has decided main elements of the management policy:
  - There are two underlying objectives:
    1. One is to ensure the survival of the wolf in Norwegian nature and contribute to a viable wolf population in Scandinavia.
    2. The other is to maintain grazing of livestock and semi-domesticated reindeer, as well as safeguarding other interests of importance in the society.
  - To achieve these objectives, the Parliament has decided that compromises in terms of the number and extensiveness of the population are necessary. Two elements are important to this end:
    1. The first is a zone-based management. In a designated area which covers around 5 percent of the Norwegian mainland, referred to as the wolf zone, wolves are prioritised and grazing of livestock and other relevant interests must adjust to a presence of wolves.
    2. The other element is a population target of 4 to 6 breeding pairs with pups each year, of which 3 solely in Norway. This includes reproduction in packs where the wolves live across the border between Norway and Sweden, which are counted with a factor of 0,5.
  - The reproduction of wolves in Norway is restricted to the wolf zone. And within the boundaries of the Act and the Convention, the political objective is to manage the population as close to the population target as possible.
  - Currently, the Norwegian part of the Scandinavian population is in line with the upper level of the population target.
- Our view is that this management policy is in accordance with the obligation to maintain a wolf population in Norway, and that Norway is taking responsibility for a part of the Scandinavian wolf population in accordance with the Convention. This has also been confirmed by the Norwegian Supreme Court.
- We want to emphasise that rather than laying down a specific level, Article 2 of the Convention leaves a margin of appreciation for parties to decide what level the population shall be maintained at. Other requirements may be taken into account, including cultural and economic requirements, such as safeguarding and providing predictability for livestock grazing and reindeer herding.
- The designation of a wolf zone is, as the population target, a compromise, providing necessary predictability for livestock industry and other interests. In addition to free-grazing of livestock, there is extensive herding of reindeer in northern Norway and in some areas in the south of Norway. Norway is obliged to safeguard the traditional practices of the Sami people, which includes reindeer herding. The wolf zone does not overlap with areas used for reindeer herding, as one of several measures that shall ensure that this obligation is fulfilled. However, the wolf zone covers areas of habitat appropriate for wolves, where husbandry practices have been adjusted, and it borders to Sweden to ensure connection with the Swedish part of the population. And to the question raised by the Bureau in the latest report - there are no existing plans to change the delimitation of the wolf zone.
- The management of wolves in Norway is based on the absolute requirement that the survival of the Scandinavian wolf population is not jeopardised. I want to mention some important means to this end. Firstly, the management is informed by a comprehensive monitoring programme, which is a collaboration with Swedish authorities. Furthermore, improving the genetic situation of the population is a top priority, and great emphasis is put on protecting immigrating individuals from the Finnish/Russian population. And all decisions to cull wolves must satisfy the criteria that the culling will not be detrimental to the survival of the population.

- There is not established a management plan between Norway and Sweden for the Scandinavian population. However, there is well-established cooperation between the Norwegian and Swedish management authorities on research and on monitoring of the population. Norwegian and Swedish authorities have also developed shared strategies for management of the population since the 1990s. And Norway and Sweden have, amongst other initiatives, adopted shared guidelines regarding management of genetically valuable wolves.
- There is also cooperation between Norway, Sweden and Finland, on sharing information and knowledge regarding the wolf populations in Fennoscandia.
  
- Wolf culling will only be allowed if the purpose of preventing damage to livestock or to safeguard public interests of substantial importance cannot be achieved in another satisfactory manner.
  - Separating wolves and livestock areas, by designating a wolf zone, is a main prevention measure.
  - Also, grants are provided for preventive methods such as fencing, adjusting the time of the year that livestock is on grazing land or removing herds to areas less prone to attacks.
  - Grants are also provided for measures aiming at reducing conflicts through increasing knowledge and understanding for wolves and the management of wolves. And several Visitor Centres have been established in different parts of the country, providing information on large carnivores, their role in the ecosystem and on the management.
- Nevertheless, due to the political intention to maintain free-grazing in large parts of Norway, there may be a potential for damage to livestock outside the wolf zone, that cannot be prevented in any other satisfactory way than by permitting culling of wolves in these areas. This is closely linked to the zone-based management, which entails that other public interests than the conservation of wolves are prioritized in these areas. Our view is that decisions to permit culling outside the wolf zone is in accordance with the purpose of exception in Article 9 paragraph 1 second indent.
- Within the wolf zone, other interests such as the livestock industry must adapt to the presence of wolves. Such adaptations were made when the wolf zone was established, and today there is little to none free-grazing within the wolf zone, and little potential for damage from wolves. However, in this area decisions to permit culling have been made with the objective to safeguard public interests of substantial importance. The assessment of Norwegian authorities has been that such interests, with an emphasis on rural policy and on reducing conflict in the society and affected communities by managing the population in accordance with the population target that has been set by the Parliament, could not be achieved in another satisfactory manner than by permitting culling inside the wolf zone, to bring the population closer to the population target. Such decisions are based on a broad balancing of interests, in accordance with Article 9 paragraph 1 third indent. This purpose of exception is formulated in a discretionary manner, giving parties a margin of appreciation to decide what may constitute such overriding public interests.
- To the question raised by the Bureau on whether there are public consultations on the culling, the Act and the Regulation that the decisions are based on were subject to public consultations when they were established, and this will also be the case if they are amended. The decisions for culling are normally adopted by Regional Boards for carnivore management, and these decisions may be appealed to the Ministry of Climate and Environment by a party or another person having a legal interest.
- Decisions may also be brought before the courts. And there have been two cases before the Norwegian Supreme Court the last years regarding wolf culling, both culling outside and inside the wolf zone. The Supreme Court has confirmed that the assessments of the authorities in both cases have been in accordance with the Nature Diversity Act and the Convention.
  
- We thank the complainants for their commitment to protect the Scandinavian wolf population. However, Norway cannot see grounds for opening this case.



**-Statement by the complainant NOAH-**

Thank you, chairman.

Dear delegates of the Standing Committee,

SLIDE 1 (Title)

As a Complainant, NOAH asks the Standing Committee to decide **in favour of the opening of a case-file** on Norway's culling policy.

In Norway, the wolf is allowed to exist only on 5% of the territory. But even in this small area the wolf is actively managed to keep the population down at the population target of 4-6 litters per year - corresponding to 40-60 wolves.

The wolf is categorized as "critically endangered" in the Red List of Species in Norway. If the current policy persists, the wolf in Norway will remain critically endangered indefinitely. It is also worrying that the government is now considering a **further lowering of the already very low population target**.

SLIDE 2

The status of the wolf population in Norway is alarming, due to genetic depletion and a very low number of individuals. Recent data shows that the number of wolves is around 60. This is the lowest number of wolves in Norway since 2014.

SLIDE 3

The wolf population is biologically connected to wolves in Sweden, but also the wolf population in Sweden is categorized as "threatened". The overall South Scandinavian population is vulnerable and estimated at 440 wolves.

Recent scientific reports conclude that wolves in Norway and Sweden constitute possibly the most inbred wolf population in the world and has a high risk of extinction if urgent measures are not taken.

SLIDE 4

High annual quotas for lethal control are pushing the population towards extinction. In the last five years, the annual quotas for population control constitute 2/3 of the Norwegian population, resulting in the killing of around 1/3 of the population every year. This year the proposed culling is 39 wolves out of around 60 wolves, including 3 wolf packs in the wolf zone.

SLIDE 6

The annual culling is detrimental to survival of the population concerned. A population of around 60 wolves cannot survive in the long term, considering also the high inbreeding depression and significant level of illegal hunting.

Thus; the legal condition that culling is not detrimental to the survival of the population concerned, is far from being met. Despite the critically endangered status of the wolf, the government continues to permit extensive culling.

In the culling decisions, the authorities use solely the transboundary population as the basis for assessing the impact of culling on the survival of the wolf population. There is no common management of the South Scandinavian wolf population agreed upon between Norway and Sweden. This approach has not only been

criticized by legal scholars and biologists, but also goes against the established practice of the Bern Convention, as confirmed by recent jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union that ruled this summer that the effect of derogations shall first and foremost be assessed in relation to the national population.

In the Complainants' view, the Norwegian wolf policy is an example of how the concept of transboundary population-level management is misunderstood and misapplied.

#### SLIDE 7

Also, the material ground for culling is lacking. Norway applies a zone-based management which means that wolves are allowed to exist and breed only in a restricted area in the South-East of the country, bordering Sweden. This area constitutes around 5% of the land territory of Norway. – SLIDE 8 – The “wolf zone” has been reduced significantly since 2001.

BACK TO SLIDE 7 - In the remaining 95%, wolf culling permits are issued almost automatically, without any damage having had to occur. The aim is to prevent wolves settling on 95% of Norway's territory. This aim itself is defined as “an overriding public interest”. Alternative measures such as livestock protection are not considered nor applied in this area.

#### SLIDE 9

Since 2019, Norwegian authorities have culled wolves also in the “wolf zone”. As wolves do not cause any concrete problems in the wolf zone, the authorities refer to general societal disagreements and inconveniences related to the mere presence of wolves as the ground for culling. It is clear, however, that the main purpose is to curtail the population so that it would not grow larger than 60 wolves. Keeping the population down at this low level, is itself defined as “an overriding public interest”, and used as a justification for culling.

#### SLIDE 10

We would like to show a quote from the Ministry's decision on the culling of wolves in the wolf zone last year:

*“In the Ministry's view, consideration of the aim that the population is kept as close to the population target as possible dictates that a license hunting shall be carried out this year. The directorate's advice shows, in the Ministry's view, that a license hunting aimed at family groups or territory-marking pairs is necessary if the population is to be kept as close to the population target as possible. Without such license hunting, given the wolf's reproduction rate and wolves migrating from Sweden, there is reason to believe that in the spring of 2024 (...) there will be reproductions of wolves exceeding the population target.”*

#### SLIDE 11

Although there is little guidance concerning the grounds which can be invoked under the exception “overriding public interests” in Article 9 of the Convention, in the Complainant's view, it should **not** be allowed to be invoked where the aim is to keep the wolf out of 95% of the territory, **nor** where the aim is to keep the wolf population down at an extremely low level, with the consequence of the population remaining critically endangered.

#### SLIDE 12

The Norwegian government is not in substance considering non-lethal solutions, as required by Article 9 in the Convention. The authorities consider the mere presence of the wolf sufficient to justify culling, and non-lethal measures are brushed aside as non-satisfactory. The absurd result is that lethal control is in itself the aim and justification of derogations.

Norwegian authorities spend only 2-14% of the 6 million Euro budget for prevention measures, on conflict mitigation, including information measures. Lethal measures receive the most funding, and lethal control is the dominant measure.

Research shows that the majority of inhabitants in Norway, also in rural areas, are positive towards wolves. Information measures and education about the positive aspects of large carnivores enjoy wide support, while support for culling measures is low. However, this research is not considered by the Norwegian authorities.

SLIDE 13

In conclusion, the Complainants argue that **by keeping the wolf out of 95% of Norway's territory and keeping the wolf population at an extremely low level in the remaining 5% – with the consequence of the wolf being kept critically endangered – Norway is in breach of Articles 2, 4, 6 and 9 of the Bern Convention.**

In contrast; Italy – similar in size to Norway – has a wolf population of 3000 animals. Germany has 1200 wolves.

It is alarming that Norway has reduced its obligations under the Convention to such an exceptionally low population and is now considering a further reduction in the population target.

It is of significant importance that the Contracting Parties react in cases where Convention obligations are reduced to a level where the Convention stops having any real effect. It is important to set clear limits on how derogations under Article 9 are used in case of Annex II species. A clear signal should be sent that species enjoying strict protection under the Convention shall be effectively protected.

Also in the case of Annex III species, an aim of keeping the national population critically endangered, goes against the Convention.

**The Complainants encourage the Standing Committee to open a case-file on the wolf culling policy in Norway to ensure compliance with the Bern Convention.**

We ask to call on Norway:

- to abstain from culling wolf packs in the wolf zone on the grounds of “overriding public interests”;
- to abstain from culling wolves in the 95% of its territory on the grounds of “overriding public interests”;
- to let the wolf population increase beyond critically endangered;
- to focus on co-existence and non-lethal measures.

**Item 13: Closing of the meeting**

**- Statement by the EU and its member States -**

Madam Chair,

Mr Executive Secretary,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hungary speaks on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

As the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee is coming to an end, we would like to thank the Secretariat and all Contracting Parties, organizations and observers for the fruitful negotiations, the valuable insights provided and the successful outcome of a number of agenda items, some of which have taken several years of preparation, such as Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) or the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. The Bern Convention has once again proved to be a strong framework to combine nature conservation efforts in a Pan-European context, as it has over the past 45 years.

If we are to highlight some of the most important achievements of this meeting, we would like to mention first the strengthening of the Emerald Network of sites, by providing further clarification on the legal framework of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding the conservation of the network, laying out both mandatory commitments and non-mandatory measures that contribute to the protection of sites. The EU and its Member States greatly appreciate the alignment of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form with the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form. These decisions will advance the standardization of site protection regimes across the continent, increasing the efficiency of nature conservation efforts in Europe. At the same time, we would like to urge Contracting Parties to work towards achieving sufficiency of their network of protected sites, also in light of the relevant targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Of course, the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee will be remembered by the public as the one that took a decision to downlist a conflict species, namely the wolf. While taking this step was considered necessary by the European Union and its Member States, we consider it equally important to emphasize that downlisting the wolf to Appendix III of the Convention does not mean it is no longer protected: on the contrary, while providing more flexibility to manage human-wildlife conflicts, the obligation remains to achieve or maintain a conservation status of the species that meets the ecological and scientific requirements as laid down by the Convention. The EU and its Member States look forward to the establishment of the new Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention. We feel this will be a valuable addition to the tools available to the Convention in its efforts to protect nature.

The EU and its Member States welcome the fact that the Standing Committee remains committed to delivering on an instrument setting a financial mechanism to the Convention, which corresponds to the principles set in its decision from 2018. The financing of the Convention should be stable, sufficient, predictable, long-lasting and fair. We look forward to continue contributing to the work of the respective Working Group in 2025.

We hope the year ahead of us will see further progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention, following the new and for the first time prioritized Programme of Work. Finally, we would like to mention that the 60th anniversary of the network of European Diploma Protected Areas will be a great occasion to celebrate the achievements of the Convention and raise awareness in society to the continued successes of the Bern Convention.

Madam Chair, we would also like to express regret – that the three years of you serving as the Chair of this Standing Committee are coming to an end. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your exceptional leadership and tireless commitment to the Bern Convention. At the same time, we are confident that the newly elected Chair will follow in your footsteps and guide us wisely through our future deliberations, with important support from his Bureau team. Congratulations to all of you.

Thank you, Madam Chair

## Appendix XIV - List of Participants

### CONTRACTING PARTIES / PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

<b>ALBANIA / ALBANIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Klodiana MARIKA (Main representative)</b> Director of Nature and Forests Ministry of Tourism and Environment</p> <p><b>Ms Brunilda KOÇO</b> Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of the Republic of Armenia to the Council of Europe</p>
<b>ANDORRA / ANDORRE</b>	<p><b>Ms Maria SALAS SOPENA (Main Representative)</b> Head of the Biodiversity, Landscape and Environmental Impact Unit Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability</p> <p><b>Ms Silvia FERRER LOPEZ</b> Director of the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability</p>
<b>ARMENIA / ARMENIE</b>	<p><b>Mr Hakob MATEVOSYAN</b> Senior Specialist of Specially Protected Areas Nature and Biodiversity Department Ministry of Environment</p>
<b>AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE</b>	<p><b>Ms Simone KLAIS (Main representative)</b> Joint Representative of the Federal Provinces of Austria on behalf of the Office of the Provincial Government of Vienna Municipal Department for Environmental Protection</p> <p><b>Ms Birgit Michaela LEITNER</b> Legal Affairs, Department V/10 National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology</p> <p><b>Mr Martin WILDENBERG</b> Federal Ministry Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility and Technology</p>

<b>AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN</b>	
<b>BELGIUM / BELGIQUE</b>	<b>Ms Sandrine LIEGEOIS</b> Service Public de Wallonie pour l'Agriculture, Ressources naturelles et Environnement
<b>BOSNIA &amp; HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE &amp; HERZEGOVINE</b>	<b>Mr Dejan RADOSEVIC (Main representative)</b> Head of department for biodiversity Republic Institute for Protection of cultural, historical and nature heritage of Republic of Srpska
<b>BULGARIA / BULGARIE</b>	<b>Mr Valeri GEORGIEV (Main representative)</b> Head of Biodiversity Unit National Nature Protection Service Directorate Ministry of Environment and Water  <b>Mr Miroslav KALUGEROV</b> Director National Nature Protection Service at Ministry of Environment and Water  <b>Ms Michaela DOTSOVA</b> Director Legal Directorate at Ministry of Environment and Water  <b>Ms Malina KROUMOVA</b> Chair State Agency Road Safety (SARS)
<b>BURKINA FASO / BURKINA FASO</b>	
<b>CROATIA / CROATIE</b>	
<b>CYPRUS / CHYPRE</b>	<b>Ms Despo ZAVROU (Main representative)</b> Environment Officer Department of Environment
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE</b>	<b>Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ (Main representative)</b> Ministerial Councillor Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic  <b>Mr Jan PLESNIK</b> Head of Division Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
<b>DENMARK / DANEMARK</b>	<b>Mr Alexander ANDERSSON (Main representative)</b> Special Adviser Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality  <b>Mr Peter Lyhne HØJBERG</b> Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality

<p><b>ESTONIA / ESTONIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Mariliis PAAL (Main representative)</b>                      Adviser                      Ministry of Climate of Estonia, Biodiversity Conservation Department</p> <p><b>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI</b>                      Adviser                      Biodiversity Conservation Department                      Ministry of Climate of Estonia, Biodiversity Conservation Department</p>
<p><b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE</b></p>	<p><b>European Commission - DG Environment / Commission européenne - DG Environnement</b></p> <p><b>Mr Andrea VETTORI (Main representative)</b>                      Head of Unit D.3 Nature Conservation, Directorate General for Environment</p> <p><b>Ms Iva OBRETENOVA</b>                      Policy Officer                      Directorate General for Environment, European Commission</p> <p><b>Ms Dora SCHAFFRIN</b>                      Legal Adviser                      Delegation to the Council of Europe</p>
<p><b>FINLAND / FINLANDE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Maria Aurora WESTERMAN (Main representative)</b>                      Senior Specialist                      Department of the Natural Environment, Biodiversity                      Ministry of the Environment</p>
<p><b>FRANCE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Charles-Henri DE BARSAC (Main representative)</b>                      International and European Wildlife Agreements Officer                      Sub-Directorate for the Protection and Restoration of Terrestrial Ecosystems                      Ministry for Ecological and Solidarity Transition</p>
<p><b>GEORGIA / GÉORGIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Salome NOZADZE (Main representative)</b>                      Chief Biodiversity Specialist                      Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p> <p><b>Mr Carl AMIRGULASHVILI</b>                      Head of Biodiversity and Forestry Policy Department                      Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p>
<p><b>GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Babak MILLER (Main representative)</b>                      Division N I 4, International Species Conservation                      Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</p>
<p><b>GREECE / GRECE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Evangelos BADIERITAKIS (Main representative)</b>                      General Directorate of Environmental Policy                      Directorate of Natural Environment Management &amp; Biodiversity                      Department of Biodiversity                      Ministry of Environment and Energy</p>

<b>HUNGARY / HONGRIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Eva FEJES (Main representative)</b> Biodiversity adviser Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p><b>Mr Andras SCHMIDT</b> Head of Natura 2000 Unit Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p><b>Ms Rita VARGA-TUROS</b> EU presidency Coordinator Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p><b>Mr András Márton RÁKÓCZI</b> EU Presidency Biodiversity Coordinator Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p><b>Mr Gábor Tamás MAGYAR</b> Ministry of Agriculture</p>
<b>ICELAND / ISLANDE</b>	<p><b>Mr Steinar KALDAL (Main representative)</b> <i>Head of Division, Department of Land and Natural Heritage</i> <i>Ministry for the Environment, energy, and climate</i></p>
<b>IRELAND / IRLANDE</b>	<p><b>Mr Alan MOORE</b> Assistant Principal Officer National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) International and EU Affairs Directorate</p>
<b>ITALY / ITALIE</b>	<p><b>Mr Vittorio de CRISTOFARO (Main representative)</b> Ministry of Environment and Energy Security</p> <p><b>Ms Daniela Alunno MANCINI</b> Head of Unit Ministry of Environment and Energy Security</p> <p><b>Ms Silvia GIARDINA</b> Officer Ministry of Environment and Energy Security</p>
<b>LATVIA / LETTONIE</b>	<p><b>Mr Vilnis BERNARDS (Main representative)</b> Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of Latvia</p> <p><b>Ms Ilze OPERMANE</b> Senior Desk Officer Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development</p> <p><b>Mr Valdimārts ŠĻAUKSTIŅŠ</b> Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development</p>
<b>LIECHTENSTEIN</b>	<p><b>Ms Anna WEBER (Main representative)</b> Office of Environment</p>
<b>LITHUANIA / LITUANIE</b>	
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	<p><b>Mr Claude ORIGER (Main representative)</b> Director of Nature, Advisor Ministry for the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development</p>



<b>MALTA / MALTE</b>	<b>Mr Kristian PULIS (Main representative)</b> Environment & Resources Authority (Malta)
<b>REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA</b>	<b>Ms Veronica JOSU (Main representative)</b> Main Advisory Officer Department on Biodiversity Policy Ministry of Environment
<b>MONACO</b>	<b>Ms Céline IMPAGLIAZZO (Main representative)</b> Head of Division Department of External Relations and Cooperation Ministry of State  <b>Ms Astrid CLAUDEL RUSIN</b> Head of Section Environment Department Department of Public Works, the Environment and Town Planning Ministry of State
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>	<b>Ms Anela SIJARIĆ DEČEVIĆ (Main representative)</b> Head of Terrestrial and Freshwater Ecosystems Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development
<b>MAROC / MOROCCO</b>	
<b>NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS</b>	<b>Mr Nick WARMELINK (Main representative)</b> Policy Officer International Species Conservation Directorate-General Nature & Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
<b>NORTH MACEDONIA / MACEDOINE DU NORD</b>	<b>Ms Svetlana GELEVA</b> Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representation of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe  <b>Mr Nazim RECHI</b> Deputy to the Permanent Representative Permanent Representation of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe
<b>NORWAY / NORVÈGE</b>	<b>Maline Salicath GORDNER (Main representative)</b> Senior Adviser Norwegian Environment Agency  <b>Ms Eva Hauge FONTAINE</b> Senior Adviser Nature Management Department Norwegian Environment Agency
<b>POLAND / POLOGNE</b>	<b>Ms Ewa PISARCZYK (Main representative)</b> Chief Expert, Bern Convention FP Nature Management Department, Species Protection Unit General Directorate for Environmental Protection

	<b>Ms Aleksandra SKOWYSZ</b> General Directorate for Environmental Protection
<b>PORTUGAL / PORTUGAL</b>	
<b>ROMANIA / ROUMANIE</b>	
<b>SERBIA / SERBIE</b>	<b>Ms Snezana PROKIC (Main representative)</b> Head of Division for Ecological Network and Appropriate Assessment Ministry of Environmental Protection
<b>SENEGAL/ SÉNÉGAL</b>	
<b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE</b>	<b>Ms Jana DURKOŠOVÁ (Main representative)</b> <i>Directorate for Nature and Biodiversity Protection</i> <i>Department for Nature Protection and for State Administration</i> <i>Bern Convention, Birds Directive, Habitats Directive</i> <i>Ministry of the Environment</i>
<b>SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE</b>	
<b>SPAIN / ESPAGNE</b>	<b>Mr Borja HEREDIA (Main representative)</b> Senior Adviser Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge  <b>Mr Ruben MORENO-OPO DIAZ-MECO</b> Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge
<b>SWEDEN / SUÈDE</b>	<b>Ms Clarisse KEHLER SIEBERT (Main representative)</b> Senior Adviser Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
<b>SWITZERLAND / SUISSE</b>	<b>Ms Danielle HOFMANN (Main representative)</b> Scientific Assistant Wildlife and Species Conservation Section Biodiversity and Landscape Division Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)  <b>Mr Hans ROMANG</b> Head of Division Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)  <b>Mr Norbert BÄRLOCHER</b> Senior Diplomatic Advisor Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)
<b>TUNISIA / TUNISIE</b>	<b>Mr Mohamed Ali BEN TEMESSEK</b> Director of Ecology and Natural Ecosystems Directorate-General for the Environment and Quality of Life Ministry of the Environment

<p><b>TÜRKIYE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Burak TATAR</b> Senior Specialist Directorate General of Nature Conservation and National Parks Department of Wildlife Management Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</p>
<p><b>UKRAINE / UKRAINE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Serhii SHABLIU</b> Head of Division of the Council of Europe, Human Rights and Coordination of the Gender Policy, Directorate General for International Organisations Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine</p>
<p><b>UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Simon MACKOWN (Main representative)</b> Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity Division Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</p> <p><b>Ms Rachel GAUGHAN</b> Senior Lawyer Legal Advisers, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</p> <p><b>Ms Sarah SCOTT</b> Senior International Biodiversity Adviser Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)</p> <p><b>Ms Leah FARQUHARSON</b> International Biodiversity Adviser Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)</p>

**OTHER ORGANISATIONS / AUTRES ORGANISATIONS**

<b>Association BIOM</b> (Croatia)	<b>Mr Boleslaw SLOCINSKI</b>
<b>Avenir Loup Lynx Jura</b> (ALLJ)	<b>Ms Susanne CLAUSS</b> Vice-Présidente  <b>Ms Lucie WUETHRICH</b> Chargée de mission pour les liens Suisse-Europe auprès du comité
<b>Balkani Wildlife Society</b>	<b>Mr Andrey KOVATCHEV</b>  <b>Mr Petko TZVETKOV</b> Chairman of the Management Board
<b>BirdLife Europe / BirdLife International</b>	<b>Ms Marion BESSOL</b>
<b>Born Free Foundation</b>	<b>Ms Adeline LERAMBERT</b> International Policy Manager  <b>Mr Zannis MAVROGORDATO</b>
<b>CEE Bankwatch Network</b>	<b>Mr Andrey RALEV</b> Biodiversity Campaigner
<b>CIC Wildlife</b>	<b>Ms Alexandra KALANDARISHVILI</b> Senior Policy Coordinator
<b>Center for Environment</b>	<b>Mr Redzib SKOMORAC</b> Legal adviser
<b>CHWOLF Association, Switzerland</b>	<b>Ms Christina STEINER</b> President  <b>Mr Christian MÜLLER</b> Vice-President
<b>Earth Thrive</b>	<b>Zoe LUJIC</b> Executive Director & Founder  <b>Harj NARULLA</b> Doughty Street Chambers Legal Representation
<b>EcoAlbania</b>	<b>Mr Olsi NIKA</b> Executive Director
<b>Eko-svest</b>	<b>Ms Ana COLOVIC LESOSKA</b> Executive Director
<b>Environmental Citizens Association “Front 21/42”</b>	<b>Ms Iskra STOJKOVSKA</b> Executive Director

<b>Eurogroup for Animals</b>	<b>Ms Léa BADOZ</b> Programme Officer - Wild Animals
<b>EUROPARC Federation</b>	
<b>EuroNatur Fondation</b>	<b>Ms Annette SPANGENBERG</b>  <b>Mr Viktor BERISHAJ</b>
<b>European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE)</b>	<b>Ms Sabrina DIETZ</b> Wildlife Policy Officer  <b>Guillaume AGEDE</b> Policy Adviser on Large Carnivores
<b>Foreningen Våre Rovdyr / The Norwegian Carnivore and Raptor Society</b>	<b>Ms Alette SANDVIK</b> CEO  <b>Ms Ingvild Elise IHLE</b> Adviser
<b>Green Home</b>	<b>Ms Azra VUKOVIĆ</b> Executive Director
<b>ANUU Migratoristi</b> Italian Hunting association member of FACE Italy	<b>Mr Ferdinando RANZANICI</b> Environmental Certification and Natura 2000 Expert ANUU association member of FACE Italy
<b>International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF)</b>	<b>Mr Julian MÜHLE</b> IAF Secretariat
<b>International Council of Game and Wildlife Conservation</b>	<b>Ms Alexandra KALANDARISHVILI</b> Senior Policy Coordinator
<b>Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET)</b>	<b>Mr George SAMPSON</b> Director  <b>Ms Brigit BRAUN</b>
<b>NOAH - for animal rights</b>	<b>Ms Siri MARTINSEN</b> Head of NOAH  <b>Ms Katrin VELS</b> Legal consultant
<b>Protect Jadar and Radjevina/Zaštitimo Jadar i Radevinu</b>	<b>Ms Marija ALIMPIĆ-KATSAKIORI</b> Organisation Representative  <b>Mr Goran TOMIC</b> Organisation member  <b>Mr Dimitrija TOMIC</b> Organisation member

<b>Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)</b>	<b>Mr Zydjon VORPSI</b> Project Manager, ornithologist at PPNEA
<b>Pro Natura – Friends of the Earth</b>	<b>Mr Friedrich WULF</b> Head, International Biodiversity Policy  <b>Ms Aline CHAPUIS</b> Chargée de projet "Doubs vivant"
<b>Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage</b>	<b>Mr Jean Paul BURGET</b> Président de Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage  <b>Mme Sylviane BURGET</b> Association Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage  <b>Ms Eléa DELAUNAY</b> Secrétaire Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage  <b>Ms Marie Adèle BRUPPACHER</b> Secrétaire Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage
<b>Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation</b>	<b>Ms Kyriaki MICHAEL</b> Executive Director
<b>World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF</b>	<b>Ms Beate STRIEBEL-GREITER</b> WWF Sturgeon Initiative Leader
<b>World Sturgeon Conservation Society</b>	<b>Mr Jörn GESSNER</b>
<b>Youth and Environment Europe</b>	<b>Mr Ashton MELFOR</b> Biodiversity Liaison Officer

#### INVITED EXPERTS / EXPERTS INVITES

<b>Ms Laura Patricia GAVILAN IGLESIAS</b> Consultant
<b>Mr Otars OPERMANIS</b> Expert
<b>Mr Dave E. PRITCHARD</b> Consultant
<b>Mr ALan REES</b> Consultant
<b>Mr Marc ROEKAERTS</b> Expert Consultant
<b>Mr Riccardo SCALERA</b> IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group

**Prof. Arie TROUWBORST**  
Expert

**INTERPRETERS / INTERPRÈTES**

**Ms Starr PIROT**  
**Ms Claudine Louise PIERSON**  
**Mr Jean-Jacques PEDUSSAUD**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT / SECRETARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

<p><b>Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law /</b> <i>Direction des droits sociaux, de la santé et de l'environnement</i></p>	<p><b>Mr Rafael BENITEZ</b> Director / Directeur</p> <p><b>Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI</b> Head of the Biodiversity Division / <i>Chef de la Division de la biodiversité</i></p>
<p><b>Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law /</b> <i>Direction du conseil juridique et du droit international public</i></p>	<p><b>Ms Ana GOMEZ</b> Head of Division / Chef de Division</p>
<p><b>Bern Convention / Convention de Berne</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Mikaël POUTIERS</b> Secretary / <i>Secrétaire</i></p> <p><b>Mr Marc HORY</b> Project Manager / <i>Gestionnaire de projets</i></p> <p><b>Ms Marta MEḌLIŃSKA</b> Project Manager / <i>Gestionnaire de projets</i></p> <p><b>Mr José AMENGUAL RAMIS</b> Policy Adviser / <i>Conseiller de Politique</i></p> <p><b>Mr Michaël NGUYEN</b> Administrative and Project Officer / <i>Chargé de mission administratif et de projets</i></p> <p><b>Ms Irina SPOIALĂ</b> Administrative Assistant / <i>Assistante Administrative</i></p> <p><b>Ms Jenny MITCALF</b> Administrative Assistant / <i>Assistante Administrative</i></p> <p><b>Mr Mark BARLOW</b> Administrative Assistant / <i>Assistant Administratif</i></p> <p><b>Ms Inès CARTER</b> Trainee / <i>Stagiaire</i></p> <p><b>Mr Hugh O'REILLY</b> Trainee / <i>Stagiaire</i></p>