



Strasbourg, 10 February 2026

T-PVS(2025)23

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

45<sup>th</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 8-12 December 2025

Strasbourg

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Opening of the meeting: 2.00 pm CET on Monday 8 December 2025

Close of the meeting: 12.30 pm CET on Friday 12 December 2025

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**- Meeting Report -**

*Document prepared by  
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

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## **PART I – OPENING**

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

Relevant document: T-PVS/Agenda(2025)21 – draft agenda of 45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee

The Standing Committee welcomed two new observers (not present in the room) - the Spanish Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey - AECCA (Asociación Española de Cetrería y Conservación de Aves Rapaces), and the Mammal Conservation Europe (MCE).

It was reminded that the Bern Convention celebrated its 46th anniversary this year. The Head of the Reykjavik Process and Environment Department a.i. , Mr Gianluca Silvestrini, welcomed the participants and introduced Ms Grazia Alessandra Siino as the new Secretary of the Bern Convention.

The Committee adopted its agenda (Appendix I).

### **2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2024)21 - 44th Standing Committee meeting report  
T-PVS(2025)04 - Report of the Spring Bureau meeting  
T-PVS(2025)06 - Report of the June Bureau meeting  
T-PVS(2025)16 - Report of the September Bureau meeting -  
T-PVS(2025)22 - Report of the October extraordinary Bureau meeting

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

The Standing Committee took note of the following statements.

The representative of the Slovak Republic shared concerns about the increasing brown bear population and increasing attacks by the brown bear in the Slovak Republic, presenting a risk to human beings. He highlighted the need for controlled regulation, which at present is not allowed due to the strict protection regime. Slovak authorities will coordinate further with the EU on the approach to be taken;

The representative of Ukraine informed of the difficult situation faced by 47% of Emerald sites in Ukraine in the context of the current conflict and asked for the Bern Convention's support in managing this challenging situation. He also brought attention to the serious environmental pressures, such as fires and the destruction of habitats occurring inside or near the occupied zones;

Denmark on behalf of the EU and its member States highlighted the pivotal role of the Bern Convention in the collective protection of biodiversity in Europe throughout more than four decades. It also thanked the Secretariat for its support and highlighted the delay in the preparation of the annotated agenda. It stressed the importance of working on the Strategic Plan, mechanisms to amend appendices to the Bern Convention and on sustainable financing. It also acknowledged the 60th anniversary of the EDPA and welcomed the adoption of the Granada Declaration.

#### **2.1. Reykjavik process and the environment**

*2.1.1. Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law*

*2.1.2. Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and Action Plan related to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment*

*2.1.3. Establishment of a Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV)*

Relevant documents: CM(2025)52-final - Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law  
Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment  
Action Plan related to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment  
GME(2024)1 –Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)  
GME(2024)AR4 –Abridged report of the 4th meeting of the GME  
GME(2024)AR3 –Abridged report of the 3rd meeting of the GME  
GME(2024)AR2 –Abridged report of the 2nd meeting of the GME  
GME(2024)AR1 –Abridged report of the 1st meeting of the GME

GME(2025)10–Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee on the Environment (CDENV)]

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 4th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe held on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavík, Iceland, in particular on the adoption of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, elaborated by the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME), and the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, open for signatures on 3rd December 2025. He also informed on the recently established Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV) and its mandate.

The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Standing Committee about his participation in the last GME meeting (2-4 December 2025), during which participants were informed of the work currently conducted under the Bern Convention.

## **2.2 Participation of the Council of Europe to the COP 30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2025)**

The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Mr Rafael Benitez, regarding the Council of Europe’s participation in COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025, including the three side events organised by the Council of Europe.

The Standing Committee also took note of the Secretariat’s call for the support of the Contracting Parties in the organisation of side events during COP31 and COP17 on biodiversity, which will be held in 2026 in Türkiye and in Armenia respectively.

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

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

#### *3.1.1 Voluntary contributions received in 2025: state of play*

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Inf(2025)18Rev - Table of the voluntary contributions received

The Standing Committee took note of the statistics provided by the Secretariat highlighting the annual amounts of voluntary contributions and the annual number of voluntary contributors. It also took note that in December 2025, the amount of contributions has significantly exceeded last year’s level but does not reach the peak of 2020, currently equating to **€25 718,48** for received contributions (**€258 023** in December 2024) with a further **€2 235,50** pending receipt of commitments from a further three contributors. This already represents an improvement in the level of contributions at this point. It was noted that while several Parties make regular contributions, several 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. The Committee agreed on the suggested scale of voluntary contributions for 2026 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.

#### *3.1.2 Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention*

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)15 - Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)44 - Note on the financing options of the Bern Convention  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)42 – Draft Terms of Reference Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention

The Standing Committee was informed by the Chair of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention, Mr Charles-Henri de Barsac, of the outcomes of the meeting held in September 2025. The Committee took note of the presentation by the Secretariat stating that

the 3<sup>rd</sup> version of the Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention ([T-PVS\(2023\)13](#)) does not fully comply with the internal regulations of the Council of Europe and that another version of the Draft Protocol was drafted to align it with the legal and budgetary frameworks of the Council of Europe ([T-PVS\(2024\)10](#)).

The Standing Committee was informed that in addition to the Draft Protocol other sustainable financing options exist, namely the Partial Enlargement Agreement, the Trust Fund and the Conference of the Parties, as outlined in the Note on the financing options of the Bern Convention ([T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)44e](#)). It was agreed that the option to be pursued is to finalise the Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention. It was requested that a dedicated meeting be organised between Council of Europe and EU officials to openly discuss and explore financing opportunities and any existing difficulties in relation to the Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention, in particular in regard to the governance rule (principle of majority or unanimity) and the EU contribution rate. The Committee decided that the work of the Working Group should continue in 2026 and consequently adopted its Terms of Reference for 2026 (Appendix II).

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)03 – Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention  
T-PVS(2025)14 – Report of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)25rev – Proposals for improving the listing process to amend Appendices I, II & III  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)41 – Terms of Reference Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention

The Standing Committee welcomed the work carried out by the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices, as well as the work of the Secretariat in 2025. The Committee agreed on the importance of introducing an evidence-based mechanism to ground any possible amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention.

The Committee thanked the IUCN representatives for participating in the meeting and providing substantial inputs to the discussion. The IUCN's availability to collaborate with the Bern Convention in the development of an evidence-based mechanism for the procedure to modify the Convention's Appendices was welcomed.

The Committee decided that the work of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices should continue in 2026 and consequently adopted its Terms of Reference for 2026 (Appendix III). The Committee mandated the Working Group to prepare, as a priority, a revised version of [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#) and to further develop a mechanism to provide ad hoc expert scrutiny of proposed species listings, including exploring possible cooperation with the IUCN, to be submitted for discussion and possible adoption to the Standing Committee in December 2026.

The Working Group was requested to explore further the establishment of a scientific advisory group, where resources allow. It was recommended that any possible modifications of the appendices to the Convention should be suspended pending agreement on an improved mechanism and the adoption of a new version of [Recommendation No. 56 \(1997\)](#) by the Standing Committee.

### **3.3. Working Group on overseeing implementation of the Strategic Plan**

Relevant document: T-PVS(2025)01 – Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan

The Standing Committee welcomed the work carried out in 2025 by the Working Group and the consultant, Mr Dave Pritchard. It acknowledged the delays in the implementation of the activities related to the Vision and Strategic Plan 2030 and requested the Secretariat to resume work in this field in 2026. The Committee invited the Secretariat to continue to create synergies between this Working Group, the Group of

Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and the Working Group on Reporting in 2026. The Committee thanked Mr Pritchard for his dedicated work.

### **3.4. Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee: state of play**

The Standing Committee welcomed the progress made by the Bureau and the Secretariat in revising the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee. It was noted that the ongoing work encompasses, *inter alia*, the formal reorganisation of the order of paragraphs, the written procedure, the composition and duration of the terms of office of Bureau members, the possible revocation of observer status, and the rules on communication. The Committee took note of the tentative schedule and of the Bureau's intention to adopt the revised text in Spring 2026, transmit it to the Parties in mid-2026, and submit it for adoption by the Standing Committee in December 2026.

### **3.5. Thematic Groups of Experts and Working Groups under the Bern Convention: state of play and ways forward**

Relevant document: [T-PVS/Inf(2025)30rev - Overview of the thematic group of experts and working groups set up under the Bern convention]

The Standing Committee welcomed the overview prepared by the Secretariat on the Thematic Groups of Experts and the Working Groups set up under the Bern Convention. The Committee *took note* of the distinction between these bodies, of the issues identified regarding their efficiency, coherence, and resource implications, and of the possible options for strengthening their functioning. It was *agreed* that further consideration should be given to this matter also in the context of the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee which could include a dedicated provision on Thematic Groups of Experts and Working Groups. It was also *agreed* that a revision of the Groups is needed and *instructed the Secretariat* to conduct a further analysis of the Groups of Experts and Working Groups, using the criteria proposed by Parties, including:

- existing priorities in terms of species and habitat protection,
- need to avoid duplication with the work of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements,
- working methods and opportunities to strengthen cooperation between experts,
- use and uptake of deliverables produced by the groups,
- possible synergies with the potential establishment of a scientific advisory body, as discussed in the context of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to amend the Appendices of the Convention.

The Committee requested the Secretariat to gradually propose the introduction or the update of the terms of reference of the Thematic Groups of Experts and Working Groups that are to remain active, together with the formulation of clear expectations on deliverables for these Groups. The Committee invited the Bureau and the Standing Committee to further consider the results of this analysis and to present proposals to the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration.

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

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

#### **4.1 Biennial reports 2023-2024 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8: state of play and new Online Reporting System**

The Standing Committee as 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. It took note of the update provided by the Secretariat on the current migration to a new Online Reporting System for reporting under

Article 9.2 of the Bern Convention. The Committee requested the Secretariat to continue this work in 2026 and to inform the Contracting Parties of the implementation schedule at the beginning of 2026.

## **4.2 Council of Europe Interim Progress Review Report 2025: inputs from Contracting parties**

The Standing Committee took note of the functioning of the Council of Europe Interim Progress Review Report 2025 in the framework of the implementation of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget 2024-2027 and the need to provide examples of the concrete results achieved at the level of the Contracting Parties as a follow up to the Bern Convention's work. It also took note of the examples of measures adopted at the national or EU level in the biennium 2024-2025 to follow up on the Bern Convention's work (for instance, changes in policies, legislation and practices in line with the Bern Convention). The Committee encouraged Contracting Parties to submit their contributions in writing by 31 December 2025 to inform the preparation of the report, which will be finalised by 31 January 2026. Lastly, the Committee asked the Secretariat to carry out any such consultation in writing and to allow sufficient time for Contracting Parties to prepare their contributions.

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

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

### **5.1 Conservation of Birds & IKB**

#### **Joint meeting with the CMS MIKT on IKB and Group of Experts on the Conservation of Birds**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)09 - Report of the Joint meeting on IKB of CMS MIKT and Bern Convention  
T-PVS(2025)10 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on conservation of wild birds  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)45rev - Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energies

The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Chair of the 5th Joint meeting with the CMS MIKT on Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds (IKB) and by the Secretariat on behalf of the Chair of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Wild Birds, about the results of both meetings held back-to-back in May 2025 at the CMS premises in Bonn. The Committee thanked CMS for excellent cooperation in organising the Joint meeting on IKB in 2025 and to Croatia for offering to host the following meeting in spring 2027. The Committee was pleased to support the launch of a mid-term assessment towards the goal of the [Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#), to assess progress on eradicating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Wild Birds in Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as the Scoreboard 2026.

The Committee took note of the priority topics proposed by the Group of Experts on the conservation of wild birds, in particular on addressing the effects of persistent environmental pollutants on birds, while stressing the importance of not duplicating the work of CMS, in particular AEWA, and the EU; proposed reformulating the relevant topic to “Invasive species, with special attention to small carnivores. Further, special attention should be given to small islands with seabird breeding populations. It welcomed the “Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energies” ([TPVS/Inf\(2025\)45rev](#)) highlighting the challenges of addressing the climate crisis while minimising negative impacts on biodiversity; encouraged Parties to make use of the recommendations therein.

### **5.2 Conservation of Large Carnivores**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)11 - Report of the meeting of the Group of experts on Large Carnivores – June 2025  
T-PVS(2025)17 – Report of the meeting of the Group of experts on Large Carnivores – September 2025  
T-PVS/ Inf(2025)37rev – Draft Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on large carnivores  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)48e - Note on wolf monitoring  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)19rev\_ Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures  
T-PVS/Inf(2025)49 - Strategy for the Rescue and Conservation of the Balkan Lynx 2026–2035

The Standing Committee welcomed the relaunch of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores and took note of the work it has carried out since, as presented by the Secretariat on behalf of the Chair of the Group, who

was elected at its meeting in June 2025. The Committee adopted the Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores (Appendix IV) and invited the Secretariat to prepare similar Terms of Reference for other thematic Groups of Experts. It supported the proposal to prepare a survey on the legal protection status as well as lethal and non-lethal management measures in place after the downlisting of the wolf in the frameworks of the Bern Convention and of the Habitats Directive, as per the Note on wolf monitoring ([T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)48e](#)).

The Committee invited the Group to also consider, to the extent possible, monitoring the impact of the downlisting of the wolf on its populations across Europe based on available information from different sources, such as reporting in the framework of [Resolution No. 8 \(2012\)](#) on the national designation of adopted Emerald sites and the implementation of management, monitoring and reporting measures, as well as data that several Observers offered to share.

The Committee endorsed “Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures” ([T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)19rev](#)), which may inspire further discussion on a holistic way of dealing with the sensitive issue of sustainable management of large carnivores, in particular of brown bear and grey wolf populations, and encouraged consideration of the document by all Parties and other relevant stakeholders. It welcomed the Range-wide Strategy for the Rescue and Conservation of the Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) 2026–2035 and encouraged the range States to actively engage in its implementation on the national level.

The Committee took note of the information provided by EURONATUR on the ongoing LIFE DinPin Bear project aiming for population-level conservation of the Dinaric-Pindos brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) through reducing habitat fragmentation and human-bear cohabitation conflicts, strengthening, monitoring and management frameworks, and enhancing transnational co-operation. The Committee also took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the large number of complaints submitted in relation to the downlisting of the wolf, resulting in a significant increase in workload.

### **5.3 Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)07 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species  
T-PVS(2025)08 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles  
T-PVS(2025)18 - Report of the joint meeting of the Groups of Experts on Invasive Alien Species and on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles  
T-PVS(2025)19 - Report of the follow-up meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species

The Standing Committee took note of the information presented by the Chair of the Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles and the Vice Chair of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species (IAS), including in their common scope of interest. The Committee expressed support for proposed work priorities of the Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles, in particular on identifying and developing Important Herpetofauna Areas (IHAs) at European and national levels, in coordination with the European Union.

The Committee welcomed the new momentum in the work of the Group of Experts on IAS and encouraged all Parties to actively engage in elaborating on the priority topics identified at the two meetings held in 2025, taking into consideration the key documents and initiatives of the EU and other relevant institutions. The Committee expressed support for the initiated cooperation and the proposed joint work priority of both Groups of Experts focused on combatting alien pathogens and pathogens spread by IAS, in particular *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* chytrid fungus (Bsal). It is expected that this should deliver tangible and practical outcomes, such as guidance on pathways management and wildlife trade.

### **5.4 Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck**

The Standing Committee welcomed the achievements of the Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Action Plan for the control and eradication of the Ruddy Duck in Europe, despite indications that suggest that on a European scale, the problem has persisted in 2025.

The Committee accepted the Bureau's proposal to extend the current Action Plan for the eradication of the Ruddy Duck by one year, to allow time to prepare a report on the implementation of the 2021–25 Action Plan, and to avoid a timeout in the eradication of the species in the wild considering the critical point in which the Plan is currently. The Group of Experts on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck was requested to meet in 2026 in order to discuss the implementation of the current Action Plan and to draft a new Action Plan for adoption at the Standing Committee meeting in 2026, subject to the availability of financial and human resources.

## 5.5 Conservation of Habitats

### 5.5.1 *Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest*

- a) Revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF) and inclusion in Resolution No.5 (1998)
- b) Criteria for assessing changes in the Emerald Network
- c) Screening, prior assessment and authorisation of potential harmful projects
- d) Draft updated list of adopted Emerald Network sites and draft updated list of candidate Emerald Network sites
- e) Update on the support provided to Contracting Parties to ensure updated databases are submitted to the Bern Convention

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)20 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks  
T-PVS/PA(2025)03 - Standard Data Form  
T-PVS/PA(2025)01 - Criteria for assessing changes in the Emerald Network  
T-PVS/PA(2025)02 - Emerald Network: screening, prior assessment and authorisation of potentially harmful projects  
T-PVS/PA(2025)04 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network candidate sites  
T-PVS/PA(2025)05 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network adopted sites

The Standing Committee took note of the outcomes of the 15th meeting of the Group of experts of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks (GoEPAEN). It thanked the authorities of Montenegro for hosting the meeting of the GoEPAEN. The Committee emphasised the strategic importance of consolidating and strengthening the Emerald Network as a key pillar of the pan-European conservation framework that also includes the Natura 2000 sites network established in the European Union.

The Committee adopted the new Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF) (Appendix VI), as Annex to Resolution No. 5 (1998), after making some changes in the draft. Also agreed that mandatory fields 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 do not have “blockers” but record an “error” when data cannot be provided.

It welcomed the inventory of relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures on assessment of potentially harmful projects or activities affecting Emerald Network sites in protected areas and encouraged Contracting Parties to make full use of the existing body of guidance and best practices identified, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring legal certainty when evaluating potentially harmful projects.

It mandated the Secretariat to conduct a legal analysis regarding the criteria for assessing negative changes and the possibility of reducing or fully delisting an Emerald site due to "imperative reasons of overriding public interest" in exchange for compensatory measures, as well as its compatibility with Article 9 of the Bern Convention, and requested to update the “Guidelines for explaining negative changes in Emerald Network proposed candidate sites and adopted sites” ([T-PVS/PA\(2017\)7](#)). Agreed that the documents produced in this regard will be submitted to the next meeting of the GoEPAEN in Autumn 2026.

The Committee took note of the proposal of the EU Commission to transpose certain elements of the Birds and Habitats Directives into the EU Energy Community Treaty thereby extending the EU's energy acquis to energy projects in those candidate countries that are parties to the Treaty to ensure species and protected-area safeguards comparable to EU standards across nationally protected areas, Emerald sites, and Ramsar sites. It also noted with concern the lack of progress in new site designations and database updates (Appendix VII).

The Committee urged Contracting Parties to designate new Emerald sites and to submit databases as a key tool to support the development of the Emerald Network to meet its 2030 targets. It welcomed the initiative to organise a Joint meeting of the GoEPAEN and the Working Group on overseeing the implementation of the

Vision and Strategic Plan in 2026. The Committee thanked the Consultants, Mr Dave Pritchard, Mr Otars Opermanis, Ms Laura Gavilan and Mr Marc Roekaerts, for their dedicated work.

### 5.5.2 *European Diploma for Protected Area (EDPA)*

- a) Meeting of the Group of Specialists on the EDPA
- b) Celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EDPA
- c) Roundtable of the Managers of the Diploma holding areas
- d) Award ceremony of the EDPA to Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve (Spain)
- e) New applications for EDPA

Relevant documents: T-PVS/DE(2025)07 – Report of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas  
 T-PVS/DE(2025)09 – List of areas which could benefit from an on-the-spot appraisal in 2026  
[60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas](#) - Broadcast of the Celebratory Event, 21 May 2025  
[TPVS/Agenda\(2025\)05](#) - Event to mark the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas, 21 May 2025  
[TPVS/Agenda\(2025\)08](#) - Roundtable of the Managers of the Diploma holding areas, 21-22 May 2025  
[TPVS/DE\(2025\)06](#) - Granada Declaration

The Standing Committee thanked the Spanish authorities for having hosted the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the EDPA, the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Diploma, the Round Table of Managers of the Diploma holding areas and the award ceremony of the EDPA to the Regional Park of Gallipoli Cognato (Italy). It welcomed the outcomes of the aforementioned activities.

It took note of the awarding ceremony of Sierra Nevada National Park, Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve as a new European Diploma holding site, in the framework of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention. It also took note of the Communication campaign prepared to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the European Diploma.

It welcomed the Granada Declaration as a strategic document for the future of the EDPA community of protected areas and encouraged all European countries with protected areas of exceptional European interest to apply for the European Diploma. It also welcomed the new applications for the European Diploma submitted by Poland and Georgia and invited the Group of Specialists of the European Diploma to evaluate the applications in its 2026 meeting. The Committee welcomed the appointment of the new members of the Group of Specialists of the European Diploma.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS(2025)05 – Abridged meeting Report of the Webinar on Favourable Reference Values, Habitat Condition and Future Prospects  
 T-PVS(2025)01 – Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan  
 T-PVS(2025)21 – Report on the 7th meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting back -to-back with a training course on reporting for non-EU Contracting Parties  
 T-PVS Inf(2025)43 - Terms of Reference Working Group on Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

The Standing Committee welcomed the work carried out to follow up on [Resolution No. 8 \(2012\)](#). It took note of the report and the outcomes of the webinar on Favourable Reference Values, Habitat Condition and Future Prospects and the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *ad hoc* Working Group on Reporting held back-to-back with a training course on reporting on Reportnet 3 for non-EU Contracting Parties.

The Committee thanked the European Environment Agency for the good cooperation in the implementation of the activities related to Resolution No. 8 (2012). It took note of the upcoming launch of the Reportnet 3 portal for reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012). The Committee strongly invited non-EU contracting parties to report via Reportnet3 under Resolution No. 8 (2012) by 31 March 2026.

It supported the idea of giving the necessary visibility to the results of this process to enable a Pan-European overview of the conservation status and in this regard welcomed the proposal of the Secretariat to attend COP 17 in Armenia in 2026.

The Committee adopted the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) (Appendix V). It thanked the Consultants, Ms Laura Gavilan and Mr Marc Roekaerts, for their dedicated work.

## **PART IV – MONITORING OF SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS**

### **6. SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS**

#### **6.1 Minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity**

The Standing Committee took note of the information presented and commended the active involvement of both the Government and the Complainants in the respective online meetings on the three case-files concerning mining in Serbia (2021/07, 2022/06 and 2022/08).

It appreciated the readiness of the Serbian Government to host the round-table and an On-the-Spot Appraisal (OSA), possibly related to the case of Complaint No. 2022/06, Possible File: Serbia: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Bosilegrad and in the Homolje Mountain region, and asked the Secretariat to initiate the preparations to hold both activities in Serbia in 2026, in communication with the interested parties.

The Committee welcomed the initiative of the Secretariat to organise bilateral meetings on issues addressed in case-files; resources permitting, the approach could be considered for relevant Open Files, in particular to protect biodiversity at the Emerald Network sites and the candidate ones.

#### **6.2 Open Files**

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_comp - Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_ngo - Archelon NGO Report

The Standing Committee took note of the report of ARCHELON, and thanked both the authorities and MEDASSET, the complainant, for their presentations. It thanked both parties for their participation in the On-the-Spot Appraisal (OSA), which took place on 17-18 June 2025, back-to-back with another OSA at Thines Kiparissias.

It welcomed the proposal from the Greek Government for the establishment of a new marine National Park in the Ionian Sea, encompassing Zakynthos National Park and Thines Kiparissias protected area, which will increase the protection.

It appreciated the local National Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) Management Unit's assent to the Environmental Impact Assessment on the restoration of the Zakynthos landfill at Skopos and urged the Greek authorities and the municipality of Zakynthos towards the complete environmental restoration of the area, which is included in the National Marine Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ).

It commended immediate actions of the NECCA on the construction activities on Marathonisi Island under a 2022 building permit, leading to a suspension order (Reference No. 792/2025) by the Zakynthos Building Authority.

It welcomed the improvements on the management measures for some of the six protected nesting beaches visited, such as increased cordoning of the nesting areas at the back of all the beaches, more and new signs, and warden presence.

The Committee remained concerned with the new touristic facilities in Daphni. Also noted the progressive deterioration of the beach due to human activity and climate change. It requested both parties to take stock of this situation, the legality of the constructions and businesses established and, where appropriate, the timeline and measures taken to remedy the situation, including demolition of illegal buildings where necessary.

It urged the Greek authorities to immediately launch an environmental study of the beach erosion at Gerakas and at Daphni Beach, and to prepare a restoration project for both beaches.

It noted with concern that breaches of [Recommendation No. 9 \(1987\)](#) were reported by the complainants, namely: 1) frequent and repeated violation of the rules and regulations on controlling marine traffic and sea turtle spotting by tourists; 2) very high marine traffic with no enforcement of the speed limits in the bay, including increased number of touristic boats practicing unregulated sea turtle spotting, which facilitate lethal collisions and mobbing of the animals. These violations are eased by an insufficient surveillance and enforcement by authorities during the breeding season.

The Committee urged the Greek authorities to evaluate the compatibility of current sea turtle watching in Laganas Bay and the conservation of *Caretta caretta*, and to set up charge capacity limits for the activity.

It noted with concern the excessive use of fireworks and strobing lights from local nightclubs in the wider area of Laganas, interfering with the turtle nesting all along the breeding season.

It urged the Greek authorities to close the illegal road connecting Daphni and Gerakas beaches, a land area of the Zakynthos National Park in the vicinity of the marine A-zone, and to ensure maximum protection and restoration of the area. The Committee also urged the Greek authorities to prepare a comprehensive legally binding management plan through a participative procedure, and also urged the Greek authorities, to advance in the coordination between different administrations with competencies in the area of the surveillance and enforcement of the National Park legal framework.

The Committee was informed that due to long-term sick-leave of the international expert involved in the OSA after his return from the mission, the OSA report and the resulting recommendations could not be prepared in time for the Standing Committee in December 2025 and cannot be finalised in the foreseeable future. In view of the exceptional circumstances, which prevented fulfilment of the requirements of the mission in the appropriate timeframe, proposed to repeat the OSAs for both case files 2010/05 and 1986/08 in 2026, with the participation of another international expert, involvement of the Bureau and a member of the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Greek authorities and the complainants.

The Committee asked the Greek authorities to host the repeated OSA for Laganas Bay in 2026, to ensure the complainant's involvement in the preparations and running of the OSA, and for all local stakeholders and sectoral administrations with competencies in the area, in order to foster decisive advances towards resolving the persistent issues addressed by this case-file.

It took note of the Greek authorities' statements regarding limitations as for the organisation of the OSAs in 2026. Dialogue will continue in this matter in order to find a mutually acceptable framework.

It was announced that **the file remains open**, and both parties were invited to report to the Bureau in **Spring 2026**.

➤ **2010/05: Greece: Threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias (OSA)**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_comp - Complainant Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_ngo - Archelon NGO Report

The Standing Committee took note of the report of ARCHELON, and thanked both the authorities and MEDASSET, the complainant, for their presentations. It welcomed the agreement by both parties to participate in the On-the-Spot Appraisal (OSA), which took place on 19-20 June 2025, back-to-back with another OSA at Laganas Bay, Zakynthos, and thanked the participation of a representative of the EU Commission.

It was informed that the National Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) is in the process of contracting the following works:

- Construction of wooden fencing to protect priority dune habitats (habitat types 2270\* & 2250\*) across approximately 3 km.
- Placement of twenty new ecological and behavioural awareness signs.
- Installation of wooden bollards at sensitive points to restrict vehicle entry.
- Sand dune stabilisation, invasive species removal, and placement of wooden boardwalks.

It welcomed the steady increase in the number of nests reflected in the 2025 reports from the parties and congratulated both NECCA and the NGOs working in the field during the nesting season for this successful result. It underlined the need for the adoption and enforcement of the management plan, which has been delayed for over six years and urged the Greek authorities to adopt and enforce it.

The Committee is concerned about the persistent breaches of the Presidential Decree affecting sensitive parts of the protected area, and the apparently minimal managerial actions adopted to correct them: extreme light pollution in critical areas, reduced surveillance and enforcement, uncontrolled camping and vehicle entrance affecting the sand dunes, extensive agricultural activity on the sand dunes without official knowledge of the property rights of the land affected, unmanaged beach furniture at night, illegal businesses and activities affecting long stretches of the breeding area, minor effective environmental education/information on site.

It is also concerned about the presence of naturalised invasive species in the sand dunes, in particular *Carpobrotus edulis*, and asks the administration in charge to eradicate it as soon as possible. The Committee urged the Greek authorities to unify as much as possible the surveillance and enforcement of the environmental legal framework in the Thines Kyparissias Bay, for the sake of efficient management, and advance decisively in the coordination between different administrations with competencies in the area.

The Committee was informed that due to long-term sick-leave of the international expert involved in the OSA after his return from the mission, the OSA report and the resulting recommendations cannot be finalised in time for the Standing Committee in December 2025 nor in the foreseeable future.

In view of the exceptional circumstances, which prevented fulfilment of the requirements of the mission in the necessary timeframe, proposed to repeat the OSAs for both case files 2010/05 and 1986/08 in 2026, with the participation of another international expert, the involvement of a member of the Bureau and a member of the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Greek authorities and the complainants.

The Committee asked the Greek authorities to host the repeated OSA for Thines Kyparissias in 2026, to ensure the complainant's involvement in the preparations and running of the OSA, and for all local stakeholders and sectoral administrations with competencies in the area, in order to foster decisive advances towards resolving the persistent issues addressed by this case-file. It took note of the Greek authorities' statements regarding limitations as for the organisation of the OSAs in 2026. Dialogue will continue in this matter in order to find a mutually acceptable framework.

It was announced that the **file remains open**, and both parties were invited to report to the Bureau in **Spring 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)1995-06\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)1995-06\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee celebrated the significant advances in the protection of the sea turtle nesting population in the area, and the increasing numbers in nests and breeding females for both species, *Caretta caretta* and, in particular, *Chelonia mydas*.

It took note that according to the government reporting, points 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of [Recommendation No. 191 \(2016\)](#) are considered fully implemented.

The Committee welcomed the information provided on the measures adopted on point 6 of [Recommendation No. 191 \(2016\)](#), *implementation of the protection measures of the newly formulated management plan through appropriate and adequate funding*, which is considered fully implemented by the Cypriot authorities, as well as the budget allocated for that purpose.

It welcomed that at the end of 2026 all 37 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) will have a Ministerial Decree that establishes management plans, objectives and measures for each SAC.

The Committee took note that according to the government report the nesting beach of Limni, in the Polis-Gialia Natura 2000 area, is in excellent condition, that two patrol officers have been employed and the eradication of the invasive alien species *Acacia saligna* is moving forward. Additionally, actions have been implemented to restore sand dune habitats and to control access to the beach, using fencing and wooden boardwalks. It welcomed the Rejection of a proposed large-scale development, consisting of 69 two-story villas in Xerolimni Pegeia, in the vicinity of the marine protected area.

The Committee welcomed the proposal for expansion of the SPAMI Lara –Toxeftra Turtle Reserve by the Regional Activity Centre of the Mediterranean Action Plan (**UNEP/MAP-RAC/SPA**) in its 2025 assessment, recommending a buffer zone of 500m for the SPAMI band both at land and at sea, and to extend the marine limits to at least to 50m depth, which is close to the limit of presence of Posidonia beds, but also is the limit depth for trawlers, and urged the Cypriot authorities to comply with these recommendations.

It also welcomed the information that no construction or other works have commenced in the resort golf projects in Limni, and that according to the authorities the project is not expected to move forward. At the same time, the Cypriot authorities were requested to consolidate the cancellation of the project by means of an appropriate legally binding procedure.

The information on the enforcement measures at the nesting beaches in the marine protected area was welcomed by the Committee, which were adequately patrolled and controlled by agents of authority. Expressed hope that the number of agents of authority would increase to adequately cover the whole of the beaches in the rest of Akamas peninsula.

It regretted that there have been no advances in the declaration of Akamas Peninsula as a National Park, according to point 1 of [Recommendation No. 191 \(2016\)](#), and suggested the Cypriot authorities to comply with this.

The Committee was concerned that the Natura 2000 sites in the Akamas peninsula still lack binding mechanisms which legally support the protection of the areas, management plans and a management body in place, except for the National Forest Park (NFP). It requested to be informed of future developments on the referring of the EU Commission of Cyprus to the Court of Justice of the EU for failing to designate SCIs as SACs of the Natura 2000 Network, and for failing to establish conservation objectives and measures for these sites.

It regretted that the Sustainable Development Plan for the Akamas peninsula includes activities and developments, like upgrades of the road network, which are already having a significant negative effect on the area, and that the largest part of the project for the improvement of the main forest roads within the Akamas NFP has been implemented without being assessed by the procedure of the Appropriate Assessment Report (AA).

The Committee was concerned that some of the protection measures preventing vehicle access, which were in place in the beaches, have been removed, leaving the nesting sites more exposed during summertime. It expressed its concern that there was growing pressure to expand the quarry adjacent to the Natura 2000 area in Androlikou gorges. It was concerned that, although there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the parties, there has been no progress in the implementation of this participatory initiative. The

Bureau urged the parties to provide updates on the development of the MoU, in order to advance positively in the resolution of the case file.

The Committee urged the Cypriot authorities to unify as much as possible the surveillance and enforcement of the Akamas peninsula legal framework, for the sake of efficient management, and advance decisively in the coordination between different administrations with competencies in the area.

It recognised the outstanding successes achieved along the time by the turtle conservation programmes in the peninsula and invited the Cypriot authorities to advance and further the comprehensive protection of the Akamas peninsula, prioritising conservation over other sectorial policies.

The Committee announced that **the file remains open**, and both parties were invited to report to the Bureau in **Spring 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2012-09\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2012-09\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee took note of the Turkish Government's report and thanked both the government and the complainant for their presentations. It acknowledged some progress reported by the authorities in the management and enforcement of regulations in both areas. The use of cameras for enforcement purposes is welcomed. Vehicle access control has improved, but vehicle tracks were still documented in several locations, including pristine zones near the vehicle entry point at Akmaz picnic area.

The Committee welcomed the advances with the RESCOM project in Patara, and the improvements in the preparation of the Management Plan for Patara Special Protection Areas (SEPA) with participatory input, planned to be implemented in 2026, and the start of the preparation of an Action Plan for Patara. It noted with concern that additional efforts were needed to adequately protect the area, and that strong differences in conservation efforts, surveillance and enforcement are found between Fethiye and Patara. Fethiye is a matter of special concern, as it seems that conservation of the area is secondary to touristic development, without visible efforts to make compatible and sustainable both activities. For example, monitoring and conservation activities are restricted to Patara. Therefore, nest numbers in Fethiye are steadily declining.

The Committee expressed its concern about new developments and human disturbances at the Çalış beach: aquatic sport equipment, sunbeds, wooden walkways and carpet-covered paths are left or installed directly on the beach and during the night. The hotel construction in the eastern part of Yanıklar has destroyed the formerly marshy habitat present in the area. Gravel parts of the beach have been artificially re-sanded. Light pollution affecting nesting areas is common. Staffing levels are inadequate for the extensive coastline, high touristic activity in summer and high nesting density.

It urged the Turkish authorities to complete the Management Plan for Fethiye and effectively enforce conservation measures included in Recommendation [No. 182 \(2015\)](#) and [No. 183 \(2015\)](#), in the area. It also urged the Turkish authorities to harmonise as much as possible the surveillance and enforcement of the law in the Fethiye and Patara SPAs, for the sake of efficient management, and advance decisively in the coordination between different administrations with competencies in the area, especially with the municipalities.

The Committee concluded that the two sites differ in their management needs, trends in the sea-turtle nesting population, levels of light and waste pollution, urban development, and touristic use, with Patara showing better results in terms of the conservation status of nesting turtles.

It decided, therefore, the splitting of the case file into two: one case file for Fethiye, **which remains open**, and another one for Patara, whose status changes to **stand-by**. Both parties were invited to report for both case files to the Bureau in **Spring 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2013-01\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2013-01\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their presentations. It regretted that no tangible progress has been achieved in the implementation of [Recommendation No. 211 \(2021\)](#). It also regretted that there is still no ban on hydropower within and impacting on protected areas, contrary to what is required by international standards.

The Committee noted with regret that after 15 years the Mavrovo National Park has still not been reproclaimed and no Management Plan for the protected area exists. It urged the authorities to amend the Environment Law in order to strengthen the process for all forms of environmental impact assessments in national legislation, to ensure that they meet international standards in this field and address point 2, 5 and 9 of [Recommendation No. 211 \(2021\)](#) including by guaranteeing proper public participation in all phases of the process.

It welcomed the active involvement of the Government in the preparation of the Draft Regional Strategy for the Conservation of the Balkan Lynx in its natural range, while regretting the lack of state funding for the Lynx Action Plan so far, and encouraged the authorities to ensure the necessary means to contribute at national level to the implementation of the Strategy.

The Committee encouraged continued cooperation between authorities, civil society, and stakeholders, including through initiatives such as the International Nature Conference organised by Eko-svest and held in Skopje on 28 October 2025, which brought together key actors including representatives from the Bern Convention Secretariat, ministries and relevant institutions, IUCN, civil society organisations and donors.

The Committee decided to **mandate an on-the-spot appraisal in 2026** given the seriousness of the issues brought to its attention.

It was announced that **the file remained open**, and both parties were invited to submit progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2026** with information on the progress made towards the implementation of [Recommendation No. 211 \(2021\)](#).

➤ **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(2025)2017-02\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2017-02\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their presentations. The Committee expressed strong concern regarding the absence of progress in the implementation of [Recommendation No. 221 \(2023\)](#). It regretted that there is no progress towards proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature and Studenchishte Marsh as a Park of Nature and requested North Macedonia to implement points 7,8 and 13 of Recommendation No. 221 (2023) as a matter of urgency.

The Committee expressed extreme concern about lack of implementation of the Management Plan for Ohrid Region and the Strategic Recovery Plan for the Ohrid Region, especially regarding the ban on any construction within the Ramsar site and further urbanisation of the candidate Emerald sites, and requested urgent implementation of points 3 and 4 of [Recommendation No. 221 \(2023\)](#).

It recalled that the issues posed by illegal constructions and their negative impact on biodiversity within the Ramsar site have direct implications for the World Heritage status of the areas. The Committee condemned the ongoing legalisation of illegal constructions within Galichica National Park and along lake Ohrid, which are areas of very high biodiversity importance and candidate Emerald sites.

It encouraged opening of a structured dialogue between central government, municipal authorities, the complainant and civil society; such dialogue could be facilitated through an on-the-spot appraisal aimed at fostering constructive communication and identification of solutions.

The Committee announced that **the file remained open** and invited both parties to submit progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2026**, providing information on progress made towards the implementation of [Recommendation No. 221 \(2023\)](#).

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-05\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-05\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the Complainant for the updated report submitted in November ahead of the Standing Committee and both parties for their presentations on the implementation of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#).

The Committee highlighted the outstanding importance of the Vjosa river and its estuary, one of the best-preserved fluvial ecosystems in the entire Mediterranean Sea basin, which is currently at risk of being irreversibly damaged by human activities in this area, including Vlora International Airport.

It regretted that point 1 of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#) on the suspension of the construction of Vlora airport to conduct an appropriate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was disregarded and expressed again its strong regret that point 1 of [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#), requesting the suspension of construction of the Vlora International Airport pending the completion of a new and sufficient Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and appropriate assessment, was not implemented, and noted with concern that no such new EIA has been presented to date, despite repeated calls from the Bureau and the Standing Committee.

It requested the Government to ensure full compliance with the Bern Convention, including Articles 3 and 4, and underlined that the any restoration, mitigation or offsetting measures as well as possible operation of the Airport must be based on, and follow, a comprehensive and legally compliant EIA, addressing cumulative impacts on habitats and species of concern in the Vjosa–Narta area.

The Committee called for increased cooperation between the Government and civil society organisations, in particular EcoAlbania and PPNEA. It requested the Government to consider holding an On-the-site Appraisal and inform the Bureau of the feasibility in its next report.

It noted its understanding that adherence to [Recommendation No. 219 \(2023\)](#) will also satisfy key EU accession requirements, helping Albania's European integration prospects and called on the Government to fully implement it.

The Standing Committee announced that **the file remains open** and, due to the urgency of the matter, requested both parties to provide updates for the **Autumn Bureau meeting in 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-04\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-04\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee noted that no reports were submitted by the two Parties ahead of the 45<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting. It highlighted the outstanding biodiversity importance of Skadar Lake and its surrounding wetlands, which is a National Park, a candidate Emerald site since 2011, and a recognised Important Bird Area.

The Committee took note of the Secretariat's report on the visit of the lake that was organised by the Montenegrin authorities on 9 October 2025 in the framework of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Network. It acknowledged the good general status of conservation of the site observed by the participants in the visit, despite the complainant's argument that no progress has been made recently by the Montenegrin authorities regarding implementation of [Recommendation No. 201 \(2018\)](#).

It took note of the presence of illegal houses built by locals on the shores of the lake and requested the Montenegrin authorities to take the necessary measures to remove these buildings. It was informed that no human activity is currently taking place in the Mihailovici area, although the building permits for Porto Skadar Lake and White Village remain valid, and requested that the authorities revoke these permits.

The Committee was informed that boat speed limits are not respected in the lake and requested national authorities to improve its capacity to enforce relevant national laws within the territory of the park. It noted that *Lutra lutra*, a strictly protected species under Appendix II of the Bern Convention, is present on the site and requested that efforts to improve its protection status be continued.

It also noted that the new spatial plan for Montenegro was adopted in June 2025. However, it regretted that the Law on National Parks and the Revision Study of the Protected Area have not been adopted, nor have the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for Skadar Lake National Park and the related spatial planning documents. Concern was also expressed that the Draft Special Purpose Spatial Plan does not address all points of the Recommendation.

The Committee urged the Montenegrin authorities to proceed with the adoption of the Revision Study, which is considered a preliminary step towards adopting several other key instruments, and the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for Skadar Lake National Park, the content of which should comply with the requirements set out in [Recommendation No. 201 \(2018\)](#).

It reiterated its recommendation to produce a detailed habitat map on a 1:10,000 scale for Skadar Lake. The Committee decided to change the status of the file from open to **possible**, and invited both parties to report to the Bureau in **Autumn 2026**.

➤ **2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2019-05\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2019-05\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and presentations. It appreciated the results of the efforts of both parties to enhance the monitoring, state of the habitats and nesting conditions of *C. caretta*, *C. mydas* and *T. triunguis*. It urged the authorities to intensify their efforts to pursue the implementation of [Recommendation No. 226 \(2024\)](#), in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders, including the complainants.

In particular, the Committee called for decisive action to halt further destruction and rehabilitate the habitats of the Nile soft-shelled turtles to enable the local population's survival. It stressed the importance of establishing a turtle protection network (Rec.8) and a turtle monitoring group (Rec.9) for ensuring appropriate coordination of required efforts.

It highlighted that any existing practices and new developments not listed in the [Recommendation No. 226 \(2024\)](#) which could have a negative impact on the nesting beach, such as mining, agriculture or inadequate water management, be carefully assessed and – if considered detrimental – avoided.

It announced that the file remains **open** and invited both parties to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2026**, focused on further implementation of the Recommendation No. 226 (2024) and any other relevant developments.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-09\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-09\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the complainant and the respondent for their reports. It urged the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to comply with their obligations of reporting in due time, both to the Bureau and the Standing Committee.

It welcomed the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism, in cooperation with the City of Konjic, to establish a new protected area of Prenj (potentially under the National Park category), taking into consideration the upper part of the Neretva River.

It also welcomed the news that no activities related to the construction of the planned small hydropower plants in the area upstream from the Ulog hydropower plant have been carried out.

It noted that no further significant progress is indicated neither by the complainant nor by the respondent on the implementation of [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#) since the 44<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee. It also took note that the HPP Ulog dam is fully constructed and operational.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the apparent use of hydropeaking in the operation of the dam, in violation of [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#). The Committee much lamented hearing of an incident that occurred on 12 September 2025 in the operation of the Ulog hydropower plant that led to the [killing of fish and river invertebrates downstream of the plant](#).

It regrettably took note that a report of an independent international experts concluded that the incident observed in the Neretva River in September 2025 was probably caused by the operation of the Hydropower Plant and welcomed the opening of an official criminal case by the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton Prosecutors Office. The Standing Committee urged for the identification of the cause of the incident.

The Committee took note that a letter of concern on the incident of dead fish was addressed to relevant authorities by a consortium of 192 independent international experts, and that the Delegation of the European Union in BiH sent a second letter to the relevant Ministry in Republika Srpska, asking for the effective implementation of [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#).

It requested the authorities to immediately cease the practice of hydropeaking in the operation of the Ulog Hydropower Plant, in accordance with the [Recommendation No. 217 \(2022\)](#).

It invited the authorities to monitor oxygen, water temperature, organic matter content levels and other indicators relevant for assessing the ecological status in the river downstream the Ulog reservoir. It urged the authorities to maintain the remaining sections of the Neretva River network as pristine as possible, to safeguard its unique biodiversity and to finalise procedures for the designation of new protected areas.

It took note of the EU Commission's concern regarding the high pressure from hydropower developments on candidate Emerald sites in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is a risk that important biodiversity areas that might become Natura 2000 sites will be irreversibly damaged by such developments prior to EU accession.

The Committee welcomed the proposal of both parties to organise a technical workshop involving government, civil society and Bern Convention representatives to address the present case and possible case 2022/07 *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica – Gornja Bukovica and Vareš*, focusing on the impacts of hydropower and mining in the Neretva and Trstionica valleys, the related biodiversity challenges, and existing best practices.

It announced that **the file remains open** and invited both parties to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-03\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-03\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the Norwegian Government and the Complainant for their reports and presentations. It concluded that the authorities disregarded the previous Standing Committee decision and the opening of the case-file, and is thus still in breach of the Convention.

The Committee reiterated strong concern over the status of the genetically impoverished, deliberately extremely restricted population of *Canis lupus*, also considering the anticipated increased culling of the Swedish part of the South Scandinavian population.

It urged the Norwegian authorities to allow the wolf population, currently listed as “critically endangered” in Norway, to recover to a satisfactory conservation level and to facilitate immigration of wolves from other populations to lower the inbreeding coefficient.

It expressed concern over the implications for the recent amendment to the clause on emergency culling in the Nature Diversity Act, in cases when “it is highly probable that an attack on grazing animals is imminent” and asked for it to be reconsidered in light of the provisions of the Bern Convention.

It urged the Government of Norway to abolish strict zoning where the wolf is excluded from 95% of the national territory and to reconsider the practice of licenced hunting of wolves for population control as the main conflict mitigation measure; combined with poaching, this approach is keeping the population at the verge of extinction, thus violating the very essence of the Bern Convention (Art. 1, 2 and 3).

It reiterated its appeal to the Government of Norway to prioritise non-lethal, proven measures of damage reduction and conflict mitigation to enhance long-term co-existence between humans and large carnivores, referring to available best practice, such as “Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures” ([T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)19rev](#)).

The Committee suggested organising awareness campaigns and initiating an authentic dialogue among all the relevant stakeholders in search of constructive solutions that would best contribute to restoring the satisfactory population status of the wolf population. It announced that the file remains **open** and invited both parties to report to the **Bureau in Spring 2026**.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2023-03\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2023-03\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities and the complainant for their reports and presentations. It appreciated the manifestly good status of the wolf population, which is naturally growing and reportedly displaying no signs of genetic defects, counting around 40 packs, significantly exceeding the restrictive minimum threshold of 12 packs. However, reiterated its concern over the long-term impact of the current wolf management practice, including extensive proactive regulation by culling of wolf pups, which was also evoked in the Motion 142 adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October 2025.

It took note of the Complainants’ concern over reported irregularities in the cantonal level implementation of the wolf management policy based on the federal law and guidelines, in particular relating to what concerns hunting methods and the training for hunters increasingly involved in the culling, as well as poaching. Also took note of concerns of recent and regular changes of regulations concerning wolf management that might negatively impact the development of the wolf population. Requested further information on the above-mentioned subjects and invited necessary vigilance to avoid the risks of the unselective culling of wolves on a large scale, which would affect the entire Alpine wolf population and the ecosystem, as well as the risk for other species.

In view of the above, the Committee highlighted the need for sound monitoring of the impact of the culling policy on the population concerned, not only in terms of population dynamics but also social and behavioural terms, to allow for holistically evaluating its outcomes. Asked the Swiss Government to provide such data.

The Committee appreciated a significant investment in herd protection and reiterated the Bureau’s request for information on attribution of the funds to lethal and non-lethal measures, and encouraged reinforcement of the latter, which had a proven record of reducing losses.

It invited international cooperation in the design of transboundary policy aligned with the existing Bern Convention Standing Committee Recommendations concerning the wolf, in particular [Recommendation No. 137 \(2008\)](#) on population level management of large carnivore populations, and taking into account existing best practice, referred to in “Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures” [T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)19rev](#).

In view of the information provided by the parties and the change in the protection status of the wolf from Appendix II to Appendix III of the Bern Convention in March 2025, the Committee announced that the status of the File is changed from Open to **Possible**, and both parties were invited to send progress reports to the **Summer Bureau in 2026**.

### 6.3 Possible Files

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2001-04\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2001-04\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities of Bulgaria and the complainant “Save Kresna Gorge” coalition for their oral presentations, and for their joint written reports sent throughout the year. It welcomed their efforts to continue working together to find a solution to the case-file and a series of positive developments that support the implementation of [Recommendation 212 \(2021\)](#) and the decision of the 44<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Convention.

It noted with great satisfaction, in particular, the decision to build a transport route from Simitli to Kresna (North-South) outside of the Kresna Gorge and, in the vicinity of and parallel to the route of the Kulata – Sofia direction (South-North), to the maximum possible extent. In this context, it took note that, further to a new public procurement procedure, the selection of a contractor was made on 22 October 2025. It also noted that the design is expected to integrate measures to mitigate the cumulative impacts of both lanes and that the affected area of protected habitats during construction was reduced to reach less than 1%.

It noted that the Road Infrastructure Agency presented the project to implement mitigation measures to reduce the mortality of species on the existing I-1 road in the Kresna Gorge and that discussions were held with the complainant, in particular on the adaptation of existing culverts, the construction of three new defragmentation facilities and the installation of fencing facilities. It requested to be informed on the decisions taken with regards the installation of fencing facilities.

It also noted that all court cases had been closed following agreements signed on 19 May 2025 by the Road Infrastructure Agency, the Ministry of Environment and Water, and the NGOs, whereby the NGOs agreed to withdraw all their complaints from the administrative courts and the Government committed to making more detailed efforts to implement [Recommendation 212 \(2021\)](#) and the decision of the 44<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Convention. It requested that the NGOs inform it of any concerns arising in relation to the full implementation of these agreements.

The Committee was concerned that harassment of NGO activists initiated by private entities continued and that the Government considered that it cannot act against such a media campaign against the NGO activists, even though it distanced itself from it. It therefore called on the authorities to take action to put an end to the situation described.

It requested the authorities to complete the construction as agreed with NGOs in line with [Recommendation 212 \(2021\)](#) and, in particular, to ensure that sufficient project funding is ensured, high-quality and objective designs are elaborated, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) are conducted and integrate effective mitigations measures for the two planned lanes.

The Committee expected that the European Commission will continue to monitor the development of the project. It noted that **the file remained possible**, and that both parties were invited to send progress reports to the **Autumn Bureau in 2026** with information on the implementation of the agreed way forward. If the parties continue the good practice to present joint reports to the Bureau, the next reporting and presentation to the Standing Committee will be in 2027 and biannually thereafter, at least until the construction of both lanes starts outside the Gorge.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-04\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-04\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the authorities and the complainant for their reports and presentations. It expressed strong concern over advancing construction of the Amulsar Gold mine and the imminent extraction of gold ore, contrary to the decisions of the 43rd and 44th Standing Committee.

It recalled that the mining area is part of the candidate site for the Emerald Network. In order to comply with Article 4 of the Convention, national authorities are requested to actively identify potentially harmful projects or activities, conduct timely and comprehensive impact assessment and authorise only activities compatible with conservation objectives according to [Recommendation No. 225 \(2024\)](#).

It requested the authorities to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Amulsar project is brought fully in line with up-to-date scientific information, including on newly recorded species and habitats, before the beginning of the extraction activity, given the existing controversies and the need to include new species.

The Committee took note of the pending process to revise the Emerald Network in Armenia and welcomed the efforts of the Armenian authorities to involve relevant stakeholders, including NGOs representatives, in the decision-making process. It recalled that any changes to an Emerald site should be based on scientific evidence and not economic interest and that any reduction of the site should be notified via the submission of a database and explained in line with the existing [“Guidelines for Explaining Negative Changes in Emerald Network Proposed, Candidate and Adopted Sites”](#) (T-PVS/PA (2017) 7).

It expressed concern over the risks to species and habitats stemming from the use of extraction methods that are potentially very costly to the environment and welcomed the respondent’s announcement of ongoing environmental monitoring and quarterly reporting including water, soil, biodiversity and air quality checks, as well as a new biodiversity study documenting flora and fauna across the Amulsar area, which will guide, according to the respondent, updated mitigation measures before and during any mining operations.

The Committee took note of the pending process of declaration of the Jermuk National Park. It decided to postpone the decision on the On-the-Spot Appraisal to a later date, taking into account the submissions of both parties.

It announced that the File remains **possible** and invited both parties to provide their update reports to the **Bureau meeting in Spring 2026** with information on the developments in relation to the Amulsar Gold mine, and the revision of the candidate Emerald Network sites in Armenia.

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

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-06\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-06\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and presentations. It appreciated the information provided on the legal framework concerning mining and Environmental Impact Assessments in Serbia. It expressed concern over the irregularities observed near both mines and their potential irreversible impact on flora, fauna and habitats around and downstream from the mines.

Concerning Bosilegrad:

The Committee stressed that a decisive action of the authorities is required to enforce removal/treatment of the tailings, demonstrably causing water and soil pollution with heavy metals downstream of the mine and a remedial action to combat the continuing damage to species and habitats caused by pollution from the mine.

It acknowledged that the draft EIA study for the exploitation of lead, zinc and copper ore deposits at the Podvirovi-Karamanica mine was again rejected again by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, with the proponent of the mine obligated to conduct the outstanding research and analyses. Reiterated that no new licences should be issued for exploration prior to the completion and approval of the EIA study.

It noted that the Bosilegrad mine continued to be nonoperational and called upon the authorities to ensure that all legal and technical requirements are fulfilled before giving any consideration to a potential extension of the mine.

It repeated its request for information on the results of the cooperation in the framework of the Espoo Convention.

Concerning Homolje Mountain:

The Committee noted with concern that the region's biodiversity have been appropriately assessed before granting exploration permits. It expressed strong concern regarding the high levels of heavy metals in the drilling slurry and the use of illegal chemical substances, which are negatively impacting aquatic plants and fish waters downstream of the Homolje exploration site. Called for the cessation of activities causing this pollution, in particular the mismanagement of contaminated slurry, and requested close and regular monitoring of the situation.

It condemned the insufficient consideration of the impacts of exploration activities on water resources, the lack of required permits and the illegal use of local water bodies for the exploration activities, which have led the depletion of water resources and negatively affected the livelihoods of local communities and biodiversity locally and beyond, including in adjacent protected areas.

The Committee repeated its call on the Respondent to pursue the cooperation with the Bulgarian authorities, in view of a high risk of transboundary heavy pollution of water. It urged the authorities to ensure fair treatment for environmental defenders and to enhance the opportunities for public participation.

The Committee thanked the authorities and the complainants for engaging with the Secretariat in two distinct on-line meetings and welcomed their agreement to hold, in Serbia in 2026, a roundtable on minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity, as well as an On-the-Spot Appraisal in one of the two mining sites. The Committee again urged the authorities to reject possible proposals for resuming and expanding mining activities in fragile natural environments.

In view of the previously noted negative impacts and allegedly high risk of further severe and potentially irreversible transboundary consequences of mining - from exploration to extraction and processing activities – the Committee announced that the complaint remains a **possible file** and requested both parties to provide their update reports to the Bureau for its meeting in **Spring 2026**.

➤ **2022/02: Austria: Alleged violation of the Convention in relation to deliberate killing of *lutra lutra***

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-02\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-02\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee took note of the report from Austria and thanked the complainant for their presentations. It noted that, according to Austria's current report (2025) under Article 17 of the [EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC](#) for the years 2019-2024, the conservation status of the otter (*Lutra lutra*) is now "favourable – with an increasing trend" in the Alpine region and "favourable" in the Continental region of Austria, and that the growth in the otter population in the Alpine region has been recorded despite the annual removal of otters in Carinthia (since 2018). Welcomed this positive development and requested the parties to provide information on its assessment by the EU.

The Committee also noted the decline in population of protected aquatic species, in particular those classified as unfavourable in the area such as the Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*), the crayfish (*Astacus astacus*) and the grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*), which are protected species under the Bern Convention (in Appendix III, Protected fauna species). The Committee noted disagreement between the information in the Government report and the expertise presented by the complainant which concludes that a link does not exist between the presence of otters and decline in the fish species, and that the feasibility of applying non-lethal alternatives was not sufficiently considered.

It recalled that the use of conibear traps and other non-discriminant means of capture and killing are considered as a prohibited means and method of killing, capture and other forms of exploitation according to Appendix IV. The Committee expressed concern that the issuing of culling permits was not done on a case-by-case basis, but by setting a fixed quota, and that in view of the lack of inspections, significant uncertainties remain regarding reporting of both culling and illegal killing, posing a risk of significantly underestimating mortality.

It requested the Carinthian authorities, in cooperation with the federal government of Austria to prepare, a comprehensive report on the culling process, including monitoring data, legal justifications and arguments on substance, implementation procedures, and assessment of selectivity and proportionality. It also requested the Carinthian authorities to withdraw or change the current regulation authorising the use of conibear traps, other lethal traps and shooting in light of the provisions of art. 8 and 9 and Appendix IV of the Convention.

The Committee decided to elevate the status of the complaint to an **Open File**, in view of the concerns raised regarding compliance with Articles 8 and 9 of the Convention, and invited both parties to submit progress reports to the **Autumn Bureau meeting in 2026**, including updated monitoring data and the results of the requested review and reporting.

➤ **2022/07: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica – Gornja Bukovica and Vareš**

Relevant documents: Government Report Not Received  
T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-07\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their presentations and the submission of detailed reports. It took note of the efforts and studies conducted by the government, and acknowledged that, according to the authorities, endangered species are not affected, monitoring is ongoing, and the site is located outside protected areas, including proposed Emerald Network and Natura 2000 sites.

It noted that an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) has been conducted in accordance with the applicable legislation. The Committee expressed serious concern about the significant and ongoing impacts of mining activities in the Trstionica Primeval Forest—classified as IUCN Category I and HCVF Category II—even if limited to around thirty hectares, noting that they have already caused severe habitat destruction, continued deforestation and road construction in the riverbed.

It was concerned to note the serious consequences of mining activities on the water system with polluted storm-water discharge into the Bukovica River, extensive degradation of aquatic ecosystems, visible die-off of riparian trees, increasing wildlife mortality, and critical pollution of the Vrući Potok stream, reportedly now “biologically dead,” posing direct risks to the drinking-water supply of Kakanj.

It noted with regret the alleged continued issuance of unlawful permits for private mining activities on state land, the withholding of concession and environmental documentation under claims of “business confidentiality”, a lack of publicly accessible water-quality data, the prolonged inaction of regulatory bodies, and widespread public suspicion of collusion and corruption between investors and authorities.

The Committee recalled the obligations of Parties to ensure transparency, public access to environmental information, and public participation, and encouraged the authorities to disclose all concession agreements, environmental permits, monitoring data, and related documentation.

It welcomed the proposal of both parties to organise a technical workshop involving government, civil society and Bern Convention representatives to address the present case and open case *2020/09: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva River*, focusing on the impacts of hydropower and mining in the Neretva and Trstionica valleys, the related biodiversity challenges, and existing best practices.

The Committee decided that **the file remains possible**, and both parties were invited to send progress reports to the **Spring Bureau in 2026**.

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

➤ **Türkiye: Recommendation No. 95 (2002) on the conservation of marine turtles in Kazanlı beach (Türkiye)**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025) Recommendation No.95\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025) Recommendation No.95\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked the Government for its report, and both Government and Complainant for their presentations. It welcomed the efforts of the Turkish Government towards the removal of some buildings and the taxi parking in the K1 zone, the improved water treatment practices in the Kazanlı urban area, and further advances in the management of the area.

However, the Committee was deeply concerned about the steady decrease in the numbers of nests of *Chelonia mydas* at Kazanlı beach, reported by the authorities. It urged the authorities to pursue the removal of structures and greenhouses from the dunes, reported on by both complainant and authorities (Point 1 of [Recommendation No 95 \(2002\)](#)). The Committee regretted that nocturnal light pollution, the presence of cars and of plastic and urban debris in the dunes and beaches (Rec. 3 and 10) have not been effectively tackled by the Turkish authorities. It was concerned with the massive accumulation of agricultural waste and plastic debris on the road along the beach and urged the Government of Türkiye to ensure that the municipalities dispose of it safely and regularly remove it from the road and zones nearby to prevent it spreading onto the beach.

The Committee was alarmed that after more than 25 years a huge volume of highly toxic chemical residues are still stored in the factory attached to the nesting site, polluting the beach and wildlife there. Removal and/or adequate treatment of the highly toxic residues, included in [Recommendation No 66 \(1998\)](#), is advancing very slowly, while the negative impact on the beach is visible and there were reports of the deaths of fish and turtles due to the incidental spread of the chemicals.

It regretted insufficient monitoring of the sea turtle nesting activity in the area (Rec. 5) and ineffectiveness of the information and public awareness raising campaigns (Rec.7), and urged the authorities to advance decisively in implementing [Recommendation No 95 \(2002\)](#).

Based on the information provided by the parties, the Committee **decided to re-open the case file** and called both the Complainant and the Government to report to the Bureau in **September 2026**.

➤ **Iceland: Recommendation No.190 (2016) on the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, especially birds, in afforestation of lowland in Iceland**

Relevant document: T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.190\_gov - Government Report

The Standing Committee thanked the representative of the Icelandic government for their presentation and commended the Government for the positive steps taken on afforestation, particularly the ongoing work on drafting Iceland's biodiversity strategy and related action plan.

It invited the authorities to share Iceland's progress in implementation of the Recommendation at the **Autumn Bureau meeting in 2027**, ahead of the following Standing Committee meeting.

➤ **Bulgaria: Recommendation No. 200 (2018) on the windfarms planned near Balchik and Kaliakra, and other wind farm developments on the Via Pontica route**

Relevant documents: T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.200\_gov - Government Report  
T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.200\_comp - Complainant Report

The Standing Committee thanked both parties for their reports and their presentations. It took note of the advancements in the implementation of Recommendation No 200 (2018) reported by the respondent in the July 2025 report, but also of the diverging conclusions between the Complainant and Respondent update reports. It commended explicit legal prohibitions on wind turbine construction in a chain of Natura 2000 sites along the Via Pontica corridor, including the permanent ban on turbines in all areas of SPA Kaliakra, reinforced by the inclusion of a marine area of exclusion since 2024.

It welcomed that an independent study of the effect of windfarms on birds in the Bulgarian Via Pontica concluded that mortality due to collision was low, and that there was no evidence of killing of vulnerable species, nor of displacement or barrier effects.

The Committee expressed concern over the fact that the moratorium on new wind farm developments in Dobrudzha and other sensitive areas along the Via Pontica migration route expired at the end of 2020. Noted

that, according to the complainant, during the last two years more than 500 wind turbines have been approved, or are in the process of approval in the geographical areas of Dobrudzha and Ludogorie - some of them without Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and of an unprecedented height exceeding 250 m. Request from the complainant to present evidence to their claim that 500 wind turbines have been approved by the Government.

It encouraged the authorities to establish a detailed map of sensitive sites for the energy infrastructure of Via Pontica, and welcomed the announcement of the imminent opening of an agreed dialogue forum with the complainant, as the best way to advance constructively in the protection of this extremely important migratory route for European birds.

The Committee encouraged the parties to make use of recommendations included in the “Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energies” ([T-PVS/Inf\(2025\)45rev](#)), which highlights the need to address the climate crisis while minimising negative impacts on biodiversity.

Based on the information provided by the parties, confirmed the **follow up status** of the case file and invited the complainant and the authorities to report at the **Autumn Bureau meeting in 2026**, ahead of the following Standing Committee meeting.

## **PART V – COOPERATION AND PROGRAMME OF WORK 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 for the continued international cooperation developed throughout the year with other MEAs and organisations including 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 and the United Nations' Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

It expressed particular thanks to 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 2026**

Relevant document: T-PVS(2025)12– Draft Programme of Activities and budget for 2026

The Standing Committee welcomed that the increase of the allocation of the Ordinary Budget adopted in 2025 had been reconducted by the Committee of Ministers in 2026.

The Committee was informed of the programme of activities ([T-PVS\(2025\)12](#)), and acknowledged the limited human resources available for implementing the Programme of Activities and accepted that activities will be carried out depending on the availability of financial and human resources. The Committee invited Parties interested in hosting meetings of Groups of Experts in 2025 to inform the Secretariat.

### **9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 46<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

The Standing Committee unanimously decided to invite the following States to attend its 46<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;

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 46<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

The Standing Committee agreed to hold its next meeting during the week of 7-11 December 2026 in Strasbourg.

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

The Standing Committee adopted document T-PVS(2025)MISC.

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

The Standing Committee closed the meeting.

## **Appendix I Agenda**

### **- T-PVS/Agenda(2025)21 –**

#### **PART I – OPENING**

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

#### **2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT**

##### **2.1 Reykjavík process and the environment**

##### *2.1.1 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law*

*[CM(2025)52-final - Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law]*

##### *2.1.2 Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and Action Plan related to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment*

*[Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment]  
[Action Plan related to the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment]  
[GME(2024)1 –Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME)]  
[GME(2024)AR4 –Abridged report of the 4th meeting of the GME]  
[GME(2024)AR3 –Abridged report of the 3rd meeting of the GME]  
[GME(2024)AR2 –Abridged report of the 2nd meeting of the GME]  
[GME(2024)AR1 –Abridged report of the 1st meeting of the GME]*

##### *2.1.3 Establishment of a Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV)*

*[GME(2025)10–Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee on the Environment (CDENV)]*

#### **2.2 Participation of the Council of Europe to the COP 30 (Belém, Brazil, November 2025)**

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

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

##### *3.1.1 Voluntary contributions received in 2025: state of play*

*[T-PVS/Inf(2025)18Rev - Table of the voluntary contributions received]*

##### *3.1.2 Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention*

*[T-PVS(2025)15 - Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)44 - Note on the financing options of the Bern Convention]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)42 – Draft Terms of Reference Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention]*

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

*[T-PVS(2025)03 – Report of the 1st meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention]  
[T-PVS(2025)14 – Report of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)25rev – Proposals for improving the listing process to amend Appendices I, II & III]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)41 – Terms of Reference Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention]*

**3.3 Working Group on overseeing implementation of the Strategic Plan**

*[T-PVS(2025)01 – Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan]*

**3.4 Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee: state of play**

**3.5 Thematic Groups of Experts and Working Groups under the Bern Convention: state of play and ways forward**

*[T-PVS/Inf(2025)30rev - Overview of the thematic group of experts and working groups set up under the Bern convention]*

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

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

**4.1 Biennial reports 2023-2024 concerning exceptions made to Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8: state of play and new Online Reporting System**

**4.2 Council of Europe Interim Progress Review Report 2025: inputs from Contracting parties**

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

**5. MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS**

**5.1 Conservation of Birds & IKB**

**Joint meeting with the CMS MIKT on IKB and Group of Experts on the Conservation of Birds**

*[T-PVS(2025)09 - Report of the Joint meeting on IKB of CMS MIKT and Bern Convention]  
[T-PVS(2025)10 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on conservation of wild birds]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)45rev - Guidance tool for good practices in bird conservation in the development of renewable energies]*

**5.2 Conservation of Large Carnivores**

*[T-PVS(2025)11 - Report of the meeting of the Group of experts on Large Carnivores – June 2025]  
[T-PVS(2025)17 – Report of the meeting of the Group of experts on Large Carnivores – September 2025]  
[T-PVS/ Inf(2025)37rev – Draft Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on large carnivores]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)48e - Note on wolf monitoring]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)19rev\_ Best practices for management of large carnivores in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures]  
[T-PVS/Inf(2025)49 - Strategy for the Rescue and Conservation of the Balkan Lynx 2026–2035]*

**5.3 Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**

*[T-PVS(2025)07 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species]  
[T-PVS(2025)08 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles]  
[T-PVS(2025)18 - Report of the joint meeting of the Groups of Experts on Invasive Alien Species and on the Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles]  
[T-PVS(2025)19 - Report of the follow-up meeting of the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species]*

**5.4 Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck**

**5.5 Conservation of Habitats**

**5.5.1 Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest**

*[T-PVS(2025)20 - Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks]*

- a) Revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF) and inclusion in Resolution No.5 (1998)  
*[T-PVS/PA(2025)03 - Standard Data Data Form]*
- b) Criteria for assessing changes in the Emerald Network  
*[T-PVS/PA(2025)01 - Criteria for assessing changes in the Emerald Network]*
- c) Screening, prior assessment and authorisation of potential harmful projects  
*[T-PVS/PA(2025)02 - Emerald Network: screening, prior assessment and authorisation of potentially harmful projects]*
- d) Draft updated list of adopted Emerald Network sites and draft updated list of candidate Emerald Network sites  
*[T-PVS/PA(2025)04 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network candidate sites]*  
*[T-PVS/PA(2025)05 – Draft updated list of Emerald Network adopted sites]*
- e) Update on the support provided to Contracting Parties to ensure updated databased are submitted to the Bern Convention

#### 5.5.2 European Diploma for Protected Area (EDPA)

- a) Meeting of the Group of Specialists on the EDPA  
*[T-PVS/DE(2025)07 – Report of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas]*  
*[T-PVS/DE(2025)09 – List of areas which could benefit from an on-the-spot appraisal in 2026]*
- b) Celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the EDPA  
*[60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas - Broadcast of the Celebratory Event, 21 May 2025]*  
*[TPVS/Agenda(2025)05 - Event to mark the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas, 21 May 2025]*
- c) Roundtable of the Managers of the Diploma holding areas  
*[TPVS/Agenda(2025)08 - Roundtable of the Managers of the Diploma holding areas, 21-22 May 2025]*  
*[TPVS/DE(2025)06 - Granada Declaration]*
- d) Award ceremony of the EDPA to Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve (Spain)
- e) New applications for EDPA

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

- [T-PVS(2025)05 – Abridged meeting Report of the Webinar on Favourable Reference Values, Habitat Condition and Future Prospects]*
- [T-PVS(2025)01 – Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan]*
- [T-PVS(2025)21 – Report on the 7th meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting back -to-back with a training course on reporting for non-EU Contracting Parties]*
- [T-PVS Inf(2025)43 - Terms of Reference Working Group on Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)]*

## PART IV – MONITORING OF SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

### 6 SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS

#### 6.1 Minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity

## 6.2 Open Files

- 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of Caretta Caretta in Laganas bay, Zakynthos (OSA)  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_comp - Complainant Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)1986-08\_ngo - Archelon NGO Report]*
- 2010/05: Greece: Threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparissias (OSA)  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_comp - Complainant Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2010-05\_ngo - Archelon NGO Report]*
- 1995/06: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)1995-06\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)1995-06\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2012/09: Türkiye: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2012-09\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2012-09\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of Mavrovo National Park  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2013-01\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2013-01\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2017/02: North Macedonia: Negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2017-02\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2017-02\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2016/05: Albania: Presumed negative impact of developments on the Vjosa river including hydro-power plant and Vlora International Airport  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-05\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-05\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-04\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2016-04\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2019-05\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2019-05\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2020/09: Bosnia-Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-09\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-09\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2022/03: Norway: Wolf culling policy  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-03\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-03\_comp - Complainant Report]*
- 2023/03: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2023-03\_gov - Government Report]*  
*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2023-03\_comp - Complainant Report]*

### 6.3 Possible Files

- 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2001-04\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2001-04\_comp - Complainant Report]*

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

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-04\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2020-04\_comp - Complainant Report]*

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

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-06\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-06\_comp - Complainant Report]*

- 2022/02: Austria: Alleged violation of the Convention in relation to deliberate killing of lutra lutra

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-02\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-02\_comp - Complainant Report]*

- 2022/07: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica – Gornja Bukovica and Vareš

*[Government Report Not Received]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)2022-07\_comp - Complainant Report]*

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

- Türkiye: Recommendation No. 95 (2002) on the conservation of marine turtles in Kazanlı beach (Türkiye)

*[T-PVS/Files(2025) Recommendation No.95\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025) Recommendation No.95\_comp - Complainant Report]*

- Iceland: Recommendation No.190 (2016) on the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, especially birds, in afforestation of lowland in Iceland

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.190\_gov - Government Report]*

*[Complainant Report Not Received]*

- Bulgaria: Recommendation No. 200 (2018) on the windfarms planned near Balchik and Kaliakra, and other wind farm developments on the Via Pontica route

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.200\_gov - Government Report]*

*[T-PVS/Files(2025)Recommendation No.200\_comp - Complainant Report]*

## PART V – COOPERATION AND PROGRAMME OF WORK 2026

### 7 INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION WITH OTHER MEAs AND ORGANISATIONS

### 8 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2026

*[T-PVS(2025)12 – Draft Programme of activities and budget 2026]*

**9 STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 46TH MEETING**

**PART VI – OTHER ITEMS**

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

**11 DATE AND PLACE OF THE 46TH MEETING**

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

**13 CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

**TENTATIVE ORDER OF BUSINESS<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 8 December 2025</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA</b></li> <li>2. <b>COMMUNICATIONS FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT</b></li> <li>1. <b>FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.2 Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices</li> <li>3.3 Working Group on overseeing implementation of the Strategic Plan</li> <li>3.4 Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee : state of play</li> <li>3.5 Thematic groups and working groups under the Bern Convention overview : state of play and ways forward</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <b>MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE CONVENTION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Biennial reports 2023-2024 concerning exceptions to Articles 4-8 and new Online Reporting System</li> <li>4.2 Council of Europe Interim Progress Review Report 2025 (inputs from Contracting Parties)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Conservation of Birds &amp; IKB</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Tuesday 9 December 2025</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. <b>MONITORING OF SPECIES AND HABITATS (CONTINUED)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.2 Conservation of Large Carnivores</li> <li>5.3 Amphibians, Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)</li> <li>5.4 Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck</li> <li>5.5 Conservation of Habitats</li> <li>5.6 Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on conservation status of species and habitats</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 <b>SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Minimising the negative impact of mining on biodiversity</li> </ol> </li> <li>2 <b>COMMUNICATIONS FROM CONTRACTING PARTIES AND FROM THE SECRETARIAT (continued)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Reykjavik process and the environment</li> <li>2.2 Participation of the Council of Europe in COP 30, Belém, Brazil, Nov 2025</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>FINANCING AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE BERN CONVENTION (continued)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 <b>Financing of the Bern Convention</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>6. <b>SPECIFIC SITES AND POPULATIONS (CONTINUED)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.2 <b>Open Files</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1986/08: Greece: Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of Caretta Caretta in Laganas bay, Zakynthos (OSA)</li> <li>➤ 2010/05: Greece: Threats to marine turtles in Thines Kiparias (OSA)</li> <li>➤ 1995/06: Cyprus: Akamas peninsula</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </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 10 December 2025</b>	
<p><b>6.2 Open Files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2012/09: Türkiye: Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in Fethiye and Patara SPAs</li> <li>➤ 2013/01: North Macedonia: Hydro power development within the territory of Mavrovo National Park</li> <li>➤ 2017/02: North Macedonia; Negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure developments</li> <li>➤ 2016/05: Albania: Presumed negative impact of developments on the Vjosa river including hydro-power plant and Vlora International Airport</li> <li>➤ 2016/04: Montenegro: Development of a commercial project in Skadar Lake National Park and candidate Emerald site</li> <li>➤ 2019/05: Türkiye; Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.2 Open Files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2020/09: Bosnia-Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of hydro-power plant development on the Neretva river</li> <li>➤ 2022/03: Norway: Wolf culling policy</li> <li>➤ 2023/03: Switzerland: New wolf culling policy</li> </ul> <p><b>6.3. Possible files</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2001/04: Bulgaria: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge</li> <li>➤ 2020/04: Armenia: The Amulsar gold mine project and impacts on Emerald Network</li> <li>➤ 2022/06: Serbia: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Bosilegrad and Homolje Mt region</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday 11 December 2025</b>	
<p><b>6.3 Possible files (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2022/02: Austria: Alleged violation of the Convention related to killing of lutra lutra</li> <li>➤ 2022/07: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica – Gornja Bukovica and Vareš</li> </ul> <p><b>6.4. Follow-up of previous complaints and Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Türkiye: Recommendation No. 95 (2002) on conservation of marine turtles in Kazanli beach</li> <li>➤ Iceland: Recommendation No. 190 (2016) on conservation of natural habitats and wildlife, focusing on birds</li> <li>➤ Bulgaria: Recommendation No. 200 (2018) on planned wind farms near Balchik and Kaliakra</li> </ul>	<p><i>Possible continuation of unfinished business</i></p>
<b>Friday 12 December 2025</b>	
<p><b>7. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION WITH OTHER MEAs AND ORGANISATIONS</b></p> <p><b>8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2026</b></p> <p><b>9. STATES TO BE INVITED AS OBSERVERS TO THE 46TH MEETING</b></p> <p><b>10. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND BUREAU MEMBERS</b></p> <p><b>11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 46TH MEETING</b></p> <p><b>12. ADOPTION OF 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 the draft Protocol amending 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.

In 2023, the Ad-hoc Drafting Group prepared a third version of the draft protocol amending the Bern Convention ([T-PVS\(2023\)13](#)). An opinion issued by the Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law (DLAPIL) and the Directorate of Programme and Budget (DPB) indicated that this version did not fully comply with the Council of Europe's internal regulations. A new version of the draft Protocol was therefore prepared in 2024 to bring it into line with the Council of Europe's legal and budgetary frameworks ([T-PVS\(2024\)10](#)).

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 Committee of Ministers, at its session in May 2025, adopted the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and considered the establishment of a dedicated Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF), without taking a decision on this matter.

The Working Group on Exploring Sustainable Financing Options for the Bern Convention met once in September 2025 and discussed four strategic options to secure the long-term financial sustainability of the Bern Convention: the establishment of a Partial Agreement, the creation of a Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF), the development of a Conference of the Parties (CoP), and the continuation of the Amending Protocol. The Working Group agreed to report on these options to the Standing Committee in 2026.

At its 45th meeting, the Standing Committee agreed that its preferred option is to finalise the Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention.

#### **II. SCOPE**

The Working Group on the draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention is entrusted with the finalisation of the draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention and creating a mechanism of compulsory financial contributions, as well as an explanatory report for both the Protocol and the mechanisms.

### **III. COMPOSITION**

The Working Group on the draft Protocol amending 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 in 2026, before the meeting of the Bureau in September 2026.

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 46<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.

The Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention met twice in 2025. At its second meeting, it examined proposals to improve the process for amending Appendices I, II and III of the Convention, outlining three possible options. The Group considered that Option A (Amending Recommendation No. 56 (1997)) and Option B (Establishing an ad hoc expert advice mechanism) appeared the most appropriate in the short term. The Secretariat was invited to further assess the feasibility of all options. Option C (Establishing a permanent scientific advisory group) will remain under consideration as a fallback, The outcomes of this work was be presented to the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration.

#### **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:

- Propose a new version of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) to provide clear guidance and criteria for amendments to the level of protection status of fauna and flora species in the framework of the Bern Convention and bearing in mind the practice in other international treaties related to nature conservation;
- explore and develop proposals for a new mechanism involving the use of *ad hoc* external expert advice to provide scrutiny of evidence submitted in support of proposals for amendments to the Appendices of the Bern Convention. This will include:
  - o exploration of possible collaboration with IUCN.
  - o an administrative procedure for submitting proposals for amendments to the appendices, including a definition of the information that needs to be provided for the assessment of the proposal;
  - o advice to the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention on any necessary changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee.

Additionally, where resources permit, consider the merits and disadvantages of establishing a permanent scientific advisory group including the wider role such a group could play in supporting the wider aims of the convention.

### **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 and Vice-Chair from amongst its members.

### **IV. WORKING METHODS**

The members of the Working Group will provide input through online meetings, 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 will 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 46<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**

### **Terms of Reference of The Group of Experts on Large Carnivores – Revised**

#### **Mandate** of the Group

1. to review the conservation status and challenges of large carnivores in the territory of Contracting Parties and observer States of the Convention;
2. to advise on appropriate conservation actions with the aim of maintaining and/or restoring the populations of large carnivores at the level prescribed in Article 2 of the Convention and in line of the specific requirements of its Chapter III;
3. to propose ways and methods to manage or mitigate economic and social conflicts regarding large carnivores to promote co-existence between large carnivores and humans;
4. to facilitate transboundary, intersectoral dialogue and peer exchange between decision makers, academics, civil society and other stakeholders regarding large carnivores, knowledge about them etc.;
5. to identify and address potential gaps in conservation of large carnivores within Bern Convention Party geographical scope;
6. to propose draft recommendations and other relevant instruments to the Standing Committee in the field of conservation of large carnivores;
7. to promote public awareness, engagement and access to information on large carnivores and their conservation;
8. to assist the Standing Committee on any matters related to large carnivores, including any changes to the protection status of large carnivore species, and to make any science-based proposals related to large carnivore conservation.

Within this scope, the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and its Bureau may entrust specific tasks to the Group, with deliverables aimed to support the compliance with the Bern Convention.

#### **Main deliverables**

Based on proposals made by the Group in June 2025 and further discussed on 30 September, and on feedback from the Bureau in September 2025, the draft Work Plan for Group of Experts on large carnivores is to be proposed for the Standing Committee's consideration in December 2025. To timely advance with the implementation of the tasks requested by the Standing Committee in 2024, some of the work stipulated underneath has been done in 2025.

#	Deliverable <sup>1</sup>	Timeline
1	A guidance tool on management of protected and strictly protected populations of large carnivores in Europe	December 2025
2	Proposed scope of a survey to monitor the situation of the wolf after its downlisting.	December 2025
3	The survey to be addressed to the Parties of the Bern Convention concerning the changes in the legislation or on administrative level, resulting from the downlisting of wolf	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft survey proposed to the Parties</li> </ul>	January – February 2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting the survey, collecting results</li> </ul>	March - April 2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the survey, complemented by desk analysis and commented by the Group of Experts and the Bureau</li> </ul>	May - September 2026

4	Drafting of a recommendation/guidance tool on managing bold individuals	by November 2026
5	Updating selected recommendations concerning large carnivores	by November 2027
6	Drafting a new recommendation/guidance tool on other topics given priority by the Group and the Standing Committee	by November 2027

<sup>1</sup> *Some or all the above-mentioned actions could be done in collaboration with LCIE: a proposal for a joint set of activities could be submitted under a clear mandate from the Bureau/Standing Committee.*

The role of the Group is also to bring issues related to the conservation and management of large carnivores to the attention of the Standing Committee as they consider needed.

**Composition:**

The Group will gather experts nominated by the Parties to the Convention and the Observers of the Standing Committee for their expertise in conservation and management of large carnivores.

***Representatives of the Parties***

Parties to the Convention may designate one representative with the relevant expertise regarding large carnivores.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from Parties whose attendance costs may be covered, as defined in the yearly work plan.

***Observers***

Observers to the Bern Convention Standing Committee may send representatives with relevant expertise regarding large carnivores, without defrayal of expenses, unless stated explicitly otherwise.

**President**

The Group will elect its President from among the Party representatives by consensus. The President may represent the Group in front of the Standing Committee or on other relevant occasions.

**Duration of the mandate**

The Group is given a mandate with specific deliverables for the term of 3 years, renewable by the Standing Committee according to needs.

**Working methods**

The Group will meet once a year, interchangeably – in person/in a hybrid mode and online.

Thematic sub-groups may advance their work independently, informing the Secretariat as needed.

The Group may decide to invite to its meetings experts with relevant expertise to help advancing the work of the Group.

**Rules of procedure**, consistent for all groups of experts to the extent possible, will guide the other aspects of the functioning of the Group.

## **Appendix V**

### **Terms of Reference of the**

### **Working Group on Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012)**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

In 2012, the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted [Resolution No. 8](#) (2012) regarding the national designation of adopted Emerald Network sites and the implementation of management, monitoring and reporting measures. According to the Resolution:

*“Parties will report to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the conservation status of species and habitats listed in Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996) of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention;*

*The report will be submitted in English, every six years from the date of adoption of this Resolution and shall reflect the previous period of six years;*

*The Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks will prepare a reporting format to be used for the purposes of this reporting.”*

The reporting, aimed to evaluate progress towards meeting the Convention’s objectives and the efficiency of Parties’ conservation efforts does not focus on the Emerald Network although it considers the species and habitats listed on Resolution [No. 6 \(1998\)](#) and [No. 4 \(1996\)](#). Conservation status is the overall assessment of the status of a habitat type or a species at the scale of country biogeographical or marine region or at country scale for birds. Further details are available from the [Reference Portal for the Reporting under Resolution No. 8 \(2012\)](#).

In 2019, Contracting Parties reported for the first time on the conservation status of a sample of 46 features over the period 2013 – 2018. This first reporting round was considered a first attempt aimed to build up experience and capacity and pave the path for future reporting cycles.

While the first reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) used the reporting format adopted for reporting under Articles 12 and 17 of the EU Nature Directives, a pan-European assessment of the conservation status of the 46 features was challenging because of the limited number of reporting countries and the incompleteness of the reports received.

Within the frame of a survey, 17 non-EU Contracting Parties participating shared opinions on their experience from the first reporting, pointed to the obstacles for not participating in the reporting cycle and commented on the scope of the previous reporting cycle covering the period 2019 – 2024 ([T-PVS/PA\(2021\)04](#)).

Following advice from the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, the Standing Committee decided to set up an Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting entrusted with following up on the findings of the survey, addressing technical challenges and proposing a future reporting scheme.

At its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Standing Committee 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 ([T-PVS\(2024\)21](#)).

## **II. SCOPE**

The Working Group on Reporting will provide a dedicated cooperation platform for preparing the scope, format, methodology, tools of the reporting by non-EU Contracting Parties on the conservation status of species and habitats under Resolution No. 8 (2012). It will advise the Standing Committee in collaboration with the Bureau, independent experts and Secretariat in the selection of reporting features under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and in developing the appropriate resources.

Building on the outcomes of the survey on the experience and expectations of Contracting Parties from the reporting, the objective of this Working Group will be to assist the Standing Committee in overseeing progress in implementation of the reporting as per Resolution No. 8 (2012), notably through the following tasks:

- Provide recommendations on the objectives and the expected outcomes of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) in light of capacities and needs of Contracting Parties, in particular focussing on what sort of reporting and information is most useful for the purposes of the Convention and how to get that in the most cost-effective way;
- Provide advice on the scope of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) in order to achieve the defined objectives and drawing on the experience of the two first reporting round (2013-2018 and 2019-2024);
- Consider the extent to which it is technically feasible for the reporting under Resolution No, 8 (2012) to be combined with information from the reporting under Articles 17 and 12 of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives to form a Pan-European overview. Taking into account the need for this to be done in a cost-effective manner and to avoid a disproportionate reporting burden, provide recommendations on how to enable a Pan-European overview.
- Ensure consistency between the objectives, the scope and format of the reporting; Provide advice and guidance for the drafting of the supporting documentation and guidance and for the design of the reporting tool(s).
- Provide guidance on how to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge on the reporting on the conservation status of species and habitats listed in Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996) among a wide range of experts and stakeholders to involve them in the reporting process.
- Monitor progress of the preparation of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).
- Review results of the reporting cycle covering the period 2025 – 2030.

## **III. COMPOSITION**

The Working Group will comprise relevant representatives of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention and observers.

Parties to the Convention may designate one representative with relevant expertise.

Any observer to the Bern Convention Standing Committee may send one representative with relevant expertise, without defrayal of expenses, unless stated explicitly otherwise.

The Working Group will select one Chair from amongst the Contracting Party members.

## **IV. WORKING METHODS**

The Working Group members 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 will meet at least once annually during the preparation and reporting phases to coordinate activities and monitor progress.

After the completion of the reporting and evaluation phase, the Working Group will convene at least once every two years to follow up on implementation and prepare for the next reporting cycle.

The Working Group shall operate by online means and physical meetings as appropriate.

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

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.

## **V. TIME FRAME**

The Working Group will develop a timeline for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) which will guide the work of the Working Group, and provide clarity for Contracting Parties on what is expected to happen when.

The Working Group should provide updates on progress at the annual meetings of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks. The Working Group will report to the Standing Committee at its annual meeting.

The Working Group will continue until the results of the reporting cycle covering the period 2025 – 2030 have been collated and have been reviewed by the Standing Committee.

## **Appendix VI**

### **Final proposal for the new fields of the updated Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF)**

#### Summary of discussions during the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks

During the 15th meeting of GoEPAEN, the new and updated fields of the proposed Emerald Network SDF were reviewed individually, in order of their potential impact. The discussion began with changes expected to have a lower impact (i.e., requiring less effort from countries) and concluded with those of higher impact.

Special attention was given to fields that could serve as potential data sources for the indicators established to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Dave Pritchard, the expert responsible for indicator-related work within the Working Group overseeing the implementation of the Strategic Plan, clarified that the fields to be considered are as follows:

INDICATOR	FIELDS USED AS DATA SOURCES
1.3.b Proportion of adopted Emerald Network sites with implemented management plans	5.2 Management plans
	5.3 Conservation measures
	5.4 Management effectiveness
1.4 Contribution of the Emerald Network to the conservation status of habitats	3.1.12.1 Degree of conservation - categorised

Table 1. Fields of the proposed SDF to be used as data sources for indicators

Countries expressed concern about the new fields that would require the compilation of additional information, as well as about major modifications to existing fields that would involve significant effort to update. Following the discussion, it was proposed that all new fields be considered *optional*, except for those serving as data sources for the indicators or required for the sufficiency analysis.

Table 2. summarizes the new fields and provide explanation on their optional or compulsory nature:

COMPULSORY NEW FIELDS	OPTIONAL NEW FIELDS	EXPLANATIONS
	2.1.2 Reason for area difference with spatial dataset (if any)	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	2.1.3 Reason for area difference - explanations	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
3.1.6 Method used for cover		Useful information for sufficiency assessment (data quality)
	3.1.7 Period of last data collection	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.1.12.2 Degree of conservation – area	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor

COMPULSORY NEW FIELDS	OPTIONAL NEW FIELDS	EXPLANATIONS
		indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.1.12.3 Degree of conservation – method used	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.1.13 Conservation objectives	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.1.14 Conservation objectives - explanations	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.1.16 Update date	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
3.2.9 Method used for population size		Useful information for sufficiency assessment (data quality)
	3.2.10 Period of last data collection	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.2.15.3 Degree of conservation – occupied percentage classes	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.2.16 Conservation objectives	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	3.2.17 Conservation objectives - explanations	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	4.3.4 Pressure further detailed	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	4.3.5 Update date	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
	5.2.3 Further explanations	Not directly used for sufficiency analysis nor indicators of the Strategic Plan.
5.3.1 Detailed information on measures		Useful information for indicator 1.3.b
5.3.2 Status of conservation measures		Useful information for indicator 1.3.b
5.4 Management effectiveness		Useful information for indicator 1.3.b

Table 2. List of new fields considered as “compulsory” and “optional” in the proposed Emerald Network SDF

On top of the new fields Table 3 summarizes the updated fields. The content of fields: Non-Presence, Significance and Degree of conservation-categorized is already present in the current SDF. In the case of Non-Presence, the definition was improved and intends to clarify countries interpretation. Non-significant species or habitats are now to be reported in a new field but the content was already included in Representativity=D for habitats and Population=D for species, as a result, this field does not require an additional effort. The information required in the field Degree of conservation – categorised is already included in Degree of conservation (the field “Degree of Conservation” has been split in categorised, area and method used, nevertheless the pre-defined options in the field -categorised completely corresponds with the old concept of Degree of Conservation, remaining therefore compulsory).

Changes proposed for Relative Surface and Populations are useful for the sufficiency exercise, in spite of the additional effort required to the countries.

COMPULSORY UPDATED FIELDS	OPTIONAL UPDATED FIELDS	EXPLANATIONS
3.1.3 Non-Presence		Useful information for sufficiency assessment
3.2.5 Non-Presence		Useful information for sufficiency assessment
3.1.8 Significance		Useful information for sufficiency assessment. Content previously included under the field Representativity.
3.2.11 Significance		Useful information for sufficiency assessment. Content previously included under the field Population.
3.1.10 Relative surface		Useful information for sufficiency assessment
3.2.13 Population		Useful information for sufficiency assessment
3.1.12.1 Degree of conservation – categorised		This field corresponds with the field Degree of conservation. There are no changes in relation to the on-going SDF. Useful information for sufficiency assessment
3.2.15.1 Degree of conservation - categorised		This field corresponds with the field Degree of conservation. There are no changes in relation to the on-going SDF. Useful information for sufficiency assessment

Since most new fields were agreed to be optional, a transitional period of three years only apply to those new fields considered as “compulsory”. Those are:

- 3.1.6 Method used for cover,
- 3.2.9 Method used for population size,
- 5.3.1 Detailed information on measures,
- 5.3.2 Status of conservation measures and
- 5.4 Management effectiveness.

Similarly, the three-year period also applies to updated fields demanding additional efforts. Those are:

- 3.1.3 Non-Presence
- 3.2.5 Non-Presence
- 3.1.8 Significance
- 3.2.11 Significance
- 3.1.10 Relative surface
- 3.2.13 Population

These fields may remain blank until 2030 but they can be fulfilled earlier if the country decides so. After 2030 validation rules will be updated for the new compulsory fields.

Fields Method used for calculating the surface area of Resolution No. 4 habitat and Method used for calculating the population of Resolution No. 6 species replace the former “data quality” field. This modification aligns the SDF with the methods proposed in Resolution No. 8 and provides more reliable information on data accuracy.

Fields 5.3.1 Detailed information on measures, 5.3.2 Status of conservation measures, 5.4 Management effectiveness serve as data source for indicator 1.4 (see table 1) and inform on Phase III of the Emerald Network.

In addition to the new fields, the discussion also addressed existing fields with modified definitions, namely:

3.1.8 Significance: previously, “D” categories (e.g., species with population “D – occasional” or habitats with “D – insignificant representativity”) were included under the Representativity of Population fields. In the revised structure, field 3.1.9 Representativity no longer allows the reporting of insignificant presence. The new field 3.1.8 Significance has therefore been created to capture cases where habitat types occur but are of non-significant importance. For species, D population is no longer allowed and occasional species will be reported in the field 3.2.11 Significance. The effort required to transfer these “D” habitats or species into the new *Significance* field is presented by country in Table 3.

3.1.3 Non-Presence (for habitats and for species): this field has improved, and the country needs to indicate if the species or habitat is no longer present on the site or it has never occurred on the site but its re-establishment is planned.

3.1.10 Relative surface and 3.2.13 Population: the A relative surface has been split into four intervals because in the past it was rather large (between 100%-15% of the national area of the habitat). The A1, A2, A3 and A4 are addressed to provide more precise data. Although this change was met with criticism, these two fields are essential for sufficiency analysis and therefore cannot be designated as optional. Countries are required to provide this information. The table below indicates the proportion of sites with A population of Resolution No. 6 species and A relative surface of Resolution No.4 habitat types, illustrating the expected level of effort for the revision of these A cases.

C P	TOTAL REGISTER OF SP	A	PROPORTION OF A POP	D	PROPORTION OF D POP	TOTAL REGISTER OF HABITAT	A	PROPORTION OF A RELATIVE SURFACE	D	PROPORTION OF D PRESENCE
A D	24	1	4.17	0	0.00	31	5	16.13	0	0.00
AL	1651	124	7.51	504	30.53	89	7	7.87	0	0.00
AM	965	341	35.34	55	5.70	528	47	8.90	0	0.00
AZ	1194	39	3.27	70	5.86	47	6	12.77	0	0.00
BA	467	0	0.00	16	3.43	121	1	0.83	0	0.00
CH	1701	48	2.82	950	55.85	374	3	0.80	150	40.11
GE	3045	227	7.45	24	0.79	409	33	8.07	0	0.00
IS	11	5	45.45	2	18.18	63	6	9.52	0	0.00
LI	27	21	77.78	0	0.00	10	6	60.00	0	0.00
MD	1233	88	7.14	3	0.24	230	0	0.00	0	0.00
ME	337	0	0.00	20	5.93	192	5	2.60	8	4.17
MK	1605	176	10.97	473	29.47	125	5	4.00	0	0.00
NO	6291	45	0.72	695	11.05	1068	38	3.56	9	0.84
RS	1919	118	6.15	578	30.12	556	13	2.34	56	10.07
UA	18566	425	2.29	484	26.09	5143	85	1.65	0	0.00
UK	1579	164	10.39	455	28.82	2766	62	2.24	74	26.75

Table 4. Proportion of habitats and species with A and D relative surface and population by country (Source: Emerald database 2024)

Pressures on the site: some new fields were added to this section (proposed as optional). Nevertheless, although 4.3.1 Pressures, 4.3.2 Rank and 4.3.3 Location inside/outside are already present in the current SDF, there will be a new list of pressure like the list used in the context of the reporting under Resolution No.8 (2012). Consequently, countries will need to revise these fields (especially 4.3.1). To help countries in this task, a table with crosswalks between the present list and the new list of pressures will be created and saved in the Emerald Reference Portal. As for other compulsory fields with changes, a transition period of 3 years (until 2030) is foreseen.

Eventually, the proposal of Switzerland of adding “other instruments” to the name of the field 5.2 is noted down and will be discussed with IT developers. If technically possible, field 5.2 will be named as *Management plans or other management instruments*, and the guidelines for filling the SDF will reflect it. The SDF in the annex shows the fields proposed as optional with the indication **optional** in red.

## **Annex To replace the current appendix to Resolution No. 5(1998) concerning the rules for the Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network)**

### **REVISED EMERALD NETWORK STANDARD DATA FORM**

This proposed Standard Data Form has six main sections as shown below. Explanatory notes and guidelines to fill the fields will be provided in the near future once an agreement is reached. For the new or revised data fields reference can be made to the guidelines of the revised Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, knowing that they will need to be revised according to the insight of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and the decision of the Standing Committee.

Background colors represent the status of the data field between former and the proposed revised SDF:

	New additional field
	Data field of the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form which is not applicable for the Emerald Network
	Existing data field with modified definitions

#### *Main sections of the Standard Data Form*

<b>1. Site identification</b>	To be filled for each site
<b>2. Site area and location</b>	
<b>3. Ecological information</b>	
<b>3.1 Habitat types</b>	To be filled for each Resolution No. 4 (1996) habitat type present on the site
<b>3.2 Species</b>	To be filled for each Resolution No. 6 (1998) species present on the site
<b>3.3 Other species</b>	<b>Optional</b>
<b>4. Site description</b>	To be filled for each site
<b>5. Site management</b>	
<b>6. Geospatial representation</b>	

**DATA FIELDS OF THE PROPOSED EMERALD STANDARD DATA FORM**

<b>1. Site Identification</b>		<b>n</b>
1.1 Site type	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> A: site only important for Birds <input type="checkbox"/> B: site important for habitats and non-avian species <input type="checkbox"/> C: site important for birds, non-avian species and/or habitats	
1.2 Site code	Stable unique code	
1.3 Site name	Name of the site in Latin alphabet	
1.3.1 Site name non-Latin alphabet (optional)	Name of the site in non-Latin alphabet	
<b>1.4 Respondent</b>		
1.4.1 Name of the organisation	Free text and language tag	
1.4.2 Contact point in the organisation (optional)	Part of the organisation responsible for the compilation of data in the SDF	
1.4.3 Postal address	Free text and language tag	
1.4.4 Functional mailbox email address	Functional Email address of functional mailbox, not personal	
1.4.5 Website with contact information	Website containing the official contact information of the organisation	
<b>1.5 Site classification/proposal/designation dates</b>		
1.5.1 DATE SITE PROPOSED AS ASCI (Emerald):	Date	
1.5.2 DATE SITE ACCEPTED AS CANDIDATE ASCI (Emerald):	Date	
1.5.3 DATE SITE ACCEPTED AS ASCI (Emerald):	Date	
1.5.4 DATE SITE DESIGNATED AS ADOPTED ASCI (Emerald):	Date	
1.5.5 National legal reference of ASCI designation:	Free text and language tag; explanations can be given, e.g. for classification or designation dates of sites	
1.5.6 Explanations (optional)	Free text and language tag; explanations can be given	
1.5.7 Emerald Site Status	Extra field not to be filled by the countries. It will be automatically included during the creation of a new Emerald Network Release <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Candidate <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted	

## 2. Site area and location

2.1 Site area	
2.1.1 Area	Area of the site in hectares
2.1.2 Reason for area difference with spatial dataset (if any) <b>Optional</b>	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> Cliff or steep area <input type="checkbox"/> Cave <input type="checkbox"/> Projection to ETRS89 <input type="checkbox"/> Other - the spatial representation does not correspond to the area size in field 2.1.1 for other reasons. Give explanation in field 2.1.3
2.1.3 Reason for area difference – explanations <b>Optional</b>	Free text field and language tag. It must be filled if 'Other' is indicated in field 2.1.2.
2.2 Administrative region ( <b>optional</b> )	
2.2.1 Administrative region code	Code from NUTS code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
2.2.2 Administrative region name	Name from NUTS code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
2.3 Biogeographical and marine regions	
2.3.1 Region code	Code-list for biogeographical and marine regions (see Emerald Network reference portal)
2.3.2 Percentage	For sites located across two or more regions, give the percentage coverage in each of these regions

## 3. Ecological information

### 3.1 Habitat types of the Annex to Resolution No. 4 (1996)

3.1.a Essential information (habitat type)	
3.1.1 Habitat type code	Fill in according to code-list for Resolution No. 4 (1996) habitat types (see Emerald Network reference portal)
3.1.2 Priority form Not applicable for the Emerald Network	Indicate if the habitat type is a priority form of 6210, 7130 or 9430

3.1.3 Non-presence	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the habitat is no longer present in the site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the habitat type is not present and was not present at the time of designation but its re-establishment is planned.</li> </ul> <p>Only the fields 3.1.1 (Habitat code), 3.1.6 (Method used), 3.1.7 (Period of last data collection), 3.1.13 (Conservation objectives), 3.1.16 (Update date) need to be filled. The field 3.1.4 (Cover) must be 0 (zero). The other fields of section 3.1 should be left blank.</p>
3.1.4 Cover	Cover of the habitat type in hectares
3.1.5 Caves	Number of caves (included in habitat type codes H1 and A1.44, A3 and A4.)
3.1.6 Method used for cover	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> complete survey or a statistically robust estimate;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data.</li> </ul>
3.1.7 Period of last data collection <b>Optional</b>	Start date and end date of the period (month and year); if such information is unknown indicate 'survey older than 2022'.
3.1.b Site assessment (habitat type)	
3.1.8 Significance	Indicate if habitat type occurrence is non-significant; For significant occurrences all fields of section 3.1.b must be filled whereas for non-significant occurrences only the fields 3.1.8 (Significance) and 3.1.16 (Update date) of section 3.1.b have to be filled.
3.1.9 Representativity	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A: excellent representativity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: good representativity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: significant representativity</li> </ul>
3.1.10 Relative surface	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A1: <math>100\% \geq p &gt; 75\%</math></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A2: <math>75\% \geq p &gt; 50\%</math></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A3: <math>50\% \geq p &gt; 25\%</math></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A4: <math>25\% \geq p &gt; 15\%</math></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: <math>15\% \geq p &gt; 2\%</math></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: <math>2\% \geq p &gt; 0\%</math></li> </ul>
3.1.11 Relative surface explanations ( <b>optional</b> )	Free text and language tag
3.1.12 Degree of conservation	

3.1.12.1 Degree of conservation – categorised	Pre-defined options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A: excellent degree of conservation (nearly all of the habitat area in good condition)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: good degree of conservation (most of the habitat area in good condition)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: reduced degree of conservation (most of the habitat area in not in good condition)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> X: unknown degree of conservation (most or all of the habitat area in unknown condition)</li> </ul>
3.1.12.2 Degree of conservation – area <b>Optional</b>	Give the area in hectares for each of the categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Good condition: ...[ha]</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not-good condition: ...[ha]</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown condition: ...[ha]</li> </ul>
3.1.12.3 Degree of conservation – method used <b>Optional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete survey or statistically robust estimate in hectares (for example taken from mapping in management plans)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data (expert judgement)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data (based on partial mapping data)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient or no data available</li> </ul>
3.1.13 Conservation objectives <b>Optional</b>	Pre-defined options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prevent deterioration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the habitat type’s surface area and its good condition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enlarge the area of the habitat type</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improve the habitat type condition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Re-establish the habitat type</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>
3.1.14 Conservation objectives – explanations <b>Optional</b>	Free text and language tag
3.1.15 Global	Pre-defined options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A: excellent value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: good value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: significant value</li> </ul>
3.1.16 Update date <b>Optional</b>	Year and month

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**3.2 Species referred to in Resolution No. 6 (1998)**

3.2a Essential information (species)	
3.2.1 Species group	Code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
3.2.2 Species code	Code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
3.2.3 Scientific name	Species name from the relevant code-list on the reference portal that corresponds to the code used in 3.2.2
3.2.4 Sensitivity of species data	Indicate in case of sensitive species data
3.2.5 Non-presence	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the species is no longer present in the site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the species is not present and was not present at the time of designation but it's re-establishment is planned.</li> </ul> <p>Following fields need to be filled: 3.2.1 to 3.2.5, 3.2.9 (method used), 3.2.10 (period of last data collection) and 3.2.16 (conservation objectives). The field 3.2.7.1 population size minimum and maximum need both to be 0 (zero). The other fields of the section 3.2 should be left blank.</p>
3.2.6 Population type	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reproducing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Concentration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wintering</li> </ul>
3.2.7 Population size and unit	
3.2.7.1 Population size	Give minimum and maximum population size
3.2.7.2 Population unit	Code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
3.2.8 Abundance category	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Common</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rare</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Very rare</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Present</li> </ul>
3.2.9 Method used for population size	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient or no data available</li> </ul>

3.2.10 Period of last data collection <b>Optional</b>	Start date and end date of the period (year and month) or if such information is unknown indicate 'survey older than 2022'
3.2b Site assessment (species)	
3.2.11 Significance	Indicate if occurrence of the species is non-significant. For significant occurrences of species all fields of the section 3.2.b must be filled in whereas for non-significant occurrences of species only the fields 3.2.11 (Significance) and 3.2.20 (Update date) of section 3.2.b have to be filled.
3.2.12 Species meeting ornithological criteria for SPA classification <b>Not applicable for the Emerald Network</b>	Indicate if the bird species met the ornithological criteria used to justify SPA classification.
3.2.13 Population	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> A1: $100\% \geq p > 75\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> A2: $75\% \geq p > 50\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> A3: $50\% \geq p > 25\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> A4: $25\% \geq p > 15\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> B: $15\% \geq p > 2\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> C: $2\% \geq p > 0\%$
3.2.14 Population – explanations ( <b>optional</b> )	Free text and language tag
3.2.15 Degree of conservation	
3.2.15.1 Degree of conservation - categorised	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> A: excellent degree of conservation (nearly all of the habitat occupied by the species has sufficient quality) <input type="checkbox"/> B: good degree of conservation (most of the habitat occupied by the species has sufficient quality) <input type="checkbox"/> C: reduced degree of conservation (most of the habitat occupied by the species has non-sufficient quality) <input type="checkbox"/> X: unknown degree of conservation (most or all of the habitat occupied by the species has unknown quality)
3.2.15.2 Degree of conservation – occupied area ( <b>optional</b> )	Give the area of the habitat occupied by the species in percentages for each of the categories: <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient quality: ...% <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sufficient quality: ...% <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown habitat quality: ...%

<p>3.2.15.3 Degree of conservation – occupied percentage classes</p> <p>Optional</p>	<p>Estimated area of the habitat occupied by the species with sufficient quality  <input type="checkbox"/> 0-25 % <input type="checkbox"/> 26-50% <input type="checkbox"/> 51-75% <input type="checkbox"/> 76-100%</p> <p>Estimated area of the habitat occupied by the species with non-sufficient quality  <input type="checkbox"/> 0-25 % <input type="checkbox"/> 26-50% <input type="checkbox"/> 51-75% <input type="checkbox"/> 76-100%</p> <p>Estimated area of the habitat occupied by the species for which the quality is unknown  <input type="checkbox"/> 0-25 % <input type="checkbox"/> 26-50% <input type="checkbox"/> 51-75% <input type="checkbox"/> 76-100%</p>
<p>3.2.16 Conservation objectives</p> <p>Optional</p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prevent deterioration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the extent and good quality of the habitat of the species and the population size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enlarge area of the habitat of the species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Re-establish habitat for the species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improve the quality of the habitat of the species (considering also disturbance and mortality factors)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the population size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce pressure on the population (e.g. reduce mortality or disturbance)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Re-establish the population at the site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>
<p>3.2.17 Conservation objectives – explanations</p> <p>Optional</p>	<p>Free text and language tag</p>
<p>3.2.18 Isolation</p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A: population (almost) isolated,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: population not isolated, but on margins of area of distribution,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: population not isolated within extended distribution range</li> </ul>
<p>3.2.19 Global</p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A: excellent value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> B: good value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> C: significant value</li> </ul>
<p>3.2.20 Update date</p>	<p>Year and month</p>

**3.3 Other important species of flora and fauna (optional)**

<p>3.3.1 Species group</p>	<p>If the species belongs to one of the species groups on the code-list available on the Emerald Network reference portal use the respective code from this list; otherwise leave the field empty (blank).</p>
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3.3.2 Species code	If the species is on the code-lists on the Emerald Network reference portal that are used in field 3.2.2, please use that code, otherwise leave this field empty.
3.3.3 Scientific name	If relevant, insert the scientific name as used in the code lists on the Emerald Network reference portal that are used in field 3.2.2.
3.3.4 Sensitivity of species data	Indicate in case of sensitive species data
3.3.5 Non-presence	Indicate if the species is no-longer present in the site
3.3.6 Population size and unit	
3.3.6.1 Population size	Minimum and maximum population size
3.3.6.2 Population unit	Code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)
3.3.7 Abundance category	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> Common <input type="checkbox"/> Rare <input type="checkbox"/> Very rare <input type="checkbox"/> Present

<p>3.3.8 Motivation</p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appendix I species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appendix II species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appendix III species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Species listed in National Red Lists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Species listed in Global Red Lists</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Endemic species</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Species listed/protected under international Conventions such as Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals or the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Typical species of Resolution No. 4 (1996) habitat types</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) / Forest Genetic Resources (FGR)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invasive alien species of Bern Convention concern</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other reasons</li> </ul>
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**4. Site description**

<p>4.1 Site characteristics</p>	<p>Free text and language tag</p>
<p>4.2 Quality and importance of the site</p>	<p>Free text and language tag</p>
<p>4.3 Pressures on the site</p>	
<p>4.3.1 Pressure code</p>	<p>Code-list (see Emerald Network reference portal)</p>
<p>4.3.2 Rank <i>(same field but new list of pressures)</i></p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High importance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium importance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low importance</li> </ul>
<p>4.3.3 Location inside/outside <i>(same field but new list of pressures)</i></p>	<p>Pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inside Emerald Network site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outside Emerald Network site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inside and outside Emerald Network site</li> </ul>
<p>4.3.4 Pressure further detailed <i>Optional</i></p>	<p>Free text and language tag</p>
<p>4.3.5 Update date <i>Optional</i></p>	<p>Year and month</p>

4.4 Documentation	Free text and language tag
4.4.1 Link(s)	URI (URL or DOI)
4.4.2 Update date <b>Optional</b>	Year and month

### 5. Site management

5.1 Body responsible for the site management	
5.1.1 Name of the organisation	Free text and language tag
5.1.2 Contact point in the organisation (optional)	Part of the organisation responsible for the management of the site
5.1.3 Postal address	Free text and language tag
5.1.4 Functional mailbox email address	Functional mailbox email address, not personal
5.1.5 Website with contact information	Website containing the official contact information of the organisation
5.2 Management plans	
5.2.1 Existence of management plans(s)	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (if yes fill in 5.2.2) <input type="checkbox"/> No, site only partially covered (fill in 5.2.2) <input type="checkbox"/> No, but in preparation <input type="checkbox"/> No, because a management plan is not necessary (fill in 5.2.3) <input type="checkbox"/> No, other reason (fill in 5.2.3)
5.2.2 Reference and validity of the management plan(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Name of the plan and <input type="checkbox"/> Link to the plan (URI) and <input type="checkbox"/> Validity: start date (year and month) and duration: number of months / or not defined
5.2.3 Further explanations <b>Optional</b>	Free text and language tag; To be filled if management plan does not exist and is also not in preparation
5.3 Conservation measures	
5.3.1 Detailed information on measures	Pre-defined options: <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation measures are included in the management plan(s) to which the link is provided in section 5.2.2 (yes/no) <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation measures are described in the following document(s): — Title and link (URI) and/or — Further explanations on detailed conservation measures (free text and language tag) ( <b>optional</b> )

<p>5.3.2 Status of conservation measures</p>	<p>Two questions with pre-defined options:</p> <p>1. Are the measures established?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fully established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> partly established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> not established/ <b>not assessed</b></li> </ul> <p>For fully or partly established measures only:</p> <p>2. Are the established measures implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all implemented and/or all on-going</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> only partly implemented and/or partly on-going</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> one-off measures not implemented and/or no re- current measures on-going</li> </ul>
<p>5.4 Management effectiveness</p>	<p>Two questions with pre-defined options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is the effectiveness of the conservation measures periodically assessed? [yes/no]</li> <li>– Are the conservation measures delivering the set conservation objectives? [yes/no/not yet/ unknown because not assessed]</li> </ul>

**6. Geospatial representation of the site (optional)**

<p>6.1 INSPIRE identifier</p>	<p>INSPIRE identifier of the spatial object (see Natura 2000 reference portal)</p>
<p>6.1.1 Namespace</p>	<p>The namespace as defined by the national INSPIRE implementation</p>
<p>6.1.2 Local identifier</p>	<p>The local identifier must be unique within the namespace</p>
<p>6.1.3 Version identifier (optional)</p>	<p>The identifier of the particular version of the spatial object</p>

## **Appendix VII**

### **Emerald Network candidate and adopted sites lists**

Updated list of officially nominated candidate Emerald Sites – **T-PVS/PA(2025)04**

Updated list of Emerald Network adopted sites – **T-PVS/PA(2025)05**

## Appendix VIII Statements<sup>2</sup>

### Item 2: Communications from Contracting Parties and from the Secretariat

#### **-Statement by the Slovak Republic-**

Dear delegates of the Bern Convention, dear Bern Convention Secretariat, dear observers and participants,

I would like to take this opportunity at the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention to address the issue of the brown bear, as this topic is becoming increasingly urgent, especially in relation to ensuring the health and safety of the inhabitants of not only the Slovak Republic.

Since the brown bear was listed in Appendix II of the Bern Convention (Strictly Protected Fauna Species) more than 40 years ago, its range and population have expanded considerably. Currently, the population is increasing in most areas where brown bears are found. The favourable conservation status of the brown bear covers approximately 80 % of the area where this species occurs in Europe. Only small, local, and isolated populations show an unfavourable conservation status. According to current data, the brown bear population in Slovakia is more than 2,500 individuals, with a favourable status defined at a population of 800 individuals. In areas with a favourable conservation status and continuous population growth, there has recently been a need for active management and controlled regulation of the brown bear population. Although the strict protection regime allows for exceptions in justified cases, it does not allow contracting parties to regulate the number of brown bears in their territory. As a result, due to the existence of marginal isolated populations in an unfavourable condition, it is not possible to control the majority of the brown bear population in Europe.

As a result of the absence of intervention in the brown bear population and its increasing numbers, attacks on humans are on the rise, in addition to extensive damage. In Slovakia, we can confirm that the number of attacks on humans is increasing with the growing brown bear population. Since 2020, there has been a continuous increase in attacks in Slovakia. Over the past five years, brown bears have killed four people in Slovakia and injured more than 120 people since 2000. In some countries, such as Romania, there have been even more deaths caused by brown bears. It should be noted that attacks occur not only in the brown bear's natural habitat but also in towns and villages, which is evidence of another worrying fact, namely the change in the behaviour of individual brown bears.

In this context, it is necessary to point out the consequences of strict protection of the brown bear, which primarily consist of the population's antipathy towards nature conservation itself. This creates a paradoxical situation where strict protection of a species (in this case, the brown bear) provokes a counterproductive reaction in people and demotivates the population to protect nature as such, as well as its institutions. Ultimately, the population may resort to finding their own solutions to protect their safety, including possible illegal killings. In some areas, brown bears are regularly found in built-up areas and in their immediate vicinity, near cemeteries, bus stops, kindergartens, and schools, where parents fear for their children. As a

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<sup>2</sup> Only *viva voce* statements that were submitted in writing to the Secretariat for the appendix of this report are included.

result of this legitimate fear, a generation of young people is being raised to fear wildlife and is subsequently afraid to spend time in the outdoors, which also has negative social impacts. This situation has a negative impact on rural tourism and travel that is associated with financial losses in this sector. The unresolved situation with brown bears may also result in the abandonment of traditional farming practices, which are beneficial for nature and landscape conservation and essential for the preservation of natural and semi-natural habitats.

Given the urgent need to achieve effective and rational management of the brown bear population in order to maintain the favourable conservation status of this species and at the same time to prevent conflict situations with the aim of minimizing the threat to the life and health of the population, the Slovak Republic will make efforts in the upcoming period to coordinate its approach with the European Commission and the Member States of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention, understanding, and support.

### **-Statement by Ukraine-**

Intervention de l'Ukraine 08/12/2025

Comité permanent de la Convention de Berne

Monsieur le Président,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au moment où se tient cette séance plénière du Comité permanent, une lettre officielle du Ministre de l'Économie, de l'Environnement et de l'Agriculture de l'Ukraine, M. Oleksii Sobolev, est transmise au Secrétariat de la Convention de Berne. Par cette communication, l'Ukraine fournit des informations importantes concernant des changements susceptibles d'affecter de manière substantielle le caractère écologique des sites du Réseau Émeraude sur son territoire, conformément aux paragraphes 4.2 et 4.3 de la Résolution n° 5 (1998).

En bref, sur la base d'une analyse réalisée avec l'appui du Conflict and Environment Observatory dans le cadre du programme EU4Environment, l'Ukraine signale l'impact direct des hostilités sur 170 sites Émeraude adoptés. Sur l'ensemble des 538 sites adoptés et proposés, près de 47 %, soit 250 sites d'une superficie totale d'environ 71 957 km<sup>2</sup>, ont été soit occupés, soit situés à moins de 10 km de la ligne de front. À la date du 30 novembre 2024, 129 sites demeuraient encore sous occupation.

La communication met également en évidence des conséquences concrètes, notamment une activité anormalement élevée d'incendies dans les écosystèmes affectés, des perturbations du couvert forestier, ainsi qu'un grand nombre d'incidents liés à l'activité militaire et à la présence de positions et d'ouvrages de fortification au sein ou à proximité des sites Émeraude. L'Ukraine attire aussi l'attention sur l'impact potentiel du développement d'infrastructures frontalières, susceptible de concerner 93 sites Émeraude supplémentaires.

Dans ce contexte, l'Ukraine demande au Comité permanent de tenir des consultations avec l'Ukraine, comme prévu par la Résolution n° 5 (1998), et propose de compléter la Liste de référence des menaces,

pressions et activités afin d'y inclure des facteurs militaires pertinents, actuellement absents de cet instrument.

Enfin, je voudrais demander, Monsieur le Président, que cette intervention soit ajoutée aux procès-verbaux de la réunion.

Je vous remercie.

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

Mr Chair,

Madam Executive Secretary,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we reconvene for the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. One of the core aims of the Bern Convention is the conservation of wild flora and fauna and the habitats on which they depend across Europe. While the challenge of safeguarding biodiversity is ongoing and while some species and habitats continue to face pressure, others are showing encouraging recovery. The Bern Convention has played a pivotal role in fostering cross-border cooperation and strengthening collective conservation efforts throughout more than four decades.

Before turning to the topics on the agenda, the EU and its Member States would like to express their sincere appreciation for the dedication of the Secretariat and the Bureau in the intersessional period. We acknowledge that preparations to this meeting have not been easy. Although we regret the late circulation of some of the meeting documents, including the draft annotated agenda, we fully recognize the pressure the Secretariat has been under. Ultimately, we are all gathered here with the common goal of delivering on our commitments and implementing the work programme of the Bern Convention effectively.

This meeting agenda includes several items that will be crucial in defining the way forward for the Bern Convention. Work on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention continues to advance, and we thank the dedicated Working Group for its commitment.

These are interesting times for us working with the Convention, but also for the species listed in its Appendices. In March of this year, the proposal to transfer the grey wolf from Appendix II to Appendix III entered into force. This development prompted discussions across Europe among Parties, stakeholders and NGOs. It has also encouraged reflections on the Appendices and on possible mechanisms to guide further amendments, which is why the Standing Committee at the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee agreed to launch the preliminary work on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the Appendices. This remains essential to ensure a consistent (coherent?) approach to addressing conservation efforts for the listed species.

One of the drivers of this discussion was the recent modification of the protection status of the grey wolf. It remains crucial to continuously explore and develop approaches that promote coexistence between people and large carnivores, and we support the ongoing work in this area.

We wish to congratulate the Bern Convention on the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for protected areas, which was celebrated this year in Spain. We acknowledge the Granada Declaration as a stepping stone for further work in this field.

Finally, we also want to express our appreciation of the work of exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention, as a means to addressing the issue of the financial situation of the Convention, which has been a theme for some years.

The EU and its Member States will do their best to contribute to a successful and productive meeting.

We wish all delegates constructive discussions and positive outcomes.

Thank you, Chair.

<p><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></p>
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**-Statement by the EU and its members States-**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on the information about the follow-up given to the 4th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe held on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavík, Iceland, in particular on the adoption of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, elaborated by the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME), and the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, open for signatures on 3rd December 2025.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on the third implementation of the Reykjavik Declaration and the follow up decisions on the 134th session of the Committee of Ministers of 13-14 of May 2025, including the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on adoption on the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and notes that the Committee of Ministers took note of the Action Plan, and entrusted its Deputies with ensuring the implementation, in the light of their decisions of the 2nd of April 2025.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on the Terms of Reference of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group of the Environment (GME).

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th meeting of the GME, including the list of items discussed and decisions taken.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note on the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV).

### Item 3.1: Financing of the Bern Convention

#### - Statement of the EU and Member States –

The EU and its Member States would like to underline the importance of securing a lasting mechanism for the long-term financing and subsequent functioning of the Bern Convention. The Bern Convention remains a cornerstone of Europe's commitment to nature conservation, and from an EU perspective its strategic importance cannot be overstated. This Convention has laid the foundations for key elements of EU nature legislation, inspiring both the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, and remains an important safeguard for this legislation, embedding it into a wider Pan-European context. The Convention also continues to play a vital role in supporting EU accession, helping candidate countries align with our environmental acquis and integrate them into a shared system of biodiversity protection. Above all, the Bern Convention creates a truly continental approach to safeguarding species and habitats, ensuring that conservation efforts transcend borders and contribute to a resilient, interconnected natural heritage for Europe and beyond.

We welcome the intensive efforts of all parties, and in particular of the **Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention**, noting however that contradicting legal requirements have so far prevented the achievement of a solution that would satisfy all parties. We would also like to thank the **Bern Convention Secretariat** for the note on Sustainable financing options, which provides a good overview of the current state of this difficult file.

We question the appropriateness of any financing approach that entails a distribution of financial contributions to several Environmental Conventions, noting in particular that while all EU Member States and the EU itself are parties to the Bern Convention, they are not all parties to these other conventions.

We also highlight the limitations of a system of voluntary contributions, noting in particular that several EU Member States cannot provide any voluntary contributions as they do not have, in their national systems, a legal basis for doing so.

We express doubts about the added value of a dedicated COP on the issue of financing, noting in particular its important resource implications.

For these reasons, our most favoured option remains a **Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention** and we also express our full support for the working group to continue to work on this option in view of elaborating a finalised proposal, for consideration by the meeting of the Bureau of the Convention in September and the 46<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting in December.

We also consider that we should call for a meeting of the European Commission, the Convention Secretariat and other relevant services of the Council of Europe **early next year**, with a view to reach further clarification on the available options as regards the remaining unresolved issues, in particular the European Union financial contribution and voting arrangements. There is a need to ensure that the Council of Europe Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law (DLAPIL) as well as the Rapporteur Group on

Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) are involved or duly informed about the process, to ensure that any possible challenges are addressed in a timely manner.

The outcome of this meeting will provide guidance for the finalisation of the amending protocol over 2026.

**Item 3.2: Working group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention**

**- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

- The EU and its Member States welcome the constructive work of the Working Group and strongly support the balanced package of proposals that combines the amendment of Recommendation No. 56 (1997), ad-hoc expert advice, and the exploration of the establishment of a scientific advisory group. While we are fully supportive to an approach that would update Recommendation No. 56 and combine this with ad hoc expert advice, we see rather limited added value and also significant challenges in the idea of establishing a broader scientific advisory group.
- First, we underline the importance of updating Recommendation No. 56. The current guidance is too short, incomplete and outdated. A revised Recommendation, to encompass both clear guidance and criteria for amendments is essential to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency across amendments to all three appendices.
- We are also particularly supportive of the proposal for ad-hoc expert advice, which will allow rapid access to independent, species-specific expertise when necessary and help ensure that Standing Committee decisions are based on robust and objective evidence.
- We also see some added value in exploring further the establishment of a scientific advisory group, consistent with mechanisms under other multilateral environmental agreements. Such a group could strengthen scientific oversight and improve coherence, in particular if a periodic review of the appendices is considered necessary. At the same time, we recognise that this option would have more substantial resource implications and risks to create redundancies with existing working groups, and therefore requires a very careful assessment.
- Finally, the EU and its Member States support mandating the Working Group to continue developing a comprehensive process, incorporating revised criteria, procedures and advisory mechanisms.
- It is our view that, as part of that work, the group should consider the establishment of an administrative procedure for submitting proposals for amendments to the appendices, including a definition of the information that needs to be provided for the assessment of the proposal.
- We propose a minor change to the draft Terms of Reference of the Working Group as proposed in document T-PVS/Inf(2025)41, specifically in Section III – Composition, to ensure continuity of work of the Group in case its Chair is unable to perform her/his duties. We propose to add the words “and one Vice-Chair”, so the second sentence in this section reads as follows: “The Working Group will select one Chair and one Vice-Chair from amongst its members.”

**Item 3.3: Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030**

**- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note of the report. We appreciate the work of the Group during the first half of 2025 as well as the valuable support provided by the independent consultant to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention.

We note with regret that the second meeting of the Group had to be postponed until 2026 and therefore only limited progress can be reported to this Standing Committee meeting. The EU+MS are hopeful that the work will advance next year.

Finally, we note with appreciation the cooperation of this Group with the Ad hoc Working Group on Reporting, as this allows for improving synergies and better alignment of monitoring and reporting arrangements under the Bern Convention. We encourage both Groups to continue in this close cooperation.

**Item 3.5: Thematic Groups and Working Groups under the Bern Convention – State of Play and Ways Forward**

**- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU+MS take note of the overview of the thematic Groups of Experts and Working Groups under the Bern Convention.

Further, the EU+MS recognize the examples on addressing challenges and strengthening cost efficiency as outlined in the note. The EU+MS support further consideration of this issue, also in the context of the foreseen updates to the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee. Reviewing groups to explore if they should be phased out or merged could be a logical first step. However, it should be discussed on what basis the outphasing or merging of groups will be decided.

Before considering the replacement of thematic expert groups, the criteria for setting thematic priorities should be investigated further. This is in order to ensure clear relevance and added value to the work under the Bern Convention (i.e. avoiding duplication with similar activities under other conventions of platforms) and considering the urgency of the issues to be addressed. The process should remain flexible to respond to new and emerging priorities.

The EU + MS wish to emphasize that the creation of thematic and cross-cutting groups to replace or merge thematic expert groups and working groups presents a risk of losing the specificity and added value to the Convention's technical work, where dedicated experts contribute. Replacing these groups with more generalist ones raises the risk of less technical representation in these meetings and a decline in the quality of the work done.

Furthermore, a valuable step would be updating the terms of reference for the Thematic Group of Experts that should remain active and formulating clear expectations on deliverables for both Groups of Experts and Working Groups.

Finally, the EU+MS would like to recall the approach taken by the Standing Committee at its meeting last year. After having reviewed the ongoing activities as well as the resources available to the Secretariat, the Standing Committee revised the provisional meeting calendar and provided guidance to maximise efficiency and support the Secretariat with prioritisation. A similar approach could be considered on a regular basis.

**Item 5.1: Conservation of Birds & IKB****- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States take note of the report from the joint meeting of the CMS Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (CMS/MIKT) and the Bern Convention and recognizes that 25 countries submitted replies to the Scoreboard 2023 and that the analysis of the replies shows a positive development. The EU and its Member States support the decision from the joint working group on a mid-term assessment to assess progress towards the goal of the Rome Strategic Plan. In regard to the joint working group we would like to take the opportunity to thank Croatia for their offer to host the next meeting of the working group in 2027.

The EU and its Member States further take note of the report of the 8th meeting of the Group of Experts on the conservation of wild birds, including the priority topics proposed by the group for its future work. However, regarding the priority topic on invasive species we have concerns related to the proposed special attention on feral cats. Even though we recognize that feral cats may pose a risk to native bird species as well as a risk of hybridization with forest cats our concerns regard the fact that the definition of feral cat may differ between countries making a common approach difficult and secondly, we have concerns about the risk of confusing feral cats with the protected forest cat if initiatives against feral cats should be recommended. Therefore, great caution should be exercised when discussing and recommending actions. We would therefore ask to amend the point on invasive species in the list of priority topics that the standing committee is asked to take note of, to read:

- invasive species, with special attention to small carnivores. Further, special attention should be given to small islands with seabird breeding populations.

The proposal to prepare a recommendation addressing the effects of persistent environmental pollutants is supported since it will highlight and strengthen the need to reduce the negative impact on birds from persistent environmental pollutants such as lead by implementing efficient regulations across the Parties to the Bern Convention. But we would like to emphasize that special attention should be given to ongoing work under CMS (AEWA and working groups against poisoning, on migratory land birds and on Illegal Killing of Birds) and the EU REACH Regulation in order to avoid duplication of work.

Furthermore, EU and its Member States welcome the prepared guidance tool on good practices for bird conservation in the development of renewable energies. This important work highlights the challenges faced when the climate crisis calls for further development of renewable energies while at the same time this development may have critical impacts on biodiversity. The guidance provides recommendations to counteract these challenges, and the EU and its Members States encourage Parties to make use of the recommendations.

**Item 5.2: Conservation of Large Carnivores****- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS);

- Take note of the information provided by the Chair of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores and the Secretariat
- Adopt the Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Large Carnivores, and consider endorsing the ToRs and using it as an example for developing similar ToRs for other thematic Groups of Experts.
- Take note of the Range-wide Strategy for the Rescue and Conservation of the Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) 2026–2035 and encourage the range States to actively engage in its implementation.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) also take note of the report regarding the best practices for management of brown bear and grey wolf in Europe with respect to lethal and non-lethal management measures. We appreciate the work that has been done by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research in this regard. The document serves as a source of inspiration and a basis for further discussion in dealing with the sensitive issue of sustainable management of brown bear and grey wolf. We especially appreciate the recommendations on taking a holistic view on the management. We also appreciate the abundant examples of best practice in action. This can indeed be helpful as a source for consideration and perhaps even future collaborations in sustainable management.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note of the “Note on wolf monitoring” and the proposal to focus on legal protection status and management measures in 2026.

### **Item 5.3: Amphibians and Reptiles and Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**

#### **- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) take note of the reports from the meetings of the Groups of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles and on IAS as well as from their joint session.

Regarding the topic of invasive alien species, the EU+MS note with appreciation the new momentum created this year thanks to the two meetings of the Group, and encourage the experts from all Contracting Parties to actively engage in further work. We also invite the group to elaborate further on the priority topics identified, taking into consideration the ongoing implementation of the EU Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species as well as the work of relevant institutions and initiatives. In addition, the EU+MS reiterate their invitation to the Group to consider 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.

On amphibians and reptiles, the EU+MS highlight the need of continuous work on preventing and controlling the Bsal chytrid fungus. We note that the Bern Convention, through the implementation of its Recommendation No. 176 (2015), provides an important platform to address the ongoing spread of the disease and promotes cooperation among Contracting Parties in this regard. The EU+MS also support further work on the proposal to develop Important Herpetofauna Areas and to plan identifying and developing IHAs at the European level and encouraging further activities at the national level.

Finally, we welcome the first joint session of both groups as an important step towards their enhanced cooperation. The EU+MS support that joint work should focus on a small number of priority topics in order to be able to deliver tangible and practical outcomes and agree to prioritising the issue of invasive alien

pathogens, with particular attention to Bsal, where guidance on pathways management and wildlife trade could be developed.

#### **Item 5.4: Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck**

##### **- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU+Ms recognizes that good progress has been made in the eradication of the invasive alien species Ruddy Duck in Europe, despite indications that suggest that on a European scale, the problem persists in 2025. Therefore, the EU+MS take note of the information presented and support the Bureau's proposal to extend the Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck to 2026. The EU+MS furthermore supports the proposal to draft a new Action Plan in time for adoption at the 46th Standing Committee meeting in 2026, but underline that this should indeed be subject to the availability of financial and human resources.

#### **Item 5.5.1: Emerald Areas of Special Conservation Interest**

##### **- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

##### ***On overall progress and strategic direction***

- The EU and Member States welcome the significant work undertaken by GoEPAEN in the last 12 months and acknowledge the progress made in several technical and strategic areas critical for meeting the Bern Convention's Vision and Strategic Plan 2030. We would also like to thank the authorities of Montenegro for having hosted the recent meeting of the GoEPAEN.
- We emphasise the strategic importance of consolidating and strengthening the Emerald Network as a key pillar of the pan-European conservation framework that also includes the Natura 2000 sites network established in the European Union.
- We value the achievements of the EU4Environment *programme* and reaffirm our support to non-EU Contracting Parties in developing and managing their Emerald sites.
- We welcome the proposal for a joint GoEPAEN–Strategic Plan Working Group meeting in 2026 to enhance coordination and ensure the best use of Emerald Network data.
- We reiterate our readiness to continue supporting the development of the Emerald Network and to work collaboratively towards a coherent, resilient, and scientifically robust pan-European ecological network.

##### ***a) Revision of the Emerald Network Standard Data Form (SDF) and inclusion in Resolution No.5 (1998)***

- The EU and Member States strongly support the adoption of the revised Emerald Network SDF, noting that full alignment with the Natura 2000 SDF will:
  - streamline reporting for countries engaged with both frameworks,
  - improve data interoperability, and
  - enhance the robustness of network-level assessments.
- Harmonisation of methodologies is a major step forward and demonstrates the maturity and progressive alignment of the two networks.

**b) Criteria for assessing Changes in the Emerald network**

- The EU and Member States strongly support the mandate for the Secretariat to conduct a legal analysis regarding the assessment of negative changes and the potential applicability of legal concepts used under the EU Habitats Directive.
- We consider that legal clarity on these issues will strengthen the governance and resilience of the Emerald Network.

**c) Criteria for screening, prior assessment and authorisation of potentially harmful projects**

- The EU and Member States welcome the inventory of relevant EIA procedures in protected areas. We encourage Contracting Parties to make full use of the existing body of guidance and best practices identified in this expert study, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring legal certainty when evaluating potentially harmful projects.
- We underline the need for effective early-stage screening of plans and projects that may affect Emerald sites. We note that early assessments, that take place prior to the detailed planning or authorisation stages, reduce risks, increase transparency, and support informed decision-making. We therefore encourage Contracting Parties to adopt robust screening procedures that allow for timely identification of risks and promote the avoidance of impacts at source.
- In this context, we are also pleased to inform the Standing Committee about an important new development for Emerald sites in the accession candidate countries: to facilitate the transition of these countries to the EU acquis in relation to their energy infrastructure, the European Commission has proposed to transpose certain elements of the Birds and Habitats Directives into the EU Energy Community Treaty. As a reminder, this treaty is an international agreement that extends the EU's energy acquis to non-EU countries, aiming to create a unified, competitive, and secure regional energy grid. The accession countries that are Contracting Parties to this treaty with the European Union are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, (Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Moldova, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.
- The Commission proposed to require that projects that can be defined as 'network energy projects', covering both projects for energy transmission and production, comply both with the EU species protection requirements under the Birds and Habitats Directives and, as far as protected areas are concerned, with the requirements of Article 6.2, 3 and 4 of the Habitats Directive. In the absence of a Natura 2000 network in accession countries, this latter requirement would cover those nationally protected areas that are reported through the EEA's NatDA database, Emerald sites and Ramsar Sites.
- This Commission proposal has recently been adopted by the Council and on the agenda for discussion at the meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Ministers of the Contracting Parties on 18 December. The length of the transition period by which the new provision will enter into force is proposed to be five years, subject to the negotiations with the Contracting Parties.
- We consider that, once they enter into force, the new provisions under the EU Energy Community Treaty will provide an additional level of protection to certain species and habitats protected under the Bern Convention, in particular where these projects would take place in Emerald sites, Ramsar Sites, and other nationally designed protected areas: in the case of significant harm to those areas such projects could only be granted subject to the three following conditions all of which have to be complied with: (1) absence of less harmful alternatives, (2) subject to appropriate compensatory measures and (3) if the project must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

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

- The EU and Member States express concern about the limited progress in new site designations and database updates. Meeting the 2030 targets will require renewed efforts and stronger engagement at national level.

- We encourage all Contracting Parties to address recurrent data errors, improve habitat coding, and ensure the consistency of site boundaries and management information.

***d) Update on the support provided to contracting parties to ensure updated databases are submitted to the Bern Convention***

- The EU and Member States welcomes the planned developments of the Reportnet3 portal for Emerald Network reporting and encourages all Contracting Parties to engage proactively in the testing phase.
- We consider that high-quality, up-to-date national databases are essential for sound sufficiency assessments and for ensuring accurate monitoring of progress towards the 2030 targets.

**Finally, the EU and Member States would welcome any proposal from Contracting Parties to host the 2026 joint meeting of the GoEPAEN and the Working Group on overseeing the implementation of the Vision and Strategic Plan 2030.**

**Item 5.5.2: European Diploma for protected areas**

**- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS);

- Take note of the meeting report of the Group of Specialists, hereunder the list of areas which could benefit from an on-the spot appraisal in 2026;
- Take note of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma (Granada, 21 May 2025) and thank the Spanish authorities for hosting the event;
- Take note of the Granada Declaration adopted on the occasion of the Roundtable of the Managers of the Diploma holding areas (Granada, 21-22 May 2025);
- Welcome the award of the European Diploma to the Sierra Nevada National Park, Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve (Spain) and the renewal of the European Diploma of the Regional Park Gallipoli Cognato (Italy);
- Take note that no on-the-spot appraisal visits are to be carried out in 2025 and that 3 are foreseen in 2026;
- Take note of the need to have additional Specialists in the Group and to follow-up on the call.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) are thankful to the Group of Specialists.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) fully supports the Granada Declaration and encourages all European countries with protected areas of exceptional European interest to apply for joining the European Diploma.

The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) encourages national focal points to appoint new appropriate specialists with expertise in protected area management.

**Item 5.6: Reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats**

**- Statement of the EU and Member States –**

The EU and its Member States take note of the report from the 7th meeting of the ad-hoc working group on reporting as well as the abridged meeting report of the webinar on Favourable Reference Values, Habitat Condition and Future Prospects. These are topics that are well known to be difficult to interpret, and we would like to thank the organizers, speakers and participants for their contributions to the webinar.

The EU and its Member States strongly invite all non-EU contracting parties to report under Resolution No. 8(2012) by 31 March 2026, using the reporting format and the checklists of habitats and species which have been endorsed in December 2024 by the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee.

The EU and its Member States endorse the draft Terms of reference for the Working Group on Reporting, subject to the following clarification on the scope of this working group: “The Working Group on Reporting will provide a dedicated cooperation platform for preparing the scope, format, methodology, tools of the reporting by **non-EU parties** on the conservation status of species and habitats under Resolution No. 8 (2012)

**Item 6.2: Open Files**

➤ **1986/08: GREECE: RECOMMENDATION NO. 9 (1987) ON THE PROTECTION OF CARETTA CARETTA IN LAGANAS BAY, ZAKYNTHOS (OSA)**

**-Statement by European Commission-**

On 30 January 2002, the European Court of Justice ruled that Greece violated the Habitats Directive, failing to protect the turtles against disturbance and degradation of their breeding habitat on Zakynthos.

Despite the ruling, subsequent assessments found that actual protection remained insufficient: tourism development, beach access, infrastructure, and other disturbances continued. In particular, the attention increasingly focused on an dysfunctional landfill within the area

In 2014, the Court ruled that Greece breached EU waste-management laws (notably the Landfill Directive and the 2008 Waste Framework Directive), because the uncontrolled landfill site endangered the protected habitat of the loggerhead turtle and the environment.

In November 2023, the European Commission decided to refer Greece back to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to close a landfill site on the island of Zakynthos (in Gryparaiika, in the région of Kalamaki), within the Natura 2000 site.

In October 2025, the European Court of Justice issued a €5.5 million fine on Greece for failing to close and rehabilitate a landfill in the Zakynthos National Maritime Park, as ordered by a 2014 ruling. The country must now pay a lump sum of €5.5 million, plus an additional €1,500 for every day of delay in complying with that earlier decision.

As the recent court case is thus focused on the landfill issue, the Commission has currently no open case in relation to nature conservation in Zakynthos. We do not currently have a clear view on the situation in this site.

However, considering the information provided through the Bern Convention complaint file, we can commit to raise the issues in the next nature dialogue with the Greek authorities

In light of the current situation and given the difficulties that the OSA in 2025 faced in terms of gathering evidence, the COM would support an on-spot appraisal by the Bern Convention Secretariat in 2026.

**-Statement by the complainant MEDASSET (Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles)-**

On the Spot Assessment -

One year ago, the Standing Committee accepted MEDASSET's request to conduct an on the spot assessment in Zakynthos Laganas Bay for the open file 1986/08 and in Thines Kyparissias for the open file 2010/05.

Unfortunately the Greek government / Ministry of Environment and Energy, instead of taking a cooperative stance in order to resolve issues and implement the Recommendations for the open files, it decided to take the stance that "they will not apologize for anything as the sea turtle nesting is increasing". This reflects their position that the only measure that matters is number of nests and that we need to stop pressuring for further implementation of the Recommendations. They refuse to accept that any improvements in nesting numbers are conservation dependent and today's nesting figures are the result of thirty plus years of conservation efforts by the NGOs and can be easily reversed if we do not continue our conservation efforts.

Furthermore, the NGOs were not involved in any way in the planning process of the OSA and received a four working day notification to plan their participation, sending them in a frenzy to change plans and make travel arrangements during the sea turtle nesting period.

As health reasons of the expert conducting the OSA, Adolfo Marco, prevented the preparation of his final report and necessitates a new OSA should take place during the summer of 2026, and MEDASSET declares its willingness to participate, but requests the following:

1. That the planning process, the agenda and the dates of the OSA are agreed upon following consultation, which includes the NGOs, unlike the 2025 OSA.
2. The dates shall coincide with the nesting season and the high tourist season for both locations, ideally in the early part of the month of July.
3. That sufficient time is allocated for meaningful assessments and meeting times (at least four days).
4. All areas of Laganas Bay (including Marathonisi) and Thines Kyparissias (between Elaia and Kalo Nero) are visited and none are excluded, as occurred in Vounaki.
5. The Greek government ensures the attendance in the OSA of all relevant stakeholders and authorities, including appropriate state and municipal officers, the Police and the Coast Guard, unlike what occurred during the 2025 OSA.

That the European Commission is invited to participate, as well.

➤ **2010/05: GREECE: THREATS TO MARINE TURTLES IN THINES KIPARISSIAS (OSA)**

**-Statement by European Commission-**

In February 2025, the Commission sent an administrative letter asking to be updated i) if the Special Environmental Study of Kyparissia bay has been subject to public consultation, if it has been approved and if

the management plan has been drafted, ii) on the results of the Special ecological Assessment by NECCA and iii) on the protection measures implemented during summer 2024, the controls and the sanctions imposed.

On 16 April 2025, the Hellenic authorities provided the results of the Special ecological Assessment by NECCA.

On 07 May 2025 in Athens, DG ENV participated at a high-level meeting co-organized by the Ministry of Environment & Energy and the Secretariat of the Bern Convention of the Council of Europe on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats to discuss ongoing open-case files concerning marine turtle protection in Greece and prepare for on-site appraisals.

As a follow up to this meeting, DG ENV was invited by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy to participate in the consultations during the on-the-spot appraisals (OSAs) by an appointed expert by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, in the regions of Laganas Bay in Zakynthos and Thines Kyparissias (Trifylia), between 17 - 20 June 2025.

It is not usual for the Commission to participate in missions/appraisals jointly with other international organisations, as each institution has its own framework. However, as this case concerned the protection of the *Caretta caretta* turtle in Kyparissia on which COM has an open infringement, it was decided to focus our participation as observer to the consultations and on-the-spot appraisal in the Thines Kyparissias (Trifylia) area.

If the country does not take the necessary measures to comply with all the aspects of the Court ruling the Commission may further pursue the case and ultimately refer it back to the Court of Justice and request that fines be imposed.

In June 2025 the Commission sent a letter of formal notice under Article 260 TFEU to Greece (INFR(2014)2260) for failing to comply with the judgment C 849/19 of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 17 December 2020. The ruling found that Greece has not established conservation objectives and measures (Special Environmental Studies for the issuance of Presidential Decrees and Management Plans) for the whole Natura 2000 network. The Commission is currently assessing the reply of the Hellenic authorities to that letter. In the absence of a satisfactory response, the Commission may decide to refer Greece to the Court of Justice of the European Union with a request to impose financial sanctions.

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

**-Statement by European Commission-**

In March 2024, the Commission decided to refer Cyprus (INFR(2021)2064) to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to fulfil the obligations under Articles 4(4) and 6 of the Habitats Directive, in particular for failing to designate Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) (for which the six-year deadline has expired) as special areas of conservation (SACs) and to establish the necessary conservation objectives and measures for these sites. As regards Akamas peninsula, conservation objectives have been established, but not conservation measures. The Commission still awaits the ruling of the Court.

The Commission has also launched infringement proceedings against Cyprus (case 2019/2303) regarding the systemic and persistent breach of application of Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. On 13 March 2024, the Commission sent a reasoned opinion to Cyprus (INFR(2019)2303).

The Commission is currently monitoring the situation to ensure that projects authorised after the sending of the reasoned opinion comply with the minimum requirements of the Directive and that thus the systemic issue that was detected previously has been addressed.

It should be reminded that the objective of this case is to quash the root causes of the bad implementation of this Article rather than to examine every single project authorised in breach of that provision.

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

**-Statement by European Commission-**

The Commission notes with concern that, as far as protected areas in Northern Macedonia are concerned, their protection against significant deterioration from plans and projects, also including as hydro-power developments, that are known to cause significant negative impacts that are very hard if not impossible to compensate, are still not in line with EU standards. Considering the outstanding importance and high level of endemism in many Western Balkan rivers, there is a risk that sites of very high biodiversity importance, many of which are or should become Emerald sites and which, in case of EU accession, should also become Natura 2000 sites, will be irreversibly damaged by such developments.

Whilst not referring explicitly to the Bern Convention cases, the European Commission commented in the annual 2025 North Macedonia Enlargement Report as follows: “The process of declaring protected areas of high importance such as Lake Ohrid, Studenchisko Blato, Matka Canyon and the re-proclamation of the Mavrovo National Park, is still not finalised and may further deteriorate the biodiversity and natural values of the sites.” 267b368e-6b55-4a42-bb72-6395593de4da\_en p. 87

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

**-Statement by European Commission-**

The Commission notes with concern that, as far as protected areas in Northern Macedonia are concerned, their protection against significant deterioration from plans and projects that are known to cause serious damages are still not in line with EU standards. Considering the outstanding importance as a biodiversity hotspot of Galichica National Park and adjacent Lake Ohrid one of the oldest lakes on our Continent, there is a risk that these sites of very high biodiversity importance, which are candidate Emerald sites and which, in case of EU accession, would also become Natura 2000 sites, would irreversibly be damaged by such developments.

We also note with concern that, on this issues, there has been hardly any progress since last years Bern Convention Standing Committee.

Whilst not referring explicitly to the Bern Convention cases, the European Commission commented in the annual 2025 North Macedonia Enlargement Report the following: “The process of declaring protected areas of high importance such as Lake Ohrid, [...], is still not finalised and may further deteriorate the biodiversity and natural values of the sites.”, and “ The implementation of UNESCO recommendations for the natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region remains insufficient.”

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

**-Statement by European Commission-**

As far as protected areas in Albania are concerned, the Commission notes with concern that their level of protection against deteriorations is still not fully in line with EU standards. Considering the outstanding importance of the Vjosa river and its estuary, one of the best-preserved fluvial ecosystems in the entire Mediterranean sea basin and which is currently under a wide range of pressures, there is a risk that this site of very high biodiversity importance which, in case of EU accession should also become a Natura 2000 site, would be irreversibly damaged by such developments.

The European Commission commented in the annual 2025 Albania Enlargement Report the following:

“Alignment with the EU acquis on nature protection, in particular the habitats and birds Directives, needs further improvement. The 2024 legislative amendments to the Law on protected areas led to a deterioration on nature protection.

The 2015 Law on Strategic Investments has again been extended, with its validity now prolonged until 2027. Its repeated extension continues to raise concerns about possible environmental impacts, particularly in protected areas.

The construction of the new Vlora Airport ... is still advancing, despite the request of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in December 2023 and in December 2024 to suspend the works until a new and sufficient EIA procedure is conducted.

In May, concerns were raised about leachate, oil and bitumen spills, gravel mining and water abstraction within the Vjosa River National Park, which may affect the integrity of the protected area. The environmental risks of the Skavica hydropower plant project to ecosystem and local communities persist.

Albania should advance the identification, pre-designation and protection of the sites that will be covered by the Natura 2000 network." See fe9138b7-90fe-4277-a12c-3a03f6d1957f\_en, page 84.

#### **-Statement by YEE (Youth and Environment Europe)-**

As an Albanian youth representative actively involved in environmental work at national and international levels, I can say that we fully recognize the fundamental importance of environmental protection and sustainable development for our country's future.

The issues raised in this process demonstrate the need for coordinated, transparent, and science-based decision-making. In this regard, we consider the active collaboration of all relevant actors (institutions, civil society, academia, and communities) as essential for identifying effective and long-term solutions.

We strongly emphasize that youth inclusion must be an integral component of this process. This should occur in two complementary forms:

- Broad inclusion of youth voices, ensuring that young people are informed and provided with opportunities to get engaged and contribute their perspectives.
- Targeted inclusion of young experts within the proposed joint technical working groups.

Albania has a growing cohort of young professionals with expertise in water- resources management, biodiversity conservation, ecology, and environmental policy. Their participation would add technical value, strengthen transparency, and support evidence-based decision-making.

Water is one of Albania's greatest assets, carrying immense ecological value while serving as a vital resource that supports our country's sustainable economic development. For us, it is essential to implement the best

European practices for sustainable development, ensuring that economic progress doesn't come at the expense of the environmental integrity of our natural heritage.

For Albanian youth, the Vjosa River serves as a powerful reminder of the responsibility our generation carries to protect the natural ecosystems for the future. Therefore, we emphasize that youth involvement should not be viewed only as a matter of representation, but a necessary investment in building the next generation of environmental stewards capable of contributing substantively to sustainable development in Albania

➤ **2016/04: MONTENEGRO: DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMERCIAL PROJECT IN SKADAR LAKE NATIONAL PARK AND CANDIDATE EMERALD SITE**

**-Statement by the European Commission-**

The Commission notes with concern that, as far as protected areas in Montenegro are concerned, their protection against significant deterioration from plans and projects, that are known to cause serious damages, are still not fully in line with EU standards. Considering the outstanding biodiversity importance of Lake Skadar and its surrounding wetlands, there is a risk that this site of very high biodiversity importance, which is a National Park, a candidate Emerald site since 2011, a recognised Important Bird Area and which, in case of EU accession, should also become Natura 2000 sites, will be irreversibly damaged by such developments.

On the positive side, we note some positive progress, given that certain damaging infrastructural developments are reported to have come to a halt.

The European Commission commented in the annual 2025 Montenegro Enlargement Report the following: "Montenegro still needs to address the recommendation of the Bern Convention related to Skadar lake." See 9ae69ea7-81d6-4d6a-a204-bd32a379d51d\_en, page 94.

<b>Item 6.3: Possible Files</b>
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➤ **2001/04: BULGARIA: MOTORWAY THROUGH THE KRESNA GORGE**

**-Statement by the European Commission-**

The European Commission notes with great satisfaction that an agreement has been reached between the complainant, a coalition of Bulgarian nature conservation NGOs, and the Bulgarian authorities, with a view to relocate lot 3.2 of the Struma motorway OUTSIDE of the Kresna gorge. We praise the good collaboration between the two parties, which is reflected by the Joint Report to the Bern Convention.

Thanks to this agreement, and provided this agreement is followed, major damage to a European biodiversity hotspot, which is also protected through several Natura 2000 sites, can be avoided.

We will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Struma Motorway, Lot 3.2 project and ensure compliance with the applicable EU environmental legislation.

➤ **2022/02: AUSTRIA: ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION IN RELATION TO DELIBERATE KILLING OF LUTRA LUTRA**

**-Statement by the European Commission-**

In the most recent 6-yearly report by Austria under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, which was submitted less than one month ago, Austria is reporting its population of the otter to be in a favourable conservation status for all 4 assessment parameters in both the Continental and the Alpine biogeographical region parts of the country. While the population is now reported to be stable in the Continental biogeographical region, it is reported to have further increased over the last 6 years in the Alpine part of the country, to which the Province of Carinthia fully belongs.

As regards derogation from species provisions, the Commission reminds that the main requirements for such derogations are that (1) there is no satisfactory alternative, including with regards to the means of killing used and whether there would be less damaging alternatives than killing, and (2) that the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

The Commission itself has so far not received any complaint about this issue. We take good note about the information provided to the Standing Committee by the complainant and by the Austrian authorities. While this information will allow us to have a closer look at this issue, we are not yet in a position to provide any further information on the way forward for this file on the Commission's side.

## Appendix IX List of Participants

### CONTRACTING PARTIES / PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

<b>ALBANIA / ALBANIE</b>	<b>Ms Klodiana MARIKA (Main representative)</b> Director of Nature and Forests Ministry of Tourism and Environment
<b>ANDORRA / ANDORRE</b>	
<b>ARMENIA / ARMENIE</b>	<b>Mr Hakob MATEVOSYAN (Main representative)</b> Senior Specialist of Specially Protected Areas Nature and Biodiversity Department Ministry of Environment
<b>AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE</b>	<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  <b>Mr Martin WILDENBERG</b> Federal Ministry Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility and Technology
<b>AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN</b>	<b>Mr Rashad ALLAHVERDIYEV (Main representative)</b> Deputy Chief of the Service of Protection of Biodiversity Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources

<p><b>BELGIUM / BELGIQUE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Sandrine LIEGEOIS (Main representative)</b> Service Public de Wallonie pour l'Agriculture, Ressources naturelles et Environnement</p> <p><b>Ms Eva BAUDICHAU</b> PhD Candidate</p>
<p><b>BOSNIA &amp; HERZEGOVINA/ BOSNIE &amp; HERZEGOVINE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Dejan RADOSEVIC (Main representative)</b> Head of department for biodiversity Republic Institute for Protection of cultural, historical and nature heritage</p>
<p><b>BULGARIA / BULGARIE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Valeri GEORGIEV (Main representative)</b> Head of Biodiversity Unit National Nature Protection Service Directorate Ministry of Environment and Water</p> <p><b>Mr Miroslav KALUGEROV</b> Director National Nature Protection Service at Ministry of Environment and Water</p> <p><b>Ms Michaela DOTSOVA</b> Director Legal Directorate at Ministry of Environment and Water</p> <p><b>Ms Malina KROUMOVA</b> Chair State Agency Road Safety (SARS)</p>
<p><b>BURKINA FASO / BURKINA FASO</b></p>	
<p><b>CROATIA / CROATIE</b></p>	
<p><b>CYPRUS / CHYPRE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Despo ZAVROU (Main representative)</b> Environment Officer Department of Environment</p>
<p><b>CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ (Main representative)</b> Bern Convention NFP Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic</p> <p><b>Mr Jan PLESNIK</b> Advisor to the Director Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic</p> <p><b>Ms Kateřina BUCHTELOVA</b> Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic</p>

<b>DENMARK / DANEMARK</b>	<p><b>Mr Peter Lyhne HOEJBERG (Main representative)</b> Head of Section Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment/Ministry for Green Transition</p> <p><b>Mr Anders LARSEN</b> Consultant Ministry of Green Transition of Denmark</p> <p><b>Ms Julie Haupt KROEYER</b> Head of Section Ministry of Green Transition</p> <p><b>Ms Camilla ULDAL</b> Senior adviser</p>
<b>ESTONIA / ESTONIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI (Main representative)</b> Advisor Biodiversity Conservation Department Ministry of Climate of Estonia</p>
<b>EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE</b>	<p><b>Mr Franck VASSEN (Main representative)</b> Policy Officer 'Nature Conservation' Unit: ENV.D3 -- Nature Conservation Directorate-General for Environment European Commission</p>
<b>FINLAND / FINLANDE</b>	<p><b>Ms Maria Aurora WESTERMAN (Main representative)</b> Senior Specialist Department of the Natural Environment, Biodiversity Ministry of the Environment</p>
<b>FRANCE</b>	<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>
<b>GEORGIA / GÉORGIE</b>	<p><b>Ms Salome NOZADZE (Main representative)</b> Chief Biodiversity Specialist Biodiversity and Forestry Department 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>
<b>GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE</b>	
<b>GREECE / GRÈCE</b>	<p><b>Mr Nikolaos NELLAS (Main representative)</b> General Directorate of Environmental Policy Directorate of Natural Environment &amp; Biodiversity Management Department of Biodiversity Ministry of Environment and Energy</p>

<p><b>HUNGARY / HONGRIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Eva FEJES (Main representative)</b>                  Biodiversity adviser                  Biodiversity and Gene Conservation Department                  Ministry of Agriculture</p>
<p><b>ICELAND / ISLANDE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Steinar KALDAL (online*)</b>                  Head of Division and Team Leader for Nature Conservation and Cultural Heritage                  Department of Climate and Nature                  Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate</p>
<p><b>IRELAND / IRLANDE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Alan MOORE (Main representative)</b>                  Assistant Principal Officer                  National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)                  International and EU Affairs Directorate</p> <p><b>Ms Molly Louise MCGOWAN</b>                  National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)</p> <p><b>Ms Áinle NI BHRIAIN</b>                  National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)</p>
<p><b>ITALY / ITALIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Silvia GIARDINA (Main representative)</b>                  Officer                  Ministry of Environment and Energy Security</p> <p><b>Mr Michele Pio Antonio DE AUGUSTINIS</b></p>
<p><b>LATVIA / LETTONIE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Vilnis BERNARDS (Main representative)</b>                  Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development</p>
<p><b>LIECHTENSTEIN</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Oliver MUELLER (Main representative)</b>                  Office of Environment                  Department Forest and Landscape</p>
<p><b>LITHUANIA / LITUANIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Lina CAPLIKAITE-DENISOVIENE (Main representative)</b>                  Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection Policy Group</p> <p><b>Mr Gintaras JODINSKAS</b>                  Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection Policy Group</p>
<p><b>LUXEMBOURG</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Claude ORIGER (Main representative)</b>                  Director of Nature, Advisor                  Ministry for the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development</p>
<p><b>MALTA / MALTE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Kristian PULIS (Main representative)</b>                  Environment &amp; Resources Authority</p>
<p><b>REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Veronica JOSU (Main representative)</b>                  Main Advisory Officer                  Department on Biodiversity Policy                  Ministry of Environment</p>

<b>MONACO</b>	<b>Ms Céline IMPAGLIAZZO (Main representative)</b> Head of Division Department of External Relations and Cooperation Ministry of State
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>	<b>Ms Sanja VUJOŠEVIĆ (Main representative)</b> Deputy to the Permanent Representative  <b>Ms Sanela METJAHIC (online*)</b>
<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 / MACÉDOINE DU NORD</b>	<b>Mr Zoran BARBUTOV (Main representative)</b> Deputy Permanent Representative
<b>NORWAY / NORVÈGE</b>	<b>Ms Eva Hauge FONTAINE (Main representative)</b> Senior Adviser Nature Management Department Norwegian Environment Agency  <b>Ms Tia Sophie JACOBSEN</b> Adviser Ministry of Climate and Environment
<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>Mr Wiktor WYZYNSKI</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>	

<p><b>SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Jana DURKOŠOVÁ (Main representative)</b> Directorate for Nature and Landscape Protection Department for Nature Protection and for State Administration Focal Point for Bern Convention, Birds Directive, Habitats Directive Ministry of Environment</p> <p><b>Mr Filip KUFFA</b> State Secretary (vice-minister) Ministry of Environment</p> <p><b>Mr Dávid HANCINSKY</b> Director of Department of National Parks Coordination Ministry of Environment</p>
<p><b>SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE</b></p>	
<p><b>SPAIN / ESPAGNE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Ruben MORENO-OPO DIAZ-MECO (Main representative)</b> Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge</p> <p><b>Mr Jaime CASTAÑER DE DIEGO</b> Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge</p>
<p><b>SWEDEN / SUÈDE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Clarisse KEHLER SIEBERT (Main representative)</b> Senior Adviser Swedish Environmental Protection Agency</p>
<p><b>SWITZERLAND / SUISSE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Danielle HOFMANN (Main representative)</b> Scientific Assistant Wildlife and Species Conservation Section Biodiversity and Landscape Division Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)</p> <p><b>Mr Urs Peter WEGMANN</b> Head of Section Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)</p>
<p><b>TUNISIA / TUNISIE</b></p>	<p><b>Mme Rabeb AMRI EP OUERFELLI (Main representative)</b> Cheffe de Division des Milieux Naturels Sauvages Direction de l'Ecologie et des Milieux Naturels Direction Générale de l'Environnement et de la Qualité de Vie Ministère de l'environnement</p>
<p><b>TÜRKIYE / TURQUIE</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Berna ALKAN (Main representative)</b> Forest Engineer General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</p>
<p><b>UKRAINE / UKRAINE</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Oleksandr KULIKOVSKYI (Main representative)</b> Deputy to the Permanent Representative</p>

<b>UNITED KINGDOM /</b> <i>ROYAUME-UNI</i>	<p><b>Mr Simon MACKOWN (Main representative for the two first days)</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 (Main representative for the three last days)</b> Senior International Biodiversity Adviser Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)</p> <p><b>Ms Jemma POWELL</b> Biodiversity Data Coordinator Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)</p>
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**OTHER ORGANISATIONS / AUTRES ORGANISATIONS**

<p><b>Avenir Loup Lynx Jura (ALLJ)</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Susanne CLAUSS</b> Vice-president</p> <p><b>Ms Isabelle CUJEAN</b> Secretary</p>
<p><b>Balkani Wildlife Society</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Andrey KOVATCHEV</b></p>
<p><b>Birdlife International – Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Irina MATEEVA</b> (<i>online*</i>) EU Policy Officer</p>
<p><b>Born Free Foundation</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Adeline LERAMBERT</b> International Policy Manager</p> <p><b>Mr Zannis MAVROGORDATO</b></p>
<p><b>CEE Bankwatch Network</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Andrey RALEV</b> Biodiversity Campaigner</p>
<p><b>CHWOLF Association</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Christina STEINER</b> President</p> <p><b>Mr Christian MÜLLER</b> Vice-President</p>
<p><b>Earth Thrive</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Zoe LUJIC</b> (<i>online*</i>) Executive Director &amp; Founder</p> <p><b>Ms Harj NARULLA</b> (<i>online*</i>) Doughty Street Chambers Legal Representation</p>
<p><b>EcoAlbania</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Olsi NIKA</b> Executive Director</p>
<p><b>Eko-svest</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Ana COLOVIC LESOSKA</b> Executive Director</p>
<p><b>Environmental Citizens Association “Front 21/42”</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Iskra STOJKOVSKA</b> Executive Director</p>
<p><b>Eurogroup for Animals</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Léa BADOZ</b> Programme Officer - Wild Animals</p>
<p><b>EuroNatur Foundation</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Annette SPANGENBERG</b> Head of Freshwater Programme</p> <p><b>Mr Viktor BERISHAJ</b></p>
<p><b>European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE)</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Sabrina DIETZ</b> Wildlife Policy Officer</p>

<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>Foreningen Våre Rovdyr /</b> The Norwegian Carnivore and Raptor Society	<b>Ms Alette SANDVIK</b> CEO
<b>Green Armenia NGO</b>	<b>Ms Arpineh GALFAYAN</b>
<b>Green Home</b>	<b>Ms Azra VUKOVIC</b> ( <i>online*</i> )
<b>International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF)</b>	<b>Mr Julian Andreas MÜHLE</b> CEO IAF Secretariat  <b>Ms Davina MÜHLE</b> IAF Secretariat
<b>International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</b>	<b>Mr Boris ERG</b>  <b>Ms. Zoë ZURN</b>
<b>Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET)</b>	<b>Mr Georgios SAMPSON</b> Director
<b>NOAH - For Animal Rights</b>	<b>Ms Katrin VELS</b> Legal consultant
<b>Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental (OMPO)</b>	<b>Mr Alexandre CZAJKOWSKI</b>
<b>Park Prirode Trstionica i Boriva</b>	<b>Ms Harija COBO</b> ( <i>online*</i> )
<b>Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)</b>	<b>Mr Zydjon VORPSI</b> Project Manager, ornithologist at PPNEA  <b>Ms Grejd HYSKA</b>
<b>Pro Natura – Friends of the Earth</b>	<b>Mr Friedrich WULF</b> Head, International Biodiversity Policy
<b>Sauvegarde Faune Sauvage</b>	<b>Mr Jean-Paul BURGET</b> Président  <b>Ms Manon BRUNSTEIN</b> Responsable Elevage Hamsters
<b>Terra Cypria – The Cyprus Conservation Foundation</b>	<b>Ms Kyriaki MICHAEL</b> Executive Director

<b>Youth and Environment Europe</b>	<b>Mr Alexandros KASSAPIS</b> Advocacy Manager
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#### INVITED EXPERTS / EXPERTS INVITES

<b>Ms Laura-Patricia GAVILAN IGLESIAS</b> Consultant
<b>Mr Marc ROEKAERTS</b> Consultant
<b>Mr Dave E. PRITCHARD</b> ( <i>online*</i> ) Consultant
<b>Mr Andras SCHMIDT</b> ( <i>online*</i> ) Expert
<b>Mr Alejandro LOPEZ GARCIA</b> ( <i>online*</i> ) Expert
<b>Ms Iskra STOJANOVA</b> ( <i>online*</i> ) Expert
<b>Mr Otars OPERMANIS</b> ( <i>online*</i> ) Expert

*\*The online participation is only offered on an exceptional basis and for a limited duration, particularly in relation to a specific agenda item or presentation of a case-file.*

#### INTERPRETERS / INTERPRÈTES

<b>Ms Starr PIROT</b> <b>Ms Christine GILL</b> <b>Mr Jean-Jacques PEDUSSAUD</b>
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#### COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT / SECRETARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

<b>Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law</b> / <i>Direction des droits sociaux, de la santé et de l'environnement</i>	<b>Mr Rafael BENITEZ</b> Director / Directeur  <b>Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI</b> Head of the Reykjavik Process and Environment Department / <i>Chef du Département Processus de Reykjavik et Environnement</i>
<b>Bern Convention</b> / <i>Convention de Berne</i>	<b>Ms Grazia Alessandra SIINO</b> Secretary / <i>Secrétaire</i>  <b>Ms Marta MĘDLIŃSKA</b> Project Manager / <i>Gestionnaire de projets</i>  <b>Mr José AMENGUAL RAMIS</b> Policy Adviser / <i>Conseiller de Politique</i>  <b>Mr Mark BARLOW</b> Administrative Assistant / <i>Assistant Administratif</i>

	<p><b>Ms Lilas HEULLANT</b> <i>Administrative Assistant / Assistant Administrative</i></p> <p><b>Ms Irina SPOIALĂ</b> <i>Administrative Assistant / Assistante Administrative</i></p> <p><b>Ms Jenny MITCALF</b> <i>Administrative Assistant / Assistante Administrative</i></p> <p><b>Ms Iris DELATTRE</b> <i>Trainee / Stagiaire</i></p>
<p><b>Landscape Convention /</b> <i>Convention sur le paysage</i></p>	<p><b>Ms Caroline MARTIN</b> <i>Secretary / Secrétaire</i></p> <p><b>Mr Ottavio DI BELLA</b> <i>Project Manager / Gestionnaire de projets</i></p> <p><b>Ms Emma GARNIER CARREL</b> <i>Administrative Assistant / Assistant Administrative</i></p>