



Strasbourg, 17 November 2021
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T-PVS(2021)27

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

41st meeting
29 November - 3 December 2021

AD-HOC WORKING GROUP
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES

in the framework of the initiative to develop a guidance tool

1st meeting (*online*)
Tuesday, 2nd November 2021, 10.00 – 12.00 (CET)

-MEETING REPORT-

*Document prepared by the Directorate of Democratic
Participation*

1. Opening of the meeting and Tour de Table

The Secretary of the Bern Convention opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and conducted a Tour de Table.

2. Election of Chair

Ms Céline Van Klaveren-Impagliazzo, Head of Division at the Department of External Relations and Cooperation of the State Ministry of Monaco and National Point of Monaco to the Bern Convention, was unanimously elected as Chair.

3. Presentation of outline and draft road map

The Secretariat recalled the decision of the Standing Committee taken at its 40th plenary in December 2020 to develop a guidance tool, such as an action plan or guidelines, for the conservation of marine turtles. The decision had been motivated by the lack of progress in the numerous and long-standing cases under the Bern Convention involving marine turtle nesting sites in the Contracting Parties Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

The Secretariat highlighted that the main aim of the initiative was to support the Contracting Parties Cyprus, Greece and Turkey in finding a solution to the pending marine turtle cases and to prevent further marine turtle complaints. Given the complexity of the issues to be addressed, a multidisciplinary approach was being taken for the implementation of the initiative: a marine turtle conservation expert, Mr Paolo Casale, as well as an expert on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Mr Ivica Trumbic, had been engaged to implement the initiative and develop the guidance tool in co-authorship. The role of the *ad hoc* Working Group was to advise the Standing Committee, in collaboration with the Bureau, the independent experts and the Secretariat, in developing a guidance tool.

The tool which will be drafted as a result of the initiative shall be tailor-made for the local situation in the three Contracting Parties and shall define good practices for a sustainable co-existence of economic development and marine turtles' protection. Depending on the findings, the outcome of this initiative may also be brought to a more general level so that the guidance could possibly apply also to Contracting Parties other than Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

The initiative had started this year and was envisaged to continue throughout 2022, with the aim of presenting the draft guidance tool for discussion and possible adoption at the 42nd Standing Committee.

The initiative is structured in two phases:

- Phase 1: an assessment phase during which consultations with relevant national stakeholders of the three Contracting Parties affected by the case-files shall take place at national level in order to identify obstacles to the implementation of the previous Recommendations of the Standing Committee and to set up a platform of exchange and collaboration.
- Phase 2: a drafting phase which shall focus on finalising the draft guidance tool based on the information collected during national consultations and meetings with the *ad hoc* Working Group.

4. Current state of play and next steps

As part of the first phase of the new initiative, the marine turtle conservation expert Mr Casale, had reached out to experts worldwide to identify global good practices in relation to the co-existence of economic development and marine turtles' protection, with a special view to the Mediterranean. Mr Casale is currently working on drafting

a briefing paper which outlines the global good practices identified, maps existing initiatives/policies/strategies for marine turtles' conservation and assesses possible gaps.

In parallel, the preparation for virtual consultations with relevant national stakeholders of the three Contracting Parties affected by the case-files had started, with the first consultation scheduled on the 8th and 9th November, targeting relevant national stakeholders in Cyprus. Consultations targeting Greece and Turkey were scheduled for January 2022.

Mr James Williams, representing the United Kingdom, reminded the Group that the issues affecting marine turtles are of global nature and asked the Secretariat to share brief reports of the first round of national consultations with the *ad hoc* Working Group.

The Chair of the *ad hoc* Working Group recalled Monaco's interest in safeguarding marine turtles and its commitment to their protection, on the shores, as well as in marine habitats. Ms Van Klaveren – Impagliazzo also informed the members of the *ad hoc* Working Group of the Monegasque Care Centre for Marine Species, whose mission is to rehabilitate turtles found wounded or injured.

5. Any other business

No other business was raised.

6. Closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

Appendix - List of Participants

Contracting Party	Name
Cyprus	<p>Ms Despo ZAVROU Environment Officer Department of Environment Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment</p> <p>Ms Melina MARCOU Department of Fisheries and Marine Research Officer</p>
Greece	<p>Mr Evangelos BADIERTAKIS Ministry of Environment and Energy General Directorate of Environmental Policy Directorate of Natural Environment Management and Biodiversity Department of Biodiversity</p>
Monaco	<p>Ms Céline VAN KLAVEREN - IMPAGLIAZZO Chef de Section Département des Relations extérieures et de la Coopération Ministère d'Etat</p>
Spain	<p>Ms Evira GARCÍA-BELLIDO Ministry for Ecological Transition</p>
Turkey	<p>Mr Yakup KASKA Professor (representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest) Pamukkale University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Biology</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Mr James WILLIAMS National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, Defra</p> <p>Ms Nikki TAYLOR Senior Marine Species Adviser, JCDP Project Manager JNCC</p> <p>Ms Lauren BROOKES Special Scientific Advisor</p>
Observer	
ARCHELON	<p>Ms Panagiota THEODOROU Conservation Coordinator Greece</p>
MEDASSET Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles	<p>Ms Liza BOURA Programmes Officer</p> <p>Ms Konstantina ANDREANIDOU Representative for marine turtles initiative</p>
PPNEA Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania	<p>Ms Sabina CANO Project coordinator</p>
Terra Cypria Cyprus Conservation Foundation	<p>Mr Lefkios SERGIDES Executive Director</p>

Independent consultants	
	Mr Ilica TRUMBIC Expert on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)
	Mr Paolo CASALE (excused) Marine turtles conservation expert
Secretariat, Council of Europe	
	Mr Gianluca SILVETSRINI Head of the Biodiversity Division Ms Ursula STICKER Secretary of the Bern Convention Mr Marc HORY Project Manager Ms Nadia SAPORITO Junior Project Officer Ms Veronika SCHICK Trainee