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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Working Group on the  
Elaboration of a European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity**

Strasbourg, 9 April 2010

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# REPORT

*Document prepared by  
the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

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## **1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat**

The meeting was opened by Ms Carolina Lasén Diaz, from the Secretariat, who welcomed participants (list in Appendix 1). She informed the Group that she has received apologies from the representative of the European Commission and Luxembourg for being unable to attend the meeting. All participants were invited to introduce themselves and the secretariat provided clarification on the status of members and observers in this ad hoc working group set up under the Bern Convention.

## **2. Election of Chairperson**

Mr Trausti Baldursson (Iceland) was elected as Chair of the Working Group. He thanked participants for his election. He regretted the low participation of government representatives at the meeting, but welcomed the active participation of numerous observers. He hoped that the meeting would meet its objectives in an efficient way and encouraged all participants to contribute to the discussions on the draft charter.

## **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix 2.

## **4. Introduction by the Secretariat**

Ms Lasén Diaz briefly presented the Bern Convention, including the main obligations for Parties, and summarised the background of this activity, which comes from a decision taken by the Parties to the Convention in November 2009, at the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, when they discussed and adopted the Programme of Activities for 2010. The Standing Committee agreed to set up a working group to prepare a European Charter on angling and biodiversity in 2010, complementary to the 2007 European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, and aimed at providing Parties with “principles and guidelines for sustainable angling activities”.

Ms Lasén Diaz also referred to the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, and related Recommendation No. 128 (2007), adopted by the Standing Committee in November 2007. She summarised the process followed for its elaboration, as well as its approach and main contents, which includes a set of non-binding principles and guidelines addressed to competent national authorities, biodiversity managers and ‘users’, including hunters and hunting tour operators, to ensure that hunting is carried out in a sustainable way

Ms Lasén Diaz further explained the procedure to prepare a full draft European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity, expected to be submitted to the next meeting of the Standing Committee to be held in Strasbourg on 6-10 December 2010.

Participants raised questions regarding the monitoring of Recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee, such as the one regarding the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, and the possible future one on a European angling charter; as well as funding sources for countries to implement them.

## **5. Presentation of the EIFAC Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries**

Mr Phil Hickley, Chairperson of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) – a statutory body of the United Nations’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - explained the role and the work of EIFAC, a network of 33 member countries and the European Union, linking policy-makers, managers and scientists working on inland fisheries and aquaculture issues.

Mr Hickley stressed the need for an international approach to recreational fisheries and raised issues related to the definition of recreational fisheries; the economic importance of this activity; and the responsibility of the sector in the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources.

He gave an overview of the EIFAC Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries, aimed at providing a set of good practices to the recreational fisheries sector in order to: promote sustainable recreational fisheries; recognise their ecological, social and economic dimensions; minimise conflicts with other aquatic resource user groups; and respond proactively to fish welfare issues.

This voluntary instrument, available in six languages, is intended to build on and complement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Code of Practice contains minimum standards of environmentally friendly, ethically-appropriate and socially acceptable recreational fishing and its management. Mr. Hickley further explained that the Code of Practice was endorsed at the 25th session of EIFAC, held in Turkey in May 2008, and is currently being promoted by EIFAC member countries as well as by the UE, as its the main challenge is to achieve successful implementation. Finally, Mr. Hickley informed the working group that a first monitoring of the application of the EIFAC Code of Practice would be carried out by May/June 2010.

## **6. Presentation of the draft Charter by the consultant**

The consultant, Mr Scott Brainerd, introduced himself to the members of the working group, highlighting his previous involvement in the preparation of the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, and the fact that the Standing Committee had asked for a complementary Charter for the angling sector. He highlighted the non-binding nature of the draft European Charter on Angling and Biodiversity and presented its scope and purpose, mirroring the model provided by the 2007 European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity but also needing to be adapted to the specific circumstances of the angling sector.

Mr Brainerd presented the structure and main sections of the draft Charter, including its scope, purpose and objectives. He explained that the draft Charter considers not only citizens' but also governmental responsibilities, as the draft Charter addresses angling as a recreational form of utilisation and/or management of aquatic biodiversity in Europe.

The draft Charter covers the three pillars of sustainability: ecological, socio-cultural, and economic, and is closely linked to the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and the Malawi Principles for the Ecosystem Approach, developed under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The draft text also takes account of the EIFAC Code of Practice, and other relevant policy regarding angling. The draft Charter includes twelve overarching principles and a set of non-binding 50 guidelines for biodiversity regulators and managers, as well as 49 guidelines for users (anglers and angling tour operators).

The consultant explained that the draft Charter represents a formal recognition by the Bern Convention of the importance of angling as a tool for biodiversity conservation, while emphasising the need for angler involvement and co-operation in biodiversity monitoring, research and management.

## **7. Discussion session**

Members of the Working Group held a discussion on the draft Charter prepared by the consultant. After a first round of general feedback on the document, members focused on providing detailed comments and input into each of the sections of the draft text submitted for discussion. Some of the most critical issues discussed were: the scope of the draft charter (focusing on freshwater and coastal biodiversity); definitions and use of terms, including "recreational fisheries" instead of "angling" for conceptual and translation reasons; and the linkages between the draft Charter and the EIFAC Code of Practice in order to minimise overlaps and ensure the relevance of each instrument.

## **8. Next steps**

The Working Group agreed to send in additional comments and input to the draft Charter by 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2010. The consultant will then prepare a revised version of the draft Charter by mid-June 2010, which will be circulated to all members of the Working Group as well as other Parties that have expressed an interest to participate (Slovenia, Germany, UK, Switzerland). Members of the Working Group will have until mid-August 2010 to comment on the revised draft. A final full version will be prepared by the end of September 2010 so that it can be translated into French and submitted to the Standing Committee ahead of its next meeting in December 2010.

## **9. Any other business**

No other business was raised.



## Appendix 1

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



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## **Appendix 2**

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### **Working Group on the elaboration of a European Chart on Angling and Biodiversity**

Strasbourg, Room 7  
9 April 2010

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## **AGENDA**

1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat
2. Election of Chairperson
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Introduction by the Secretariat
5. Presentation of the EIFAC Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries
6. Presentation of the draft Charter by the consultant
7. Discussion session
8. Next steps