

Strasbourg, 6 December 2013
[tpvs07e_2013.doc]

T-PVS (2013) 7

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

33rd meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2013

**DECISION
ON FINANCING THE BERN CONVENTION**

*Document
prepared by
The Directorate of Democratic Governance*

*This document will not be distributed at the meeting. Please bring this copy.
Ce document ne sera plus distribué en réunion. Prière de vous munir de cet exemplaire.*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Decision of the Standing Committee, adopted on 6 December 2013, on financing the Bern Convention

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats,

Recognising the importance of the work carried out under the Convention for the conservation of European biodiversity, and taking into due account the importance of ecosystem services to the well-being of society;

Welcoming the work carried out by the Bureau and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Budgetary matters in order to identify a viable system for funding the Convention;

Recalling the Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1964 (2011) on “The need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention”, in which the Committee of Ministers recognised the importance of efficient enforcement of environmental legislation, including the implementation of the Standing Committee’s recommendations and also efforts aimed at communication, education and public awareness, and asked the Standing Committee to continue its reflection on ways and means to ensure appropriate funding to the Convention, taking into account current budgetary constraints;

Taking note of the finalisation of the reform process at the Council of Europe, and welcoming the reorganisation of the Directorate of Democracy, which has resulted in a prioritisation of activities for a more efficient implementation, as well as the establishment of the Directorate General of Programmes, with the mandate of ensuring strategic programming, donor relations and resource mobilisation for the Council of Europe;

Welcoming the continued support of the Committee of Ministers, and the regular allocation of a financial contribution from the Council of Europe’s Ordinary Budget to the implementation of the Bern Convention;

Noting the adoption, by the Committee of Ministers of Resolution CM/Res(2013)7, concerning financial arrangements for the participation of non-member States in Council of Europe conventions, which resolves that any Contracting Party to a Council of Europe convention which is not a member of the Council of Europe shall be invited to make a financial contribution to the said convention, in view of the costs that these accessions entail for the Organisation, when the conventions concerned provide follow-up mechanisms;

Having regard to document T-PVS (2012) 8, presenting possible options for identifying a viable system of funding for the Convention;

Taking into consideration the views expressed by the Parties regarding ways and means to ensure that the Convention continues receiving adequate and predictable funding for the implementation of its Programme of Activities and the fulfilment of its mandate and objectives;

Noting that the majority of Parties whom addressed an opinion to the Standing Committee prefers to maintain a double funding system consisting of a regular contribution from the Ordinary Budget and voluntary contributions, the latter being based – when expressly requested by the Party - on a suggested scale provided to the Party individually;

Equally noting the need to continue prioritising activities within the Programme of Activities, also according to their budgetary implications, by promoting a result oriented approach and a cost effective management of resources;

Confident that the financial climate will only improve and noting a slight improvement in the financial trends related to the Convention;

Decides:

1. To maintain the double funding system consisting in completing the provision regularly allocated by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (including those coming from the enforcement of CM/Res(2013)7, concerning financial arrangements for the participation of non-member States in Council of Europe conventions) to the Convention's Ordinary Budget with funds allocated to the Convention's Special Account by additional resources;
2. That these additional resources will come from contributions done by those Parties wishing to provide additional financial support to the implementation of the Programme of Activities or to sponsor one or more specific actions requiring extra-funds for their implementation;
3. That additional contributions will remain the will of Parties and will not follow a legal obligation;
4. That the Secretariat will advise – bilaterally and on an annual basis - those Parties who request a suggested scale of contribution, by providing them with an indicative amount;
5. That the provisions of the Ordinary Budget will be mainly devoted to Convention's core activities, in particularly its statutory meetings and its monitoring mechanisms, while additional activities will be (fully or partially) implemented as they receive additional contributions ;
6. That the expenses for the organisation of the meetings of the Convention's Group of Experts will be optimised by:
 - Asking some Parties (particularly the EU Member States, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway and Switzerland) to check the possibility of regularly funding the participation of their own delegates;
 - Dispensing with simultaneous interpretation on an exceptional basis where circumstances permit;
 - Making excursions optional and thus excluded from the reimbursement of daily allowances;
 - Coordinating with other MEAs in order to organise, where appropriate, back-to-back meetings.

The Standing Committee further invites Parties to:

- a.* Consider the possibility of increasing the number and type of in-kind contributions, for instance by asking appointed delegates or experts from their States, to volunteer for the drafting and preparation of specific, technical background reports, moderate technical working groups – namely those organised under the Group of Experts, deliver keynote speeches;
- b.* Encourage delegates to maintain regular contacts with the representatives of their States in the Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe;
- c.* Encourage Ministries of Environment to uphold the Bern Convention at the national level, advocating before other Ministries for the added value of the Council of Europe work in the field of nature conservation;

d. Consider the possibility of temporarily seconding national, regional or local officials to the Bern Convention's Secretariat, according to the general rules laid down in Resolution CM/Res(2012)2 establishing Regulations for secondments to the Council of Europe.