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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

34th meeting
Strasbourg, 2-5 December 2014

**Group of Experts
on Biodiversity and Climate Change**

(Strasbourg, 19 June 2014)

**– EXTRACT FROM THE LIST OF DECISIONS AND ADOPTED TEXTS
OF THE 32ND MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO THE
BERN CONVENTION -**

*Document prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

Meeting of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change

(Strasbourg, 19 June 2014)

**EXTRACT FROM THE LIST OF DECISIONS AND ADOPTED TEXTS
OF THE 32ND MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE TO THE BERN
CONVENTION**

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- Recommendation No. 158 (2012) on guidance for Parties on conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions;
- Recommendation No. 159 (2012) on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change.

➤ 5.2 Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change

Relevant documents: T-PVS (2012) 16 - Meeting report of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change (Strasbourg, 1-2 October 2012)
 T-PVS/Inf (2012) 8 - National reports on biodiversity and climate change
 T-PVS/Inf (2012) 11 - Analysis of the implementation of recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change
 T-PVS (2012) 10 - Draft recommendation on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change, under the Bern Convention
 T-PVS/Inf (2012) 19 - IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and other Conservation Translocations
 T-PVS (2012) 6 - Draft recommendation on guidance for Parties on conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions
 T-PVS/Inf (2012) 10 - Draft guidance on marine biodiversity and climate change

The Secretariat presented the work carried out by the Group of Experts in 2012, highlighting that the 7th meeting of the Group has been characterised by very fruitful and enriching debates taking into account all aspects of biodiversity conservation in a climate change context. For the next two year, the Group decided to keep the multidisciplinary approach which has been consolidated so far, to continue the valuable interaction with other interest groups within and outside the Council of Europe, and to continue and improve the monitoring exercise initiated in 2012 as a tool to assist Parties in better focussing their conservation actions.

As requested by the Group of Experts Mr Philippe Wery (Belgium), member of the Bureau of the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH) and former chairperson of the Committee for the Development of Human Rights (DH-DEV) addressed the Standing Committee to briefly introduce the work of the CDDH. Mr Wery stressed that, although the CDDH had not undertaken specific work on climate change in the light of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation No. 1883 (2009), the Committee has recently published the 2nd edition of a Manual on Human Rights and the Environment to present the emerging principles on environmental protection in a systematic and accessible way. In fact, even if the European Convention on Human Rights does not guarantee an explicit right to a healthy and sound environment, the general standards deriving from it may nonetheless also apply to environmental matters. The electronic version of the Manual is downloadable through the CDDH internet webpage.

Furthermore the Secretariat presented the two draft recommendations produced by the Group and submitted to the Standing Committee for analysis. The Consultant, Mr Nicolas Fournier, representing OCEANA, presented the draft Guidance on Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change, to be eventually appended to Recommendation No. 152 (2011) on the same topic.

The Cyprus Presidency, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, expressed general support for the draft recommendation on conservation translocations as these may become more and more challenging in a climate change context. Regarding the draft recommendation on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and Climate Change, the Cyprus Presidency particularly welcomed, on behalf of the EU and its Member States, the report “An analysis of the implementation of recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change (2006-2010)”, by Prof. Brian Huntley and stressed that on this matter further research, sharing of experiences and improving the knowledge on the dynamics of such possible mitigating measures should be undertaken by the Parties’ competent authorities, relevant stakeholders and organisations. The Cyprus Presidency concluded its intervention by putting forward some minor amendments to both draft recommendations.

The Secretariat and the Chair expressed their warm thanks to the consultants involved in the preparation of the draft documents, and more particularly to the IUCN for submitting so promptly its Guidelines for reintroductions and other conservation translocations to the attention of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention.

Decision: The Committee took note of the report of the 7th meeting of the Group of Experts and particularly praised the high quality of the speakers as well as of the working documents, emphasising on the interesting, complete and useful agenda.

The Committee welcomed the Guidance on Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change, and decided to endorse it as Annex to Recommendation No. 152 (2011) on marine biodiversity and climate change.

Finally, the Committee examined, amended and adopted the following recommendations:

- Recommendation No. 158 (2012) on guidance for Parties on conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions (appendix 3 to this report);
- Recommendation No. 159 (2012) on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change (appendix 4 to this report).



Appendix 1

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 158 (2012) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 30 November 2012 on Conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions

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

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

Aware that the conservation of natural habitats is a vital component of the protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna;

Recalling that Article 2 of the Convention requires Parties to take requisite measures to maintain the populations of wild flora and fauna at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic requirements;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention requires Parties to undertake to have regard to the conservation of wild fauna and flora in their planning and development policies, and in their measures against pollution;

Recalling that Article 4 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of wild flora and fauna species as well as of endangered natural habitats; and give particular attention to the protection of areas of importance for migratory species;

Recognising that climate change affects biological diversity in the territory covered by the Convention, including species, habitats and the Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald Network;

Recognising the need to adapt conservation work to the challenges of climate change so as to minimise its impacts on the species and natural habitats protected under the Convention;

Noting that conservation action is becoming increasingly proactive in managing biodiversity wherever it occurs, particularly in a climate change context;

Welcoming the scientific progress which has allowed for an increase in the numbers of comprehensively designed and assessed, carefully implemented and monitored plant and animal reintroductions, with an associated increase in the understanding of scientific principles, ethics and practical issues associated with successful reintroductions;

Further noting that assisted colonisations are expected to be increasingly used in future biodiversity conservation though they remain largely untested;

Emphasising that any conservation introduction (outside indigenous range) brings additional risks, due to the record of species moved outside their indigenous ranges that have become invasive aliens, often

with extreme adverse impacts on native biological diversity, ecological services or human livelihoods health and economic interests;

Aware that management solutions based on historical precedence may not always be adequate for future biodiversity conservation needs, particularly because of the lack of certainty over ecological relationships, inability to predict ecological outcomes, and the increasing complexity of global change;

Recalling Decision X/33 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Biodiversity and climate change which invites Parties and other Governments, according to national circumstances and priorities, as well as relevant organizations and processes, bearing in mind that under climate change, natural adaptation will be difficult and recognizing that *in situ* conservation actions are more effective, *to also consider ex situ measures, such as relocation, assisted migration and captive breeding, among others, that could contribute to maintaining the adaptive capacity and securing the survival of species at risk, taking into account the precautionary approach in order to avoid unintended ecological consequences including, for example, the spread of invasive alien species*;

Recalling the EU document “Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020”, and more particularly its Target 5 aimed at tighter controls on invasive alien species;

Recalling the AEWA “Guidelines for the Translocation of Waterbirds for Conservation Purposes: Complementing the IUCN Guidelines”, and taking note of Resolution 5.13 of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA on Climate change adaptation measures for waterbirds and in particular the annexed guidance framework for climate change adaptation when considering species translocation and ex-situ conservation;

Further recalling ACCOBAMS Guidelines for the release of captive cetaceans into the wild;

Recalling Recommendations No. 122 (2006) of the Standing Committee, on the conservation of biological diversity in the context of climate change; No. 135 (2008) and No. 143 (2009) of the Standing Committee, on addressing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity;

Further recalling Recommendation No. 142 (2009) of the Standing Committee, recommending Parties and inviting Observers to the Convention to interpret the term “alien species” for the purpose of the implementation of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species as not including native species naturally extending their range in response to climate change;

Welcoming Decision XI/21 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Other matters related to biodiversity and climate change;

Welcoming the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 providing the indicative list of indicators to assess progress towards the achievement of the 20 Aichi Targets, as annexed to Decision XI/3 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Monitoring progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular the operational indicators referring to Target 9 and Target 10;

Welcoming Resolution 10.19 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species on Migratory Species Conservation in the light of climate change that *inter alia urges Parties and the Scientific Council, and encourages conservation stakeholders and relevant organizations to: consider ex situ measures and assisted colonization, including translocation, as appropriate for those migratory species most severely threatened by climate change*;

Welcoming the report “An analysis of the implementation of recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change (2006-2010)”, by Prof. Brian Huntley [doc T-PVS/Inf (2012) 11];

Welcoming and taking into account, for the purpose of the implementation of the present Recommendation, the IUCN guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations, developed by the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group and IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group in 2012;

Noting the definitions used in the IUCN guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations and namely:

Conservation translocation: the human-mediated movement of living organisms from one area, with release (applicable to individuals of any taxon) in another, where the primary objective is a conservation benefit; this covers:

1. Population restorations: any conservation translocation to within indigenous range. This comprises two activities:
 - Reinforcement: the intentional movement and release of an organism into an existing population of conspecifics;
 - Reintroduction: the intentional movement and release of an organism inside its indigenous range from which it has disappeared;
2. Conservation introduction: the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range. Two types of conservation introduction are recognised:
 - Assisted colonisation: the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range to avoid extinction of any/all populations of the target species;
 - Ecological replacement: the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range to perform a specific ecological function.

Recommends Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites Observer States to:

1. Undertake conservation translocations only if aimed to deliver a demonstrable conservation benefit in terms of species viability or ecological function. Translocation should therefore be justified, with development of clear objectives, a long-term or permanent management plan, identification and assessment of risks, and with the specification of clear measures of performance;
2. Consider alternative solutions before starting a conservation translocation. In particular, there should be confidence (e.g. via peer-reviewed evidence and in absence of this consideration of best available expert knowledge) that alternative solutions are not more appropriate, including in particular:
 - a. Increased habitat availability (area-based solutions);
 - b. Management of the species or its habitat (species-based solutions);
 - c. Social or indirect solutions, either in isolation or in combination with the above (e.g. habitat restoration and mitigation of pressures);
 - d. Doing nothing, which may carry lower risks of extinction compared to those of alternative solutions.
3. Carefully assess in advance the full range of possible hazards both during a translocation and after release of organisms, including any transboundary impact, taking into account that any translocation bears risks that it will not achieve its objectives and/or will cause unintended damage;
4. Combine proportional risk analysis with conclusions from a feasibility study before deciding whether a translocation should proceed or not. Where possible, formal methods for making decisions based on best evidence should be used. As a general principle, where there is inadequate information to assess that a translocation outside indigenous range bears low risks, the Precautionary Principle should be applied and such a translocation should not be carried out;
5. Consider particularly the ecological risks, including the risk of gene escape in any risk analysis;
6. Where relevant, prioritise the species or populations to be translocated, based on criteria such as their ecological role, their evolutionary distinctiveness or uniqueness, their role as flagship species, their threatened status, or potential as ecological replacements; where species are extinct, consequent changes in the ecosystem can indicate a need to restore the ecological function provided by the lost species, which can constitute justification for exploring an ecological replacement;

7. Follow the revised IUCN guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations, developed by the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group and IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group when conducting translocations;
8. Inform the Standing Committee of measures taken to implement this recommendation.



Appendix 2

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 159 (2012) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 30 November 2012, on the effective implementation of guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, in accordance with Article 14 of the Convention,

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

Aware that the conservation of natural habitats is a vital component of the protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna;

Recalling that Article 2 of the Convention requires Parties to take requisite measures to maintain the populations of wild flora and fauna at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic requirements;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention requires Parties to undertake to have regard to the conservation of wild fauna and flora in their planning and development policies, and in their measures against pollution;

Recalling that Article 4 of the Convention requires Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of wild flora and fauna species as well as of endangered natural habitats; and give particular attention to the protection of areas of importance for migratory species;

Recognising that climate change affects biological diversity in the territory covered by the Convention, including species, habitats and the Areas of Special Conservation Interest of the Emerald Network;

Recognising the need to adapt conservation work to the challenges of climate change so as to minimise its impacts on the species and natural habitats protected under the Convention;

Bearing in mind that climate change mitigation has a key role in reducing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and the need for further adaptation measures;

Recalling the CBD Conference of the Parties Decision X/33 on Biodiversity and climate change and its guidance;

Recognising the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, namely the strategic objective aiming at a more climate resilient, low-carbon economy;

Recalling recommendations of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention: No. 122 (2006), on the conservation of biological diversity in the context of climate change; No. 135 (2008) and No. 143 (2009) on addressing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity; No. 145 (2010) on guidance for Parties on biodiversity and climate change in mountain regions; No. 146 (2010) on guidance for

Parties on biodiversity and climate change in European islands, No. 147 (2010) on guidance for Parties on wildland fires, biodiversity and climate change; and No. 152 (2011) on Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change;

Welcoming and bearing in mind the conclusions of the monitoring assessment presented in the report “An analysis of the implementation of recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change (2006-2010)”, by Prof. Brian Huntley [doc T-PVS/Inf (2012) 11];

Welcoming Resolution 10.19 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species Conservation in the light of climate change and Resolution 5.13 of the Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement on Climate change adaptation measures for waterbirds;

Welcoming Decision XI/21 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Other matters related to biodiversity and climate change;

Welcoming Decision XI/3 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Monitoring progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;

Acknowledging that most Parties already recognise the need to take action in relation to the conservation of biodiversity in the face of climate change;

Noting that many Parties reported actions relating to the development of policies, strategies or legislative measures designed to address specifically the issue of biodiversity conservation in the face of climate change;

Welcoming in particular many excellent examples of good practice which were identified, especially those where the embedding of consideration of biodiversity issues cross-sectorally has already been achieved, where win-win solutions are being adopted for adaptation and/or mitigation, where the development of ecological networks is already underway, where the need to embed national actions in their international context has been recognised, where systematic evaluations of species' vulnerability to climate change have been made using species' distribution models, and where a national vision underpins a series of coherent actions aimed at addressing both the limitation of climate change and its inevitable impacts;

Concerned by the gaps identified with regards to those specific and practical actions most directly related to minimising the negative effects of climate change on biodiversity, and especially upon species and ecosystems already under threat from other pressures;

Recalling the desirability and benefits of adopting adaptive management practices;

Stressing that many of the actions recommended can almost certainly be commenced under existing conservation legislation in the Parties:

Recommends Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites Observer States to:

1. Urgently implement the practical conservation measures that have been recommended by the Group of Experts and encourage appropriate national bodies involved in nature conservation to adopt and use them as resources permit; urgent action should more particularly focus on implementing adaptive management practices and strategies, enhancing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable species (rare/endemic/threatened), minimising pressures and threats on species and habitats that are most vulnerable to climate change, and implementing monitoring of, *inter alia*; species' population trends, species behaviour, including phenology, and climate change impacts upon critical areas;
2. Take further steps to develop ecological networks, to promote and enhance the permeability of landscapes generally, and also enhance their protected areas networks, as appropriate, by increasing the extent of existing sites, designating new sites and establishing buffer zones, and ensuring they are sustainably and adaptively managed;
3. Take an appropriately long-term view, based on adaptive management methodologies, when formulating management plans and strategies for protected areas management;

4. Adopt, as appropriate, a more holistic approach when formulating strategies and plans for ecological networks or protected areas, and when developing conservation or recovery plans for individual species. In particular, encourage the general adoption of the examples of good practice reported, especially by Switzerland and Ukraine, with respect to taking into account their international context when planning ecological networks, and to developing networks and protected areas in partnership with their neighbours;
5. Adopt measures that encourage biodiversity conservation to be embedded across other sectors and taken into account when formulating policies or strategies for those sectors, also by informing policy-makers across the Parties about the opportunities for win-win solutions, for instance through the development and use of ecosystem-based approaches, when developing strategies for adaptation to climate change by their sector as well as for mitigation measures;
6. Undertake knowledge transfer activities using existing mechanisms, to encourage awareness by other stakeholders and the general public of the challenges posed and opportunities presented by climate change when considering biodiversity conservation, including its links to other sectors and the opportunities for win-win solutions;
7. Take account of the potential increased risk of wildfires as a result of climate change and embed, as appropriate, mitigation measures for consideration of this risk into protected area management plans;
8. Adopt the good practice, identified in the case of the United Kingdom, of implementing measures for the assessment of introductions that include assessment of the impacts of projected climate changes on species' invasion potential;

Further instructs the Bern Convention Group of Experts on biodiversity and climate change to:

1. Take all necessary steps to ensure that the importance of the issue of climate change on biodiversity, and understanding the role of biodiversity in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change is well recognised by all Contracting Parties;
2. Promote awareness among Contracting Parties of the examples of good practice identified and urge their implementation;
3. Ensure that those persons preparing reports from Parties for the Group of Experts are fully informed about relevant activities, for example monitoring activities, being undertaken in their country, thus avoiding spurious identification of gaps in the activities of that Party or of priorities for new actions by the Party;
4. Assess the potential for introduced species already present in the national territory of Contracting Parties to become invasive under future climate conditions, in close co-operation with the Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species, and using information and methodologies developed in other *fora*, where appropriate;
5. Inform the Standing Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Recommendation.