

Recommendation 1964 (2011)¹

Final version

The need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Referring to its [Resolution 1802 \(2011\)](#) on the need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention, the Parliamentary Assembly calls for an assessment of progress in the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention, ETS No. 104), the first comprehensive legal instrument for pan-European nature conservation, which remains the keystone treaty for the protection of biodiversity within the Council of Europe framework.

2. The Assembly recalls the wider legal framework in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity which complements the Bern Convention, principally the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention), the European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) and the European Union "Birds" and "Habitats" Directives.

3. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

3.1. invite the Russian Federation and San Marino to sign and ratify the Bern Convention;

3.2. assess the effectiveness of the Bern Convention in Africa and, if appropriate, invite more countries to accede to it in order to provide comprehensive geographical coverage, investigate possibilities for co-operation with the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention) and continue and further develop co-operation with the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA);

3.3. call on the parties and observers to the Bern Convention to enhance co-operation with the European Union in order to achieve compatibility between the Emerald network of areas of special conservation interest under the Bern Convention and the Natura 2000 network of

protected habitats resulting from the European Union Habitats Directive, and in particular with regard to:

3.3.1. establishing protected area networks, to:

3.3.1.1. harmonise habitat and species lists through co-ordinated interpretation of the habitat types included in the lists;

3.3.1.2. strengthen the rules for site designation;

3.3.1.3. accelerate designation of conservation areas in all States Parties to the Bern Convention in order to extend and complete the two European conservation area networks;

3.3.1.4. create a comprehensive assessment of the Emerald network, similar to the Natura 2000 Barometer;

3.3.1.5. make data relevant to areas of special conservation interest available to the public, including mapping of designated areas on a pan-European scale, compatible with geographical information systems and available on the Internet;

3.3.1.6. incorporate development of the Emerald network into European Union development assistance programmes, namely through European Union accession and neighbourhood policies;

3.3.2. management of protected areas, to:

3.3.2.1. strengthen mechanisms for reporting and implementation with a view to being able to react to non-compliance with infringement procedures, similar to the European Union procedures;

3.3.2.2. strengthen existing guidance with more specific advice with regard to management planning and action;

3.3.2.3. create management planning software that could complement software used for site description;

1. Assembly debate on 13 April 2011 (15th Sitting) (see [Doc. 12459](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Lotman). Text adopted by the Assembly on 13 April 2011 (15th Sitting).

- 3.3.2.4. make a more systematic overview of the situation of habitats and species in protected areas on a pan-European basis, using data from the European Diploma of Protected Areas as well as case files and complaints;
- 3.3.2.5. take stock of the state of implementation of the numerous recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;
- 3.3.2.6. ensure coherence of networks and avoid infrastructure developments that cut through migratory corridors;
- 3.3.2.7. secure protection of Emerald sites comparable to Natura 2000 site protection;
- 3.3.3. the protection of species, to:
 - 3.3.3.1. when species included in Appendix II of the Bern Convention have reached safe ecological levels and such a move would not jeopardise the current favourable status, consider moving some of the biogeographical populations to Appendix III and to consider also the opposite move for species in Appendix III that are not in a favourable position, while avoiding any hasty movements of species from one appendix to the other without adequate prior assessment of their status;
 - 3.3.3.2. step up efforts to significantly reduce populations of invasive alien species in Europe and avoid introducing new ones;
- 3.4. call on the Parties and observers to the Bern Convention to step up implementation of the Standing Committee recommendations, including where necessary efficient enforcement of the environmental legislation, in particular in order to:
 - 3.4.1. fight against global biodiversity loss, loss of habitats and fragmentation of European landscapes and to address issues of habitat diversity protection not related to particular conservation sites;
 - 3.4.2. make use of the ecosystem approach and maintain large networks of heterogeneous habitats;
 - 3.4.3. integrate protection of biological and landscape diversity in all sectors such as spatial planning, infrastructure development, construction, mining, agriculture and forestry, as well as protection of the environment from pollution, including mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- 3.5. make the Bern Convention and the work of the Steering Committee and its groups of experts more visible internationally and ensure that it is regarded as one of the priorities of the Council of Europe.