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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Outcome of the 45th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (Strasbourg, France, 8 - 12 December 2025)
- Report by the Presidency and the Commission

Delegations will find in the Annex a report by the former Danish Presidency and the Commission on the main outcomes of the abovementioned meeting.

Outcome of the 45th Standing Committee Meeting on the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

8 - 12 December 2025, Strasbourg, France

Report by the DK Presidency and the Commission

The 45th Bern Standing Committee Meeting took place from 8 – 12 December 2025, in Strasbourg, France. The meeting took place in the Agora - Council of Europe- building. The 44th meeting took place from 2 – 6 December 2024 in Strasbourg, France.

More than 100 people, including representatives of Contracting Parties, observers, NGOs and experts gathered to, among other things, discuss the work done in the interim period since the last meeting of the Standing Committee.

The opening plenary commenced by welcoming two new observers, namely, The Spanish Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey - AECCA (Asociación Española de Cetrería y Conservación de Aves Rapaces) and Mammal Conservation Europe (MCE). In addition, the Standing Committee was informed by Mr Gianluca Silvestrini, Head of the Department for the Reykjavik Process and Environment, of the appointment of Ms Grazia Alessandra Siino as the new Secretary to the Bern Convention in June 2025.

The opening of the meeting also contained the following statements: A representative from the Slovak Republic shared concerns about the increasing brown bear population in the country. A representative from Ukraine informed about the challenging situation for almost half of the Emerald sites in Ukraine as a consequence of the ongoing conflict. Denmark on behalf of the EU and its Member States highlighted the important role of the Bern Convention on the common goal to conserve biodiversity and the areas where they exist across Europe.

More substantial discussions were expected for the Agenda Item 3.1 on Financing of the Bern Convention and 3.2 on the Working Group on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention. For the item on Financing, four sustainable financing options exist. Of these it was decided to pursue the Draft Protocol amending the Bern Convention. A dedicated meeting was requested to be organized between the Council of Europe, and EU Officials to openly discuss financing opportunities. For the item 3.2 on exploring mechanisms to guide amendments to the appendices of the Bern Convention, it was decided to recommend that any possible modifications of the appendices to the Convention should be suspended pending agreement on an improved mechanism and the adoption of a new version of Recommendation No. 56 (1997) by the Standing Committee. In addition, 2025 marked the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas. The Standing Committee welcomed the addition of the Sierra Nevada National Park, Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve (Spain), which was awarded the diploma in 2025.

A substantial part of the meeting is the review of Case Files, of which 20 were discussed across Open and Possible files as well as Follow-up of previous complaints and Recommendations.

The 46th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention will take place from 7 – 11 December 2026 in Strasbourg, France.