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**REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY SPECIES TO THE 53rd MEETING OF THE CMS STANDING COMMITTEE.
EUROPEAN REGION**

REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN PARTIES' ACTIVITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES TO THE 53rd MEETING OF THE CMS STANDING COMMITTEE

This report presents the activities undertaken since the thirteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (February 2020) at national, regional, sub-regional levels for the implementation of the Convention and its related instruments as well as relevant resolutions and decisions.

BELGIUM

Although no significant changes in legislation have taken place since last COP, an update in legislation, which is of importance to CMS, occurred in the marine areas which are the responsibility of the federal government. Notably, a New Federal Action Plan concerning marine litter covering the period 2022-2027 (<https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/federaal-actieplan-marien-zwerfvuil-2022-2027>) will definitely have an indirect impact on migratory marine species.

GEORGIA

During 2021 National Red List of Georgia was assessed Species covered by Appendix I/II of CMS, as well as, Annex I of the Birds Directive and Annex II to the habitat Directive are respectively protected since a significant part of the species distributed in Georgia, are strictly protected by the law on the Georgian "Red List" and the "Red Data Book".

National Red List of Georgia was updated in 2021-2022 according to the IUCN assessment criterias. The results of the new assessment, along with international obligations, will serve as basis for defining strictly protected and protected species status under the "Law of Georgia on Biological Diversity" (when adopted).

During the Biogeographical Seminar for Georgia in 2021, Bern Convention assessed 56 bird species protection as "Sufficient".

The long-term Energy Policy Document is in development phase.

Draft law on Biological Diversity of Georgia, is in the final stage of its development. The draft law establishes legal regulation mechanisms to respond to the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. The draft law sets out rules and procedures for the identification and extension of the Emerald Network. The draft law as well introduces the provision on the natural habitats and defines protected and strictly protected species lists, similarly to the annexes of the EU Nature Directives.

Between 2016 and 2022, several existing protected areas were expanded and few new protected areas were established: 9 new (5 nature reserves, 1 national park, 2 protected landscapes and 5 habitat or species management areas) and 4 national parks were extended. As of 2022, the total area of protected areas is 792,916 hectares, which covers 11.4% of the country's territory. Of these, the land area is 783,011 hectares, and the marine water area is 15,276 hectares; Protected Areas and Emerald Network cover important areas for migratory birds, including waterbirds.

As of 2022, Emerald Network (established under Bern Conventions provisions) comprises 66 areas have been identified in Georgia, of which 46 areas (1,030,491.5 ha) have been adopted by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention. Together with the candidate and proposed areas, the total area of the Emerald Network is 1,296,116 ha, which accounts 18.6% of the territory of Georgia.

In June 2022, Kolkheti National Park was expanded by 671.5 hectares and currently, the total area of National Park is 44,980 hectares. Expanded 671.5 hectares incorporate the marine area, the Rioni River estuary and its section from the river mouth upstream – up to 7 km. Overall, extended area is important for the anadromous migration of sturgeons during the spawning period, as well as for their growth and wintering.

GERMANY

Since the end of 2021 the Federal Ministry for Environment has a new Minister, Steffi Lemke, who is well-experienced in environmental policy including species protection issues. So, concerning CMS one of her first initiatives was, that she realized a visit to the CMS secretariat and assured there her readiness to help.

However, measures undertaken to meet the current energy policy needs - to increase, in short term, the amount of renewable energy by, in particular the use of wind energy - may pose new challenges for migratory species like, in particular, birds and bats too. To bring these species in a better state of preservation, the German Government decided to dedicate, in this legislative period, considerable financial support of expectedly over 80 Mio € (federal support and – additional - contributions from the wind-energy companies) to projects helping those species, which might be negatively affected by respective renewable energy projects. The German Federal Agency for Nature Protection is currently developing a strategy to decide for which species and projects this extraordinary financial support might be best used. However, it is already obvious that bat and bird species - both taxa of CMS interest- will be in the focus of concern and respective support.

Furthermore, in the autumn of 2021 the German federal legislative bodies approved the so-called “Insect Conservation Package” consisting of a law amending the Federal Act on Nature Conservation and Landscape Management (Bundesnaturschutzgesetz) and a regulation amending the Ordinance on the Use of Plant Protection Products (Pflanzenschutz-Anwendungsverordnung). This legislative package introduced stricter regulations to, inter alia, protect habitats relevant to insects, restrict the use of herbicides and insecticides in certain areas, and allow for the implementation of further limitations regarding the use of artificial lighting, sky beamers and insect traps. In brief, this a helpful contribution concerning the CMS COP resolutions 13.5 (Light Pollution) and 13.6 (Insect decline).

ITALY

In 2022, an important amendment was made to Articles 9 and 41 of the Italian Constitution. The protection of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, in the interest of future generations, has been introduced among the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

Moreover, the Italian recovery fund (Investment 3.5) foresees the restoration and protection of seabeds and marine habitats with positive impacts on species of CMS concern.

At local level, an Italian region (Sardinia) has started the administrative process to develop a regional law facing the problem of electrocution and collision of birds with electric powerlines.

Furthermore in 2021, a national action plan on Bonelli's eagle *Aquila fasciata* which tackles main threats to the species conservation in Italy was drafted. In 2022, the national action plan on *Streptopelia turtur* (CMS app II) was also drafted. Both are waiting for final approval.

Italy is also dealing with the requirements of energy policy, namely with the development of renewable energy sources.

MONACO

Since 2021, Monaco has started a great legal work in order to enforce its Environnement Code. One of the first measures taken was related to the prevention of pollution, including plastic pollution.

In addition, Monaco has finalized and published its National Strategy for Biodiversity 2030 in which the preservation of migratory species is taken into account.

SPAIN

Spanish Authorities (Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge and the Generalitat Valencian) hosted and coorganized the Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean, on 7 to 9 June 2022 in Valencia. The meeting had a hybrid format (in person + on-line) and was attended by >90 participants representing countries parties and members or both initiatives (Bern and CMS) as well as representatives of different stakeholders and NGOs. This first hybrid meeting after the pandemic restrictions was successful in terms of participation and involvement, the share of positive experiences and needs in different countries, the commitment of members to move forward for the launch of National action plans, and in relation to providing accurate and comparable figures that could reveal in 2030 the efficiency of implementation of the measures included in the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030.

Furthermore, Spain has earmarked around 90M € for retrofitting power lines, tackling one of the most important causes of death for migratory species.