



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 01.04.1997
SEC(97) 569 final

**Report on the European Community's implementation of the
Bonn Convention on the conservation of migratory species
of wild animals from 1994 to 1996**

Presented by the Commission

Communication from the Commission to the Council

Subject: Report from the European Community to the Secretariat of the Bonn Convention concerning the period 1994-1996

1. On 24 June 1982 the Community concluded the Bonn Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals¹ and became a Contracting Party.
2. Pursuant to Article VI of the Convention, the Contracting Parties must inform the Conference of the Parties, through the Secretariat, of the measures they are taking to implement the provisions of the Convention.
3. The Commission is sending the Council, for information, the Report on the Community's implementation of the Bonn Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals from 1994 to 1996.

¹ OJL 210, 19.7.1982., p. 10

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

UPDATING REPORT

General information

Name of Contracting Party: European Community

Period covered by the report: 1994-1996

Representative on the Scientific Council: Pierre Devillers, nominated by
the Commission of the European
Communities

Measures taken to implement decisions of previous Conferences of the Parties concerning species listed in Annexes I and II

A. General implementing measures:

During the period 1994-1996, the European Community acquired greater powers in the area of nature protection as a result of the entry into force of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.¹ Most migratory species of Community interest covered by the Annexes to the Convention thus enjoy additional protection.

The new Directive builds on the provisions of Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds.² It provides for the creation of a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation, the "Natura 2000" network (Article 3). This new commitment reflects the desire to develop an integrated approach to nature protection and conservation in Community policies. In order to encourage application of the legislation, the Council adopted a financial instrument, LIFE,³ half the resources of which are allocated to nature protection.

¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

² Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, as last amended by Council Directive 94/24/EEC of 8 June 1994, OJ L 164, 30.6.1994.

³ Council Regulation (EEC) No 1973/92 of 21 May 1992 establishing a financial instrument for the environment (LIFE), OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1404/96 of 15 July 1996, OJ L 181, 20.7.1996.

During the three-year report period, the Commission co-financed 184 nature conservation projects in the European Union costing a total of ECU 136.5 million. These projects concern, *inter alia*, the conservation of biotopes important to the following species:

- protection and restoration of corncrake habitat (*Crex crex*) at five sites in Belgium (Wallonia and Flanders). These sites, situated in valleys of major biological interest, generally comprise wet meadows and are home to the largest Belgian populations both of this species and other endangered species;
- rehabilitation of the Gironde/Garonne/Dordogne estuary system in France, the last known breeding site in the world of the sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*), one of five priority fish species under Directive 92/43/EEC;
- action to preserve the habitat of the Iberian lynx (*Lynx pardina*) and the wolf (*Canis lupus*) in Portugal, which also includes transboundary cooperation between Portugal and Spain;
- programme for the study, protection and conservation of the bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) in Greece (Crete), with the aim of drawing up a package of measures to ensure the survival of the species in the region;
- long-term conservation of brown bear populations (*Ursus arctos*) in Austria, France, Spain, Italy and Greece. To achieve this objective, the habitats must be protected and an attempt made to re-establish links between isolated populations;
- preservation of western taiga habitats in Finland, home to endangered species such as the white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). The project concerns five sites in the Baltic archipelago and also involves land purchase;
- re-establishment of the turtle population *Caretta caretta* in Greece on the western beaches of Crete, where 25% of the national loggerhead turtle population lay their eggs;
- measures to protect the migratory and wintering areas of the slender-billed curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) in Greece (six wetland areas) and Italy (Orbetello lagoon);
- coordinated action to protect and manage important wintering sites for bats. Of the 30 species of bats occurring in Europe, 19 have been recorded in the project area which covers four Member States (Belgium, Germany, France and Luxembourg) and eight of them are listed in Annex II to Directive 92/43/EEC.

B. Regional agreements

The Commission participated, on behalf of the Community, in the negotiating session for the Agreement on the conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds (AEWA) from 12 to 16 June 1995 in The Hague, which was organized by the Secretariat of the Convention in conjunction with the Dutch Government to complete and adopt the Agreement. The Commission conducted the negotiations in conformity with the negotiating directives agreed by the Council on 7 June 1995. The Agreement was adopted by consensus in The Hague on 16 June 1995, and was opened for signature in

August 1996. The Community will sign the Agreement in due time, subject to subsequent ratification.

The Agreement on the conservation of small cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) was adopted by the Community on 7 October 1992; conclusion on behalf of the Community is scheduled to take place in 1997.

C. Action in response to resolution 3.2, paragraph 4

1. Marine mammals

The European Community has continued its programme to protect and conserve the monk seal *Monachus monachus* during the report period.

Following an initial phase of participation in the research and studies necessary to build up scientific knowledge of the biology of the species and population distribution, it is essential to support the coordination of measures that have a direct impact on the conservation of colonies important to the survival of the species.

The European Community supports the following projects in this area:

- measures to stabilize the Atlantic population of the monk seal. This project concerns the conservation and expansion of the Atlantic population by protecting the Madeira population and establishing a new colony (in the Canary Islands) on the basis of the Cap Blanc population. The work follows the recommendations of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and is monitored by an international committee of experts;
- measures to conserve the monk seal in Greece. The aim of the project, adopted at the end of 1996, is to have four special areas of conservation (SAC) for the species by the year 2000, one in the Ionian Sea and three in the Aegean, in addition to the existing marine park at Alonissos. These areas, which are important to the survival of the species, have been proposed by Greece to form part of the European ecological network, Natura 2000.

2. Turtles

The Community has been supporting programmes to protect the habitats (egg-laying sites) of *Caretta caretta* for several years now. In Greece, this programme has concentrated on the following main areas over the last three years:

- establishment of protection areas for important egg-laying sites (beaches of Lagana Bay in Zakynthos).
- conservation and monitoring of turtles along the south-west coast of the Peloponnese and Crete.
- raising of public awareness, particularly in the sites affected by the projects.

In addition, the Commission approved a new project in Portugal at the end of 1996 to identify the species' migration areas in the Madeira exclusive economic zone.

3. Slender-billed curlew

After participating in an international project to conserve *Numenius tenuirostris*, the Community has continued its action in the territory of the Union. Two new LIFE-Nature projects were financed in 1995 to this end. These concern:

- Six wetlands in Greece which are important migration areas for the curlews, the most endangered bird species in the Palearctic region. The project involves updating of scientific data and implementing appropriate conservation measures.
- Rehabilitation of the Orbetello lagoon in Italy to eliminate the main causes of degradation. 1 300 ha of lagoon, Mediterranean maquis and salt meadows constitute an important bird wintering, breeding and migration area. Some 257 bird species have been recorded there, 63 of them listed in Annex I to Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds.

