



Resolution 1802 (2011)¹

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

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to the ceremony of the 30th anniversary of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention, ETS No. 104), to the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020, to its [Recommendation 1918 \(2010\)](#) on biodiversity and climate change, and to the declaration jointly signed by the Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe on the occasion of European Biodiversity Day on 28 April 2010.
2. In this respect, the Assembly deeply regrets that depletion of biological diversity is currently taking place faster than natural extinction, reflecting the global political failure to meet the 2010 Biodiversity Target and stop biodiversity loss by 2010 as stipulated at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002.
3. In its broadest sense, the environment concerns both human beings and their surrounding natural habitat, to the extent that they form a single entity that is ecologically balanced and conducive to development. The Assembly refers to Principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972) which states: “Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment, for present and future generations.”
4. The Assembly recalls its [Recommendation 1885 \(2009\)](#) on drafting an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a healthy environment and Resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change and the explanatory study of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/10/61), and stresses that any degradation in delivery of ecosystem services will closely affect a wide range of universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely the right to life and to food, access to water, health, adequate housing, right to property and land use.
5. Both the Assembly and the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention have already identified and fought activities that are harmful to the environment in various places in Europe, including those affecting fragile ecological areas. The Assembly hereby reaffirms its resolutions and recommendations concerning concrete issues of environmental protection, such as [Resolution 1444 \(2005\)](#) on protection of European deltas, and [Recommendation 1837 \(2008\)](#) on the fight against harm to the environment in the Black Sea. It also calls for the full implementation of the Bern Convention Standing Committee’s recommendations.
6. Moreover, according to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, environmental degradation, depletion of biological diversity and alteration of ecosystems also indirectly affect other human rights protected under the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), namely: respect for private and family life as well as the home (Article 8); access to justice and an effective remedy (Article 13); freedom of expression and the right to receive and impart information and ideas (Article 10).

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). See also [Recommendation 1964 \(2011\)](#).

7. According to scientific studies, Europe is projected to experience warming greater than the global mean warming, with winter warming greatest in northern Europe and summer warming greatest in the Mediterranean region, in both cases double the levels of the projected global mean warming. Changes in habitats, species, their geographical spread, their migratory patterns and ultimately the composition and functioning of European ecosystems will inevitably also affect their ability to deliver the various services upon which human society depends.
8. While mitigation measures for the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions are essential for reducing the negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity in the medium and long term, concrete measures are also necessary to facilitate adaptation of natural and managed ecosystems to ongoing processes resulting from climate change. Spontaneous adaptation will not be sufficient to reduce impacts on biodiversity at all levels, in particular on vulnerable ecosystems and for long-term human well-being.
9. The Assembly therefore considers that strong measures to protect habitats, flora and fauna, as well as good management and extension of existing networks of conservation areas will be vital to any successful national and European strategies for biodiversity conservation in the face of climate change.
10. The Assembly welcomes the initiative of the European Union aimed at drafting the post-2010 European Union biodiversity strategy in consultation with citizens, stakeholders, public administration, business and civil society, with a view to stepping up the European Union contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.
11. In this respect, the Assembly calls upon the European Union and the relevant member states of the Council of Europe to step up their efforts to increase their contribution in order to meet the Global Biodiversity Target set by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and especially to implement the recommendations and resolutions of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.