

**Mr Valeri GEORGIEV**  
Head of Biodiversity Unit  
National Nature Protection Service  
Directorate  
Ministry of Environment and Water  
22, Knyaginya Maria Luisa Blvd,  
1000 Sofia / Bulgaria

Strasbourg, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Subject: Possible on-the-spot appraisal visit to Bulgaria within the framework of the Complaint No. 2001/4: Possible file: Motorway through the Kresna Gorge**

Dear Mr Georgiev,

As you know, at the 39<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting, a decision was made on this case-file to keep it as a “possible file” but to mandate an on-the-spot appraisal visit following calls from several Contracting Parties. The appraisal visit would take place subject to the Bulgarian authorities agreement. At its meeting on 7-8 April 2020, the Bureau of the Standing Committee discussed again this case and drew up a draft Terms of Reference for the possible on-the-spot appraisal. Please see below the official Bureau decision.

“The Bureau drew up provisional Terms of Reference for the possible on-the-spot appraisal, while recalling that agreement still needed to be sought from the Bulgarian authorities for the mission.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to consult with the Bulgarian authorities on the proposed Terms of Reference and to seek their agreement for the on-the-spot appraisal which could be joined by the European Commission. Depending on progress and on uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, the on-the-spot appraisal could take place in the second half of 2020, or in Spring 2021.

The Bureau requested the Contracting Party to update the Bureau at its meeting in September on the state of play of the application for EU financing.

The Bureau also mandated the Secretariat to contact the European Commission to see if a joint on-the-spot appraisal was feasible.”

Therefore in accordance with the Standing Committee and Bureau decisions, I would kindly ask you to seek the agreement of the relevant Bulgarian authorities for this on-the-spot appraisal visit to take place in the 2nd half of 2020 or in Spring 2021, taking into account the

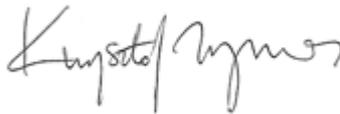
Covid-19 pandemic situation. I would be most grateful to receive your decision **by the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020**.

Should an agreement be reached, I would then ask you to provide feedback on the attached draft Terms of Reference by **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**. Furthermore, the Secretariat will consult with the European Commission on whether they would be willing to join the visit. Finally, I would ask you to submit a report for the next Bureau meeting including an update on the state of play of the application for EU financing, as well as any other developments you deem relevant. I would be grateful to receive this report in electronic Word format **by the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020**.

The same deadline applies to the complainant organisation for the submission of an updated report for the attention of the Bureau.

On behalf of the Bureau, I would like to thank you for your ongoing cooperation with the Bern Convention and for your work in protecting species and habitats.

Yours sincerely,



Krzysztof Zyman  
Secretary of the Bern Convention

Cc: Ms Katya TODOROVA, Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe  
Ms Irina KOSTADINOVA, BirdLife Bulgaria (Complainant)  
Ms Anelia STEFANOVA, "Save Kresna gorge" coalition (Complainant)  
Ms Desislava STOYANOVA, Za Zemiata (Complainant)  
Ms Anne BURRILL, European Commission, EU Focal Point to the Bern Convention