



**for a living planet®**

18. Mai 2008

## **WWF und Schweizer Vogelschutz SVS: Klage gegen die Schweiz**

**Jede zweite Art in der Schweiz ist bedroht. Der Bund hat es aber bisher versäumt, seine internationale Verantwortung in Sachen Biodiversität wahrzunehmen. Deshalb haben der WWF und Schweizer Vogelschutz SVS/BirdLife beim Europarat in Strassburg eine Aufsichtsbeschwerde gegen die Schweiz eingereicht**

Morgen beginnt in Bonn die 9. Internationale Naturschutzkonferenz. 190 Vertragsstaaten aus aller Welt entwickeln gemeinsam Massnahmen, um die anhaltende Zerstörung der biologischen Vielfalt zu stoppen. Auch die Schweiz nimmt an der Konferenz teil. Dabei gäbe es im eigenen Land viel zu tun, denn ausgerechnet die Schweiz versäumt es seit Jahren, von ihr unterzeichnete internationale Biodiversitäts-Abkommen umzusetzen. Unser Land verpflichtete sich 1989 im Rahmen der internationalen Berner Konvention und des europäischen Naturschutzprogramms Smaragd, gefährdete Lebensräume und deren Tier- und Pflanzenarten zu schützen. Bis heute ist diesbezüglich aber wenig passiert. Der WWF und Schweizer Vogelschutz SVS haben deshalb beim Europarat in Strassburg eine Aufsichtsbeschwerde eingereicht. Diese stützt sich auf folgende Kritikpunkte:

- Statt eine europaweite Zusammenarbeit anzustreben, zum Beispiel im stark gefährdeten Alpenraum, schiebt der Bund die Verantwortung für das Ausscheiden von schützenswerten Gebieten auf die Kantone. Damit missachtet die Schweiz ein Hauptprinzip des internationalen Abkommens
- Der Bund hat es bisher versäumt, mögliche Smaragd-Gebiete in Strassburg anzumelden. Das zögerliche Ausscheiden von Gebieten gleicht zudem einer Alibiübung, da bloss Orte gewählt wurden, die kantonale oder national bereits unter Naturschutz stehen und nicht solche, die dringend Schutz benötigen

Diese Versäumnisse sind umso gravierender, als der Rückgang der Artenvielfalt in der Schweiz drastisch ist. Es gibt hier schätzungsweise 40'000 Arten, und mehr als jede zweite ist in Gefahr. Konkret: Ein Drittel der Wildpflanzen, 40 Prozent der Vögel und 95 Prozent der Amphibien sind hierzulande selten oder gefährdet. Der Schweizer Vogelschutz SVS und der WWF wollen erreichen, dass die Erhaltung der Biodiversität dank der Aufsichtsbeschwerde im Pflichtenheft des Bundes weiter nach oben rückt.

Klage vom 10. März 2008 (in Englisch):



**WWF**® for a living planet®



Carolina LASSEN DIAZ  
Secretary of the Bern Convention  
Biological Diversity Unit, Directorate General IV  
Council of Europe  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

Zürich, the 10th march 2008

concern

**Complaint against the strongly retarded realization of the Emerald Network in Switzerland**

for the attention of

the Standing Committee of the CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee 2008

senders

WWF Switzerland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. Eichenberger".

Kurt Eichenberger  
Biodiversity Officer

SVS/BirdLife Switzerland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. Müller".

Werner Müller  
Director

# Complaint against the strongly retarded realization of the Emerald Network in Switzerland

## A: Introduction

WWF Switzerland and the Swiss Association for the Protection of Birds SVS/BirdLife Switzerland denounce the current situation in the realization of the Emerald Network in Switzerland, that does not correspond to the engagement that the Swiss government has taken to protect the biodiversity on his territory. The Emerald Network has been on the agenda of the Federal Office for the Environment FOEN as a serious engagement till 2006. In the same year it has been decided by the Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger and deputies of the federal office, *that the responsibility for the announcement of Emerald sites should be transferred to the cantons*. The fact that the cantons shall take responsibility for an international commitment is false in itself and signifies a 'downgrading' of the Emerald Network in Switzerland. Today the FOEN acts only as a service office to the cantons and not as a strategic office as before.

WWF and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland are convinced that a serious and fast realization of the Emerald Network in Switzerland is absolutely crucial and important. This was also the opinion of the FOEN in 2003 as is written in their report on the Emerald Network (annex 2). Switzerland is surrounded by EU-countries which are very advanced in the implementation of Natura 2000. International cooperation is the only way to set the right priorities, taking in consideration that species not move only within national borders.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2007 the *EU announced the extension of the Natura 2000 Network*. 90'000 square kilometres could be added to the existing framework thanks to the new EU member states. Switzerland should not stand aside and must help to complete the Network with Emerald sites and link them with better protected corridors.

*The OECD also mentioned the deficits of Switzerland in the protection of biodiversity in their recent report Environmental Performance Review 2007. It states, among other critiques: "... Moreover, delays have been recorded in the adoption of certain inventories and in the implementation of the Emerald Network."* This critique has been written before the Swiss government announced the mentioned 'downgrading' of the Emerald Network in Switzerland!

It is worth to mention that Switzerland is working on the Emerald Network since 1999. Until now they failed to announce any Emerald site. *Especially in the Alps Switzerland carries a high international responsibility to conserve biodiversity*. The FOEN also mentioned this special responsibility in the Emerald Network Report of 2003. Therefore WWF Switzerland and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland denounce the recent decision downgrading the importance of the Emerald Network in Switzerland instead of upgrading it.

## B: Complaint

WWF Switzerland and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland complain about the following steps that have been taken wrongly or have been neglected during the last period of implementation of the Emerald Network by the Swiss government:

1. In Autumn 2006 the government took the decision to delegate the initiative for announcing Emerald sites to Strasbourg to the cantons (see annex 1). In the opinion of WWF and SVS it is false to give an international responsibility to the cantons. The lead of Emerald has to be taken actively by the federal office (FOEN).
2. The identification of Emerald sites has never been finalized. Although WWF and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland made an inventory of 108 Emerald sites and 31 Important Bird Areas IBA and the FOEN carried through an additional inventory of alpine sites, these sites have never been evaluated (see annex 3). Until today we have no official selection of sites on the basis of scientific data.
3. The recent selection of Emerald sites is an alibi. The 30 officially proposed Emerald sites (see link 1) are sites that are already well protected on national or cantonal level. There are no criteria available to explain the choice of these 30 sites. WWF and SVS know that the selection has been made on the basis of Emerald sites that cover already protected sites to prevent conflicts with the cantons. It is worth mentioning, that these 30 sites should be announced to Strasbourg in 2008. But it depends on the cantons and thus it cannot be assured that even these 30 well protected areas become international Emerald areas!
4. Switzerland carries a special responsibility for the biodiversity in the Alps. Two thirds of the country's area belongs to the Alps and Prealps and the biodiversity found in this area contributes considerably to the panalpine biodiversity. 14 alpine sites have been selected by the FOEN. These 14 sites are also designated for an announcement to Strasbourg in 2008 but the FOEN indicates that it probably will come to a delay because of the difficult consultation process with the cantons (see info 1).
5. The new financial compensation system of Switzerland (NFA – Neuer Finanzausgleich, see info 2) has been started in 2008 and regulates the dispersal of federal fees to the cantons. It governs the amounts of money for the conservation of biodiversity, too. For all groups of organisms lists have been worked out to determine, which species can be subsidized. The same has been made for habitats. The international threat status has been considered but it is not an explicit basis for the choice of subsidised species and habitats. In this way the new financial compensation system does not fully contribute to the conservation of internationally threatened species and habitats.
6. Switzerland does not cooperate with EU countries to create bordercrossing Emerald/Natura 2000 sites in spite of many Natura 2000 sites along the border, e.g. with the French border-sites in Franche-Comté or Alsace, the Italian sites in the South Tirol or Piemonte, the Austrian sites in Kärnten or the German sites in Baden-Württemberg. Species are not bound to national borders – reason enough to strengthen the cooperation with neighbouring countries.

## C: Summary and requests

Switzerland does not give special regard on international necessities. Neither for internationally threatened species and habitats nor for Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

WWF and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland call on the Swiss government ...

1. ... to take back the lead of the Emerald Network (FOEN)
2. ... to adopt a selection of Emerald sites on the basis of scientific data
3. ... to give priority to and to push forward the announcement of alpine Emerald sites
4. ... to improve the status of Emerald species and habitats in the new financial compensation system (NFA)
5. ... to cooperate with neighbour countries for the creation of border crossing Emerald/Natura 2000 sites

WWF and SVS/BirdLife Switzerland ask the representatives of Switzerland how they plan to fulfil the aims of Emerald Network and which are the next steps in the future.

## D: Annex

- Annex 1 protocol FOEN 'Stand Zukunft Smaragd 14-11-06 rev. 1 - 2002-00357-04-13-04 - F463-0237'
- Annex 2 Smaragd-Netz in der Schweiz. Ergebnisse der Vorarbeiten. Schriftenreihe Umwelt Nr. 347, Bundesamt für Umwelt, Wald und Landschaft, 2003
- Annex 3 carte étapes Emeraude
- Link 1 <http://www.bafu.admin.ch/artenvielfalt/01030/01032/index.html?lang=en>
- Info 1 Personal communication with Christine Gubser, FOEN, responsible person in charge
- Info 2 Proposals for different taxa made by several scientific institutions; not available officially until now.