



RESOLUTION #17



TITLE:
A Wilderness Convention for Europe

WHEREAS

The European Parliament passed a resolution on wilderness in February 2009, some of the recommendations having been realised through the development of a definition of wilderness; the development of guidelines on wilderness management in the Natura 2000 network; and a wilderness register that documents and maps wilderness in a subset of countries in Europe.

A review of status and conservation of wild lands throughout Europe, completed for the Scottish Government, revealed that the word “wilderness” is not officially included in most of the national protected area legislation of European countries. However, strictly protected area types that are found in the national legislation in most of the European countries do give rise to areas across Europe that have wilderness characteristics. Some of these areas, like the Swiss National Park in Switzerland and the Lagodekhi State Nature Reserve in Georgia, have had this strict protection in place for 100 years and more.

Even with the growing realisation that Europe does have areas with wilderness characteristics, it is unlikely that countries will seek to amend their national protected area legislation for redefining strictly protected areas as wilderness, even if their language allows them to do so.

Europe therefore runs the risk of missing out on a powerful and inspirational means for an appreciation of its wild nature that comes from having a common understanding of wilderness.

THEREFORE

We commend the Alpine Convention as an example of a supranational agreement between countries that share geographical regions, with protocols for specific common actions defined and pursued by the decision-making body of the Convention and through participation of the (Contracting Parties) signatories? to the regular meetings of the Alpine Conference.

We recognise the example of the ‘model law’ for Biosphere Reserves proposed by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program, based on the analysis of various examples of existing legal translations of the biosphere reserves concept into national protected area legislation.

We applaud the initiative of PAN Parks for developing a European Wilderness Preservation System based on the voluntary commitment of protected areas with large, strictly protected core zones to a common principle of wilderness protection.

RESOLVED TO

- Call upon all European Countries to join together in a European Wilderness Convention based on a framework that incorporates the wilderness definition, and has a ‘model law’ for wilderness as a protocol for its protection derived from existing national legislation for strict protection.

- Ensure that the framework includes a commitment on Contracting Countries (signatories?) to explore the possibility of establishing additional strict wilderness reserves in their territories in line with the protocol.
- Encourage Contracting Countries (signatories) to incorporate their strict wilderness reserves in the European Wilderness Preservation System.

PROPOSER

Dr Mark Fisher
Research Fellow, Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds
United Kingdom
m.n.fisher@leeds.ac.uk
+44(0) 7910 655849

Zoltan Kun
Executive Director, PAN Parks Foundation
Hungary
zkun@panparks.org
+36 70 3801522

SECONDERS

Vladivoj Vancura
Conservation Manager, PAN Parks
Foundation
Hungary
vvancura@panparks.org
+421 907 816 067

Dr Steve Carver
Director, Wildland Research Institute, University of
Leeds
UK
S.J.Carver@leeds.ac.uk
+44(0) 7866042352