

## The Bern Convention celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with 40 inspiring stories of nature conservation

- The Bern Convention, first signed on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1979, was the first international treaty to protect both species and habitats.
- Under the slogan [“Healthy nature for healthy Europeans”](#), the Bern Convention is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a big awareness campaign.
- The initiative reviews the achievements of the Convention through **40 inspiring stories** which highlight the essential value this treaty brings for the conservation of our natural heritage.

**Strasbourg, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019** – Today, the Bern Convention turns 40 years old. To celebrate this remarkable date, a new campaign highlights the most inspiring results of 4 decades working for the preservation of nature. From helping save the few remaining leopards in the Caucasus to fighting invasive alien species or actively involving citizens in the protection of the environment, the actions of the convention have been turned into engaging stories that are available through the interactive website [www.bernconvention40years.com](http://www.bernconvention40years.com). This initiative highlights the wide reach and long-term objectives of the convention, which has 51 Contracting Parties in 2019. The motto of the campaign, “Healthy nature for healthy Europeans” was chosen through a [participative process](#), and reflects the importance of nature conservation in our lives.

The campaign encompasses four main pillars of action:

- **Protecting biodiversity** to maintain the delicate balance between the species in our ecosystems. This is exemplified by results such as the Plan for the Conservation and Recovery of the Osprey, which is helping to bring back this bird to the skies of Southern Europe.
- **Tackling environmental challenges** such as climate change, invasive species and harmful human activities. The Convention contributes to this ambitious mission with initiatives like [Not Alone](#), a campaign to raise awareness about the key role of biodiversity in counteracting climate change.
- **Raising public awareness** and actively involving citizens in the protection of our natural heritage. An example of this is the [complaint system](#) of the Convention that allows every citizen to raise their voice and report harmful actions against the environment. Since the implementation of this system in 1984, nearly 200 signals and complaints have been processed!
- **Preserving our natural habitats** and their vital role in hosting numerous species of animals and plants. As a remarkable example, the [Emerald Network](#) is an ecological

network put forward by the Convention that includes over 3200 areas of special conservation interest in fifteen countries!

Over the last 40 years, the Bern Convention has orchestrated a collective effort involving governments, NGOs, social institutions and citizens to protect our natural heritage. The achievements of these four decades of dedicated work have now been put forward in the form of compelling and inspiring stories. However, the future lies ahead with unprecedented challenges for the sustainability of our planet. This scenario highlights the importance of the Convention in continuing to provide efficient and democratic coordination to preserve nature for future generations.

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