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15th Meeting of the Compliance Committee of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 25-26 June 2019

Agenda item 4: National Implementation Reports for the Biennium 2016-2017: Status of Reporting and Implementation

Draft Explanatory Note to the new Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS)

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Note by the Secretariat

1. The 20th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP 20) (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017) adopted the Programme of Work of the Compliance Committee for the biennium 2018-2019 (Decision IG.23/2). The Programme of Work included under activities to deliver for the said biennium, the development of an Explanatory Note for the revised Reporting Format of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as adopted by COP 20 Decision IG. 23/1.
2. This document provides in the form of general guidance to Contracting Parties a draft Explanatory Note to be associated to the revised Reporting Format. Guidance so presented builds on the experience in examining the national implementation reports submitted by Contracting Parties for the biennium 2016-2017, using the revised Reporting Format.
3. The Compliance Committee is expected to consider the draft Explanatory Note and advise, as appropriate.

Draft Explanatory Note for the revised Reporting Format of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

1. The paragraphs below provide general guidance to Contracting Parties aimed at improving the quality of reporting by avoiding any potential misunderstanding when considering the information contained in the national implementation reports. In this context, reporting should be considered as a process of continual improvement and over time as experience is refined, the general guidance below should be expanded, as needed.

- a. To avoid ambiguity and any impression of non-reporting by leaving parts of the reporting format in blank, it would be advisable to respond to all questions, if only by indicating “nothing to report” or “not applicable” or “no data available”. This is of particular importance when it comes to reporting quantitative data under the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention. If a Contracting Party did not have data to report for the reporting biennium, it should report “NIL” for the entire reporting biennium and submit that information;
- b. To explain the difficulties faced in implementing is encouraged as well as the type of assistance required to overcome them. This would enable the Secretariat to provide targeted support for facilitating implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as resources allow;
- c. The use of links is encouraged in the revised Reporting Format. Links should be seen as a way of offering a rich source of further information while allowing the Contracting Parties to keep the text of the report brief. In this context, it is advisable not to use links as a substitute for including the essential information in the report itself;
- d. When referring to the implementing legal or regulatory measures for the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, it is advisable to give at least the precise title of the regulatory instrument. This would help prepare the General Status of Progress of the Implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as requested by COPs;
- e. It is advisable to check that the narrative text, when provided, makes clear the status of the activity or measure in question, i.e. whether it is a measure that is already in place (status: “yes”), or in preparation (status: “no”), not in place (status: “no”) or is not applicable (status: “not applicable”). Sometimes the reported status seems to be inconsistent with the narrative text provided;
- f. It is advisable that Contracting Parties provide more comprehensive responses than the minimum required in the revised Reporting Format to enrich the picture of the status of implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.