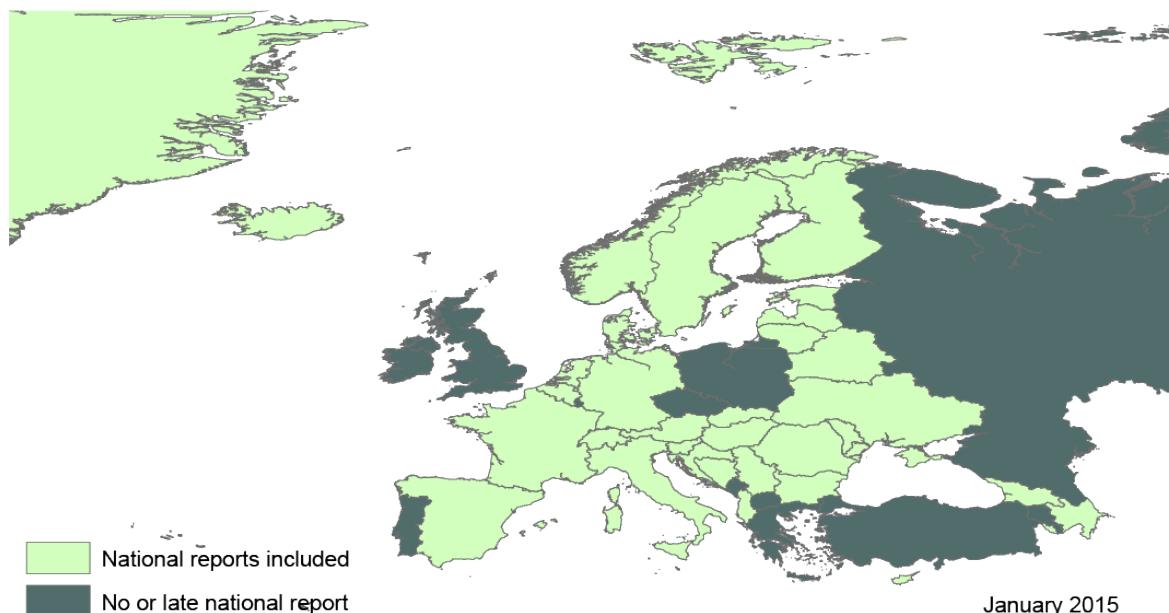


Regional overview of the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan in Europe

National Reports upon which this overview is based can be consulted at:

http://www.ramsar.org/library/field_date/%5B2015-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%20TO%202016-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z%5D/field_document_type/contracting-party-documents-418/field_document_type/national-reports-532/field_tag_countries/europe-14.

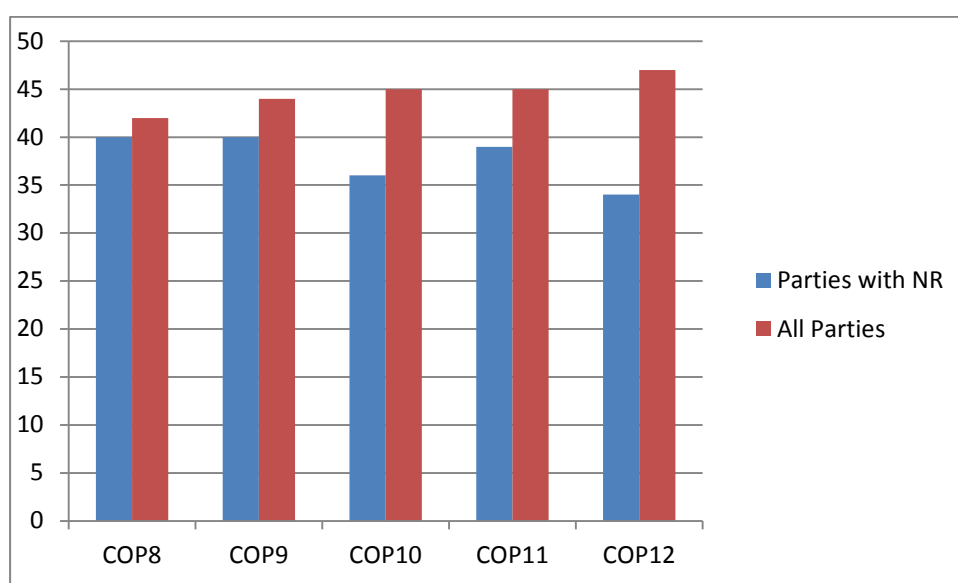


National Reports analysed

1. This overview is based on the National Reports submitted by **34 European Parties** (72% of all 47 Parties) in time for analysis¹: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark (with a separate report for Greenland), Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Netherlands (with a separate report for its Caribbean territories, included in the analysis provided in Ramsar COP12 DOC.10), Norway, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

¹ Standing Committee Decision SC46-21 stated that the: "... deadline for submission of completed reports to the Secretariat would be at nine months before the beginning of COP12, provisionally September 2014 ...". The Secretariat was able to include reports submitted until mid-October 2014 in the analysis.

2. No National Report was submitted in time for the analysis by **13 Parties**: Armenia, Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.
3. Two European countries are not yet Parties to the Ramsar Convention: the Holy See and San Marino.
4. The number and percentage of European Parties submitting National Reports in time for analysis for each of the five latest meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) have declined, with 34 (**72%**) reports analyzed for COP12 in 2015, 39 (**87%**) for COP11 in 2012, 36 (**80%**) for COP10 in 2008, 40 (**91%**) for COP9 in 2005, and 40 (**95%**) for COP8 in 2002.



5. European Parties not included in these analyses were Albania (in 2008), Armenia (2015), Czech Republic (2015, 2005), Georgia (2008), Greece (2015, 2012, 2008, 2005), Ireland (2015, 2012, 2008, 2005), Luxembourg (2015, 2012, 2008, 2002), Malta (2015, 2012, 2008, 2002), Monaco (2008, 2005), Montenegro (2015), Poland (2015, 2012), Russian Federation (2015, 2012, 2008), Serbia (2008), The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2015), Turkey (2015) and the United Kingdom (2015).

Summary and ways forward

6. In Europe, the Ramsar Convention has to compete for attention in a very crowded context for environmental organizations, without receiving much administrative and financial support compared to more recently adopted MEAs. The Ramsar constituency faces increasing pressures on wetlands, stemming from rapid urbanization and land-use changes for tourism, infrastructure development (transport, energy) and non-sustainable exploitation of natural resources (e.g. water, gravel, peat, oil, gas). Ongoing climate change increases environmental stress and the frequency of natural hazards such as floods, droughts, storms and landslides. In this context, the regulating services that wetlands can provide are still widely ignored and only rarely taken into account. Many European countries, including some of the wealthiest ones, are also facing large-scale unemployment and economic standstill.
7. There is thus a need to elaborate innovative models for sustainable ways of dealing with our human environment, taking into account in a coordinated way its natural, social and economic

resources. Ramsar provides tools to help us achieving these aims. To make best use of them, Ramsar experts need to be at the forefront of new thinking and acting. We need to be the advocates of an inclusive understanding and wise use of all wetland ecosystems (rivers, lakes, inland, coastal, human-made, etc.) and of a comprehensive valuation of the services they provide to humanity, particularly to our societies in our highly industrialized part of the world. Still too often, a narrow picture of wetlands prevails in our day-to-day work. Focusing mainly on protected areas and species conservation underestimates the importance of wetlands and their ecosystem services as key assets for regional socio-economic development, and seriously weakens the recognition of our work and of the Convention.

8. Ramsar actors in our national Administrative Authorities, within NGOs, the business sector and the civil society at large, all have unique opportunities to increase public awareness and understanding of the crucial roles that wetland ecosystems play in the water cycle, in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and in biodiversity conservation. We need to illustrate the benefits that our societies can reap from wetlands, as long as they exist. With more than 1,000 European Ramsar Sites, we have a solid base to demonstrate how to integrate our needs for local sustainable development with water resources management at river basin scale, and how to curb the continuing loss of global biodiversity, its products and values.
9. Still too often, short-term economic gains and narrow sector-based thinking are guiding ill-fated development and investment decisions. Governments and investors still do not fully take into account the manifold wetland ecosystem services, their maintenance costs, compared to higher repair and restoration costs, and their long-term benefits for our well-being. In this situation, we are left with one major solution to overcome our current constraints and limited capacities: work together with other administrative sectors and society at large. This concerns water management in the first place, but also any other sectors, notably in the fields of rural development, agriculture, resource use and land-use planning.
10. 44 years after the gathering of 18 pioneering states in the city of Ramsar, it is time to make sure that our colleagues and societies at large appreciate the values and services of all different wetland types, understand cultural and socio-economic inter-connections inside river basins and aim to find sustainable solutions for environmental resource uses in all their forms.

Main achievements since 2012 and priorities for 2016-2018

11. As an introduction to their National Reports 2014, the European Parties provided a general summary of progress and the challenges they experienced with national implementation of the Convention during the years 2012-2014. Their main points are summarized according to the specific questions A-H:

Most successful aspects of implementation of the Convention (A)

12. Parties reported most frequently on:
 - their steps to develop management plans for Ramsar Sites and the implementation of their provisions;
 - the preparation and designation of new Ramsar Sites (and synergies with the EU *Natura 2000* network of protected areas);
 - communication, education and outreach activities (including World Wetlands Day),
 - successful wetland restoration projects;
 - the development of national policies for conservation, biodiversity and wetlands (including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans);

- wetland monitoring and inventory activities;
- the work related to water policies and river basin management (including the EU Water Framework Directive).

Greatest difficulties in implementing the Convention (B)

13. The greatest difficulty reported is limited administrative capacity resulting from limited human and financial resources. Progressing with wetland ecosystem conservation on the ground is difficult, because it needs to be based on time-consuming inter-sectoral stakeholder consultations. Agricultural, urban and land-owner interests hinder the implementation of Ramsar objectives. To achieve more, Ramsar needs clearer and stricter directives, rules on wetland inventory, monitoring and management, and on how to comply with the Convention's objectives. Currently, these are not always understood. More communication to create wider societal awareness is needed. Other difficulties mentioned are slow administrative processes to put effective policies in place and insufficient coordination between wetland, water, and river basin management authorities. Other difficulties are the lack of political interest, of economic incentives (in the absence of wetland valuations), and of sufficient wetland inventories.

Priorities for the future implementation of the Convention (C)

14. The future priorities listed by the Parties stem straight from the successes and difficulties listed above:
- preparing management plans and designating new Ramsar Sites;
 - creating greater awareness about wetland values and ecosystem services;
 - working in cooperation with neighbouring countries, particularly in shared river basins;
 - undertaking wetland management planning and restoration activities at the river basin level;
 - updating outdated information on Ramsar Sites;
 - establishing National Ramsar Committees (planned in Croatia, Azerbaijan, Iceland, and Serbia);
 - monitoring wetland status;
 - creating specific laws and enforcing them; and
 - creating synergies for the implementation of Ramsar, EU and other international policies.

Recommendations for improved Ramsar Secretariat assistance (D)

15. Most Parties are generally content with the assistance provided by the Secretariat. However some stated that more assistance for practical implementation activities would be welcome. This could focus on the following subjects listed in no order of preference:
- make brief, simple and consolidated information available on the outcomes of meetings of the COP, Standing Committee and the work programmes of STRP and CEPA;
 - make National Report formats and World Wetlands Day materials available earlier, in order to give Parties enough time to use them internally and adapt them for their needs;
 - provide practical guidance and tools for national wetland inventories, advice on wetland management, economic valuation and restoration projects in preparation, and facilitate regional meetings for exchange of know-how and good practice.

Recommendations for better assistance from the Convention's IOPs (E)

16. Several Parties reported that they work well with national branches of Ramsar's International Organization Partners (IOPs) on different projects, and that this cooperation could be increased

to include other countries as well, notably to work on issues such as Ramsar Site designation, (transboundary) wetland management, wetland inventory and monitoring techniques. The IOPs often have expertise and capacities on CEPA and STRP issues that could be used better. They should participate and contribute actively to the work of National Ramsar Committees, Regional Initiatives, and the managers of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands.

How to link national Ramsar implementation better with other MEAs (F)

17. Parties made a number of practical proposals. The most frequent suggestion was to coordinate national reporting and the development of strategies and work programmes of different MEAs, notably through increased cooperation of national focal points for different MEAs in the countries, and through coordinated information provided to the Parties by the secretariats of the different MEAs. They also suggested to create common national committees addressing the issues of all relevant MEAs, to coordinate work on sites and species covered by different MEAs, and to use such common approaches to improve national legislation and policies.

How to link Ramsar better with national water policies and other national strategies (G)

18. Ramsar stakeholders need to use water-related issues as a link to construct effective partnerships and to contribute to other programmes and policies. They need to bring Ramsar's ecosystem-based approach into national water management policies and those derived from the European Union Water Framework and Flood Directives. Ramsar issues need to be addressed in river basin planning, regional development strategies and physical plans, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and protected area strategies including the EU Natura 2000 site network. Work should focus on practical tasks to facilitate inter-sectoral cooperation, such as on Strategic Environmental Assessments, site management, land-use planning, and the valuation of ecosystem services.

General comments on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention (H)

19. A suggestion to organize more workshops to share experience and best practices at European and sub-regional levels, as a means to enhance the way Ramsar COP decisions are implemented at national level. To use Ramsar's objectives for international approaches along migration routes or migratory bird flyways and to promote transboundary aspects of wetland and river basin approaches. Use the results of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment for follow-up work in the Arctic and beyond, e.g. along flyways. Consider identifying national Ramsar focal points for wetland wise use aspects to increase awareness on sustainable socio-economic solutions to be found and implemented. To provide Ramsar Sites with stronger legal protection status at national level, and by doing so facilitating also the obtention of funds for their management.

Implementation activities undertaken since COP11

20. The topics presented below follow the structure of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 (adopted through Resolution X.1). As far as possible, the evolution of the implementation of the Convention is analyzed by comparing Strategies and Indicators provided in National Reports to earlier meetings of the COP with the latest information provided for COP12.

GOAL 1: The wise use of wetlands

National wetland inventories and assessment (*Strategy 1.1*)

21. The first Conference of the Parties (COP1) in 1980 recommended establishing wetland inventories “as an aid to the formulation and implementation of national wetland policies” (Recommendation 1.5). In 2002 (COP8), the adoption of a *Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory* (Resolution VIII.6) triggered many activities. This was reflected by the growing number (from 11 to 22) of European Parties with a national wetland inventory during the following years. But since COP9 in 2005, not much progress has been reported, as can be seen in the comparative table at **Annex 2**.
22. Of the 34 European National Reports analysed, 22 Parties indicate that they have completed a national wetland inventory (Indicator 1.1.1, see **Annex 1**), and that inventory data and information is maintained and made accessible to all stakeholders (Indicator 1.1.2). These are higher percentages than the global average, but a substantial number of European Parties are still without a comprehensive wetland inventory. Given the importance of inventories as a baseline for National Wetland Policies, the remaining Parties are strongly encouraged to prepare, complete and regularly update national wetland inventories.
23. The Ramsar Secretariat would greatly appreciate receiving more detailed information on existing national inventories, if possible with a copy of inventory site lists or an indication of how such inventories are accessible through the Internet.
24. It is important to work with, and to use, wetland inventory data and to make them available to all stakeholders as a baseline for assessing the status and trends of the ecological character of wetlands. After doing so, eight European Parties reported in 2014 (Indicator 1.1.3) that the overall status of their Ramsar Sites had improved, and two of them reported that the status of their other wetlands had also improved (Denmark and Spain): Albania, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Lithuania, Serbia, and Spain. They are encouraged to share their “recipes for success” with others, including those Parties that reported a deterioration of Ramsar Sites and/or wetlands in general: Andorra, Belarus, France, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, and Serbia. While the wetland status deteriorated generally in Belarus and Serbia, these two Parties reported that the status of their Ramsar Sites had improved since COP11. Which measures applied to Ramsar Sites could be beneficial for other wetlands?

Policy, legislation and institutions (*Strategy 1.3*)

25. Ramsar Handbook 2 (4th edition, 2010) provides guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands (adopted through Resolution VII.7) that should lead to the adoption of a National Wetland Policy or a similar legal instrument. For COP12, 24 European Parties report that they have such a national policy in place (Indicator 1.3.1, see **Annex 1**). This is a higher percentage of Parties than the global average. Substantial progress since COP11 is reported by Belgium, Bulgaria and Romania. Switzerland acknowledges that it has no overarching instrument in place, contrary to what it reported earlier. However, the number of Parties with a National Wetland Policy has not progressed since COP11 (see **Annex 2**), and one third of all European Parties do not seem to have such a policy in place yet.
26. Wetland issues are increasingly incorporated into other national strategies and planning processes (Indicator 1.3.3), often into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) elaborated under the Joint Work Programme between Ramsar and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), as shown at **Figure 1**. However, for a number of Parties, this is not yet the case. In many countries, wetland issues are incorporated into national strategies for

sustainable development and water resource management, as well as into water efficiency plans.

27. More integration of wetland issues into agriculture, forest, coastal and marine policies is still required. Few European Parties focus on domestic “poverty eradication strategies”. However, when this term is understood in the sense of “socio-economic development strategies”, particularly for less-favoured regions (e.g. those eligible for EU financial support), many European Parties could better incorporate wetland issues into such strategies.

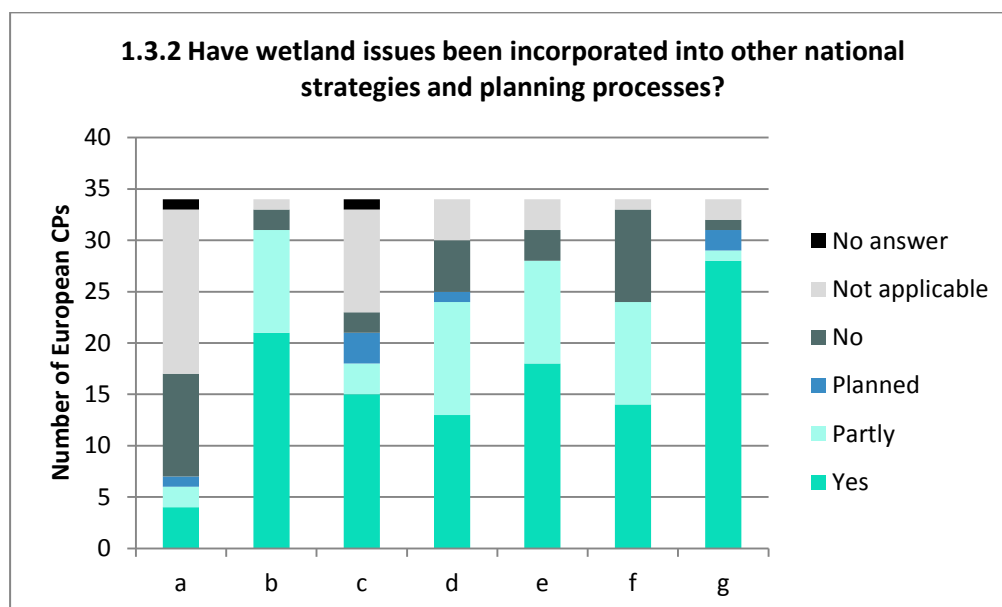


Figure 1: Number of Parties with wetland issues incorporated into other strategies:

- a – poverty eradication strategies
b – water resource management and water efficiency plans
c – coastal and marine resource management plans
d – national forest programmes
e – national strategies for sustainable development
f – national policies or measures on agriculture
g – National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD

Cross-sectoral recognition of wetland services (Strategy 1.4)

28. Fewer European Parties than the global average report that wetland services are recognized across different sectors. Only Cyprus and Slovenia report on specific ecosystem services assessments undertaken, at one Ramsar Site in each country. 14 Parties (41%) report that they are making progress with assessing the ecosystem services provided by their Ramsar Sites (Indicator 1.4.1, see **Annex 1**). However, compared with their reports to COP11, Croatia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Switzerland seem to have regressed during the last three years. Is this a sign that the need for national wetland ecosystem services assessment programmes is now better understood, and that the earlier assessments are no longer considered sufficient?
29. As was the case prior to COP11, 19 European Parties report that socio-economic and cultural values of wetlands have been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands (Indicator 1.4.3). This number is still below the global average.

Recognition of the role of the Convention (Strategy 1.5)

30. The 2008 'Changwon Declaration' (Resolution X.3) has been brought to the attention of the head of state, parliament, private sector and civil society in a few European countries, mainly during the triennium following COP10 (2009-2012). However, since COP11, it has not been much used to highlight the Ramsar capacity for ecosystem management at all levels and to promote Ramsar's usefulness as an implementation mechanism to meet the goals of other conventions. Some issues of the Declaration have been included into national policy instruments. At this stage, only Slovakia intends to include the points of the Declaration into its forthcoming national wetland policy and action plan 2015-2021. This suggests a need to find other means to raise the profile of the Convention.

Science-based management of wetlands (Strategy 1.6)

31. To succeed, Ramsar's 'wise use' concept needs to profit from the integration of the best available scientific knowledge, including traditional techniques, into national policies and wetland management plans. Research to inform wetland policies and management plans is particularly important in the fields of agriculture, climate change and valuation of ecosystem services. Since COP11, a few more European Parties report having undertaken research in these fields. The percentage of European Parties having undertaken research in agriculture-wetland interactions and on climate change corresponds to the global average. But they lag behind with the valuation of their wetland ecosystem services. Overall, **Figure 3** below does not show significant progress since COP11.

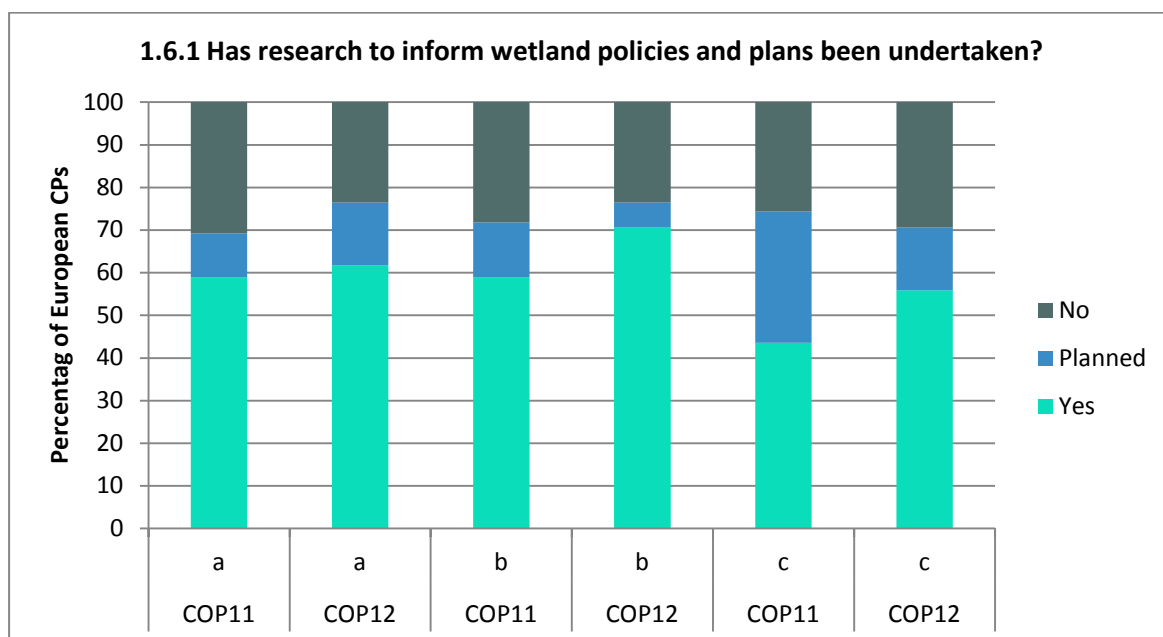


Figure 3: Number of Parties having undertaken research in a) agriculture, b) climate change, and c) valuation of ecosystem services.

Integrated Water Resources Management (Strategy 1.7)

32. The critical linkage between wetlands, water, and river basin management is emphasized in the preamble to the Convention ("considering the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands as regulators of water regimes") and was refined from COP6 (1996), to the point that COP10 was able to adopt consolidated guidance on the subject (Resolution X.19). During recent years, the

recognition has grown that Ramsar is in a unique position to provide its know-how of the ecosystem approach to the water management sector. Such concrete cooperation started in Europe in 2008 through Ramsar's expert contribution to the elaboration of the *Second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters* by the UNECE Water Convention (UN document ECE/MP.WAT/33).

33. Since COP9 (2005), the European Parties report on a steadily increasing understanding, exchange and cooperation with the water sector (see **Annex 2**). Currently two thirds of all European Parties report that their water governance and management systems treat wetlands as natural infrastructure, integral to water resource management at river basin level (Indicator 1.7.1, see **Annex 1**), implying that Ramsar's water-related guidance is used to inform decision-making related to water resource planning and management (i.e. as the Indicator was described earlier). Albania, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland report significant progress since COP11 in applying such an ecosystem-based approach.
34. More European Parties than the global average report that they incorporate CEPA expertise and tools into river basin planning and management and establish policies for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change. European plans to sustain the role of wetlands in supporting viable farming systems correspond to the global average. A majority of the European Parties are implementing the European Union Water Framework Directive and related EU instruments. They provide a practical legal framework for integrating wetland ecosystem considerations into water resources management planning.

Wetland restoration (Strategy 1.8)

35. Many European Parties report that they have implemented wetland restoration projects or programmes. The Ramsar guidance on how to design restoration programmes is not well known, as it is hidden in a chapter of Handbook 19 (4th edition, 2010) on *Change in ecological character of wetlands*. Over the last two triennia (COP10-COP12), implementation of wetland restoration programmes has not progressed much in Europe (Indicator 1.8.2, see **Annex 2**), although European Parties are slightly more active in this field than the global average. With the loss of more than half of Europe's wetlands during the last 70 years, rehabilitating and restoring wetland ecosystems is becoming an economically interesting option. Parties are encouraged to consider this more widely.

Invasive alien species (Strategy 1.9)

36. Invasive alien species are increasingly creating problems in European wetlands. 14 Parties have a comprehensive national inventory of invasive alien species (Indicator 1.9.1), and 13 Parties have established national policies for wetlands on invasive species control (Indicator 1.9.2). This reflects a slightly higher percentage of engagement than the global average. However, the situation has not much progressed since COP11. Parties are encouraged to develop national inventories of invasive alien species and to develop guidance and promote procedures and actions to prevent, control or eradicate such species in wetland ecosystems.

Private sector (Strategy 1.10)

37. At COP10 the Parties adopted principles for partnerships between the Ramsar Convention and the business sector (Resolution X.12), recognizing the role that businesses can play in improving the management of water and wetland resources and reducing the risk of unsustainable

environmental management. Parties were asked to encourage the private sector to apply the Ramsar wise use guidance. 11 European Parties report that they have done so (Indicator 1.10.1). In 24 Parties the private sector has undertaken specific activities for the sustainable management of Ramsar Sites or wetlands in general (Indicator 1.10.2). This is encouraging information. The percentages of European Parties active in these fields are slightly above the global average, but they have not increased since COP11.

Incentive measures (Strategy 1.11)

38. Two thirds of the European Parties (23) report on incentive measures undertaken for wetland conservation and wise use, many of them through agri-environmental, forestry and fishery measures, rural development plans, territorial cooperation, wetland restoration, and measures related to the European Union Natura 2000 network of protected areas. About one third of the European Parties (13) report on actions undertaken to remove perverse incentives, mainly in the field of destructive agricultural practices, draining of agricultural fields, rural development plans, flood mitigation measures, hydropower generation, fish-eating bird control, disturbance by wetland visitors, and EIA legislative procedures.

GOAL 2: Wetlands of International Importance

Ramsar Site designation (Strategy 2.1)

39. At COP7 (1999), the Contracting Parties adopted a *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Resolution VII.11). Handbook 17 provides detailed guidance on how to implement this. However, only ten European Parties report that they have a national strategy and have established priorities for the further designation of Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.1.1). Albania, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Italy, Romania, Spain, and Sweden report regress in this matter since COP11 (see **Annex 1**). This indicates that no sufficient, or no regular use is made by them of the *Strategic Framework*, or that no current plans exist for future Ramsar Site designations. Over the past 13 years (since COP8), the number of European Parties using the *Strategic Framework* has stagnated. And it has diminished since COP11 and remains below the global average (see **Annex 2**).
40. All 47 European Parties have together designated 1,059 Ramsar Sites for the global List, or 48% of the global total of 2,186 sites (as of 15 January 2015). The European Sites, however, are rather small and cover together only 13% of the global area of all Ramsar Sites. Since COP11, 16 European Parties have designated 63 new Ramsar Sites (covering 833,095 ha); they are listed in **Annex 3**. In addition, most recently Belarus and Ukraine have submitted to the Secretariat the necessary documents (i.e., designation letter, information sheet RIS, and map) for the listing of another 15 Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.1.3). These are currently being reviewed and will be added to the List as soon as the remaining questions are clarified. This is a larger number than the 45 new Ramsar Site designations by European Parties between COP10 and COP11, but the 63 new Sites add only half the 1.6 million ha added between COP10 and COP11.
41. At global level, the 2,186 Sites covering 208 million hectares are still below the target which the Parties set for the year 2015, of 2,500 designated sites covering 250 million hectares. Further designations, based on national designation strategies, are therefore highly encouraged. In their National Reports for COP12, 16 European Parties announced another 76 new designations planned for the triennium 2016-2018 (Indicator 2.1.4, see **Annex 3**). The Secretariat looks forward to facilitating these new designations and will report on them to COP13.

Updating information on Ramsar Sites

42. Andorra, Armenia and Cyprus have submitted all required updates for their seven Ramsar Sites to the Secretariat (Indicator 2.1.2). Congratulations. The Secretariat has made comments on provisional updates of 235 Ramsar Sites (22% of all European Ramsar Sites) presented by Austria, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and Ukraine. This indicates that many Parties are addressing the need to update Ramsar Site information. The Secretariat hopes that these updates can be rapidly completed and uploaded on the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS). However, The Secretariat is not aware of ongoing activities to update information on another 527 (50%) European Ramsar Sites with outdated information. This is a substantial increase in the number of Ramsar Sites (199 more Sites) with outdated information and no efforts undertaken to prepare updates, compared to the last reporting period (see **Annex 4**).

Ramsar Site ecological character (*Strategies 2.3 – 2.5*)

43. The public database of the Ramsar Sites Information Service (<http://rsis.ramsar.org>) provides analytical tools that can respond to many individual enquiries and questions. However, the results obtained are only as accurate and up-to-date as the original data submitted by the Parties. To ease the work of updating Ramsar Site information, the European Parties have repeatedly clarified at European meetings that updating Ramsar Site data and maps should be done whenever a particular change occurs. The Parties agreed not to wait until the six year-deadline for updating Ramsar Site information, but argued that this should be done by simply updating the database whenever a local change occurs.
44. Parties commit themselves to formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the Ramsar Sites, to maintain their ecological character, to prevent their deterioration as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interferences, and to consider their international responsibilities, in particular for shared sites, water catchments and wetland-dependent species. Arguably the most tangible indicator for how well armed Parties are to deal with these challenges is the development and implementation of management plans (or strategies) for *all* Ramsar Sites.
45. While recognizing that Ramsar Site designation can act as a stimulus for the subsequent development of effective site management, particularly in Europe, the current philosophy is rather that all Ramsar Sites should have effective management planning in place before Ramsar designation, as well as resources for implementing such management. However, only a third of the European Parties responded that this was the case for their *newly* designated Ramsar Sites (Indicator 2.3.1).
46. About two thirds (511) of the Ramsar Sites designated by the 34 European Parties that reported to COP12 have a management plan (Indicator 2.4.1); a slight progress since COP11. The plan is being implemented in 86% of them (2.4.2). This is a lower percentage than three years ago (93%). However, they report that for another 139 Sites a management plan is in preparation (2.4.3). The Parties report that 251 Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee (2.4.4), a substantial increase since COP11 (149 sites). For 491 sites, an ecological character description has been prepared (2.4.5). Only five Parties report that an assessment of the effectiveness of Ramsar Site management has been made (2.5.1), down from nine Parties in 2011. A draft resolution submitted to COP12 intends to provide Parties with a widely tested and simple-to-use management effectiveness evaluation tool for Ramsar Sites.

Ramsar Site status (Strategy 2.6)

47. Many European Ramsar Sites are under pressure, especially in densely populated areas with conflicting land-use demands, but also in less populated regions with significant remaining natural resources and in regions strategically located along planned new transport routes. At the time of the closing of COP11 (July 2012), the Secretariat had been informed about negative ecological change occurring or likely to occur because of planned developments at 102 (10%) European Ramsar Sites as listed below.
48. **Article 3.2** commits the Ramsar Administrative Authorities (AA) to make arrangements to be informed at the earliest possible time of such changes and to pass such information without delay to the Ramsar Secretariat. 26 European Parties report that they have such arrangements in place (Indicator 2.6.1). This is significant progress since COP11, when only nine reported so. But only nine Parties state that all such cases were reported the Secretariat (2.6.2). Seven Parties report that they have taken actions for Ramsar Sites listed on the Montreux Record (2.6.3). In both these regards the number of active Parties is similar to 2011.
49. The list of Ramsar Sites with negative ecological change is split into “Open Files” where the AA confirmed the existence of such change (63 cases), and into “Potential Files” where the AA has not yet confirmed (or refuted) that such change is occurring or likely to occur (39 cases). In some of the latter cases, the Secretariat asked for confirmation several years ago without receiving an answer so far.
50. In less than one third (28) of the Open Files listed in the table below, the AA was first to inform the Secretariat about the purported change. In the other cases (including all Potential Files), reports were sent to the Secretariat by concerned individuals and stakeholders living close to Ramsar Sites or knowing them well, or by Ramsar’s International Organization Partners or national NGOs. The AAs of all Parties are strongly encouraged to establish arrangements to be rapidly informed about changes at Ramsar Sites and to pass such information without delay to the Secretariat.

Open Article 3.2 Files (as of 15 January 2015)

Ramsar Sites where ecological change was confirmed to occur or likely to occur

Party (bold where information was first received from the AA)	Ramsar Site	Montreux Record	Ramsar Advisory Mission
Albania	1290 Butrint		
Albania	1598 Lake Shkodra and River Buna		
Armenia	0620 Lake Sevan		
Austria	0272 Donau-March-Thaya-Auen	1990	1991
Austria	0273 Untere Lobau		
Belgium	0329 De Ijzerbroeken te Diksmuide en Lo-Reninge	1999	
Belgium	0327 Schorren van de Beneden Schelde	1990	1988
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1105 Hutovo blato		
Bulgaria	0239 Durankulak Lake	1993	
Bulgaria	0064 Srebarna	1993	1992, 2001
Croatia	0585 Delta Neretve		
Croatia	0583 Kopacki Rit	1993	2005
Czech Republic	0638 Litovelské Pomoravi	1997	
Czech Republic	6035 Floodplains of Lower Dyje River	2005	

Czech Republic	0639 Poodří	2005	
Czech Republic	0494 Sumavská raseliniste (Sumava peatlands)		
Czech Republic	0495 Trebonská rybníky (Trebon Fishponds)	1994	
Denmark	0141 Ringkøbing Fjord	1990	1996
Denmark (Greenland)	0389 Heden (Jameson Land)		2009
Georgia	0893 Wetlands of Central Kolkheti		2005
Germany	0561 Mühlenberger Loch		2001
Germany	0082 Wattenmeer, Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart	1990	1990
Greece	0061 Amvrakikos gulf	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0059 Axios, Loudias, Aliakmon delta	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0063 Kotychi lagoons	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0060 Lake Mikri Prespa		1988, 1989
Greece	0055 Lake Vistonis, Porto Lagos, Lake Ismaris & adjoining lagoons	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0057 Lakes Volvi & Koronia	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0062 Messolonghi lagoons	1990	1988, 1989
Greece	0056 Nestos delta & adjoining lagoons	1990	1988, 1989
Iceland	0167 Myvatn-Laxá region (part)		
Italy	0190 Laguna di Marano: Foci dello Stella		
Italy	0133 Stagno di Molentargius		
Montenegro	0784 Skadarsko Jezero		2005
Netherlands	0581 Bargerveen		
Norway	0013 Åkersvika		2010
Norway	1949 Evenes Wetland System		
Norway	0809 Froan Nature Reserve & Landscape Protection Area		
Norway	0805 Giske Wetland System		
Norway	0308 Ilene & Pesterødkilen		
Norway	0307 Nordre Øyeren		
Norway	0802 Nordre Tyrifjord		
Norway	0310 Ørlandet		
Romania	0521 Danube Delta		
Romania	1074 Small Island of Braila		
Romania	2065 Olt-Danube Confluence		
Serbia	1392 Slano Kopovo		
Slovenia	0991 Škocjanske jame (Skocjan Caves)		
Slovenia	0586 Secoveljske soline (Secovlje salt pans)		
Spain	0454 Albufera de Valencia		2006
Spain	0234 Doñana	1990	2002, 2011, 2015
Spain	0599 Laguna y Arenal de Valdoviño		
Spain	0235 Las Tablas de Daimiel	1990	1988
Spain	0706 Mar Menor		
Spain	449 S'Albufera de Mallorca		2010
The f. Y.R. of Macedonia	1735 Dojran Lake (Dojransko Ezero)		
The f. Y.R. of Macedonia	0726 Prespa Lake		
Ukraine	0765 Northern Part of the Dniester Liman		
Ukraine	0766 Tyligulskyi Liman		
United Kingdom	1077 Diego Garcia		
United Kingdom	0077 Ouse Washes	2000	2001
United Kingdom	1043 South East coast of Jersey, Channel Islands		
United Kingdom	0298 The Dee Estuary	1990	1993, 1994

Potential Article 3.2 Files (as of 15 January 2015)

Ramsar Sites where ecological change was reported as occurring or likely to occur

Party (bold where information was first received from the AA)	Ramsar Site	Montreux Record	Ramsar Advisory Mission
Denmark	0143 Nissum Fjord		
Denmark	0146 Ulvedybet & Nibe Bredning		
Denmark	0356 Vadehavet (Wadden Sea)		
France	1810 Rhin supérieur		
Greece	0058 Artificial Lake Kerkini		1988, 1989
Greece	0054 Evros Delta		1988, 1989
Hungary	0188 Pusztaszer		
Iceland	0460 Thjörðsárver		
Ireland	0846 Lough Corrib		
Ireland	0847 Lough Derravaragh		
Ireland	0416 Morgan Bog		
Ireland	0417 Raheenmore Bog		
Ireland	0415 Clara Bog		
Italy	0423 Laguna di Venezia		
Italy	0117 Pian di Spagna e Lago Mezzola		
Netherlands	0289 Waddenzee		
Netherlands	0194 Naardermeer		
Portugal	0212 Ria Formosa		
Republic of Moldova	1029 Lower Prut Lakes		
Russian Federation	0110 Kandalaksha Bay		
Russian Federation	0675 Kuban delta: Akhtaro-Grivenskaya limans		
Russian Federation	0674 Kuban Delta: Group of limans between rivers Kuban & Protoka.		
Russian Federation	695 Moroshechnaya River		
Russian Federation	0682 Selenga Delta		
Russian Federation	0683 Torey Lakes		
Russian Federation	0699 Pskovsko-Chudskaya Lowland		
Russian Federation	0111 Volga Delta		
Serbia	0819 Stari Begej/Carska Bara Special Nature Reserve		
Slovenia	1600 Lake Cerknica and its environs		
Spain	0592 Aiguamolls de l'Empordà		
Spain	0452 Complejo Intermareal Umia-O Grove		
Spain	0705 Ria del Eo		
Spain	0593 Delta del Ebro		
Turkey	0945 Gediz Delta		
Ukraine	0764 Dniester-Turunchuk Crossrivers Area		
Ukraine	0767 Dnipro River Delta		
Ukraine	Dniester-Turunchuk Crossrivers Area		
United Kingdom	0926 Avon Valley		
United Kingdom	0074 Lough Neagh Lough Beg		
United Kingdom	0973 Pevensey Levels		

51. Since COP11, 24 new Article 3.2 cases were opened (8 Open and 16 Potential), and the efforts of the AAs and others involved allowed 13 cases to be closed, because the threat of ecological change does not exist any longer.

52. Since COP11, no European Ramsar Site was removed from the Montreux Record, despite repeated requests. The Secretariat did not receive new information about the status of the

remaining Sites, or considerations for their possible removal from the Record.

53. When the Parties established the Montreux Record as a management instrument at COP4 in 1990, they believed that the voluntary inclusion of a Site on the Record would be a useful tool (as explained in the Ramsar Convention Manual) to:
- demonstrate national commitment to resolve adverse changes;
 - highlight particularly interesting cases for demonstration purposes at international level;
 - benefit from positive international conservation attention; and
 - provide guidance on how best to allocate resources to solve the issues affecting the ecological character of the Site.
54. Many of the 24 European Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record are among the longest-listed ones, dating back to 1990 when the record was established (see the tables above and below). This leads to the conclusion that solving these problems either demands more sophisticated procedures, and these should be prepared without further delay, or that the problems evoked when putting the Sites on the Record were likely solved or mitigated in the meantime, in which case these Sites should now be removed from the Record, following the procedure outlined in the Annex to Resolution VI.1. European Parties are requested to make more systematic and coherent use of the Montreux Record by listing Sites that deserve to be included, addressing the problems of listed Sites, finding solutions, and then asking for the removal of these Sites from the Record.

Status of European Ramsar Sites on the Montreux Record (as of 15 January 2015)

Contracting Parties	Ramsar Sites with ongoing removal process from the MR	Ramsar Sites where the change in ecological character is actively addressed	Ramsar Sites in need of clarification if they should be removed, or if the causes of their ecological change need to be addressed
Austria		Donau-March-Thaya-Auen	
Belgium			De Ijzerbroeken te Diksmuide en Lo-Renige, Schorren van de Beneden Schelde
Bulgaria	Srebarna		Durankulak Lake
Croatia			Kopacki Rit
Czech Republic		Litovelske Pomoravi, Floodplain of lower Dyje River, Poodří, Trebon fishponds	
Denmark		Ringkøbing Fjord	
Germany	Wattenmeer, Ostfriesisches Wattenmeer & Dollart		
Greece			Amvrakikos gulf, Axios Ludias Aliakmon delta, Kotychi lagoons, Lake Vistonis Porto Lagos Lake Ismaris & adjoining lagoons, Lakes Volvi & Koronia, Messolonghi lagoons, Nestos delta & adjoining lagoons
Spain		Doñana, Las Tablas de Daimiel	
United Kingdom		The Dee Estuary, Ouse Washes	

GOAL 3: International cooperation

Synergies and partnerships with MEAs and IGOs (*Strategy 3.1*)

55. At COP7 (1999), the Parties recognized the usefulness of working as partners with global and regional multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other intergovernmental organizations. This is becoming more of a necessity than ever. COP11 adopted Resolution XI.6 focusing on improved cooperation at international and national levels, listing a number of concrete activities. One way of assuring coordinated and cooperative work at national level is to invite national focal points of other MEAs to participate in the work of National Ramsar Committees. Only eight European Parties report that this is happening (Indicator 3.1.1), a much smaller percentage than the number of Parties who do so in other regions. Collaboration between Ramsar Administrative Authorities and the focal points of other global and regional bodies (such as UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNECE, WHO, FAO, ITTO) is only starting, and only ten Parties report that they do so, even though these bodies undertake an impressive number of wetland-related projects in many eastern European countries, notably through the programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Regional Initiatives (*Strategy 3.2*)

56. The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (www.medwet.org) started independently in 1991 and became formally part of the Ramsar Convention in 1999 (Resolution VII.22). The success of MedWet triggered the development of other Ramsar Regional Initiatives. In Europe, the Nordic-Baltic Wetlands Initiative (www.norbalwet.org) has brought together nine cooperating Ramsar Parties (plus Greenland) since 2005. The seven Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided in 2004 to develop a Carpathian Wetland Initiative (www.cwi.sk) which provides a useful link for wetland-focused cooperation between the Carpathian and the Ramsar Conventions. Wetlands International revived a proposal for a Black Sea Wetlands Initiative (BlackSeaWet) in 2006, focusing on the coastal areas of seven countries around the Black and Azov Seas (www.blackseawet.org). Some of these countries concerned have actively participated in its work. Two of them, Bulgaria and Turkey, are also members of the MedWet Initiative. With all this experience of regional cooperation gathered during the last 15 years, the potential for exchange, transfer of know-how, cooperation and synergies between the different Regional Initiatives in Europe is great and should be further developed (Indicator 3.2.1).
57. These regional networks for cooperation, capacity building and training need to work more with Ramsar national focal points for scientific and technical matters (STRP) and for communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA). Regional Initiatives are expected to align their activities with the new Ramsar Strategic Plan and to support the implementation of the Convention on the ground. Contrary to other regions, no regional Ramsar wetland training and research centre exists yet in Europe. However, a well-established independent research centre for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands (www.tourduvalat.org) works closely with Ramsar's MedWet Initiative and STRP through its "Mediterranean Wetland Observatory" (Indicator 3.2.2).

International assistance (*Strategy 3.3*)

58. Parties are requested to promote international assistance for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, and to ensure that environmental safeguards and assessments are an integral

component of all development projects that affect wetlands, including foreign and domestic investments. Not all Ramsar focal points of European countries with a development assistance agency ('donor countries') seem to be aware of the projects that their agency is supporting (see Annex 2), whether it includes funding to support wetland conservation and management in other countries (Indicator 3.3.1), and whether environmental safeguards and assessments have been included in development proposals supported by the agency (3.3.2). But Denmark (DANIDA), France (AFD, FFEM), Germany (BMZ, GIZ, KfW), Norway (NORAD), Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain (PDCE, LifeWeb), and Switzerland (SDC) report on specific wetland-related funding. On the other side, Albania, Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine report on international support received for in-country wetland conservation and management. Other eligible countries, such as Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, and Serbia do not (3.3.3). Furthermore, the European Union supports many wetland-related projects in its 28 member states as well as beyond.

Sharing information and expertise (Strategy 3.4)

59. Over half of the European Parties report that they have networks, including twinning arrangements at national and international levels, for knowledge sharing and training (Indicator 3.4.1). This is slightly more than the global average. Three quarters of European Parties (slightly more than the global average) report that information about their wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status has been made public (3.4.2), but less than half of the them (fewer than the global average) have transmitted such information about their wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites to the Ramsar Secretariat (3.4.3).

Shared wetlands, river basins and migratory species (Strategy 3.5)

60. European Parties are pioneering the implementation of the requests formulated in Article 5 of the Convention and have established transboundary cooperation procedures for many shared Ramsar Sites. Most European Parties report that they have identified all transboundary wetland systems in their countries (Indicator 3.5.1, see **Annex 1**). Ramsar work in shared river basins and wetland ecosystems was part of the assessment process of the UNECE Water Convention, where a selection of 25 transboundary wetland ecosystems (and Ramsar Sites) were evaluated in the publication of 2011 (see para.32 above).
61. Currently, 16 shared wetland ecosystems are formally designated as *Transboundary Ramsar Sites*, 15 of them in Europe. They include three new *Transboundary Ramsar Sites* declared since COP11, shared between Bulgaria and Romania along the Lower Danube Green Corridor: Lake Calarasi (Iezerul Calarasi)-Srebarna, Suhaia-Belene Island Complex, and Bistret-Ibisha Island. Another 20 or so shared wetland ecosystems in Europe would merit formal designation as *Transboundary Ramsar Sites* in order to facilitate their long-term ecosystem-based management. For two of them, the preparations are advanced: for the Wadden Sea shared between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (Ministerial Declaration of February 2014, also a Transboundary World Heritage Property), and for the Mura-Drava-Danube river confluence shared between Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia (planned to become also a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve).
62. About a third of the European Parties report on cooperative management in place for shared river basins and coastal zones (3.5.2). How are Ramsar concerns taken into account in such cooperative work? Many Parties report on the overlapping interests of Ramsar and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its Agreements, including the one on African-Eurasian waterbirds (AEWA).

GOAL 4: Institutional capacity and effectiveness

CEPA (Strategy 4.1)

63. Progress with establishing national action plans for Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness (CEPA) in European countries has been slow. The main responses by Parties prior to COP12 are summarized in **Figure 3** and indicate that few of them have undertaken specific planning of activities (Indicator 4.1.1). Also, there has not been much progress with this matter since COP11 (see **Annex 1**). However, regarding Indicator 4.1.2, 23 European Parties mention 345 visitor or education centres at Ramsar Sites, and 191 additional centres at other wetlands. This is a substantial increase on the 349 centres reported in 2011.

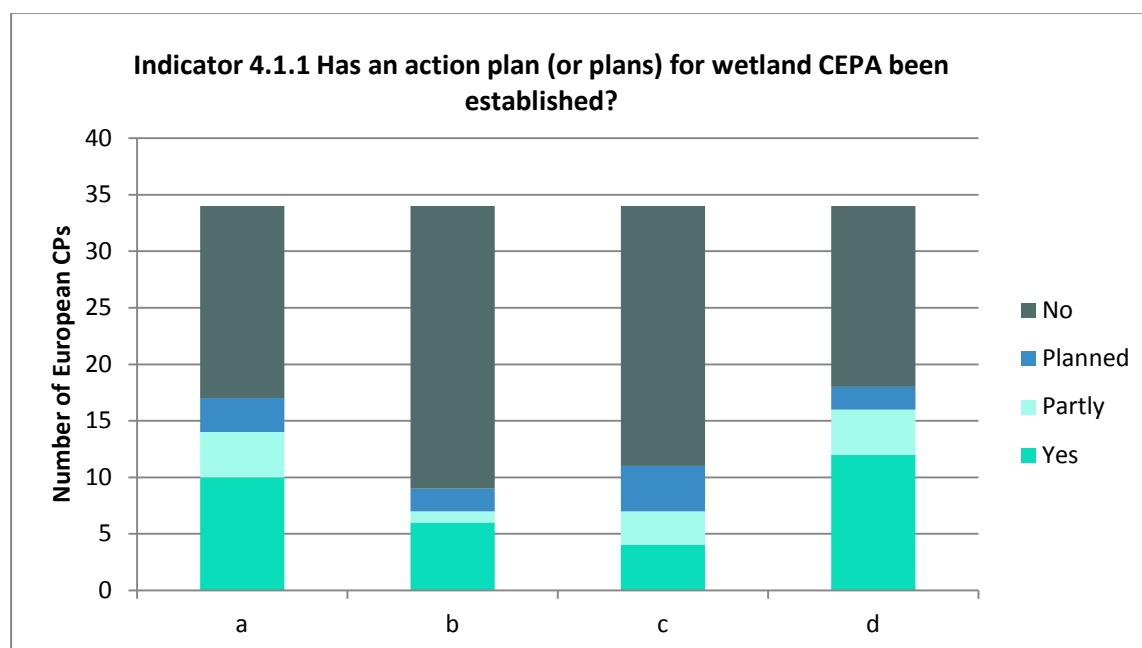


Figure 3: Number of European Parties reporting having established a CEPA action plan: a) at national level, b) at subnational level, c) at catchment basin level, d) at local site level.

64. About half of the European Parties have established an operational cross-sectoral National Ramsar Committee, i.e. 18 out of the 34 reporting Parties. This is less than global average. Iceland, Romania, and Switzerland report that the establishment of a committee is planned. The remaining Parties are strongly encouraged to do so.
65. A specific analysis of all activities for communication, education, participation and awareness in support of the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national level is provided in Ramsar COP12 DOC.18. Increasingly, communication with – and outreach to – other sectors and the public at large is considered essential to make the Convention and its concerns more widely understood, followed and applied.

Convention financial capacity (Strategy 4.2)

66. Most European Parties are up to date with their annual contributions, at least up to and including 2013 or 2014 (Indicator 4.2.1). Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Ukraine reported on their additional voluntary contributions

since COP11 to the operating budgets of Ramsar Regional Initiatives, the work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF), the Swiss Grant for Africa, the costs of Ramsar Advisory Missions, the 8th European Ramsar Meeting in 2014, specific international projects and in-country activities (Indicator 4.2.2). This is an impressive and encouraging list of voluntary contributions. It hopefully augurs well for the long list of activities in need of voluntary financial contributions during the years 2016-2018 (see COP12 DR1).

Convention bodies' effectiveness (Strategy 4.3)

67. Since COP8, National Reports have been designed in such a way as to help Parties with the planning and monitoring of their implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan at national level. Earlier formats also included a section to identify national targets, intended to allow regular checks and updates on progress with the implementation. Only a very small minority of the Parties used this "national target" section as a planning tool. So it was abandoned at COP10.
68. Planning at national scale, monitoring the implementation of tasks, reporting on progress with work, identifying gaps, and defining new targets are crucial steps of an efficient working cycle. Ramsar Parties encapsulated this already in 1984 in Recommendation 2.1, stating that they are "aware that the submission of timely and detailed national reports is of vital importance for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the Convention and for the purpose of sharing information on wetland conservation measures taken, on any problems which have arisen and on appropriate methods of dealing with them".
69. Increasingly Parties are using National Reports to this end. This time, 21 Parties report doing so (Indicator 4.3.1). For three of them this reflects progress compared to what they reported prior to COP11, though four other Parties report regress compared to COP11 (see **Annex 1**). Still, many Parties only start compiling their National Reports at the end of the triennium close to (or only after) the deadline for submission. The challenge remains to have a simple-to-use National Report tool that allows all Parties to monitor progress with their implementation at national level, across a series of succeeding periods between COPs.
70. Many European Parties have made substantial progress since COP11 with the designation of national focal points for scientific and technical matters (STRP) and for the planning and development of national programmes on communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA). Many updated the Secretariat through their National Reports on changes and new appointments of National Focal Points (Indicator 4.3.2), as listed in the table below. Some people fulfill the role of focal point in more than one area. This may create synergies and be a necessity for smaller countries with limited capacities, but it might also limit the Parties' capacity to fully execute each of the roles, and should rather be avoided whenever possible. Parties are encouraged to designate missing focal points, as shown by the shadowed boxes in the table below.

Party	Administrative Authority focal point	STRP focal point	CEPA governmental focal point	CEPA non-governmental focal point
Albania	O. Cato		S. Alshabani	
Andorra	J. Naudi	A. Moles	N. Rovira	
Armenia	K. Jenderedjian	K. Jenderedjian	A. Avalyan	S. Hakobyan
Austria	G. Schwar ch	G.M. Steiner	G. Schwach	B. Mair-Markart
Azerbaijan	R.Allahverdiyev			
Belarus	T. Trafimovich	A.V. Kozulin	N. Minchenko	Y.V. Solovjev
Belgium	G. Raeymaekers	E. Martens	W. van den	

			Bossche	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	J. Vego			
Bulgaria	A. Hasan	N. Kambourova	A. Hasan	N. Arabadzhieva
Croatia	M. Jurić			
Cyprus	E. Stylianopoulou		E. Stylianopoulou	
Czech Republic	L. Vlasáková	D. Pithart	L. Vlasáková	
Denmark	L.L. Dinesen	L.L. Dinesen	A. Lysholt Mathiasen	K. Flensted
Denmark (Greenland)	A. Lysholt Mathiasen	L.L. Dinesen	A. Lysholt Mathiasen	K. Flensted
Estonia	H. Fridolin	K. Kimmel	M. Kivistik	M. Kose
Finland	S-K. Juvonen	J. Ilmonen	S. Airas	H. Klemola
France	G. Ferrère	P. Triplet	G. Ferrère	G. Macqueron
Georgia	S. Devdariani	G. Sopadze		L. Butkhuzi
Germany	J. Schmitz	B. Hedden- Dunkhorst	C. Schell	S. Stübing
Greece	K. Stilogianni			M. Katsakiori
Hungary	A. Schmidt	S. Göri	B. Bakó	L. Musicz
Iceland	G. Þorvarðardóttir	T. Baldursson	H. Vésteinsdóttir	G. Guðbrandsson
Ireland	L. Bradley	J. Ryan		K. Dubsky
Italy	D. Martino			
Latvia	J. Jatnieks	A. Urtans	S. Ruskule	
Liechtenstein	O. Müller	O. Müller	O. Müller	M. Gstöhl
Lithuania	D. Sungaila	V. Bezaras		
Luxembourg	C. Origer			
Malta	D. Stevens			
Monaco	J. Carles	J. Carles		
Montenegro	M. Misković- Spahić			
Netherlands	A.J. Pel		A.J. Pel	
Norway	J.P. Huberth Hansen	J.P. Huberth-Han.	M.S. Aaronaes	
Poland	P. Stawiarz			
Portugal	J.C. Farinha	J.C. Farinha		
Republic of Moldova	B. Valeriu	A. Andreev		I. Trombitski
Romania	D.M. Cocai	G. Baboianu		
Russian Federation	V. Ivlev	A. Sirin		I.E. Kamennova
Serbia	J. Ducic	P. Lazarevic, N. Stojnic	N. Panic	
Slovakia	A. Kušíková	E. Stloukal	M. Balciorová	M. Janák
Slovenia	G. Beltram	M. Naglič	M. Vičar	M. Ogrin
Spain	M. Bernués Sanz	R. Sánchez Navarro		
Sweden	J. Lonnstad	L. Tranvik	J. Lonnstad	L. Gladh
Switzerland	R. Schnidrig	S. Herzog	S. Herzog	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	A. Nastov	B. Micevski	P. Kirovski	B. Micevski
Turkey	M. Golge	S. Hizli	S. Çagirankaya	
Ukraine	I. Ivanenko	V. Kostyushyn	O. Petrovych	G. Marushevskiy
United Kingdom	C. Hamilton	D. Stroud	A. Tully	C. Rostron

Working with IOPs and others (*Strategy 4.4*)

71. The Ramsar Convention is the only multilateral treaty that works formally with a selected group of international non-governmental organizations, known as its International Organization Partners (IOPs). This mutually beneficial cooperation has developed over time, and offers a potential for further development towards more planned, structured, consequent and far-reaching achievements. Such cooperation should not only happen at international level, concerning the work of the Secretariat, STRP, and Standing Committee, but a great potential for increased cooperation exists also at national and local levels, also with additional non-governmental organizations, notably in Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, and Switzerland (Indicator 4.4.1).
72. Belarus, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland report having provided assistance to one or more of the Convention's IOPs (Indicator 4.4.2).

Annex 1

European Parties' responses to selected indicators

Note on symbols used

Three response categories are used: ☺ yes ☹ in progress - partly - planned ☹ no

Evolution between COP11 (2012) and COP12 (2015): The table shows the Parties' responses prior to COP12 to selected indicators according to the three categories above. The responses are compared to those provided for the respective indicators prior to COP11 (Annex 1 of Ramsar COP11 DOC.11), except for those countries with an asterisk (*) who did not report to COP11.

white boxes	no significant progress reported since COP11, i.e. the indicator remained in the same category
shadowed boxes	indicator moved one category up between COP11 and COP12, e.g. from <i>no</i> to <i>in progress</i> , or from <i>partly</i> to <i>yes</i>
black boxes	indicator is now (2014) reported in a lower category than for COP11 (2012)

Indicators compared:

- 1.1.1 Party has a comprehensive National Wetland Inventory
- 1.3.1 Party has a National Wetland Policy or equivalent instrument in place
- 1.4.1 Party has assessed the ecosystem services provided by Ramsar Sites
- 1.7.1 Party's water governance and management systems treat wetlands as natural water infrastructure at the scale of river basins (*COP11 Indicator: Party uses Ramsar's water-related guidance in decision-making related to water resource planning and management*)
- 2.1.1 Party has a strategy and priorities for further Ramsar Site designations, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List
- 3.5.1 all transboundary/shared wetland systems in the country have been identified
- 4.1.1 an action plan for wetland CEPA has been established
- 4.3.1 Party used previous National Report to monitor implementation of the Convention

<i>COP12 Indicator:</i>	1.1.1	1.3.1	1.4.1	1.7.1	2.1.1	3.5.1	4.1.1	4.3.1
Albania	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Andorra*	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	n.a.
Austria	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Azerbaijan*	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺
Belarus	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺	☹	☺
Belgium	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Bosnia-Herzegovina	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Bulgaria	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺
Croatia	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Cyprus	☹	☹	☺	☺	☹	n.a.	☺	☺
Denmark	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
(Greenland)	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	n.a.	☹	☹
Estonia	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺
Finland	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺
France	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Georgia	☹	☺	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☺
Germany	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺	☹
Hungary	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺	☹

<i>COP12 Indicator:</i>	1.1.1	1.3.1	1.4.1	1.7.1	2.1.1	3.5.1	4.1.1	4.3.1
Iceland	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	n.a.	☹	☹
Italy	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☹
Latvia	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Liechtenstein	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹
Lithuania	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹
Monaco	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	n.a.	☹	☹
Netherlands	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺
Norway	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺
Rep. of Moldova	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺
Romania	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Serbia	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☹
Slovakia	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺
Slovenia	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹
Spain	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺	☹
Sweden	☺	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺
Switzerland	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☹
Ukraine	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺

Annex 2

Summary overview of trends between COP8 (2002) and COP12 (2015)

Where indicator questions were reasonably similar, the table compares information provided in the National Reports to COP8, COP9, COP10, and COP11 with those provided to COP12 in order to assess progress during these 13 years, covering the periods of the Strategic Plans 2003-2008 and 2009-2015.

Shading in the table shows whether particular actions reported for COP12 were more (or less) widely addressed in the European region, compared to the global average, based on the percentages of Parties having answered positively.

Strategy	Indicator	Affirmative European Parties at					COP12 globally	13 years progress
		COP8	COP9	COP10	COP11	COP12		
1.1	Party has a comprehensive national wetland inventory (1.1.1)	11	20	20	21	22 (65%)	47%	little (since 2005)
1.3	Party has a national wetland policy in place (1.3.1)	15	18	17	24	24 (71%)	55%	stagnating
1.7	Party has applied Ramsar water-related guidance (1.7.1)	n.a.	5	10	14	24 (71%)	71%	significant
1.8	Party implemented wetland restoration programmes (1.8.2)	11	24	29	30	27 (79%)	70%	regressing
2.1	Party uses the Strategic Framework for Ramsar Site designations (2.1.1)	n.a.	15	18	15	10 (29%)	41%	regressing
3.3	Development assistance agencies provided funds for wetlands (3.3.1)	15	12	11	14	9 (26%)	15%	stagnating

Annex 3

New European Ramsar Sites designated since COP11

Including new designations submitted between 15 July 2012 and 15 January 2015. The right-hand column lists the number of further Ramsar Site designations planned for the triennium 2016-2018.

Country	Number of new sites designated	Area of new sites (ha)	Announced new sites 2016-2018 (2.4.1)
Albania	1	15,119	-
Andorra	3	6,870	-
Armenia	-	-	-
Austria	3	4,958	3
Azerbaijan	-	-	2
Belarus	6	212,980	5
Belgium	-	-	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	-
Bulgaria	-	-	-
Croatia	1	5,748	-
Cyprus	-	-	-
Czech Republic	-	-	-
Denmark	1	7,393	-
Estonia	-	-	4
Finland	-	-	11
France	1	43,970	9
Georgia	-	-	1
Germany	-	-	-
Greece	-	-	-
Hungary	-	-	-
Iceland	3	69,696	-
Ireland	-	-	-
Italy	-	-	2
Latvia	-	-	-
Liechtenstein	-	-	-
Lithuania	-	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-
Monaco	-	-	-
Montenegro	1	150	-
Netherlands	4	4,274	-
Norway	12	39,505	-
Poland	-	-	-
Portugal	3	45,906	-
Republic of Moldova	-	-	1
Romania	7	232,851	2
Russian Federation	-	-	-
Serbia	-	-	2
Slovakia	-	-	1
Slovenia	-	-	2
Spain	-	-	4
Sweden	15	137,008	2
Switzerland	-	-	-
The f.Y.R. of Macedonia	-	-	-

Turkey	1	4,589	-
Ukraine	-	-	25
United Kingdom	1	2,078	-
Total	63	833,095	76

Annex 4

Number of European Ramsar Sites for which information is out of date

* Numbers in parentheses refer to sites (included in the overall number) for which the Administrative Authorities have submitted updated information and are currently revising it, based on comments by the Secretariat.

Country	Ramsar Sites with outdated information	Total number of Ramsar Sites
Albania	3	4
Andorra	all updated	3
Armenia	all updated	3
Austria	16 (7*)	23
Azerbaijan	2	2
Belarus	8	16
Belgium	9 (3*)	9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 (1*)	3
Bulgaria	6	11
Croatia	1	5
Cyprus	all updated	1
Czech Republic	12	14
Denmark (incl. Greenland)	13 (13*)	43
Estonia	6	17
Finland	49	49
France	20 (8*)	43
Georgia	2 (1*)	2
Germany	33 (17*)	34
Greece	10	10
Hungary	27 (27*)	29
Iceland	3	6
Ireland	45	45
Italy	48 (44*)	52
Latvia	4	6
Liechtenstein	1	1
Lithuania	1 (1*)	7
Luxembourg	2	2
Malta	2	2
Monaco	1	1
Montenegro	1	2
Netherlands	32 (20*)	53
Norway	6 (1*)	63
Poland	13	13
Portugal	17(6*)	31
Republic of Moldova	3	3
Romania	5	19
Russian Federation	26 (21*)	35
Serbia	6	10
Slovakia	14	14
Slovenia	3	3
Spain	61	74
Sweden	34 (32*)	66
Switzerland	10	11
The f.Y.R. of Macedonia	1	2

Turkey	8	14
Ukraine	33 (33*)	33
United Kingdom	163	170
Total	762 (72%) (235* 22%)	1059 (100%)