

10th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 25-27 April 2005

Record of the Meeting



1. Attendance

This is listed at **Annex 1** to this Record.

2. Opening remarks:

Mr. Peter Lina (Chair) opened the Meeting. He welcomed the participants and invited the representative of the host country (Slovak Republic) to make opening remarks.

The State Secretary of the Slovakian Ministry of Environment, Mr. Peter Stanko, welcomed everyone to Bratislava on behalf of the Slovakian Government and expressed his great pleasure to be hosting a meeting discussing the conservation of bats, an important issue for the Slovak Republic. He wished all participants a successful meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed delegates from the host country, Parties and Non-Party Range States as well as observers to the 10th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. He was pleased to see the presence of participants from several NGOs and highlighted the importance of the co-operation according to Resolution No. 4.11 regarding the important role of NGOs in bat conservation. The Chair furthermore expressed his thanks to the Slovakian Government for hosting the Meeting.

Mr. Robert Hepworth, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS), sent a welcoming address on his behalf as well as of the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. Klaus Töpfer. He emphasised the importance of EUROBATS within the CMS family, being an Agreement keeping growing. Furthermore, he invited other countries to join the Agreement as well as the mother Convention. He expressed his gratitude towards the Governments of Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom for continuously supporting the Agreement through substantial voluntary contributions. He also thanked the Government of the Slovak Republic to host the Meeting and for

all its activities in bat conservation. In addition, he underlined the promising approach of the Agreement to develop its own implementation mechanism.

The Executive Secretary of UNEP/EUROBATS, Mr. Andreas Streit, thanked the distinguished State Secretary, Mr. Peter Stanko, as well as the EUROBATS national focal point, Mr. Peter Pilinsky, for having invited us to this Meeting. He underlined the very positive and constructive role of the Slovakian Ministry of Environment since Slovakia had been a Party. He was happy to see participants from 34 countries being present, which meant that this was probably the biggest Meeting ever. He also thanked the German government for having provided a substantial voluntary contribution for the participation of delegates from countries with economies in transition. Denmark, Monaco, the German delegate, Dr. Peter Boye, as well as the Slovenian delegate, Ms. Jana Kristanč, had sent apologies.

3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

The Rules (Doc.EUROBATS.AC10.4) were adopted by consensus.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted unanimously.

5. Secretariat report

The Executive Secretary informed the Committee about the progress in the recruitment of staff according to the decisions taken at MoP4. He was happy to introduce Ms. Ayhan Polat as new part-time secretary who had formally entered on duty on 1 March 2005. He furthermore explained the procedure for the advertisement and recruitment of the two other posts within the Secretariat. These posts had to be re-advertised according to Resolution 4.1 for promotion. He confirmed that the Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS, who will be the manager of the selection panel, would consult the Chair of the Advisory Committee in order to be informed about the recommendations of the Parties.

The Executive Secretary was also happy to report that the new Internet discussion forum for the Intersessional Working Groups (not public) was about to be launched and expressed his hope that this would be a useful tool to facilitate the implementation of the tremendous work programme of the Committee.

a) National Reports and updates to National Reports

The Executive Secretary regretted that only a few Parties had submitted updates to National Implementation Reports before the Meeting. However, the Secretariat was able to produce a new synthesis. National Reports submitted shortly before and during the Meeting or afterwards would be circulated with the Record of the Meeting. He recalled the Parties and Non-Party Range States to use the correct new title of the Agreement in their reports. The Executive Secretary furthermore informed the Parties that the CMS Secretariat as well as the related Agreements were exploring the possibility of having an online reporting system through the Internet, which would significantly facilitate the work of providing information.

b) Agreement membership (recruitment of new Parties)

The Executive Secretary was happy to report that in 2004 Estonia acceded to the Agreement. He expected Italy and some other countries to become Parties in the course of 2005.

c) Ongoing projects

The Executive Secretary thanked the United Kingdom for the major voluntary contribution to continue training workshops on monitoring techniques as part of the project managed by the Bat Conservation Trust. He also mentioned the ongoing project on the publication of a brochure on bat-friendly forest management in Eastern European countries funded by the United Kingdom. He furthermore thanked Germany for having provided the text and layout of this brochure for free. The Secretariat also presented the new leaflet about the Agreement.

d) Publicity

The Executive Secretary stressed that the European Bat Night continued to be a growing success with activities organised by local Bat Groups, NGOs and governments. He encouraged more governments to get involved if they were not already doing so. The Bat Night focal points would be asked about their requirements for posters in 2005 after the Meeting.

6. Administrative matters:

a) Organisational arrangements for the Secretariat since 1 January 2001

It was a particular pleasure for the Executive Secretary to report that the relationship of the EUROBATS Secretariat with the mother Convention, UNEP/CMS, continued to be excellent. He also thanked the new executive management of the CMS Secretariat for all the support given to the Agreement.

- b) Report on income and expenditure as well as Trust Fund status
(Inf.EUROBATS.AC10.4 and 10.5)

The Executive Secretary thanked the Parties for paying contributions promptly, both in 2004 and 2005. He reiterated his thanks to the Parties that the present budget had been adopted in Euro and noted that this had prevented the problems experienced by other Conventions or Agreements with budgets in US dollars. He noted the existence of a Trust Fund Reserve, which was a provision required in case of major shortfalls in funding. The Executive Secretary furthermore reported that in July 2004 an extensive audit had been carried out by the UN Office of Internal Oversight with no negative remarks concerning the financial and administrative operation of the EUROBATS Secretariat.

He furthermore reported that the Government of Luxembourg had decided to offer a substantial annual voluntary contribution. This contribution will be available for meetings of Intersessional Working Groups if the need arises. The possibility of holding such meetings during conferences and symposia was suggested. This will be the case at the Xth European Bat Research Symposium in Ireland (August 2005).

7. Oral presentations of Parties, Non-Party Range States and NGOs

Parties and Non-Party Range States made oral presentations regarding bat conservation measures. Range States additionally informed the Plenary about the progress made in acceding to the Agreement. Also NGOs reported about their activities. Ms. Lena Godlevska from Ukraine gave a presentation on cave-dwelling bats in the Crimean region. Dr. Colin Catto from the Bat Conservation Trust reported about the outcomes of the workshop on the development of a pan-European strategy to monitor bat populations in caves/underground sites across Europe, held in London on 15 April 2005. Mr. Peter Kanuch from Slovakia presented an overview of bat conservation activities in his country.

8. Intersessional Working Groups

The convenors of the Intersessional Working Groups reported about progress achieved. Some groups also had submitted written reports. During the Meeting all Intersessional Working Groups except one (IWG on Transboundary Programme – Habitats: Data compilation) convened for further discussions and established revised work programmes (**Annex 2**). A revised table listing the members of the Intersessional Working Groups is attached (**Annex 3**).

The Meeting agreed that guidelines for assessing potential impacts of wind turbines on bats should be developed and the IWG shall continue to work on that subject.

9. Implementation Mechanism for the Agreement

The Secretariat had received information and requests about an increasing number of cases of non-compliance or even breaches of obligations under the Agreement, therefore the Executive Secretary initiated a discussion on a possible implementation mechanism in order to avoid referring such cases to bodies of other international treaties (e.g. Bern Convention or EU commission). Positive reactions were received from several Parties and supported by NGOs. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a document listing some examples where such a mechanism would be useful and to develop potential models for such a mechanism. It was suggested that the IUCN environmental law experts could be involved if necessary.

10. Interactions between Bats and Humans

In response to discussion at AC9, the United Kingdom submitted a paper on the interaction between bats and humans (Doc.EUROBATS.AC10.7) considering that discussion on this subject could be useful and productive. An informal meeting took place during the Meeting on that subject; the outcomes are presented in **Annex 4**.

11. Draft Resolution on Bat Rabies

A draft Resolution on Bat Rabies was developed taking into account the outcomes of the Bat Rabies Workshop in Vilnius as well as of a meeting of the Med-Vet-Net group (a group of bat rabies virologists) held in Amsterdam in 2004. Mr. Anthony M. Hutson and Mr. Peter H.C. Lina are members of this group. The draft Resolution will be forwarded to the second meeting of the Med-Vet-Net group that will be held in Kraków, Poland, in September 2005. After review of the draft Resolution by the Med-Vet-Net group the document will be presented to the AC11.

12. Review of the Annex to the Agreement

Mr. Anthony M. Hutson agreed to continue to co-ordinate a small Advisory Panel of taxonomic specialists to review potential changes of the Annex to the Agreement (species list). Two potential changes were being considered and he requested that delegates advise him of any other likely changes and, if necessary, a Resolution will be prepared for MoP5.

13. Date and venue of the 11th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

The Government of Luxembourg kindly offered to hold AC11 in 2006 and this was gratefully accepted by the Meeting.

14. Any other business

Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland) reported on a proposal for a research project resulting from a workshop on bat migration in the Baltic Sea region, held in Finland in October 2003. Several delegates from the Baltic Sea area had an informal meeting to discuss the project and agreed on the next steps.

Ms. Daniela Hamidović from the Croatian Museum of Natural History gave a presentation about an ongoing project raising public awareness including an exhibition in a Croatian castle.

The Secretariat asked if it should follow the example of other international Conventions and Agreements in distributing Meeting documents by E-mail and making them available on the website. This was generally welcomed. The Secretariat assured that in cases where this was not practicable, hard copies would be provided by ordinary mail. The Secretariat also confirmed that Meeting records being important documents for filing and reference would continue to be circulated as hard copies.

15. Adoption of the Record of the Meeting

The record was adopted after minor changes.

16. Close of Meeting

The Chair expressed his thanks towards the Slovakian hosts who were supporting the Secretariat with the selection of the venue and the organisation of the Meeting. He also thanked the Executive Secretary, Mr. Andreas Streit, and his staff members Ms. Christine Boye, Ms. Catherine Lehmann and Ms. Ayhan Polat for their excellent team work that has made the meeting so successful. Furthermore, the Chair expressed his gratitude to the Vice-Chair, Ms. Luisa Rodrigues, for her tireless support in carrying forwards the working progress of the Intersessional Working Groups. He also thanked the managing and technical staff of the Tatra Hotel for assisting the Secretariat. Finally, the Chair thanked the Conveners of the Intersessional Working Groups and the other participants for their fruitful contributions carrying forward the work of the Advisory Committee.

There being no further business the Meeting was closed at 19.17 h.