

## 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Vilnius, Lithuania, 17 – 19 May 2004

### Record of the Meeting



#### 1. Attendance

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

#### 2. Opening remarks:

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

The Director of the Department for Nature Protection of the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, Mr. Laimutis Budrys, welcomed everyone to Vilnius, on behalf of the Lithuanian Government, and expressed his great pleasure to be hosting a meeting discussing the conservation of bats, an important issue for Lithuania, neighbouring countries and around the world. He wished everyone a successful meeting and noted that bats were an ecologically interesting group at the centre of public attention because of the disappearance of important habitats and foraging areas. Populations were declining as a result. Lithuania was concerned about protecting bats and 10 out of the 14 species known to occur in Lithuania were listed in the country's Red Data Book. He noted that Lithuania acceded to the EUROBATS Agreement in 2001 and it was considered an important issue by the Parliament to ratify the Agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed delegates from the host country, Parties and Non-Party Range States and observers to the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee. The Chair expressed his thanks to the host country for hosting the Meeting.

Dr. Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of UNEP, had sent a welcoming address, which was read by the Executive Secretary. The Executive Director, among many other aspects of the successful work of the Agreement outlined that this was an ambitious year for all committed to co-ordinated global action on the conservation and sustainable management of the European bat species. He also recalled that the EUROBATS Agreement aims to address threats to 45 bat species in Europe,

arising from habitat degradation, disturbance of roosting sites and harmful pesticides.

Mr. Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS), sent his written welcoming address, which was read by the acting Chair. He drew the attention of the participants to the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CMS and to the fact that EUROBATS was one of the three initial Agreements under the auspices of the Convention, celebrating this year the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its entry into force. He also highlighted the excellent working relationship between the CMS and EUROBATS Secretariats.

Mr. Andreas Streit, the Executive Secretary of EUROBATS, also thanked the Government of Lithuania for hosting the meeting and was happy to see so many Parties and Non-Party Range States being present, among them people attending for the first time. He noted that the organisation of the meeting had been more difficult than usual due to the absence of his assistant Ms. Christine Boye.

The Executive Secretary noted that there was an extremely full agenda and he hoped that it could be completed during the meeting and looked forward to the discussions. He introduced the temporary replacement staff, Ms. Ayhan Polat, Ms. Catherine Lehmann, and Ms. Dessislava Krüger, providing excellent assistance for the Meeting, and also the helpful presence of Dr. Jessamy Battersby from the United Kingdom who had offered to act as rapporteuse. He also thanked the governments of Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom for having provided voluntary contributions to enable participants from countries with economies in transition to participate in both the Rabies Workshop and the Meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Apologies were noted from the competent authorities for Finland and Luxembourg for not being able to attend the Meeting.

### **3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure**

The United Kingdom noted the tremendous service and achievements of the current serving officers, but proposed that some future provision should exist in the Rules of Procedure to prepare for the election of new officers. It was noted that the current officers could not continue in office indefinitely and that there was a benefit in extending the expertise and geographical coverage of officials. With this in mind,

the United Kingdom offered to propose a change of wording to the Secretariat for circulation and consideration by Parties to the Agreement in the coming year. If it was considered appropriate the Rules of Procedure could then be amended at a future Advisory Committee Meeting.

The Executive Secretary noted this was a good proposal and agreed to revise the wording of the Rules of Procedure according to the United Kingdom's suggestions and to circulate for reflection and discussion.

France requested that meetings should be conducted in all the official Agreement languages, not only English. The Executive Secretary noted that in accordance with Rule 13 English should normally be the working language of any Advisory Committee Meeting and working groups. The Executive Secretary noted that there were no provisions in the budget for simultaneous translation, particularly at Advisory Committee Meetings. This subject should be discussed before the next MoP if the Advisory Committee wished to have a budget to provide translation facilities.

Following this discussion, the Rules of Procedure (Doc.EUROBATS.AC9.4) were adopted by consensus.

#### **4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Croatia proposed that due to his excellent previous work Mr. Peter Lina be re-elected as Chair of the Advisory Committee. The nomination was seconded by the delegates from Sweden and France. There were no other candidates and no objections and so Mr Lina was duly re-elected by consensus.

The delegate from Finland proposed that Ms. Luisa Rodrigues, who had significantly contributed to the success of former meetings, be re-elected as Vice-Chair. The nomination was seconded by the delegate from the Ukraine. There were no other candidates and no objections and so Ms. Rodrigues was duly re-elected by consensus.

#### **5. Adoption of the Agenda**

Sweden requested that two documents should be circulated, one on migration of bats in the Baltic area following a meeting in Finland and one report on bats and wind turbines. There were no further comments and the Agenda was unanimously adopted.

## 6. Future operation of the Advisory Committee and Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) (Doc.EUROBATS.AC9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 9.11.)

The Vice-Chair noted the heavy workload and outlined the plan of action as proposed in Doc.EUROBATS.AC9.11. The suggestion for the functioning of the meeting was agreed. It was also agreed that the Work Programme Group should consist of all the Convenors of IWGs plus Mr. Peter Boye (Germany) and Ms. Amy Coyte (BCT), because of their past experience and expertise. Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones was chosen as Chair.

Dr. Peter Boye (Germany) requested clarification on the resources available to assist with IWGs because in his experience as Convenor of the Forest Practices IWG it was important to hold meetings of IWGs between AC Meetings in order to progress the work. It was agreed that this point should be discussed further under Administrative Matters.

Nine IWGs dealing with new topics were established; three former IWGs were re-established (see **Annex 2**). *Ad hoc* groups were set up by the Convenors of the new IWGs in order to agree the work that they were going to carry out until MoP5. Following is a list of the *ad hoc* groups with their members (Convenors marked with \*):

1. Producing Guidelines on Bat Monitoring Methods to Assess Population Trends at Different Levels (Agenda item 16)

Dr. Jessamy Battersby (UK)\*, Ms. Amy Coyte (BCT), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (Salamandra), Prof. Bronisław Wołoszyn (Poland), Mr. Edvardas Mickevičius (Lithuania), Dr. Dumitru Murario (Romania), Mr. Yrjo Siivonen (Finland), Dr. Matti Masing (Estonia)

2. Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management (Agenda item 17)

Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (Ukraine)\*, Ms. Andrea Stefan (Croatia), Dr. Peter Boye (Germany), Ms. Inga Mickevičienė (Lithuania), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Vitaliy Matveev (Russian Federation), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia)

3. Bat Migration (Agenda item 18)

Dr. Teodora Ivanova (Bulgaria)\*, Mr. Gunars Petersons (Latvia), Mr. Jeroen van der Kooij (Norway), Dr. Irina Rakhmatulina (Azerbaijan)

4. Autecological Studies for Priority Species (Agenda item 19)

Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France)\*, Dr. Nikola Tvrtković (Croatia), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Italy), Ms. Jelena Ducic and Ms. Marija Mitric (Serbia and Montenegro), Mr. Misho Hristovski (Macedonia)

5. Protection of Overground Roosts (Agenda item 20)

Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland)\*, Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Marcel Uhrin (Slovakia), Prof. Dainius Pauza (Lithuania), Ms. Alison Rasey (BCT), Ms. Melanie Hardie (UK)

6. Impact on Bat Population of Use of Anti-parasitic Drugs for Livestock (Agenda item 21)

Mr. Tony-Hutson (IUCN)\*, Ms. Libuse Vlasakova (Czech Republic), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands)

7. IWG on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations (Agenda item 22)

Ms. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal)\*, Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Ms. Linda Smith (UK), Mr. Alessandro La Posta (Italy), Mr. Lauri Lutsar (Estonia)

8. CBD/CMS Joint Work Programme (Agenda item 23)

Ms. Eva Cepakova (Czech Republic)\*, Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets (Ukraine), Dr. Marcel Uhrin (Slovakia)

9. Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes (Agenda items 24-26)

Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland)\*, Dr. Tony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Ms. Kaja Lotman (Estonia), Ms. Nomeda Vélavičienė (Lithuania), Mr. Deividas Makavičius (Lithuania), Ms. Jana Kristanč (Slovenia)

Each working group met to discuss its Terms of Reference and work plan and to complete its framework sheet. The Work Programme Group analysed the framework sheets for each IWG and the results were presented to the Meeting by the Chair of the Group. Following discussion the framework sheets were agreed by the Plenary. A report of the decisions taken by the Work Programme Group is attached to **Annex 3** to the Record, which lists all the IWGs in operation until MoP5.

## **7. Secretariat report:**

### **a) National Reports and updates to National Reports**

The Executive Secretary was disappointed to note that only 5 out of the 29 Parties had submitted National Reports and updates. As a result no synthesis had been produced, but would be circulated as soon as sufficient Reports had been provided. Those submitted during the meeting and shortly afterwards would be circulated with the Record of the meeting.

### **b) Agreement membership (recruitment of new Parties)**

The Executive Secretary welcomed the two new Parties that had acceded to the Agreement in 2003, Belgium, Latvia and Slovenia. He noted that the accession of Italy would hopefully take place in 2004 and that ratification was in progress. He further noted that the enormous growth of the Agreement in past years would automatically slow down in the coming years because most Range States had already joined. Several of the remaining Non-Party Range States would be unlikely to accede in the near future.

### **c) Ongoing projects**

The Executive Secretary thanked the United Kingdom for the major voluntary contribution to continue training workshops on monitoring techniques in Central and Eastern European Countries, under the project managed by the Bat Conservation Trust. He also thanked the Government of Germany for funding the project on the Atlas of Migration of Bats.

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. The Executive Secretary 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 2004 after the meeting.

Furthermore the Executive Secretary was happy to report that the EUROBATS website had been redesigned and many positive comments had been received. The intention had been to provide a more modern look and to ease navigation around the site. The work on the website was still in progress.

d) Publicity

The participants were also informed that work was underway on a new leaflet on the set-up and working of the EUROBATS Agreement. There had been many requests already for more information so this material was urgently required.

Further information was provided on Eurobat Chat, which would be published in the near future and would mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the entry into force of the Agreement. The Executive Secretary called for contributions in the form of short articles from Parties and Non-Party Range States concerning Agreement implementation and research activities.

**8. Administrative matters:**

a) Organisational arrangements for the Secretariat since 1 January 2001

There had been major improvements in the administrative side of the Agreement. UNEP were providing three additional Finance and Administration Assistants to CMS and co-located Agreements. The Secretariat noted that the additional cost of the Finance Officers was being met from the 13% Programme Support costs paid to UNEP. He also thanked the Government of Germany for providing an additional Junior Professional Officer. A constructive meeting had taken place between UNEP administered Secretariats and UNEP Headquarters to further improve the administrative support of UNEP. A decision would be taken in the autumn of 2004 by the Executive Director.

b) Report on income and expenditure as well as Trust Fund status  
(Inf.EUROBATS.AC9.4 and 9.5)

The Executive Secretary thanked the Parties for paying contributions promptly, both in 2003 and 2004. He also expressed thanks that the new 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. Upon request of Parties the Executive Secretary agreed to look into the possibility of transferring the remaining funds of the former US dollar Trust Fund into the newly established Euro Trust Fund. He noted the existence of a Trust Fund Reserve, which was a provision required in case of major shortfalls in funding. He noted that the 2003 budget was still in dollars but future reports on expenditure would be in Euro.

Germany noted that the experience of previous IWGs suggested that the newly established IWGs would need some resources to fund additional meetings, and asked how the funds might be obtained. The Secretariat outlined the dependence on voluntary contributions for such tasks as there was no provision in the Secretariat's budget and he did not recommend withdrawing monies from the Trust Fund. He also requested that governments should look into the possibility of voluntary contributions for this purpose. He furthermore reported that the Government of Luxembourg was planning to offer annual voluntary contributions but no amount had been agreed. The possibility of holding such meetings during conferences and symposia was suggested, including the 13<sup>th</sup> International Bat Research Conference in Poland in August 2004 and the 10<sup>th</sup> European Bat Research Symposium in Ireland in August 2005. It was agreed that a proposal should be prepared at AC11 for presentation at MoP5.

#### **9. Other presentations of Parties, Non-Party Range States and NGOs**

Parties and Non-Party Range States made oral presentations regarding bat conservation measures and the activities carried out for the "European Bat Night". Range States additionally informed the Plenary about the progress made in acceding to the Agreement. Also NGOs reported about their activities.

#### **10. Outcomes of the European Bat Rabies Workshop**

The workshop was held on 16 May in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The Chair noted that it had been a very successful meeting and some recommendations had been agreed. There would be a meeting of MedVetNet in Amsterdam (September 2004) and also the First International Conference on Rabies in Europe in Kiev (December 2004) where rabies issues would be discussed.

A final report would be produced, and circulated together with other documents from the AC meeting. They would appear on the EUROBATS website, together with information about risks and medical treatment.

Before circulation of the draft report, experts would have an opportunity to make comments to ensure the accuracy of information in the first draft. The final draft would then be circulated for additional comments from the other participants. Where

disagreement existed among the experts, the contention would be incorporated into the report.

Mr. Tony Hutson (IUCN/SSC Chiroptera Specialist Group) noted that a recent Scientific Council Meeting of CMS had recommended a group should be set-up to look at diseases of migratory species.

#### **11. Report of the Intersessional Working Group (IWG) on the Transboundary Programme – Habitats: Data Compilation (Doc.EUROBATS.AC9.10)**

The Convenor of the IWG, Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones gave a presentation on the work of the IWG and asked two main questions: Should the list of underground sites held in the database be closed? What should the Advisory Committee do with the list? There was general agreement that this was a very important dataset that gave an international rather than national view. It was also noted that permanent closing of site lists had been a problem in other areas. It was noted that this list was equivalent to an Atlas of underground sites and Atlases were usually reviewed after 5 or 10 years. After some discussion it was agreed to close the list on 1 January 2005, but to review the list in 5 years time to assess new information. Parties and Non-Party Range States that had not contributed information were urged to do so.

#### **12. Transboundary Programme - Habitats: Guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Underground Habitats for Bats**

The Convenor of the IWG, Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones, advised that a further draft of the Guidelines had been produced and noted that the publication could contain some information on the results of the data compilation exercise, including maps of underground site locations. He noted that it would be good to have a paper publication under the EUROBATS logo and could be part of a series of publications. The Secretariat noted that underground sites across Europe were under increasing threat from human activities and a tool to help protect important sites would be very useful. After some discussion, and noting the experiences of Germany in providing a draft translated version for comments at a national level, it was agreed that comments on the draft should be sent to the Secretariat by the end of October 2004, for publication before the next Advisory Committee Meeting. It was also requested that countries note the number that they would require in each language, if translation was available. The skills existed within the Secretariat to provide

translation into German, Russian, Bulgarian and French. The Netherlands offered to provide publishing facilities.

### **13. Report of the IWG on the Geographical Scope of the Agreement: Migration Routes**

The Convenor of the IWG, Ms. Luisa Rodrigues, recalled the request made by participants at AC8, to the Government of Germany to extend the German migration Atlas project to cover the whole of Europe. Since this request had now been agreed, she therefore recommended that the IWG be dissolved and that all data collected should be passed on to the group in charge of the Atlas project. This was agreed by the Meeting.

### **14. Transboundary Programme on Bat Migration in Europe and Migration Atlas Project**

Germany provided an update on the project, which was being carried out by the Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn. An e-mail questionnaire would be sent out to all Focal Points with information about the project and the data required. Two publications were planned, one in German with the national results and one in English covering the whole of Europe. The European Atlas would be printed in 2005 and there would be close co-operation between the Advisory Committee IWG and the Museum group doing the work. The publication would contain maps at a European level and at a regional level for some species. There would be a chapter on ringing techniques, reflecting the EUROBATs Guidelines on the subject, and a chapter on ringing programmes in different countries. There would be a results chapter covering all species and containing notes about the conservation implications for long distance migratory bats. There would also be an Annex with addresses of ringing centres and a short overview of the conservation status of bats, by country.

### **15. Report of the IWG on the Geographical Scope of the Agreement (Doc.EUROBATs.AC9.12 & 9.13)**

The Convenor of the IWG, Mr. Tony Hutson, advised that there is an IUCN Global Mammal Assessment project, which will provide updated distribution maps, lists of countries of occurrence and revised Red List status. For the European species this would be completed by June 2004. Using this information and the information on

migration, it was proposed that AC10 discuss which countries outside the Agreement would be appropriate for special collaboration and what sort of relationship should be developed with EUROBATS. It was noted that the data for the Agreement area had been compiled by the Forestry Practices IWG, who had reviewed National Red Lists and National Reports, and had been revised during AC8. Apologies were noted for the exclusion of Andorra, Holy See, Gibraltar and San Marino from the list. It was proposed that a revised version of the Table should be made by 1 October 2004, and comments from all countries were requested. A final list would then be produced to pass to the Secretariat for circulation and also for information for the IUCN project. A full and final report would be presented at AC10.

#### **16. Report of the IWG on Review of Guidelines for the Issue of Permits for the Capture and Study of Captured Wild Bats**

The Convenor Mr. Peter Lina advised that the Guidelines had been adopted at MoP4, but the document was open for reviewing and there was some missing information in the Annex with regard to ring sizes. He appealed for information on appropriate ring sizes and any technical developments. He also noted the need to translate the guidelines into national languages because the authority issuing ringing permits might not be familiar with technical English. Germany noted that the guidelines had been translated into German and were circulated among ringers recently. It was felt that there might be a need to revise the guidelines and this would require substantial time, but full revisions could be supplied during AC11.

#### **17. Review of the Annex to the Agreement**

Mr. Tony Hutson agreed to continue to co-ordinate a small Advisory Panel of taxonomic specialists to review potential changes to 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.

#### **18. Priority species**

Recognising that a new IWG should be created to deal with this topic rather than including it with the Review Panel, but taking into consideration the large workload

already being undertaken by the Advisory Committee, the decision was taken to postpone any further work on this topic until AC10.

#### **19. Date and venue of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee**

A letter of apology was provided by the Hungarian Government, advising that the offer to hold the 10<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee meeting in Hungary had been withdrawn. The Slovakian Government has kindly offered to hold AC10 in Slovakia in 2005 and this was gratefully accepted by the Meeting.

#### **20. Any other business**

Germany made a general statement with respect to the *2010 Biodiversity Target*: “During the 2002 Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg it was agreed by the global community that it is necessary to stop the loss of biodiversity by 2010 at the latest. This so-called *Global Biodiversity Challenge* became a target of policies of the European Community, many governments of EUROBATS member states, and other countries. The work of EUROBATS during the last ten years and its results, among which the international cooperation and the support by thousands of bat enthusiasts should be especially highlighted, is an important basis for our attempt to reach the 2010 target. EUROBATS now starts new initiatives through its IWGs to reduce current threats for bats on European, national, and local level. These IWGs will also examine some primary causes of biodiversity loss due to environmentally unfriendly projects and unsustainable development. We appreciate these activities very much and we like to underline that EUROBATS makes significant contributions to the Global Biodiversity Challenge by this. The discussion of the *2010 Biodiversity Target* will most probably become more important in the near future. We would therefore like to invite the Advisory Committee to take this into account during its 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.”

Slovenia made a suggestion that space be made available on the EUROBATS website with closed access to allow IWGs to publish interim results and for others to comment. The Executive Secretary noted that this work was in progress following an earlier suggestion made by the United Kingdom.

Mr. Tony Hutson informed the Meeting that a Scientific Council Meeting of CMS had suggested that further bat agreements should be set up and investigations were being made into developing an Agreement for African bats. He further noted that this was a very encouraging development. The Executive Secretary was happy that

EUROBATS, being a pilot Agreement from the beginning, had now, due to its success, inspired other Regions of the world to work towards a conclusion of similar Agreements.

Poland suggested that it would be useful to exchange information between the Range States about bat Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

A film about bat conservation in Serbia and Montenegro was presented and met very positive reactions.

## **21. Adoption of the Record of the Meeting**

The Record was adopted by consensus after minor amendments.

## **22. Close of Meeting**

The Chair expressed his thanks towards the Executive Secretary, Mr. Andreas Streit, and his staff members Ms. Ayhan Polat, Ms. Catherine Lehmann and Ms. Dessislava Krüger for the excellent organisation of the Meeting and the EUROBATS Bat Rabies Workshop. He also thanked Dr. Jessamy Battersby for her effort as volunteer rapporteuse of both the Workshop and the Meeting, and the Vice-Chair, Ms. Luisa Rodrigues, for her unbridled support preceding and during the Meeting. Furthermore, the Chair expressed his gratitude towards Ms. Nomeda Vélavičienė and her colleague of BTI West Travel Agency for finding the excellent venue and accommodations for both the Workshop and the Meeting. He also thanked the participants for their substantial contributions to carry forward the work of the Advisory Committee.

There being no further business the Meeting was closed at 19:00 h.