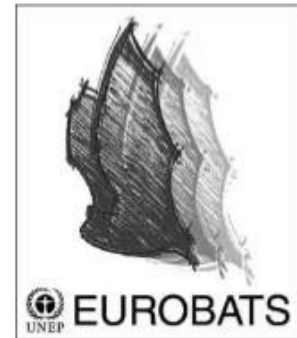


## **18th Meeting of the Advisory Committee**

Sofia, Bulgaria, 15 – 17 April 2013

### **Record**



#### **1. Attendance**

This is listed at Annex 1 to the Record.

#### **2. Opening Remarks**

The Chair of the Advisory Committee, Mr. Peter Lina, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to Sofia, Bulgaria. He kindly invited H. E. Evdokia Maneva, Deputy Minister of the Environment of Bulgaria, to lead the opening remarks.

H.E. Evdokia Maneva, the Deputy Minister of Environment and Water, welcomed the delegates to Bulgaria and expressed her wish for a fruitful meeting since issues of great importance would be covered; namely, the implementation of the Agreement, the practical impact of the most recent research, the problems and challenges for the trans-border conservation of bats, the impact of wind farms on bat populations and the regulations and strategies related to the political decision-making for the protection of bats and their habitats.

Ms. Maneva emphasized that Bulgaria is home to thirty-three (33) of the thirty-nine (39) species of European bats and that these comprise one third of the mammals of Bulgaria. The winter colonies exceed 40,000 individuals and therefore the country has a high degree of responsibility for the conservation of European populations. The recently undertaken NATURA 2000 project was very extensive and covered more than one third of the country's territory. The Deputy Minister concluded by wishing the delegates a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Bulgaria.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee thanked Her Excellency for her kind words and hospitality, and highlighted that this was the second EUROBATS Meeting to be held in Bulgaria. Mr. Lina referred to the highly informative excursion to Lovech and the Devetashka Cave and concluded by wishing all present a productive meeting.

The Executive Secretary of UNEP/EUROBATS, Mr. Andreas Streit, welcomed Her Excellency's positive statement and expressed his gratitude towards the Bulgarian hosts for the wonderful welcome and organisation of the excursion.

#### **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The Agenda was adopted by consensus.

#### **4. Adoption of the rules of procedure**

The Chair drew attention to Doc.EUROBATS.AC18.3, in particular rule 2, paragraph 2 on the participation of individual experts and NGOs, and rule 8 on the *Right to Speak*. The rules were adopted by consensus.

## 5. Summary Reports by Parties, Non Parties and NGOs

**Albania** reported that since the last Advisory Committee meeting and despite the limited budget, an annual monitoring programme was coordinated by the NEA. It was also indicated that in accordance with the National Legal Framework, the Review of the Red List of Fauna and Flora species of Albania is underway and that the Red List is updated and reviewed every 5 years. The results of the review of bats species status is expected to be completed and approved by the Ministry in 2013.

In the framework of the KfW project “*Integrated management of Prespa Lakes*” a trans-boundary study of bat species was carried out in Albania, FYR Macedonia and Greece. The findings of the project were published in a report that can be read on [IWLearn](http://iwlearn.net/iw-projects/1537) (<http://iwlearn.net/iw-projects/1537>). Lastly, Albania shared that the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan revision and update was initiated in the beginning of 2013 and that bat species would be regarded as biodiversity indicators.

**Belgium** drew attention to the two new bat species discovered in 2012 through the use of ultrasonic recordings: *Pipistrellus kuhlii* was found near Brussels and *Nyctalus lasiopterus* in Flanders. These findings provide a new perspective on the distribution of these species in Europe and illustrated the good knowledge on bat identification of Belgian volunteers.

With regard to monitoring and conservation actions, it was stated that activities mentioned in previous reports were underway: winter and summer census, International Bat Night events, conservation of critical feeding areas in NATURA 2000 areas, construction of purpose-built bat roosts, study on the impact of anti-parasitic drugs and awareness raising of farmers through the distribution of AGRINATURE, a new publication in French. The latter can be found here: <http://www.agrinature.be/pdf/les-reines-de-la-nuit.pdf>. Further activities include:

- Several government funded studies on swarming behaviour around major underground hibernation sites;
- Actions towards conservation of bats in all relevant ‘favourable state of conservation’ local planning (EU Habitat Directive);
- Infrared port year round experiment on bat movements in one of the major sites;
- Concluded lists of underground roosting sites of major importance are now ready to be reported to EUROBATS;
- Bat Action, EU LIFE+ funded conservation project is coming to an end, with manifold on-site conservation actions, and PR activities.

Lastly, it was highlighted that a new framework on wind turbine construction in the Walloon Region officially recommends EUROBATS guidelines. Bat activity is now better taken into account since all wind farm projects regularly include a permanent ultrasonic recording during the impact assessment. New wind turbines can be automatically stopped when bat activity is confirmed or when the likelihood of bat activity is considered to be high. This depends on the bat species recorded and is done on a site-specific basis. Unfortunately and for the first time, Belgium reported bat fatalities under wind turbines to the IWG.

**Bulgaria** informed the meeting that the two-year long project “*Mapping and identification of conservation status of natural habitats and species: Lot № 5- Bats*” was completed at the end of 2012. The project was funded by the EU within the frame of the national Operational Programme Environment 2007–2013. Twenty seven bat experts and fifty one volunteers

studied the composition, distribution and status of bat species and their underground and forest habitats in 188 NATURA 2000 SCI sites in Bulgaria. Between June 2011 and December 2012, more than 1,500 bat roosts as caves, galleries, tunnels, abandoned buildings, bridges, bunkers, water reservoirs and many others were discovered and accessed in the course of summer and winter surveys. Many important and previously unknown bat roosts were discovered and assessed. The results were summarized and compiled in a database, which now contains thousands of precise population assessments, photo materials, GPS data, ultrasound recordings and reference tables. Distribution maps, national population estimates, MAXENT models, potential and high quality habitat surface, connectivity and fragmentation of the bat habitat were calculated for each of the 12 Habitat Directive Annex 2 species that occur in the country. Threats, conservation status and population perspectives were also accessed as part of the Habitats Directive Article 17 first country's report, to be submitted in July 2013.

It was reported that the International Bat Night (IBN 2013) was held in 6 locations across Bulgaria: Sofia, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Pomorie, Vratsa and Ruse. The organizers were the National Museum of Natural History in Sofia, Green Balkans NGO for the cities of Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and Pomorie, the Directorate of the Nature Park "Vrachanski Balkan", Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and the Directorate of Nature Park "Rusenski Lom for the cities of Vratsa and Ruse.

The First Tabachka Bat workshop was held in September 2012 at the Tabachka Bat Research Station (TBRS) located in the Rusenski Lom Nature Park. Nine young people from Bulgaria (7) and Romania (2) participated in the workshop. The project was conducted by Dipl. Biol. Daniela Schmieder and Dipl. Biol. Ivailo M. Borissov from the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology-Sensory Ecology Group, together with project partner Eng. Milko Belberov from the Rusenski Lom Nature Park. The workshop was funded by the Finnish Ministry for Environment.

Finally, it was reported that a very successful campaign for the protection of Devetashkata Cave, one of the top three most important Bulgarian bat roosts, home of fifteen bat species, was carried out in 2012. Construction activities and shooting of the Hollywood production "Expendables 2" lasting from September until early December 2011 caused a significant disturbance to hibernating bat colonies, which led to increased mortality and obvious population decline. As a result, the public interest for bat and the cave's conservation was considerably raised; after a series of consultations at different levels, a new order for the status and regimes of the cave was issued by the Ministry of Environment and Water on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

**Croatia** reported that a new Nature Protection Act was submitted and was under official procedure. It was also highlighted that the State Institute for Nature Protection (SINP) submitted the "*Proposal for the Ecological Network NATURA 2000*" to the Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection in December 2012. In this proposal sixty-four pSCI for twelve bat species were recognized. Both the proposal and an interactive map are available in Croatian on the SINP website:

([http://www.dzpz.hr/dokumenti\\_upload/20130318/dzpz201303181456590.pdf](http://www.dzpz.hr/dokumenti_upload/20130318/dzpz201303181456590.pdf))

(<http://natura2000.dzpz.hr/natura/>).

The plans to conduct a three year-long bat inventory in the continental region through the EU NATURA 2000 Integration Project (NIP) were also shared. Moreover, all existing data is to be digitalised and georeferenced for input in the CroFauna Database, which is expected to be

concluded at the end of this year. Further planned activities for 2013 by Public Institutions for the Management of Protected Nature include various research and monitoring projects.

Croatia confirmed that regular winter monitoring at the Veternica Cave did not identify any new cases of bats suspected of contracting White Nose disease. Lastly, in 2012 the International Bat Night and other bat-related lectures were conducted by the Zagreb ZOO, Osijek ZOO Krka National Park, Brijuni National Park, Medvednica Nature Park, City of Rijeka in cooperation with SINP, BIUS, TRAGUS and CBSS. Each activity was extensively covered by the media: through radio, TV and newspapers on both national and regional levels, as well as social networking sites.

General and scientific knowledge about bats is increasing steadily in **Estonia**. Despite the positive trend observed with the inclusion of bats in environmental assessments, the capacity in many fields is still considerably low.

Recent activities reported by Estonia include the preparation of the Habitat Directive report, which is under way and the summary of monitoring data, which includes trends for the common species and renewed distribution maps (to be made available soon).

The International Bat Night continues to be successfully celebrated in Estonia. New bat-talks and information days for summer are reported to be booked early in the year; this demonstrates the high level of interest on bat conservation displayed by the public. Also, there are activity centers putting together special bat information programmes and purchasing bat detectors for doing bat walks independently.

It was also mentioned that the Tallinn City Government Environmental Department is looking forward to including bat monitoring in its plans; it was also stated that the Department has purchased new bat detectors, which will also be made available to scientists. The largest park in Tallinn, Kadriorg, where the presidential castle and eight (8) of the twelve (12) bat species in Estonia can be found, is looking forward to including bat research in the development of its management plan.

Lastly, it was revealed that in autumn 2013 two PhD students are expected to start their research related to bat ecology. Until now the research completed by the group has already yielded vast amounts of new knowledge on Estonian bats.

**Finland** conveyed that for the reporting of article 17 of the Habitats Directive effort was placed on the update of the distribution maps of the bat species in the country. The importance of rolling out the recently compiled and tested monitoring scheme was discussed, and it was noted that the successful recruitment and education of volunteers from different parts of the country is crucial for the monitoring. Concerning research, it was mentioned that the monitoring of bat migration continues especially along the coastal areas. With regard to the active sampling study on European bat lyssaviruses circa seven hundred (700) bats were sampled and no viruses were found in saliva samples; instead, antibodies were detected in southwestern Finland. The results of the study are to be published in an article that was recently submitted.

It was also mentioned that in November 2012, Thomas Lilley from the University of Turku defended his PhD thesis on the effects of butyl tin compounds on bats and their prey insects; also, a three year study on the ecology and conservation of forest bats is now on-going. Finally, the 'Year of the Bat' was reported to have been very successful with plenty of bat walks and talks. The theme exhibition on bats was opened in the Museum of Natural History and received very positive feedback.

**France** informed delegates that 2013 is the last year of a National Action Plan that was quite successful. The main result was the magnification of this plan in the twenty-two (22) regional action plans and the employment of approximately twenty bat workers. This national plan encompassed several actions to address EUROBATS resolutions including the availability of bat ringing archives, licensing the capture of bats for research purposes and studying bats in forests in relation to forest management. The final report and an independent evaluation of results are expected soon. The 34<sup>th</sup> species, *Myotis escaleraei*, was protected in 2012 together with the Spanish ibex and the Southern water vole. Further activities in France were reported by the French Mammal Society.

From all activities carried out in **Georgia** in 2012, two were highlighted. The first is the discovery of a new underground site with 1,000 *Myotis blythii* in western Georgia. The second is the close co-operation between the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC) and the U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a programme financially supported by the Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) of the U.S. Department of Defence. Georgia reported that the programme aims to

- i. strengthen bat research for pathogens of public health and veterinary significance; and
- ii. implement various laboratory diagnostic methods along with building laboratory capacity.

To date the first round trainings in field sampling of bats and laboratory methods were conducted and a local sampling protocol was developed. Georgian bats experts are actively involved in this project and in June 2012, field work was conducted in five Georgian regions. Experts visited 12 caves in Western Georgia, three caves in Eastern Georgia and a colony of *Eptesicus serotinus* in the floodplain forest.

**Germany** informed that the results of the monitoring for the next national report under the Habitats Directive are currently being checked and that the bat monitoring scheme will likely be revised. It was further mentioned that both the proceedings of the national bat meeting of the NABU/LBV in the 'Year of the Bat' 2011-2012 ("*Bats between Culture and Nature*") and the results of the monitoring of *Myotis myotis* were published. A link to the publications was provided: [http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/service/Skript\\_325.pdf](http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/service/Skript_325.pdf)

Germany further briefed on an Internet-Handbook with management recommendations for agriculture and forestry for all 25 bat species in Germany. The website is currently under construction but will soon be available online: <http://www.ffh-anhang4.bfn.de/>

Regarding projects, it was indicated that the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN) is funding a Research and Development Project on migratory pathways of long-distance migrating bat species. In the first step of this three-part project, existing observational records from Switzerland, Austria and Germany were analyzed with respect to the phenology of the Noctule, Leisler's, Nathusius' and Parti-colored Bat. The research group presented the first results at the International Bat meeting in March 2013 in Berlin and in April the radio-tracking a group of Noctules was initiated. Another Research and Development Project currently funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation seeks to examine the exposure of bats to wind turbines and space-use patterns of bats especially in and over forests.

Lastly, it was mentioned that the department of renewable energy of the Federal Ministry of Environment is financing several projects to support their sector, some of which also tackle the effects of wind turbines on nature, particularly on bats (e.g. methods to reduce the risk of collision).

**Ireland** was pleased to report that since the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee in Dublin new contracts for the continuation of the Irish Bat Monitoring Programme were signed. This includes three-year contracts for the Car Monitoring Scheme, the Waterways Bat Survey and the Brown Long-eared Bat Roost Monitoring project. Funding for these monitoring projects comes from the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht; these projects will be managed by Bat Conservation Ireland. Reports from the previous three years of these monitoring projects were published by the National Parks & Wildlife Service in their *Irish Wildlife Manuals* series and can be downloaded here: <http://www.npws.ie/publications/irishwildlifemanuals/>

Annual monitoring of *R. hipposideros*, by staff of the National Parks & Wildlife Service, also continues at a hundred (100) winter roosts and one hundred and fifty (150) summer roosts.

Bat research in a number of Irish universities was also highlighted, with current projects including investigations of the impact on bats of wind farms, the phylogeography of *R. hipposideros*, the efficacy of bat mitigation during roadway construction and genetic studies of *Myotis* species.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Irish Bat Conference took place from 21 - 23 September 2012. The programme included talks on *R. hipposideros* in Ireland, updates on Irish bat species trends, reports on Habitats Directive and CBD reporting, discussions of the impacts of motorways, wind farm studies and street lighting.

Work on the Habitats Directive's Article 17 report was reported to be well advanced in Ireland and conservation assessments for nine (9) species of breeding bats are being prepared. No further record of *M. brandtii* was reported– only one individual has ever been found in Ireland despite extensive survey. However, in the last six weeks, a single male *R. ferrumequinum* was discovered in south-eastern Ireland - the first report of this species in Ireland.

**Italy** celebrated the end of the 'Year of the Bat' with many events and bat nights, which took place throughout the country. Other bat-related activities include the publication of a new popular book on bats and the financial support granted by the Italian Environment Ministry to a research project aimed to analyze the distribution of cryptic species across the country. Furthermore, the Italian IUCN Committee updated the Mammal Red List and the status of all bat species were revised in light of the newly recorded cryptic bat species. Lastly, it was shared that as part of the Italian Mammal Society, the Italian Chiroptera Research Group is one of the parties involved in the collection and analysis of data on bat distribution and conservation status assessment aimed at reporting to the EU about the progress made with the implementation of Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

**Latvia** highlighted that in 2012, the long-term monitoring programmes of hibernating and migrating bats reached the twenty years threshold. The analysis of twenty-years' worth of data on hibernation by the TRIM programme revealed:

- a) an increasing trend in two species;
- b) stable trend in three species; and
- c) a decline in one species – the brown long-eared bat.

The acoustic monitoring of Nathusius' bats at the Baltic Sea coast during autumn migration in the period of 1993-2012 indicated a possible positive population trend of this species in North Eastern Europe.

It was also emphasized that Latvian bat scientists established collaboration with the bat research group from the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (led by Dr. Christian Voigt) and University of Kiel (Dipl. Biol. Frauke Krüger) to study the eco-physiology of long-distance migrating bats and their diet.

**Lithuania** reported that fifteen (15) bat species currently occur in the territory of Lithuania, several of which are very rare: *Myotis mystacinus* (skull found in a limestone cave in a single locality in northern Lithuania), *Nyctalus leisleri* (insufficiently studied but there are new records of its presence in Aukstadvaris regional park and Vilnius), *Myotis dasycneme* (vulnerable status; 700 individuals are known to hibernate in the Paneriai tunnel) and *Barbastella barbastellus* (endangered; has been observed but no breeding colonies have been found).

With the number of individuals interested in bats in Lithuania reported to have increased substantially, scientists have found signs of visitors in hibernation sites. Bats have also been negatively impacted by the increasing number of wind turbines, the renovation of buildings during the breeding and wintering periods and the occasional cases of hibernating individuals falling prey to martens, rats and cats.

Lithuania also informed that national monitoring for Annex II Species (*Barbastella barbastellus*, *Myotis dasycneme*) in NATURA 2000 sites takes place every 2 years. Additional observations are made mostly by volunteers and scientists.

Regarding the International Bat Night, Lithuania mentioned that various events are organized in regional parks every year. Most events took place in the Renavas Manor, Pavilniai and Verkiiai Regional Park, during which more than a hundred different types of bat boxes were erected. Over five hundred people attended the events and the Lithuanian Society for Bat Conservation founded the web site [www.siksnosparniai.lt](http://www.siksnosparniai.lt).

Lastly, it was conveyed that the project “*Preparation of Actions Plans for Protection of Rare Species and Actions Plans for the Control of Invasive Species*” was approved by a Ministerial order. In this framework, conservation and management plans for *Barbastella barbastellus*, *Myotis dasycneme*, *Pipistrellus nathusii* and *Plecotus auritus* were approved.

**Luxembourg** highlighted the following bat-related developments:

- Publishing of a short note on the discovery of two new bat species in Luxembourg, *Myotis dasycneme* and *Myotis alcathoe* - available on the EUROBATS website;
- On-going bat monitoring within a large monitoring programme of species of the Habitats Directive and also through some other more specific projects;
- The implementation of Protection Measures, such as:
  - *R. ferrumequinum* Species Action Plan: on-going practical implementation of the SAP, mainly focusing on the improvement of the corridors from the village, which holds this very important colony, to the foraging habitats, as well as improvement of the foraging habitats themselves;
  - *B. barbastellus* Species Action Plan: the closing of an important underground site in the protected area *Kelsbaach*;
- Public awareness activities, such as:
  - Participation of the bat group at the Biodiversity weekend along with other events with various activities, such as bat quizzes and walks for children and adults (in June);

- Production of an information flyer on *R. ferrumequinum* for the local people to raise public awareness in the village where the colony is located;
- An exhibition called “*The world of bats*” being prepared at the National Museum of Natural History.

The **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** briefed on the progress made in raising the awareness and profile of bats, and on the two International Bat Nights held in Skopje in August 2012. The issuing of a series of four ‘bat stamps’ by the Macedonian Post was highlighted.

It was also mentioned that Bat Study Group Macedonia (BSG) is currently trying to include bats in impact assessment studies, particularly with the increasing number of wind farms in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In this context, the EUROBATS guidelines are being considered in preconstruction surveys.

Finally, it was conveyed that the BSG will implement a project for capacity building of the Society regarding human and equipment resources; the project will be conducted thanks to the kind support of DEFRA from the UK and through the EUROBATS Projects Initiative.

**Moldova** briefed on the approval of the National Programme for the creation of a National Ecological Network 2011 – 2018 through Government Decision No. 593 (August 2011). The Programme establishes the activities related to the integrated management of the National Ecological Network, by conservation of the natural genetic diversity of all organisms involved in the natural ecosystems and complexes, to ensure optimal life conditions and sustainable development of the territories adjacent to the ecological network. The protection of bat fauna was said to feature highly in this report.

It was also mentioned that the National Plan for Afforestation drafted by the Ministry for Environment is expected to be approved in the near future. The Ministry also intends to publish the 3rd edition of the National Red Book in 2013, which will include all twenty-one known species of bats in Moldova.

Further bat-related activities reported by Moldova include:

- Opening of a Research Centre by the Moldovan Academy of Sciences in 2012 aimed to train and improve bat research techniques;
- Inventory of the Bat Reserve at Tsiganca by the Institute of Zoology in the beginning of 2013; the results will play a significant role in determining the future level of protection of the reserve;
- Continuous commitment expressed by some NGOs to organise International Bat Night events in 2013, to be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. Byelorussian NGOs will also be involved in the organisation of these events in the hope to increase their scope. The Ministry of Environment expressed the will to support this endeavour through its National Ecological Fund.

The **Montenegrin** delegate expressed her belief that with regard to bats, Montenegro is perhaps one of the least studied countries in Europe and very little has been published so far. The lack of data on important roost makes conservation actions difficult and the evaluation of local threats almost impossible.

Twenty-six bat species have so far been recorded in Montenegro. However, with its diversity of habitats and climates and suitable roosting sites, several more species are thought to be



present. Equipment was reported to have been purchased with the support of German Development Cooperation, enabling bat workers in Montenegro to conduct better field research. Nonetheless, more activities are required in the future. Lack of capacity, lack of equipment and lack of funding are the main obstacles to further bat research.

Montenegro shared that on 16 January 2011, the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro began the implementation of the project "*Nature for future*". This project was financed through *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance* funds, carried out in a cross border cooperation program with Croatian partners, and focussed on research, protection and presentation of cave fauna in Skadar lake National Park. The duration of the project was two years. Twenty-one caves were thoroughly investigated, twelve of which had bats or signs of their presence. Together with older data, nine bat species were detected<sup>1</sup>. Also, the cadastre of caves in NP Skadar Lake was made and distributed to all relevant scientific institutions in the second year of the project. The final report from the field work, including photographic documentation was produced, and it has been used as a basis for the development of a joint biodiversity study.

The Joint Study of Biodiversity focussed on a review of the state of biodiversity in order to preserve underground ecosystems in the project regions (Dubrovnik-Neretva region, Croatia and NP Skadar Lake, Montenegro) and to provide protection measures and guidelines for sustainable presentation of this type of ecosystem.

A list of important cave roosts for bats in the area was produced. Information on bats, the ecology of species present and the necessary conservation measures was presented on information boards throughout the park.

An additional output of this project was reported to have been a round table discussion organized by the Public enterprise for national parks of Montenegro, on "*The Importance of caves in the National Parks of Montenegro, their protection and tourist valorisation*". This was held in order to exchange experience with Croatia on sustainable valorisation of underground sites and to raise awareness about bats underground sites.

**Norway** reported little in terms of new projects and activities. However, a wide range of bat related work is on-going, some of which now dating back approximately twenty years. These include, for example, counts in selected underground wintering sites, summer monitoring transects with bat detectors, various bat box projects, operation of a bat rescue centre, and bat walks and talks aimed at the public. The underground winter surveys have been linked with a short course in bat identification, and this has sparked renewed interest in participating in the counts. In connection with these counts a social event provides short oral presentations, also with some international participation – a Danish bat worker attended this winter.

Since the last Advisory Committee meeting there are no additions to the Norwegian list of species (currently totaling thirteen). There was however, the surprise discovery that *P.pygmaeus* are sometimes active even at the coldest periods of winter. Yet, it was also pointed out that this occurs only in the southwest of Norway, which is the mildest corner of the country. The only Barbastelle was still present in its regular hibernation site in January

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<sup>1</sup> *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *R. ferrumequinum*, *R. euryale*, *Myotis myotis*, *M. blythii oxygnathus*, *Myotis nattereri*, *M. emarginatus*, *M. capaccini*, and *Miniopterus schreibersii*. Some species were found in hibernating or in nursery colonies of 300 to 800 individuals, exceptionally up to 5,000, while for other species only individuals or small numbers were observed.

2013. Unfortunately, there is still no indication of this species' summer roost or whether Norway actually holds a population.

According to the last report submitted by **Poland** to the European Commission, nine out of twenty-one bat species permanently occurring in the country have reached favourable conservation status. In nine out of sixteen Polish provinces winter monitoring is carried out mostly on annual basis. Despite the strong involvement of administration, scientific institutions and NGOs in this process there is still no central database for the country that includes the results of winter monitoring.

It was highlighted that in 2012 the Polish Ministry of Environment organised a two-day conference to celebrate the 'Year of the Bat'. The conference provided a communication platform between the nature conservancy authorities, State Forests National Forest Holding, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, scientists and NGOs.

Poland also reported on the project entitled "*System for bat protection at wind farms*". The project was developed as a result of the research conducted by two engineers specialized in acoustics from the University of Technology in Wrocław and Dr. Joanna Furmankiewicz from Wrocław University. The project seeks to develop a device that will help bats avoid wind turbines through the generation of ultrasonic waves.

The results revealed a statistically significant correlation between emissions of high power ultrasounds and bat activity; when pulses were generated the number of individuals belonging to the genus *Myotis* decreased. It was further noticed that the system is effective even in adverse weather conditions. Poland informed that the project will continue in order to develop the system further; the aim is to enable the device to operate in different frequencies and allow it to be adjusted to echolocation frequencies of species most endangered by collision with wind turbines (i.e. *Noctules* and *Pipistrelles*). It was stressed that the team seeks to cooperate with interested institutions/individuals.

Lastly, it was mentioned that in 2012 Gdańsk University, Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences and PTOP „Salamandra” launched a co-operative radio-tracking project on habitat selection of *Myotis dasycneme*. A result of the first year of study includes the discovery of two new maternity roosts. Consequently, an application was put forward to General Directorate for Environmental Protection to extend one of the NATURA 2000 site PLH 220026 "Sandr Brdy" to cover the new discovered breeding sites and foraging areas. The project will be continued in 2013.

A very detailed written report was provided by **Portugal**. The 'Year of the Bat' campaign was reported to have achieved excellent results in 2012, in both the mainland and in Azores and Madeira archipelagos; the success of the campaign was mostly due to the tremendous work done by volunteers. It was further highlighted that in 2012 more than forty persons and entities organized many dozens of activities attended by more than 12,000 participants. Lastly, the Portuguese delegate informed that a regional Bat Census was developed in the Azores archipelago and that several projects and MSc and PhD theses are in progress.

**Romania** shared its most recent activities:

- Ten projects to be financed by the Environmental Sectorial Operational Program in Romania in 2013. These projects elaborate the management plan of two caves and eight NATURA 2000 sites. These projects target ten bat species and four Environment Protection Agencies and five NGOs are involved.

- Research project of the Babes Bolyai University Cluj Napoca and the Freundeskreis Fledermaus Bad Segeberg (The Friendly Society for Protection, Education and Research of Bats). The project aims for the sustainable protection of a *Myotis myotis* nursery colony and the establishment of a monitoring programme in the Romanian orthodox church of Prundu Bargaului. The project is financed by the DBU Ministry (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) from Germany.
- IBats Romania: The car-based monitoring of bats has been ongoing since 2006.
- BatLife Europe: the Romanian Bat Protection Association was one of the founding members of BatLife Europe in 2011.
- Life project *LIFE08NAT/RO/000504: Bat conservation in Pădurea Craiului, Bihor and the Trascău Mountains*. Led by Bihor (the Environmental Protection Agency) in partnership with the Romanian Bat Protection Association and the Speleology Institution Cluj Emil Racovitza. The project began in 2010 and is expect to end in 2013.
- All the conservation actions which were planned were run successfully:
  - In 2012 three hundred bat boxes were placed at seventy locations and sixteen NATURA 2000 sites. Seven bat species were identified in thirty-two bat boxes.
  - Fifteen caves were closed in a bat-friendly way.
  - Warning signs were placed in front of these caves and forty caves were equipped with information boards.
  - Alternative visitor routes were created in three caves to protect the bat colonies.
  - The lighting was changed in three caves.
  - Nine caves were cleaned and hazardous and household waste was removed.
  - The management plan for seven bat species was prepared and guidelines for underground sites were completed.
- Public awareness activities:
  - 3 training sessions took place involving volunteers for the monitoring of bats.
  - Work with children in schools was carried out.
  - A documentary film was made about the life of bats (available on [www.batlife.ro](http://www.batlife.ro))
  - Several leaflets were prepared and distributed and pencils and T-shirts were handed out to interested participants.
  - More information about the life project is available on [www.batlife.ro](http://www.batlife.ro).

The **Republic of San Marino** referred to bat-related research, awareness-raising and protection activities presented during the last Advisory Committee meeting and informed that a comprehensive report will be submitted before the next Meeting of the Parties.

The **Slovak Republic** informed that in preparation for the Art. 17 report, extensive monitoring of all bat species will be undertaken; this will be achieved through the project of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and supported through EU structural funds.

The first year of the LIFE+ project resulted in the successful installation of more than 3,000 boxes for swifts and bats in insulated buildings. In this framework, an international *'Conference on the Protection of Birds and Bats during Insulation and Reconstruction of*

*Buildings'* took place in Zvolen, as well as a Chiropterological seminar and other workshops. Two other projects aimed at the conservation of bats in mines in Slovak Republic were initiated, thanks to the small grants scheme of the Bonn Convention. Unfortunately, another project aimed at supporting the implementation of bat-related activities was not selected to receive Structural Funds.

The communication between nature conservation staff members and local inhabitants was reported to have improved; advice and practical measures were provided to the public on problems related to the occurrence of bats in blocks of flats and other buildings (over seventy cases, especially in bigger cities).

Other highlighted public awareness activities include the increase in the number of International Bat Night events (eleven in 2012), the publishing of the '*Atlas of mammals of Slovak Republic*' by Krištofík & Danko (2012) and the fact that studies on *R. euryale* and *N. leislerii* are on-going at various universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Lastly, the Slovak delegate informed that comments on the documents provided by the Secretariat were submitted and that a new poster was proposed; orders were placed for International Bat Night posters, which will be distributed to the administration of protected areas.

**Slovenia** (*in absentia*) informed that:

- Bat monitoring results are consistent with the results from previous years. The Report is available here:  
[www.natura2000.gov.si/uploads/tx\\_library/Netopirji\\_monitoring\\_12\\_koncno.pdf](http://www.natura2000.gov.si/uploads/tx_library/Netopirji_monitoring_12_koncno.pdf).
- Several maternity bat roosts were reported to have been destroyed; however in some cases mitigation measures were successful and bats returned to previously destroyed roosts. Active and passive monitoring programmes in 2012 did not reveal the presence of EBLV in Slovenian bat populations
- The LIFE project "*Life at night*" is in the last year of its programme.
- During the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee the Slovenian government is expected to decide on substantial amendments and corrections of NATURA 2000 sites; should the expert proposal be confirmed, many new sites for bats will also be declared.
- Successful organisation and participation in IBN events;
- Field work co-operation between Slovenian and Bosnia and Herzegovina experts with the goal to conduct winter monitoring in their country took place in 2012.

In February 2013 **Sweden** (through the research programme Vindval) hosted the Conference on Wind power and Environmental impacts (CWE 2013). The conference included seventy (70) lectures, eleven (11) plenary speakers and four (4) workshops, with more than three hundred (300) participants from thirty (30) countries. There were presentations and workshops on how to minimize negative impacts on birds and bats, bat behaviour and mortality and mitigation of bird and bat mortality, among others. Abstracts from the conference are available on the website: <http://www.naturvardsverket.se/CWE2013/>

It was also reported that active surveillance of bat rabies continues parallel to the passive surveillance which has been going on for the last thirty years. The test results from 2012 confirm the presence of antibodies in *Myotis daubentonii* in the central parts of Sweden, as well as in the south. Those results were no less than expected. No bats with actual symptoms of bat rabies were found. More information on bats rabies in Sweden can be found here:

- Bat rabies information on the web site on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.naturvardsverket.se/Var-natur/Djur-och-vaxter/Rad/Fladdermossen-i-Sverige/Om-rabies-bland-svenska-fladdermoss/>
- FAQs in rabies and bat rabies on the web site of the National Veterinary Institute (SVA): <http://www.naturvardsverket.se/Var-natur/Djur-och-vaxter/Rad/Fladdermossen-i-Sverige/Om-rabies-bland-svenska-fladdermoss/>
- PM on bat rabies issued by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the National Veterinary Institute (SVA), the Swedish Institute for Communicable Disease Control (SMI), the Swedish Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket), The National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) and the Work Environment Authority (Arbetsmiljöverket): <http://www.sva.se/upload/pdf/Djurhalsa/Epizootier/PM-fladdermusrabies.pdf>

Sweden also briefed the meeting on the project Bat Forts, a cooperation of bat scientists, WWF and Fortverket (a governmental agency for maintaining the buildings of the Swedish Armed Forces), which is an ongoing success in protecting manmade underground hibernation sites owned by Fortverket. Some sites have up to five different species present each winter. A single Barbastelle bat has been found to hibernate in the same spot for at least the last three years. So far no Barbastelles have been found in the area during the summer in one of the bat forts, but considering that the nearest known colony of Barbastelles is located more than 200 km to the south, some bats are likely to be found in the neighbourhood eventually.

It was mentioned that monitoring work is on-going and includes the increasing use of autoboxes, and that the studies on bats and wind turbines also continues.

Lastly, there has been a considerable increase in bat talks and bat walks in Sweden by both scientists and bat amateurs. There have also been a number of nice radio and television programs on bats, which increases the public awareness of bats in a very positive way.

**Ukraine** informed delegates that for the first time five cities (Kyiv, Kamyanets-Podilsky, Lviv, Luhansk and Kharkov) hosted bat events during 2012 and reports can be found here: [http://kazhan.org.ua/eng/projects/pr\\_ibn\\_2012.htm](http://kazhan.org.ua/eng/projects/pr_ibn_2012.htm). Other developments include the launch of a second Ukrainian bat-website: <http://www.bat-kharkov.in.ua>.

The increasing number of bat-related reports in mass-media was also reported. Several interviews were given to by Ukrainian bat-workers to different TV and news-papers. Most reports were devoted to the International Bat Night and to the spring release of bats rehabilitated during the previous winter,

Lastly, it was emphasized that in December 2012, the National Bank of Ukraine put into circulation the 5 *hryvnia* commemorative coin dedicated to the 'Year of the Bat'. The coin, inscribed with 'International Year of the Bat' was made of German silver, mintage – 20,000 pieces. For more information visit:

[http://www.bank.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art\\_id=127769](http://www.bank.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=127769)

The **United Kingdom** submitted a written report. It referred delegates in particular to the sufficient data collected by the programme to produce population trends for eleven of the UK's seventeen resident bat species. In 2011, five species showed statistically significant increases in at least one survey. Significant positive trends were reported for five bat species.

Offences against bats continue to be investigated by the authorities, resulting in some prosecutions. The majority of offences concern building development projects.

Some research projects of particular interest to IWGs were mentioned, namely research on the impact of wind farms on bat populations that was extended for a further year and is due to report next year. Additionally, on-going projects on the impact of single mid-size wind turbines and on the identification of methods to monitor woodland bats were highlighted. One last project that looks at monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation methods for road schemes was reported to start soon.

The most important development of the protection of bats in **Algeria** during the past year was that the Ministry of the Environment issued a decree (No. 12-235) dated 24 May 2012 to protect all the twenty-eight Algerian bat species. In addition, continuous active research on the distribution of bats was reported, as well as the enrolment of one graduate student who is to study the ecology of bats in north-eastern Algeria. Finally, a comprehensive study was carried out on ectoparasites of bats collected from north-eastern Algeria. Twelve species of ectoparasites were recovered from nine bat species, including dipterans, fleas, mites, ticks and bugs. A manuscript was reported to have been prepared for publication.

**Armenia** reported on the developments in biodiversity conservation and in the sphere of environmental policy in general. Since 2007 three state sanctuaries and two national parks were established and in 2008 the Armenian government approved the list of 230 natural monuments. Parts of these protected areas are habitats for migratory species, including bats. Also, in 2010 the New Red Book of Animals, which includes ten bat species, was approved.

Since the last Advisory Committee meeting, several talks between governmental and academic organisations took place to discuss the accession and ratification of the EUROBATS Agreement. With the launch of the AEWA Agreement ratification process, it is expected that accession to EUROBATS will soon occur.

Regarding activities, a study is currently being conducted on the species included in the Annex of EUROBATS Agreement, as well as a comparison and analysis of species encountered in Armenia. Representatives from the Ministry of Nature Protection, science research institutes, universities and non-governmental organizations are involved. There is a willingness to continue these efforts however technical and financial difficulties hinder progress.

**Belarus** stated that 2012 was announced as the 'International Year of the Bat' and the following activities were included in the action plan:

- Field surveys of bat breeding, migrations and hibernation;
- Occurrence of several International Bat Night events:
  - International Workshops "*Bats in Belarus: research and protection*" and detector workshop "*Bats in Belarus – intensification of the researching*", which were kindly supported by Habitat Foundation, EUROBATS, Ministry of Natural Resources and National Academy of Sciences;
  - International Bat Nights in Minsk, Narach Lake, Hrodna Fortress and Brest;
  - Regional and International Workshops "*Bats of Brest province*" and "*Nocturnal guardians of the fields*";

- Public educational activities, such as photo exhibitions, popular lectures, interviews and articles in Mass Media;
- Creation of a web-page on Belarusian bats (in Russian) on the APB-Birdlife website: [www.ptushki.org](http://www.ptushki.org);
  - Creation of two bat-groups on Facebook and V Kontakte social networks;
  - Translation of the EUROBATS “*Bats and Forestry*” leaflet – to be published;
  - Belarus now a signatory to the Bern Convention.

The past year has brought significant progress in bat research and protection in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, mainly due to the cavers’ interest in bat research. Monitoring in several caves in northern part of the country was initiated and colonies of several thousand bats were found in some. These monitoring activities are conducted in collaboration with Mr. Primož Presetnik from Slovenia. Monitoring in the southern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the wider area of the Neretva river delta is expected to start at the end of May. Also, a new species was registered: *Myotis brandti*, bringing the total of registered species in Bosnia and Herzegovina to twenty-eight.

Lastly, it was highlighted that according to the government and its official website, the process for the ratification of the Agreement is currently underway.

In 2012 Nature Conservation **Egypt** (NCE) continued its role in enhancing bat conservation and research in Egypt by strengthening its cooperation with international bat organizations and bodies such as BatLife Europe and Bat Conservation International. The word of bat conservation continued to be spread through the ‘Chiroptera’ internet groups and web pages as well as through awareness events. An example of such is the *Rousettus aegyptiacus* event organised by NCE concerning the roosts in the Aquarium Grotto Garde in Cairo. The first TV interview about bat conservation in Egypt was given and broadcast by the Egyptian satellite TV channel “ONTV”. This interview is a milestone in the awareness programme of bat conservation in Egypt.

The delegate expressed his gratitude for the support of EUROBATS through its Projects Initiative (EPI). This initiative enabled a successful capacity building workshop on bat monitoring to take place and which was kindly hosted by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan.

It was further reported that NCE recently took the initiative and became the first North African country to join the newly announced Bat Conservation Africa Network. NCE believes this African cooperation will definitely be reflected on bat conservation in the region.

Lastly, it was mentioned that NCE is lobbying to draw the attention of the stakeholders during the Environmental Impact Assessment studies towards the importance of bats as a genuine part of the fauna of Egypt and to highlight the key position of bats in the ecosystem.

**Greece** reported that radio tracking of *Pipistrellus hanaki* took place in September 2012 and will continue next June. The project, funded by the EUROBATS Project Initiative, aims to elucidate the species’ roosting and foraging ecology and conservation needs.

To celebrate the ‘Year of the Bat’ a public speech on the life history, ecology and conservation of bats was given in the Natural History Museum of Crete and an article was sent to several newspapers.

Other highlights include field trips made to Kythera, Samos and the Ionian islands, as well as in Central Macedonia in order to locate and survey important roosts and feeding areas.

Finally, a research article was published in *Acta Chiropterologica*, presenting the bat fatalities in some wind farms operating in north-eastern Greece.

**Iran** stated that following last year's suggestion to establish an NGO to raise awareness on Iranian bats, all means to meet this target were pursued. However, due to the length of the procedure, the establishment of a scientific group entitled "Persia bats" was being considered. The Iranian delegate invited other participants to comment on the target.

With regard to wildlife education, Iran reported that research work is currently being conducted and that pilot workshops were already held for children. These were very informative and creative events that targeted children of various ages.

**Israel** shared the latest activities in bat conservation:

- **Monitoring**

- The long-term monitoring program for insectivorous bats in roosts and foraging areas throughout the country has begun in cooperation with the Israel Nature and Parks Protection Authority and the Mammalian Center. The program includes two visits per year during winter and summer in each of the selected sites;
- Summer monitoring of roosts and foraging areas in the northern part of Israel;
- Monitoring of bat populations in the army bunkers on the Jordan valley;
- Positioning of a webcam in Qasr al Yahud (The Jews' Castle or Palace).

- **Education**

- Lectures for the public including teachers, school students and soldiers around Israel;
- Experts (Israel Nature and Parks Protection Authority and the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel) educated the public on the ecosystem services provided by bats;
- Three public bat events took place in 2012. Over 1,800 people participated in two of these three events;
- The second full-day seminar on bats took place at Tel Aviv University with over two hundred and eighty participants. The seminar included eight lectures on recent studies and survey programs on bats in Israel.

- **Conservation and Policy**

- Declaration of 20 army bunkers in the Jordan valley (roosts for twelve species of insectivorous bats) as part of the Natural reserve system of Israel;
- The first steps have been taken by Israel in order to become a party to the Agreement.

Through a grant from EUROBATS funded by the German Government, a workshop on capacity building for bat detector and calls analysis training was held in **Jordan** in August 2012. Fourteen participants from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories attended the workshop. There were field visits to nature reserves and bat calls were recorded and analysed. A detailed report was submitted to the EUROBATS secretariat.

It was conveyed that although it is not regulated yet the Jordanian Ministry of the Environment demands that all wind turbine projects should undergo a detailed EIA on bat



populations before the construction phase. Efforts are being made by various nature conservation agencies to adopt specific regulations for bat monitoring to be enforced in wind turbine projects. In the past year around six new wind turbine projects have been in the evaluation process. Guidelines published by EUROBATS for wind turbine projects have been adopted by non-governmental agencies for conducting impact assessment studies.

**Lebanon** briefed the meeting on the winter monitoring that was accomplished in several roosting sites and the upcoming summer survey. Funding for capacity building (through the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)) enabled the expansion of the survey to new areas; this led to the discovery of five new sites, which are winter roosts of *Myotis myotis* and *Myotis capaccinii*. Through this grant, sixteen university students were trained to monitor wintering sites.

It was also mentioned that due to the steady increase in wind turbines in Lebanon, the Ministry of Environment is now demanding Environmental Impact Assessments prior to the construction of these projects. The EUROBATS guidelines have proven useful in this matter.

Lastly, an International Bat Night event under the patronage of the EU ambassador was highlighted. It was attended by more than five hundred participants with several activities on bats and its conservation.

**Saudi Arabia** informed delegates that various public awareness activities were conducted in the framework of the 'Year of Bat' and announcements at some universities and wildlife websites were made for the occasion. In addition, it was mentioned that posters on Saudi mammals, including bats, are currently under preparation and being sponsored by King Saud University and the Saudi Wildlife Authority. The posters are to be distributed to elementary schools across the country.

A draft proposal on the design of artificial roosting sites for both insectivorous and fruit bats is currently being drafted; it is supported by the Saudi Wildlife Authority. Also, phylogenetic studies on some bats of Arabia have been conducted and a publication on Kuhl's bats has been published. The occurrence of coronavirus cases in human was an issue to be investigated. Therefore, extensive efforts have been put into locating more roosting sites for future sampling.

**Serbia** reported that due to changes in the government in the past year no progress was made with regard to its accession to the Agreement. While accession is included in the plan of Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, no precise timing was given on the duration of the process.

With the incorporation of the Ministry of Environment in the newly formed Ministry, major changes were made to the official website. For this reason, environmental legislation and the national guidelines presented during the last Advisory Committee meeting, "*Bats and environmental impact assessment: tools for implementation of the European Habitat Directive and EUROBATS agreement in Serbia*", are currently unavailable for download. However, the document can be accessed through the Natural History Museum in Belgrade website.

[http://www.nhmbeo.rs/upload/images/ove\\_godine/Promocije2011/bats\\_and\\_environmental\\_impact\\_assessment\\_web\\_lq.pdf](http://www.nhmbeo.rs/upload/images/ove_godine/Promocije2011/bats_and_environmental_impact_assessment_web_lq.pdf).

It was further emphasized that International Bat Nights were held in summer and autumn, not only in Belgrade but also in several other larger cities, two of which for the first time. More

than 5,000 participants took part in various events, which mostly focused on direct contact of participants with live captive (handicapped) bats. With very satisfactory media coverage for the third year in the row and a steadily increasing number of events and participants, Serbia was happy to share that the International Bat Night is now an event in the Serbian public. Lastly, with no recorded changes to the Serbian bat fauna, the number of species remains at twenty-nine.

**Spain** acknowledged the kind invitation to participate in the AC18 and reported on the following:

- The Spanish Administration displayed an increasing commitment towards bat conservation. In this context and in collaboration with the regional governments, a guideline document was prepared to establish demographic trends for all endangered species and those under special protection, at country level and in a standardized way. As a result, and together with the regional authorities and bat conservation groups, bats and their most important roosts are being monitored this year all over the country under the EU's Habitats Directive. This initiative will need to be extended during the next years to achieve its goals;
- A joint Commission of the Ministry and the regional environmental authorities was reported to be working on a Spanish Conservation Strategy in which specific action plans will be designed and implemented for species that still require them (i.e. bats);
- On a scientific level, bat/viruses relationships continue to be studied and in this context the findings of a new Lyssavirus related to rabies and a new Filovirus both from *Miniopterus* were reported;
- Bat researchers and the Spanish bat conservation society (SECEMU) prepared a guideline document for the consideration of bats in wind farm projects, currently being reviewed by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment; it is hoped the guidelines will be implemented in the near future;
- Despite the above-mentioned developments, only through a long-term commitment by the different Spanish Administrations, researchers and conservation societies, will the necessary knowledge on bats and the development and implementation of effective measures for their conservation be achieved;

**Switzerland** informed the meeting that bat-related activities across the country were being consolidated. Not only were several IBN events organised but *Plecotus auritus* was also designated 'Animal of the Year'. Also, both the official recommendations for bats and wind farms and the revised Red List of Switzerland are to be published in 2013. The integration of bats in the list of priority species and in the project of Swiss biodiversity strategy is also expected.

It was confirmed that Switzerland will join the Agreement in 2013. Lastly, it was mentioned that contact with the Secretariat will be established in order to facilitate the access of chiropterologists to the World Bat Library Geneva (more than 23,000 scientific articles and books).

**Syria** reported that due to the current crisis no progress has been made on studying the bats.

**Tunisia** briefed the AC on a bat night that was carried out on 25 August 2012 with over 150 participants. An educational lecture was given for researchers and speleologists, and games

were played for children to educate them about the importance of bats. The interaction was overwhelming and covered by the public media.

It was also shared that a survey was carried out in July 2012 in the north of the country. Twelve species were recorded and the results give a more detailed picture of the distribution of bats in Tunisia. The survey results are also ready for publication.

**Turkey** highlighted a project aiming to initiate a conservation programme for Egyptian Fruit Bats in Turkey was conducted in 2012. In the field trips, eight roosts, as a total hosting more than 7,000 Egyptian Fruit Bats, were identified and the management plans for these sites were submitted to the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs. A three day workshop was organized for conservation of bats and cave ecosystems, with participation of more than fifty researchers from twenty national caving groups. A booklet, a brochure and a poster about bat and cave ecosystems were published and distributed to the interest groups. This information material is available online: [www.yarasalar.org](http://www.yarasalar.org).

After its establishment in September 2011, **BatLife Europe** reported on reaching thirty partners in twenty-eight countries. In the past year, a three year action plan was written, a website launched, and a quarterly newsletter was sent to partners.

In April 2012 the Rufford Foundation offered a grant to BCT towards capacity building of BatLife Europe. The main aims of the project is to gather a clear picture of priorities and conservation issues of international concern for BatLife Europe and to identify opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience across the BatLife Europe network. Jan Collins of RSK was appointed in September as Project Manager. She has consulted BatLife Partner NGOs about the bat conservation priorities in their country/region and about needs and opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience. Also, BatLife held a session at the Berlin Bat Meeting to discuss ways of sharing knowledge between NGO partners. The consultations and the session in Berlin resulted in a clear picture of how members can strengthen each other. A report on the capacity building study results and recommendations will be available to BatLife partners soon. BatLife is now working out an implementation plan.

BatLife Europe also mentioned that it recently joined the European Habitats Forum (EHF). This is a group of international NGOs that aims to influence European environmental and land use policy and legislation. This membership is valuable in ensuring BatLife Europe can influence European policy and to exchange experiences with other European NGOs.

BatLife Europe together with the Dutch Bat Workgroup organized a bat box symposium in October 2013. Presentations are available on <http://symposium.vleermuiskasten.nl>

Lastly, BatLife Europe mentioned that it is currently contributing to Bat Detective, a Zooniverse project, coordinated by the iBats project (ZSL in partnership with BCT and others such as the Romanian Bat Protection Association).

**BCT** referred to the UK report to EUROBATS and highlighted several of its activities.

- In collaboration with Orly Razgour at Bristol University, a conservation management plan for the *Plecotus austriacus* the Grey long eared bat in the UK was developed to be published this summer.
- Bats, Churches and Communities pilot project. In the UK there is currently a strong lobby against bats in churches, focused on the problems some churches experience when large roosts of bats are present in churches. The aims of the project is to ensure bats and people can thrive together by improving the guidance and support available to churches,

improving information flow among bat-workers on how to help churches, and building better relationships with churches and congregations. Outputs so far include draft guidance for parishes, case studies of churches that have dealt positively with experiences, and a short film for bat-workers to support training. There is a great need to continue this work for the next few years and to learn about other country experiences with churches. Contact point: Karen Haysom ([khaysom@bats.org.uk](mailto:khaysom@bats.org.uk)).

- Strategic Mapping for Bats project –100,000 bat records were digitalised to be used for predictive spatial maps using GIS. Work is being done on how to share these spatial maps of bat data with key decision makers and bat workers. Trialling “alert layer” maps for planners, showing places to avoid development around bat roosts, and trialling maps of conservation “hotspots” showing bat records per 10km<sup>2</sup> will be conducted. “Google Earth” maps of bat records to highlight record gaps are being developed to encourage new recordings and to help volunteers plan work.
- Bats and the Built Environment – published *Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity* guide (see [bats.org.uk](http://bats.org.uk)). Second edition of *Bats in Zero carbon buildings* due to be published by RIBA this summer.
- Investigations: cases of suspected bat crime continue to be investigated in close cooperation with policy and prosecution services.
- The National Bat Monitoring Programme - volunteers taking part in the Roost Count will now be able to view their survey results and enter their data online starting this summer. A targeted search for *Plecotus austriacus* was undertaken and one new roost was found.
- The National Bat Helpline –12,500 calls about bats were answered over the last year. Because of the cold wet spring and summer there was an increase in the number of calls about grounded and injured bats and abandoned baby bats.
- Training programme – this year a new course for planners was trialled, online volunteer training modules were developed for Natural England, as well as a new course for volunteers working with churches.
- Bat Champions: Following a social media campaign 6 Members of the Scottish Parliament were encouraged to become champions for 6 Biodiversity Action Plan bat species.

**Dutch Mammal Society** reported on the on-going national bat monitoring program (winter hibernacula and summer roosts) and on a new monitoring scheme of bicycle and car transects focusing on *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *Pipistrellus nathusii*, *Nyctalus noctula* and *Eptesicus serotinus* (currently in a pilot fieldwork phase).

The WUR/NIOO research program of effects of lights with different spectra was reported to be in its second field work year; the effect of lights on bats is being studied by DMS volunteers through the use of automatic bat detectors and bat boxes. [www.lichtopnatuur.org](http://www.lichtopnatuur.org).

It was also mentioned that in 2011 a start was made in the adaptation of an existing predictive model of the collision risk for bats and wind turbines, in cooperation with consultancy Bureau Waardenburg. The fieldwork showed large differences in bat activity between locations and measurements of activity on turbine altitudes is currently being analyzed. The report is expected to be published in June.

DMS published a field and literature study of bat box use and mitigation success in Dutch, which is available on the Society's website. An English version/paper is planned.

The national bat workgroup together with BatLife Europe organized a bat box symposium and presentations can be found on <http://symposium.vleermuiskasten.nl>. The national bat workgroup also organized a well visited national bat symposium for 130 bat workers, and a well visited night of the bats with over forty excursions.

DMS organized a course in bat friendly tree lane management. A brochure on bat friendly building construction in English was published, with financial report from the EUROBATS secretariat.

The field work group had its annual research camp in the Sierra do Courel in Spain, hosted by local researchers.

Lastly, DMS was consulted on the state of Dutch bat populations for the Art. 17 report to the EU, which is currently being drafted.

**NABU** reported that similarly to previous years, local NABU groups organized Bat Nights in several cities in Germany and that special attention was paid to raise public awareness during the 'Year of the Bat'. Several thousand people were reached through these events and knowledge on the need for bat conservation was spread.

Bat protection in settlements has been further enhanced by the action „*Welcome bats*“ established in all 16 *Länder*. This action mainly deals with the acknowledgement and encouragement of actions in favour of bat roosts mainly in private houses, such as tolerating roosts or making possible the access to houses. Local NABU groups are responsible for this action: they give advice to roost owners and monitor important roosts.

In March 2013 the bi-annual national conference of the federal NABU bat group was held in Rostock. About 300 bat workers from Germany attended this meeting. Thirty presentations showed new research results from the field of ecology, conservation, health problems and threats to bats, especially with regard to energetic renovation of buildings and renewable energies.

It was also mentioned that the use of wind energy remains a major problems for bats in Germany. In order to point out the possible dangers for bats when installing wind turbines, particularly in forests, the NABU organised a meeting of national bat experts in February 2012. A position paper integrating the most recent research results was thereafter elaborated and is now published and available to all competent authorities as well as to wind turbine companies.

On a European scale, NABU is a founding member and trustee of BatLife Europe. In this framework, several internet conferences were attended during the past year.

**PTOP “Salamandra”** reported on a number of bat conservation, research and educational initiatives held in Poland by NGOs and other institutions, which were not reflected in the official report of Poland.

It was highlighted that important research was conducted in 2012 and that new knowledge was obtained. Niedźwiedzia Cave appears to be the most important hibernaculum of bats in Lower Silesia, with 1,190 bats found in last winter, including 625 *Myotis emarginatus*. Also, the largest known hibernaculum of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (720 individuals) in Poland was discovered in the attic of St. Stanisław & Waclaw Church in Świdnica by PTOP researchers.

In spite of the incompleteness of a NATURA 2000 sites network for some bat species, progress on the practical conservation of known sites was reported. Plans for conservation tasks for a number of designated sites have been initiated.

PTOP informed that various educational activities were conducted in 2012, namely a nation-wide art competition for children on bats and their conservation. The thousands of art pieces sent by participants were used to organize an educational exhibition. Also, street events related to bats were organized in several Polish cities in May/June 2012; performers wearing realistic costumes of different species of bats explained the need for bat conservation. These events were significantly covered by the media.

Lastly, it was highlighted that the All Polish Bat Conference, organized by PTOP Salamandra, took place in March 2013; One hundred participants were reported to have taken part.

The French mammal society (**SFEPM**) informed the meeting that in 2012 it was given the task to report on the conservation status of the thirty-four bat species present in France (Habitats Directive). New distribution maps were made and the evaluation of trends is still not quite finished as information is still lacking, particularly on population size.

It was mentioned that, a national distribution atlas and a national database are expected to be produced after the conclusion of the reporting. Currently, all available data belongs regional bat groups.

The national meeting of bat workers which takes place every two years in Bourges brought about three hundred participants together in 2012. The presentations will be published in 2014 in the Journal Symbioses.

One hundred and eighty-four events were organized for the International Bat Night, slightly fewer than the two hundred and four organised in 2011.

It was also shared that with regard to wind energy it has become more difficult to obtain access to reports of mortality monitoring reports. Post-construction surveys are now compulsory (only once every 10 years) and it has been stated that raw data will not be made public. The ministry is working to produce a circular letter on wind energy and wildlife.

The surveillance of bat rabies continues with the collaboration of the SFEPM with ANSES Nancy and for the first time one *Myotis nattereri* has been found with the Bokeloh Bat Lyssavirus in north-eastern France.

On a positive note, SFEPM reported that:

- The first breeding colony of *Myotis dasycneme* has been found in the north of France with forty-two individuals (young included). Before 2012 only hibernating individuals had been found.
- The first breeding females of *Nyctalus lasiopterus* were caught and radiotracked last summer in south-western France and we found two roosts of fifteen and twenty individuals only 1 km away from each other. Altogether on a drinking site nine adult females, one adult male and five young were mist-netted. Another roost of thirty-two individuals was found further north, in the Massif Central region.

The delegate from the **University of Tirana** stated that thirty-two species of bats had been identified in Albania (see table below) and that sixteen are currently protected by the actual Albanian Red List. This list was last edited in 2007 and is expected to be updated in the upcoming months.

Name of the Species	Albanian Red List (2007)	Name of the Species	Albanian Red List (2007)
<i>Rhinolopus blasii</i>	Yes (LRnt)	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus euryale</i>	Yes (VU)	<i>Nyctalus lasiopterus</i>	No
<i>R. ferrumequinum</i>	Yes (LRcd)	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus hipposideros</i>	Yes (LRnt)	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Rhinolopus mehelyi</i>	No	<i>Pipistrellus kuhli</i>	No
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	No	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	No
<i>Miniopterus schreibersi</i>	Yes (LRnt)	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	No
<i>Myotis alcathoe</i>	No	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	No
<i>Myotis blythi</i>	No	<i>Hypsugo savii</i>	No
<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	Yes (DD)	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	No	<i>Plecotus austriacus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis capaccinii</i>	Yes (LRcd)	<i>Plecotus kolombatovici</i>	No
<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Yes (LRcd)	<i>Plecotus macrobullaris</i>	No
<i>Myotis emarginatus</i>	Yes (DD)	<i>Vespertilio murinus</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis myotis</i>	No	<i>Tadarida teniotis</i>	Yes (DD)
<i>Myotis mustacinus</i>	No	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	No

Management plans of several protected areas are currently being developed and bat-related issues (the need for monitoring, protection of underground sites, etc.) were reported to have been taken into account.

It was also mentioned that the first specific PhD thesis on bats in Albania at University of Tirana began in October 2012; the research seeks to investigate the dynamic of bat populations on the Albanian side of the Prespa Lake. Additionally, this PhD will attempt to centralize all available data on Albanian bats. Worth mentioning was also the master degree research on Albanian bats that began in early 2013. Cooperation on ectoparasitism between the University of Tirana and a German University was also reported to be on-going.

Finally, it was stressed that the conservation of Albanian bat populations remains rather weak; this is mostly due to the non-implementation of national laws concerning biodiversity protection. Particular threats to bats in Albania are the limited knowledge on bat populations, illegal logging, disturbance during hibernation, and destruction of habitats.

Following a review of its broader mammal conservation and research activities, **The Vincent Wildlife Trust** reported that it has adopted a new Conservation Strategy to focus its resources, and target its activities more precisely on the needs of its priority species. The strategy identifies greater horseshoe bat, lesser horseshoe bat, Bechstein's bat and Barbastelle as its priority bat species in the UK and lesser horseshoe bat and Leisler's bat in Ireland.

It was conveyed that the Trust's work on horseshoe bats focused on supporting these recovering populations by improving roosting opportunities for these species through training of ecological consultants, local authority planning officers and county ecologists. Increasing roosting opportunities during foraging periods is important for horseshoe bats. This year artificial night roosts were constructed and deployed in the field and the Trust will be monitoring the success or otherwise of these designs during this summer. The issue of

negative interactions between greater and lesser horseshoe bats in shared roosts is being addressed through novel techniques for separating species within roosts. The permeability of the landscape for horseshoe bats is one of the issues restricting their recovery; the Trust informed that it is addressing this through a research project with the University of Exeter looking at the effect of artificial lighting in the wider landscape and testing the efficacy of road crossing mitigation schemes.

An established method for surveying for Bechstein's bat is well established in the UK but to date monitoring population trends in the species have not been addressed. Utilizing data from its long-term ringing scheme, the Trust informed the meeting that it is developing a project with the University of Exeter using novel molecular techniques for monitoring changes in population demography and size. Work on the Barbastelle continues with the establishment of a ringing scheme for the species and the trialing of bat box designs mimicking the range of natural roosts adopted by this species.

In addition to its work in Britain and Ireland the VWT also highlighted that it is a partner in a research project on the predation of hibernating bats by martens in north-west Poland.

## **6. Secretariat Report**

The Executive Secretary referred to the written report Doc. EUROBATS.AC18.4 and highlighted the following developments.

Following the end of Ana Ferreira da Silva's contract in November 2012, the post was re-classified to GS-6 (50% occupancy) in January 2013. Both posts of Administrative Assistants (GS-6, 50% occupancy) have been advertised and the recruitment process is close to completion. Mr. Titus Ndunda has been filling the gap as Temporary Assistant since January 2013 and his contract is due to expire at the end of April 2013.

Mr. Streit informed the AC that with the Standing Committee's approval to move forward the recruitment of the new post of Associate Scientific and Project Officer (P-2, 50% occupancy), the process of establishment, classification and advertisement was initiated at UNEP Headquarters.

Regarding Agreement membership, the Executive Secretary was pleased to announce that Cyprus had acceded to the Agreement and that Switzerland is expected to deposit its instrument of accession in due course. Further expressions of interest to accede have been received by other states.

2012 was marked by the redesign and restructuring of the EUROBATS website, which is now more attractive and user friendly (e.g. easy navigation, enhanced search functions, order forms, etc.).

Following the successful example from AEWA, the whole CMS Family has developed an online workspace for the Advisory or Technical Committees. The EUROBATS Advisory Committee Workspace (<http://workspace.EUROBATS.org/>) became operational in January 2013 and is the electronic, web-based communication space and working area for the EUROBATS Advisory Committee. Its aim is to provide a central platform for online collaboration and support the work and communication of the AC between meetings. Mr. Streit emphasized the usefulness of such tool and encouraged the delegates to actively use the platform. He added that in the course of the meeting Ms. Ferreira da Silva would be providing training and answer questions on the workspace.



Lastly, the Executive Secretary informed the delegates that in 2012 the Secretariat was able to finance and co-ordinate several projects through EPI funding and that many other promising applications had been received. He thanked the EPI Selection Sub-Committee for the evaluation of project proposals and guidance, and all project partners who report on the resources and project results in a very reliable manner.

## **7. Reports from the Intersessional Working Groups**

### **a. Conservation of Key Underground Sites**

The convener referred to the progress report of the working group (Doc.EUROBATS.AC18.7) and requested the group to convene during the AC.

### **b. Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management**

The convener informed the AC that there were no further responses to the questionnaire since the last meeting. The questionnaire was made available on the EUROBATS Workspace and any countries that had not yet replied were encouraged to send responses as soon as possible.

The examples of case studies submitted as part of the questionnaire were posted on the EUROBATS Workspace, together with a list of references also taken from the questionnaires. A template for the format of published case studies was presented for discussion at the IWG.

The convener reported that the IWG would need to meet to discuss the development of a literature review and a matrix on the ecology of woodland bat species and also a process for identifying research priorities.

### **c. Monitoring and Indicators**

The convener referred to the progress report posted on the EUROBATS website (Doc.EUROBATS.AC18.10) and that the EEA technical report is currently in the publication report. The convener requested the IWG to meet to discuss capacity building needs and how to move forward on the establishment of a European indicator, preferably before the next MoP.

### **d. Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements on Bats**

The convener of the group reported that not much progress was made and that the IWG would convene during the meeting to discuss the work plan.

### **e. Autecological studies for Priority Species**

The convener referred to the written report available on the EUROBATS website (Doc.EUROBATS.AC18.9) and requested the group to convene during the meeting.

#### **f. Wind Turbines and Bat Populations**

A progress report (Doc. EUROBATS.AC18.6) on the work of the IWG can be found on the EUROBATS website and the convener requested a meeting to discuss the next steps and a draft resolution.

#### **g. Light Pollution**

In the absence of Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino) requested to convene the group.

#### **h. Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes**

Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen was pleased to report that progress had been made with the discussed guidance document and that species accounts were complete. The convener requested the group to meet on the margins of the meeting.

#### **i. Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts**

The convener, Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT) requested the group to convene and discuss further progress during the meeting.

#### **j. Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats**

The convener informed that since the last Advisory Committee, Slovenia had updated the literature review. It was further mentioned that little other progress on the proposed publication had been made and the IWG would need to meet to decide how to take this work forward in the next year.

The convener stressed that the IWG requires additional information on research and for case studies and would request it from participants. Additionally, it was pointed out that the questionnaire is to be circulated again as new information is available since the original questionnaire was produced in 2008 and some countries have joined EUROBATS since then.

#### **k. Lethal Fungal Infections**

The convener listed the countries where the presence of *Geomyces destructans* on bats has been confirmed and published: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic, Switzerland and Ukraine. Its occurrence in three further countries has been confirmed but not yet published.

The presence of *Geomyces destructans* was also reported to be suspected in Denmark, Romania and Turkey (Thrace), and in one further country, the identity of which has not yet been published.

The convener shared Sebastien Puechmaille's plans of a large-scale pan-European sampling of soil and wall scrapings from bat hibernacula, and that he would approach members of the Advisory Committee for assistance.

Lastly, it was mentioned that in the UK, BCT are investigating six underground sites for the presence of *Geomyces destructans* in collaboration with Kevin Drees (Northern Arizona University), and that DEFRA is still finalising its contingency plan for White Nose Syndrome.

#### **l. Implementation of the Agreement**

The IWG was established at AC16 under the joint chairmanship of Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN) and Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), and with the following members: Dr. Julien Astoul-

Delseny (France), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Mr. Oliver Schall (Germany), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

The main objective of the group (arising from Paragraph 1b of Resolution 6.16) is: "...to review the implementation of the Agreement and relevant resolutions."

The convener informed that a table of all Resolutions (from MoP 1-6) adopted by the Agreement and relevant to the Conservation and Management Plan was prepared. Since the last Advisory Committee (AC17), this table was further modified to highlight the elements of each Resolution directed to Parties, the Advisory Committee, the Standing Committee and the Secretariat as appropriate. A checklist of the elements of the Resolutions addressed specifically to Parties was also provided to the IWG on National Reports to facilitate the group's discussions. It was also mentioned that work continued on the information handbook on the Agreement, which aims to facilitate all parties, old and new, to fully implement the Agreement. Furthermore, the handbook is fully intended to be completed before the next Meeting of the Parties.

Lastly, one further objective of the IWG was highlighted: "*to discuss with the Chairmen of the Advisory Committee and Standing Committee the possibilities to develop a system to assess performance by Parties to meet their obligations and to establish an Implementations Committee to address special needs or cases e.g. clear breaches of obligations, where these cannot be settled through the relevant Focal Points.*" This point expected to be addressed once the Handbook has been completed and made available to all Parties.

#### **m. Review of the Format of National Reports**

Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier, convener of the IWG, requested the group to meet to discuss further progress.

#### **n. Bat rehabilitation**

The convener of the IWG, Dr. Helena Jahelková, was unable to attend the meeting and Dr. Lena Godlevska reported on the results of the group.

Dr. Godlevska reflected on the IWG's establishment during the AC17 and its goal: to work on bat rehabilitation issues in view of bat conservation tasks.

She informed that during the report year, the initial version of the questionnaire was drafted and first answers were received and compiled. Additionally, a list of references was initiated and a presentation with items for discussion and further work was requested to be presented during the IWG meeting. Dr. Godlevska invited delegates willing to share ideas and comments to attend the IWG meeting.

#### **o. Bats and Insulation**

The convener, Dr. Martin Cel'uch, referred to the need to discuss the scope of the IWG and requested the group to convene during the meeting.

### **8. Reports from IWGs convened during the meeting**

*\*convener*

#### **a. Conservation of Key Underground Sites**

Present: Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones\* (UK), Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Prof.

Zihad Bouzlama (Algeria), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Tomasz Kokurewicz (Poland), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Ms. Arjana Matushi (Albania), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Gunars Petersons (Latvia), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Mr. Philippe Théou (University of Tirana), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The group convened twice during the Advisory Committee meeting (once as a sub-group) with the objective of reviewing progress with the underground site lists and deciding on future actions.

After fruitful discussions, progress was made towards providing slightly updated guidance on site selection, making better use of the existing data and developing a system for maintaining and updating the site lists on a regular basis. The latter will be proposed as a Resolution at the next Meeting of Parties and steps towards preparing the draft Resolution were made. This will be circulated to members of the IWG after the meeting, with the intention of presenting an agreed draft at the next AC meeting.

#### **b. Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management**

Members of the Group (present): Ms. Jean Matthews\* (UK), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Ms. Zrinka Domazetović (Croatia), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Mr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Dan Merrett (BCT), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Dr. Carol Williams (BCT)

To be kept informed (present): Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Ms. May Abido (Syria), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Dr. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Mr. Serghei Andreev (Moldova), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (I.E. Carpathians), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Mr. Abdellah El Mastour (Morocco), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Mr. Aivaras Jefanovas (Lithuania), Mr. Johnny de Jong (Sweden), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Ms. Monica Lesz (Poland), Dr. Eran Levin (Israel), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Arjana Matushi (Albania), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Aleksander Rachwald (Poland), Dr. Niamh Roche (BCIreland), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Mr. Andre Ursache (Moldova), Dr. Davit Yavruyan (Armenia).

The convener reflected on the aims of the IWG: to emphasise the importance of forests and trees for bats; to provide examples of good practice of forest management and related guidance documents; to collect information on research as well as identify areas where research is required.

Once again, the convener informed that the questionnaire was made available on the EUROBATs Workspace and any countries that had not yet replied were encouraged to send

responses as soon as possible. It was also mentioned that the list of references taken from the questionnaires will be checked and updated (Italy & France).

Examples of case studies submitted as part of the questionnaire were posted on the EUROBATS Workspace and a template for the format of published case studies was presented to the meeting. The convener indicated that a subgroup (UK & BCT) will continue to work on the selection and presentation of case studies for publication on the website. These should ideally represent a wide range of forest habitats, bat species and forest management methods. She encouraged participants to send any further examples of case studies and details of relevant literature and guidance documents (e.g. France survey methodology).

Also discussed was the matrix of information on the ecology of woodland bat species being developed (BCT). This matrix is planned to link to the species accounts from the IWG on Critical Feeding Areas.

Lastly, the convener mentioned that information on current research will be collated (Israel) and research priorities identified. Further topics of discussion included: the requirements of individual bat species and of bat communities associated with forests, survey methods, the need to train forest workers and the use of predictive modelling. Participants were encouraged to send any relevant information to the IWG.

### **c. Monitoring and Indicators**

Members (present): Dr. Karen Haysom\* (BCT), Dr. Jasja Dekker\* (DMS/BatLife Europe), Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-said (Lebanon), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (Ukraine), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEMP), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Tomasz Kokurewicz (Poland), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Dr. Gunars Petersons (Latvia), Mr. Primož Prestnik (Slovenia), Dr. Niamh Roche (BCIreland), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Prof. Ayachi Sehhar (Morocco), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Mr. Philippe Théou (Albania), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia),

To be informed (present): Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Mr. Serghei Andreev (Moldova), Prof. Zihad Bouslama (Algeria), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Viktor Dzimianchyk (Belarus), Mr. Abdellah El Mastour (Morocco), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakarkis (Greece), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Ms. Antonia Hubancheva (Bulgaria), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Andro Kandaurov (Georgia), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania), Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The conveners summarised the aims of the group and the work undertaken since the last Advisory Committee (see IWG report on the EUROBATS website):

1. Develop a pan European population indicator based on existing data;
2. Build capacity for monitoring in countries which do not currently have national monitoring schemes;
3. Develop a data sharing structure for census data;

#### 1. Prototype European indicator of bats at hibernating sites.

The conveners reported on the work currently being undertaken with the EEA on the publication of the prototype indicator of bats at hibernation sites report in the EEA technical series. EEA have not provided an explicit time-table but it is expected that the report will be published in 2013. Maps in Appendix 2 (showing the country schemes) are to be redrawn in a common format by Dr. Jasja Dekker and participating countries will submit information with the coordinates of their sites to him. This will help highlight the capacity of monitoring schemes in Europe and gaps, and may prove to be a useful exercise to repeat and expand on the EUROBATS or BatLife Europe websites showcasing monitoring effort across Europe. *Action: Dr. Karen Haysom to circulate the report when published.*

A full indicator representing 15 or more countries is planned to be expanded and published before the next MoP. The conveners checked the list of 20 countries who had stated they would be willing to participate at the last AC in Dublin or during the course of the last year. All those present confirmed and Norway also offered to participate. The next revision of the indicator will include both hibernation and maternity colony data, thus allowing greater participation and coverage of species. Several countries that have already initiated monitoring with a shorter time series (e.g. Lebanon, Egypt) expressed interest in becoming part of the indicator in the future. Albania noted the availability of data from various separate periods (1960's, 1990's, and 2000's). *Action: Dr. Jasja Dekker to send around information on type of data required.*

#### 2. Capacity building /monitoring needs

Some countries informed on the establishment of monitoring schemes but that they require training in statistics to participate in the indicator. Others require training /advice in coordinating monitoring schemes. Some countries have only a few individuals working on bats and for these there is a need to extend the number of trained bat-workers or train speleologists, at the very least. A round table approach was used to share country and regional needs. Particular needs for capacity building on coordination and operation of monitoring schemes (including recruitment and retention of surveyors) were identified in South-eastern Europe (e.g. Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania), North Africa (e.g. Tunisia, Morocco) and the Middle East. In these areas neighbouring countries are joining together to help build capacity jointly. The group felt that where possible, regional approaches to sharing and building capacity building are the most effective due to close distance, similarity in languages, etc.

The group recognised the opportunity provided by the EBRS in Croatia in 2014 to hold a capacity building workshop after the conference; the workshop would focus on regional attendees and it was suggested that practical field-based monitoring and statistical training workshops would be organised. *Action: Dr. Jasja Dekker to discuss with Statistics Netherlands options for statistics workshop. Conveners to discuss options with organisers of EBRS.*

### 3. Preparation of resolution for MoP in 2014

The group discussed the requirements for a new resolution or amendment of the existing resolution for the next MoP. Group consensus was to incorporate a solid target for the continuation and commitment of indicator production for Europe (e.g. 15+ countries, steps required).

#### **d. Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements on Bats**

Members: Dr. Dino Scaravelli\* (Republic San Marino), Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (I.E. Carpathians), Prof. Zihad Bouslama (Algeria), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Ms. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

To be informed of IWG activities: Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Kate McAney (VWT, Ireland), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway).

The convener recalled that the topic concerning this IWG is inherent to the reasoning behind the establishment of the Agreement under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species. Bat migration is a keystone characteristic in European bat populations.

He reflected that as the Berlin 2009 conference, the 2005 Huetterer et al. publication and further articles highlighted, not only are migratory species highly dependent on long distance migration and also important ecological movements are dependent on many bat species. Undertaken flights between hibernation and reproductive roosts, foraging areas and related commuting routes also reveal how species travel across borders, at times even beyond the actual geographical scope of the Agreement.

Since the last Advisory Committee meeting, the group was tasked with the collection of migration data of species in the range of the Agreement. The data was to be obtained from literature and other specialists.

Following a brief reminder on the need to collect data from 'grey literature' and publications in foreign languages, clarifications were provided on the meaning of ecological movements, as well as the relation between bats, human health and several transboundary movements. Discussion on the preparation of a draft resolution for the Meeting of the Parties ensued.

An important on-going project on bat movements in Germany (see Meschede et al., 2013 Berlin Bat Meeting) was mentioned and its results were reported to be published. The IWG

agreed to collect information and literature not only on the project but from countries also working on the subject.

It was further agreed that a new questionnaire on all species known to undertake seasonal movements is to be discussed in the EUROBATS Workspace area and that it will later be circulated among scientific focal points. Replies to the questionnaire will be collected and summarised in order to draft a resolution during the next Advisory Committee meeting for the upcoming Meeting of the Parties.

#### **e. Autecological Studies for Priority Species**

Members (present): Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier\* (France), Ms. Zihad Bouzlama (Algeria), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Peter Kanuch (Slovak Republic), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Ms. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Dr. Nikola Tvrtković (Croatia).

To be informed (present): Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Ms. Antonia Hubancheva (Bulgaria), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Dr. Eran Levin (Israel), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Philippe Théou (University of Tirana), Ms. Violeta Zhelyazkova (Bulgaria).

The convener presented the table prepared to collect information on the knowledge of autecology of each bat species in Europe. The group first discussed the table. Croatia requested to add information on accidental mortality linked with the ecology of bat species (to be collected by IWGs Wind Turbines and Bat Populations and Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructure on Bats) and to rank the available knowledge by numbers (0: no knowledge, 1: poor knowledge, 2: good knowledge).

The aim of the table was then defined. However, in order to facilitate the work, it was agreed to shorten the list by deleting the species listed *Least Concern* in the European IUCN Red List. Then all the remaining species were evaluated according to the knowledge of the members of the group, eliminating marginal species (restricted to a small area of the geographical scope of the Agreement and widely distributed outside the Agreement area) as well as species already studied in a significant part of their range (e.g. *Myotis punicus* which benefitted from a three-year study in Corsica). This work resulted in a list of 16 species, most of them with a restricted range (e.g. four species are endemic to islands). Therefore, the completion of the table should be a simple task for most of the scientific focal points of countries that host at least one species.

#### **f. Wind Turbines and Bat Populations**

*Present in the meeting:* Dr. Luísa Rodrigues\* (Portugal), Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Ms. Natalie Buttriss (VWT), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Mr. Stoyan Goranov (Bulgaria), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Prof.



Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Gunars Petersons (Latvia), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Ms. Elena Stoeva (Bulgaria), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway),

*Members of IWG (°: Interest in IWG participation to be confirmed after AC18):* Dr. Luísa Rodrigues\* (Portugal), Mr. Lothar Bach (Germany), Mr. Laurent Biraschi° (Luxembourg), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina° (Austria), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek° (Belgium), Ms. Lisa Hundt° (BCT), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland), Ms. Kirsty Park (Stirling University), Dr. Laurent Schley° (Luxembourg), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (San Marino), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Mr. Christian Voigt (Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research), Ms. Katherine Walsh° (UK),

*To be informed (°: Interest in IWG participation to be confirmed after 18AC):* Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-said (Lebanon), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Mr. Stoyan Goranov (Bulgaria), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Helena Jahelková° (Czech Republic), Mr. Aivaras Jefanovas (Lithuania), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Mr. Lauri Lutsar° (Estonian Fund for Nature)°, Ms. Úna Nealon° (Ireland), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Gunars Petersons (Latvia), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria), Mr. Jacques Pir° (Luxembourg)°, Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Ms. Elvana Ramaj° (Albania)°, Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Ms. Elena Stoeva (Bulgaria), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

During the meeting the working program was analysed, a draft resolution to be presented at the next Advisory Committee meeting was prepared, and the on-going revision of the guidelines was briefly discussed.

Some members volunteered to help prepare the revision of guidelines, which was acknowledged by all participants. It was agreed to present a first draft of the guidelines revision during the AC19 and to present a final draft for approval at the MoP7. The current membership of each chapter of the guidelines revision is presented in the table below. Colleagues interested in being included in the task were invited to contact the IWG convener until the end of May.

Chapter	Authors (* coordinator)
Introduction	Dr. Luísa Rodrigues
General aspects of the planning process	Dr. Christine Harbush* Mr. Branko Karapandža
Carrying out impact assessments	Mr. Lothar Bach* Mr. Branko Karapandža
Monitoring the impacts	Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage Mr. Lothar Bach*
Research priorities	Mr. Lothar Bach* Dr. Jasja Dekker
Small wind turbines	Ms. Kirsty Park* Mr. Jeroen Minderman
Content of national guidelines	Dr. Andrzej Kepel
Conclusions and further work	Dr. Luísa Rodrigues
References / further reading	Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage
Glossary	Dr. Andrej Kepel
Acknowledgments	
Studies done in Europe	Prof. Branko Micevski
Bats' behaviour in relation to wind farms	Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage

Christian Voigt expressed his wish of becoming a member of the IWG, which was accepted by consensus.

### g. Light Pollution

Members: Dr. Ludo Holsbeek\* (Belgium), Dr. Dino Scaravelli\* (Republic San Marino), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Kelly Gunnell (BCT), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Ms. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

To be informed of IWG activities: Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The IWG convened during the meeting and discussed on the possibilities to come to:

- a. A MoP resolution with policy relevance on acute disturbance of bat colonies, roost, important feeding grounds and known commuting routes by acute light pollution (e.g. spotlights);
- b. Write guidelines for good practices for both acute and diffuse light pollution, including fragmentation of the night landscape by road lights or how to avoid a significant disturbance on sites in multiple use.

The latest information on the on-going projects on the topics from the UK, Slovenia, Italy and Netherland were presented and discussed. The number of different study groups on wildlife and other topics (as astronomers favour all efforts to darken the night landscape and in and outside cities) were highlighted.

BCT notified the group that it is currently working on the proposal to organise an international meeting in early spring of 2014. It was thus proposed that the group meets at the event in order to collect the latest results on the topics at hand. In the interim period, it was decided the group should collect any other possible information on the topic also in 'grey literature'.

Recalling the suggestion to provide a resolution for the next MoP, the group decided to prepare a draft resolution on the acute disturbance (related to the Habitats Directive and general rules in EUROBATS) and the diffusion of disturbance. It was suggested that a useful annex/guidance document on the current good practices with regard to light pollution and bats should accompany the draft resolution. This is to be discussed further during the next Advisory Committee Meeting.

#### **h. Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes**

Members (present): Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland)\*, Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Ms. Jean Mathews (UK), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYRO Macedonia), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (EUROBATS), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Mr. Per-Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Ms. Katherine Walsh (UK).

To be informed of IWG activities (present): Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Tina Aughney (BCIreland), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Ms. Clare Heardman (Ireland), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Mr. Peter Lina (The Netherlands), Dr. Kate McAney (VWT, Ireland), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

Others present: Ms. Natalie Buttriss (VWT), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Ms. Antonia Hubancheva (Bulgaria).

The meeting began by recalling the Resolution 6.7 '*Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes*'. Afterwards, the working documents were verified and the progress made on the guidance document was discussed. All species accounts were reported to be ready (excluding species for which no studies are available), but they still require editing due to the different writing styles. Other general chapters of the guidelines were also drafted. Concerning examples of successful habitat management cases, it was noted that there are not that many cases where habitats had been managed and the outcomes monitored and reported. Rather, many cases include suggested or implemented management measures but no monitoring on the effects of these actions. The group also discussed the remaining tasks, which were divided as follows:

Guidance chapter / other task	Who
Finalising the summary table of habitats	Ms. Eeva-Maria K.
4.1. Forests, forestry practices	Ms. Eeva-Maria K.
4.2. Water bodies, wetlands, river valleys - Marshlands as feeding areas?	Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen DHelena
4.3. Bats in agricultural landscape	Jasja, Karen, Branko
4.4. Urban areas, parks	Jasja, Branko
4.7. How to protect feeding areas that lie across national boundaries - combine with 4.8	Dr. Christine Harbusch
4.9. Examples of Life projects and agrienvironmental practices	all
4.10. Summarizing: actions favouring and harming bats	Ms. Eeva-Maria K.
5. Species accounts - check esp. own texts, all relevant references included?	all
6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - <i>Myotis dasycneme</i> ?	Dr. Jasja Dekker
6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - case from Germany	Ms. Ruth Petermann to ask for text
6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - case from Poland	Dr. Henry Schofield to ask

Finally it was stressed that the final draft of the guidance should be ready for the AC19. Therefore all the texts should be ready by December 2013 leaving enough time for commenting and editing the guidance before the AC meeting.

#### i. Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts

Members (revised during AC18): Dr. Henry Schofield\* (VWT), Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Dr Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Tomasz Kokurewicz (Poland), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Andrei Ursache (Moldova).

To be informed: Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (France), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia) Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Ms. Elena Stoeva (Bulgaria), Ms. Slaveya Stoycheva (Bulgaria), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran),.

The IWG reviewed the examples of purpose—built man-made structures that had been gathered to date. These structures have proved to be quite unusual in a European context and have generally been created for greater and lesser horseshoe bats; although cases had also been gathered for species such as brown long-eared bats and European free-tailed bats. Geographically these new roosts were centered on the UK, Ireland, France, the Netherlands and Portugal.

The IWG discussed the scope of the group as many more examples had been gathered where existing structures had been adapted for bats. It was decided that the remit of the IWG

would be expanded to include these structures. However, the group felt it would be useful to report on the case studies that have been gathered so far and so an interim report will be submitted to the Secretariat for publication on the EUROBATS website in time for the next Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **j. Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats**

Members (present): Ms. Jean Matthews\* (UK), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (I.E. Carpathians), Dr. Rasit Bilgin (Turkey), Ms. Natalie Buttriss (VWT), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Christina Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Tomasz Kokurewicz (Poland), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Ms. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Mr. Farkas Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Ms. Katherine Walsh (UK), Dr. Davit Yavruyan (Armenia).

To be informed (present): Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Mr. Laurent Biraschi (Luxembourg), Prof. Zihad Bouslama (Algeria), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Andrei Kandaurov (Georgia), Mr. Brian Keeley (BCIreland), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Prof. El Ayachi Sehhar (Morocco), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Wael Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The group discussed progress on the publication and a draft resolution relating to the publication. A timetable to produce the first draft by the end of 2013 was set. The draft resolution and the final draft of the publication are to be prepared by the next Advisory Committee meeting for approval at the next MoP.

In addition, there was also a discussion on mitigation and particularly about monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation. The group informed that it is still seeking examples of case studies and relevant literature on bats and roads and other traffic infrastructure.

All documents and references will be posted on the IWG's workspace and the questionnaire will also be put on the website. Any countries that did not respond previously, or that have new information were requested to complete the questionnaire or submit the information to the group.

## Publication Structure & Work Programme

**Timetable** 1<sup>st</sup> Draft → End December 2013  
Final Draft → AC19

### **Chapter 1:** Introduction - UK

- Scope of the Advice
- Structure/Contents
- Legislation General principles relevant to roads – sources?

### **Chapter 2:** General information about the impact of roads on wildlife UK review – Leeds (JM) – Serbia, Ireland. France report due 2013.

- General information on bats & impacts of roads: which species are most affected & where - tables (Slovenia)
- Why bats cross roads (migration, nightly movements, foraging around lights etc.)
- Roosts, including roosts in infrastructure elements such as bridges
- Feeding habitats & flight routes (Link to Critical Feeding Areas IWG)
- Reproduction
- Hibernation
- Conservation status
- Distribution and occurrence on the road network
- Known impacts (speed, noise, lights – barrier effect – link to Light Pollution WG)
- Table/photograph of features important for bats (Romania?) – Serbia

### **Chapter 3:** Bats and road construction (Hermann Limpens requested)

- Pre-construction considerations
- EIA process
- Planning phase of roads
- Bat inventories / surveys

### **Chapter 4:** Avoidance, mitigation & compensation measures (Serbia – to revise)

- Photograph of features used by bats. Use of screens.

### **Chapter 5:** Monitoring (UK & ask Ireland/ Bulgaria)

- Monitoring of impacts and sampling methods. Poland monitoring gantries – results due 2013

### **Chapter 6:** Bats & existing roads (France)

- Reconstruction and management of existing roads

**Case studies:** (Germany). Some examples in text & also in Annex. Contributions offered from Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Romania (case study on monitoring).

**Annexes:** Further reading, links and list of references (Slovenia); Glossary (UK)

**Photographs:** examples of different infrastructure, for case studies –will be folder on website to enable participants to submit contributions

## **k. IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health (formerly IWG on Lethal Fungal Infections)**

(Call the resolution on communication with respect to public health and bat conservation).

Members (present) Prof. Paul Racey (UK)\*, Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Prof. Zihad Bouzlana (Algeria), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Jasja

Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (France), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Mr. Abdellah El Mastour (Morocco), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Christine Harbusch (Germany), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheroinen (Finland), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Aleksandr Rachwald (Poland), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (San Marino), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

To be informed (present): Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Ms. Antonia Hubancheva (Bulgaria), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Gunnars Petersons (Latvia), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Philippe Théou (University of Tirana).

Prof. Paul Racey gave a presentation on lethal fungal infections and bats to the Advisory Committee meeting, including recent information about the potential link to neonicotinoid pesticides. The presentation is available on the EUROBATS Workspace.

The group agreed there is a need to improve communications between the bat conservation community, the media and the public on issues relating to public health. Bat conservation relies on public understanding of bats and EUROBATS Parties have done much to raise awareness of bats and change negative attitudes. However people still have concerns about human health and bats in Europe, generally due to miscommunication about bats and disease. Much good work has been done to put the risk of human exposure to rabies from bats into context and to develop good practice to manage this small risk. However, following recent coronavirus fatalities there is increasing press and public interest in emerging infectious zoonotic diseases, with press stories often negatively linked to bats. There have also been two recent discoveries of viruses new to bats in Spain: a new lyssavirus and a new filovirus.

The group agreed to expand the remit of the IWG on Lethal Fungal Infections to include communication on public health and bat conservation. Prof. Paul Racey will continue to keep the group informed of developments on White Nose Syndrome in North America and *Geomyces destructans* in Europe. The new additional aim of the group will be to agree a communication strategy for bat conservation with respect to emerging infectious diseases in bats.

The group stated that it will work to create a taskforce with knowledge of bats and infectious diseases and good contacts with virologists to communicate factual information about topical disease issues to the bat conservation community (Focal points, NGOs and organisations working with the press) on emerging infectious diseases in bats in Europe. Since virology is a rapidly advancing field, it is important that the facts are checked with virologists and the same language is used as the World Health Organisation. Equally care must be taken to confine communication to issues relating to bat conservation and not human health. Suggestions for members of the taskforce were Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN) and Mr. Peter Lina

(Netherlands). It was agreed to make factual information and key contacts (e.g. Center for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia) available via the EUROBATS intranet.

The group mentioned that it will also consider publishing some facts and responses to frequently asked question on the EUROBATS website e.g. there have been only five human deaths from bat-transmitted lyssavirus in the past 30 years amongst the 590 million people in Greater Europe. These FAQ's should be translated if budgets allow. Answers should stress the diversity of bats worldwide and the fact that zoonoses tend to emerge in the tropics.

It was agreed to draft a resolution urging Parties to ensure joined-up communication on public health and bat conservation by sharing key contacts for public health officials, government veterinarians, researchers into zoonotic diseases and bat conservationists within EUROBATS Range. The resolution will use the history of productive cooperation and communication between bat biologists, virologists and public health officials about bats and rabies as an illustration of how this can be done effectively.

It was stated that Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEMP) will provide a French paper (by Francois Moutou).

Lastly, Jordan mentioned that CDC had recently contacted them asking for samples from bats in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, in relation to the recent human deaths from coronavirus, although the bat origin of the virus has not been demonstrated. To enable follow-up, it was agreed that Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan) will provide details of the CDC contact to Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN).

#### **I. Review of the Format of National Reports**

Present: Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier\* (France), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Mr. Andreas Streit (EUROBATS Secretariat), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

The Secretariat provided the guidelines for national reports that were adopted at MoP2 (and slightly amended at MoP3) and presented the aim of this newly established working group: to prepare a revised format that could be suitable for preparing syntheses. In a near future, this work could benefit from the online reporting system that is expected within the CMS family.

The convener informed that the IWG had started to revise the four issues listed in the guidelines, suggesting to restrict the paragraph on status of bats to a standardized table. However, the main change concerns the implementation of the Resolutions of the Agreement that were compiled by the *ad-hoc* Working Group. Lacking time, the IWG agreed that the convener, with the help of Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), will prepare a draft of revised guidelines that will be circulated before the next Advisory Committee meeting.

#### **m. Implementation of the Agreement**

Members (present): Mr. Anthony Hutson\* (IUCN), Dr. Ferdia Marnell\* (Ireland), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Ms. Arjana Matushi (Albania), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Gunnars Peterson (Latvia), Mr. Phillippe Théou (University of Tirana), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Mr. Üllar Rammul (Estonia), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel).

The IWG met and reviewed the progress to date. Three of the group's five objectives were reported to be now completed: 1) the resolutions adopted by the Agreement have been



reviewed, tabulated and annotated as to whether they are still valid, or are now invalid, or have been replaced by another Resolution; 2) the resolutions have been separated into obligations to Parties, to the Advisory Committee, the Standing Committee and to the Secretariat; and 3) a checklist of obligations relating to Parties has been provided to the IWG on National Reports.

The group went on to discuss the information handbook on the Agreement which has been drafted.

The guide should provide background on the workings of the Agreement before going on to focus on its Fundamental Obligations (Article III). It should go through each of Article III's eight bullet points and provide interpretation on their implementation as well as a review of the relevant Resolutions, Working Groups and EUROBATS publications where appropriate. Suggestions on how to improve and refine the document were discussed and aspects requiring additional text were allocated to various group members for completion. The IWG reported its intent to have the handbook completed in time for the next Meeting of the Parties and its hope that it will facilitate all Parties, old and new, to fully implement the Agreement.

#### **n. Bat Rehabilitation**

Members (present): Dr. Helena Jahelková\* (Czech Republic), Mr. Jessamy Barker (BCT), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Ms. Helen Miller, Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Ms. Elena Stoeva (Green Balkans).

To be informed (present): Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro), Mr. Stoyan Goranov (Bulgaria), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Christine Harbusch (Germany), Ms. Antonia Hubancheva (Bulgaria), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Mr. Brian Keeley (BCIreland), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Ms. Slaveya Stoycheva (Bulgaria), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

In the absence of the IWG convener, Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), the meeting was convened by Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine). A presentation on the item was considered and then discussed.

It was agreed that:

- Bat rehabilitation should be considered as a tool for bat conservation, public education and can also provide useful information about bat distribution; further work of the group should be continued in view of this statement.
- The current version of the questionnaire will be added with few some new items and will be sent to EUROBATS focal points.
- The reference list of published information on bat rehabilitation is needed and should be broadened with references to all available information in different languages from as many countries as possible.

- The contact list of experts involved in bat rehabilitation across Europe should be finalized during the next year.
- Both contact list and reference list should be placed for open access on the web.
- List of regulations on the usage of bats during public events should be prepared.
- Guideline on bat rehabilitation in relation to bat mapping, bat conservation and public education will be really useful. The group will start to work on it.

#### **o. Bats and Insulation**

Following an exchange of views on their countries' situation on bats and insulation, the name and scope of the IWG was partially changed. The convener informed that this change was made to also include breathable roofing membranes in the scope of the IWG. Other issues, such as bats in churches, were not included in the work of this IWG.

The convener shared the new aims of the IWG:

- Prepare overview of situation in all countries (questionnaire). Identify extent of this problem, species which are affected and type of roost (hibernacula, nursery roost, mating roost), techniques used for insulation, if "insulation policies" accounts for protected species in individual countries, etc.;
- Collect, share and exchange knowledge between countries. Knowledge on technical solutions, population status, state of legislation, etc.;
- Find ways to include conservation of "urban species" in national legislation related to insulation and reconstruction of buildings.

As such, the scope of the IWG was reported to be:

- post construction insulation (surface insulation, injected insulation)
- new buildings and "eco" buildings
- breathable roofing membranes

As a conclusion to the meeting the IWG decided to prepare a draft Resolution for next MoP.

Following the reports of the IWGs, the following presentations were delivered:

- **Bulgaria** – Presentation and Video on the Project "*Mapping and identification of conservation status of natural habitats and species: Lot № 5- Bats*" by Mr. Boyan Petrov.
- **Jordan** – Presentation on the *2012 Capacity-building Workshop for Bat Species Monitoring* that took place in Jordan by Prof. Zuhair Amr.
- **BCT** – "*Bats, Churches and Communities*" by Dr. Karen Haysom.
- **Green Balkans** – "25 years of the Green Balkans" by Ms. Elena Stoeva.
- EUROBATS Website and Online Workspace Training by Ms. Ana Ferreira da Silva.

#### **9. Possible EU Bat Action Plan**

The Executive Secretary reported that the Secretariat had been contacted by the Environment Directorate-General (DG Environment) in relation to its intention to develop an action plan dedicated to bat species. In order to respond to the short-notice request for input on focus areas, the Secretariat requested Senior Expert, Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones, to compile scientific input from individual experts from various EU states. Mr. Streit informed

that the Habitats Committee will convene on 25 April and only then will more information on a possible project be available. The Vice-Chair suggested that in the meantime, national contacts should be approached to encourage support for the proposed Bat Action Plan at the Habitats Committee meeting.

Prof. Racey, from the IUCN Bat Specialist Group, endorsed the initiative and shared with the participants his experience and involvement in such action plans (e.g. Old World Fruit Bat Action Plan).

The Secretariat is to follow up on Poland's request to circulate the input compiled by Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones.

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

Greece offered to host the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2014. The invitation was welcomed unanimously and accepted with much appreciation.

Belgium announced its offer to host the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties. Belgium emphasized that this is a unique opportunity to obtain feedback from DG Environment on the implementation of bat conservation in the European Union and detailed information on the progress of European nature conservation. The invitation was received and accepted with much enthusiasm.

Lastly, the Executive Secretary informed that in 2014 the Advisory and Standing Committees will take place simultaneously and efforts will be made to have improved communication between the two Committees.

#### **11. AoB**

Mr. Nikolay Nedyalkov, Head "Natura 2000" Department, Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria reported about the project "Mapping and Identification of the Conservation Status of Natural Habitats and Species".

He explained that this was the largest biodiversity mapping project ever carried out in Bulgaria. He reported that the national network of Natura 2000 protected sites covers more than 33% of the country's territory compared to an average of 18% for other EU countries.

In the last 2 years (2011 and 2012), 80 habitat types of HD Annex 1, 100 species of plants and 226 species of animals from HD Annex 2 were studied in Bulgaria's 231 HD SCI sites. The project was divided into six lots: I. Invertebrates, II. Fish, III. Amphibians and Reptiles, IV. Mammals without bats, V. Bats and VI. Natural habitats and plant species. 120 field teams with more than 500 experts from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, University research centres and NGO's took part in the field surveys.

Mr. Nedyalkov explained that a common methodological approach was strictly followed for the mapping and assessment of the conservation status of every species and habitat type. He said that the project provides a solid basis for the national report under Article 17 of the Habitat Directive and that the new data will also be used to carry out the impact assessments of different investment projects under Article 6.

Mr. Nedyalkov stated that the results gained from the project will improve the strategic planning, policy implementation and decision-making in the field of biodiversity conservation. He commented that the further preparation of the management plans for Bulgaria's SCI and SPA sites will also rely greatly upon the latest population estimations and distribution data which were gathered during the project. He underlined that bats were no exception and that

they would benefit greatly from this work. He explained that the team of lot 5 studied the current distribution of bats; estimated their local and national population numbers with great precision; highlighted the threats to the most important roosts and assessed the conservation status of all 12 HD Annex 2 species which are found in the country.

Mr. Nedyalkov closed by thanking all those who had worked hard for the project and emphasised the long-term benefits of this extensive study.

## **12. Adoption of the record of the Meeting**

The record of the meeting was adopted by consensus.

## **13. Close of the Meeting**

The Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Chair, Vice-Chair and participants for their strong commitment. He further thanked the Bulgarian hosts and the Secretariat team for their admirable support.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee thanked once again the Bulgarian hosts for the hospitality and agreeing to host a second EUROBATS meeting. Mr. Lina extended his gratitude to Mr. Streit and the Secretariat team for the excellent organisation. Lastly, he concluded by thanking the participants for their dedication and wishing them a safe return home and fruitful intersessional work in preparation for the forthcoming Meeting of the Parties.

There being no further business the session closed at 17:54<sub>u</sub>.

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

Sofia, Bulgaria, 15 – 17 April 2013

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