

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

Budva, Montenegro, 23 – 25 March 2015

### Record of the Meeting



#### 1. Attendance

This is listed in **Annex 1** to the Record.

#### 2. Opening remarks:

The Chairman, Mr. Peter Lina, opened the meeting and asked HE Ms. Daliborka Pejović, State Secretary of the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro, to address the participants.

Ms. Pejović welcomed the participants and expressed her delight at hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee to UNEP/EUROBATS. She pointed out the importance of Montenegro for biodiversity and its dedication to protecting it. Ms. Pejović informed the delegates that there were 430 animal species and 415 plant species protected in Montenegro, as well as that 9.04 percent of the total territory was under protection, which included the five national parks. She also drew attention to the problems with regard to defining the borders of the protected areas, in particular with respect to establishing the future Natura 2000 network, which is a precondition for Montenegro's accession to the European Union. As future goals she recognised increasing the territory under protection and thus increasing the protection of biodiversity in Montenegro, including also bat protection and conservation.

HE Ms. Gudrun Elisabeth Steinacker, Ambassador of Germany in Montenegro, also greeted the participants and expressed her honour at addressing the meeting. One reason for her participation was certainly the involvement of the German government in protecting biodiversity in the Western Balkans. Ms. Steinacker pointed out the importance of Montenegro for the protection of nature, being a signatory of most relevant conventions including EUROBATS. She reminded the delegates that beauty and biodiversity were among Montenegro's main resources and emphasised the importance of awareness raising with respect to nature protection, especially among younger people, to which she hoped the meeting would also contribute.

Mr. Zoran Mrdak, Director of the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro (PENP) and President of the Dinaric Arc Parks Association, welcomed the participants in the name of both of the organisations. He recapped what the situation in terms of nature protection was like at the time of the establishment of PENP, as well as some of its more significant contributions to biodiversity protection in Montenegro. In 2011 Montenegro became a member of EUROBATS. Due to the great engagement and enthusiasm of Ms. Marina Đurović, EUROBATS scientific focal point for Montenegro, who wanted to connect archaeology with biodiversity protection, the underground sites in the National Park Skadar Lake were investigated, and PENP began to deal with bat fauna for the first time. With her field work during the previous four years, Ms. Đurović pointed to the great diversity of bats as well as their importance in the ecosystem. In 2013, with the financial support of GIZ, PENP started a number of activities regarding bat protection. This led to the discovery of three new species for Montenegro and to increasing the total number of species to 29. Since bats were migratory species, their protection did not only depend on the measures conducted at the national level, but also on the international cooperation, one example of it being the Association of the Dinaric Arc Parks. Mr. Mrdak concluded by wishing the delegates a successful meeting.

Mr. Andreas Streit, the Executive Secretary of UNEP/EUROBATS, thanked the host government for having invited EUROBATS delegates to Montenegro. Representatives and observers from 40 different countries were present at the meeting. Owing to the precious richness of biodiversity in Montenegro, the Executive Secretary was convinced that this stay would be a real discovery for most of the participants. He encouraged Montenegro to give due consideration to its natural heritage. He further thanked the representatives of GIZ for their valuable work in the region as well as for their support of the meeting.

Before proceeding with the agenda, the Chairman reminded those present of the tragic death of a colleague and the EUROBATS scientific focal point for Syria, Dr. Adwan Shehab, who was killed by a sniper, the news of which was circulated in February 2015 by the Secretariat.

A minute's silence was held to honour Dr. Shehab's memory.

### **3. Adoption of the Agenda**

The Agenda, Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.1.Rev.1, was adopted unanimously.

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

The Chair drew attention to the Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.3, especially to rules 2 and 8, and asked the participants if they had any objections to the Rules of Procedure. There being no objections, the Rules were adopted by consensus.

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

The Chair explained that, after each Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP), the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee (AC) were to be elected. Since Mr. Peter Lina was stepping down as Chair after 21 years of engagement, he thanked his colleagues as well as the Secretariat for their continuous support, and asked the delegates if there were any nominations for the Chair.

Portugal nominated Dr. Ferdia Marnell from Ireland and the nomination was supported by many delegates. Further Sweden nominated Dr. Danilo Russo as Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee and this nomination also found great support among the delegates.

The newly elected Chair, Dr. Ferdia Marnell, thanked the delegates for their support as well as the previous chair, Mr. Lina, for his guidance for 21 years, which brought EUROBATS to the position where it was at the moment – an international organisation with great respect.

### **6. Summary reports by the Parties, Non-Party Range States and NGOs**

Representatives of the Parties, Non-Party Range States, and Observers of the meeting gave a short report of their activities since MoP7:

**Albania:** Specialists from the University of Tirana and from Shkodra Albania are still working together to complete the final list of bat species of the country, including endangered species. The list will also include some data about the number of colonies and roosts. In addition to this, bat species are included in the list of species of North Albania.

The work on capacity building and bat monitoring is still ongoing, as is the work to raise community awareness of bat protection. World Environment Day on 5 June will be celebrated with primary school pupils.

Specialists are finalising the Albanian National Report with staff from the Ministry of Environment and the report will be sent to the EUROBATS Secretariat in the near future.

**Belgium:** reporting for the 3 regions: The monitoring of bat populations for the preparation of the next article 17 report is ongoing and showing positive results. Bats hibernating underground are increasing in number year upon year. Populations may be considered as progressively recovering from the 1960-1970 crash.

*Eptesicus nilssonii*, which had only been observed once in Belgium seventeen years ago, was recorded acoustically in the summer (2014) in the Belgian Ardenne. *Pipistrellus nathusii* is being increasingly observed during the summer with automated acoustic recordings. The reproduction of this species is suspected to occur in Belgium.

Thanks to the advice of the “Bats and Disease WG”, Belgian authorities and NGOs prepared and published an article on this subject. This was really useful because a few months later in November 2014, the main public press editor spontaneously published a confusing article on Ebola and bats. Thanks to the prepared article, a response was posted very promptly, precluding a detrimental confusion with European bats.

A study on the topic of bat activity around wind farms is starting in the Hainaut province with the cooperation of wind turbines’ owners and under the supervision of the Walloon Public Service.

The Flemish Region is currently working on a species protection programme for bats, addressing a range of issues, plenty of which were brought to our attention by EUROBATS.

The first field studies for the atlas of mammals in the Brussels region are currently starting under the supervision of Brussels Environment and the NGOs Natuurpunt and Natagora. Several *Myotis bechsteinii* were observed this winter in the Sonian forest where the MoP7 excursion took place. Belgium will submit a full and updated country report for MoP8.

**Bulgaria:** In November 2014, the Bat Research & Conservation Centre at NMNH Sofia started a national monitoring project of bats within the National Biodiversity Monitoring System. The project aims to collect field data on the cave-dwelling bat populations in the 2015 hibernation and breeding season. The data will be used for

the next National Report on HD Article 17. This winter, 65 underground hibernaculas were visited and more than 125 000 bats of 15 species were counted. No serious threats or unusual mortality rates were found in any of the key winter roosts. The increased number of bats in 10 show caves was associated with the improved access for bats (changed entrance fences) and improved management of visitors.

A new NGO focussed on bats was established in December 2014 (“Za Prilepiti”). Its aims are to carry out projects in bat education and conservation, awareness raising, capacity building, monitoring and autecological studies.

Two MSc theses on discovery and distribution of *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* in Bulgaria were completed recently.

The bat researchers in the country have a close relationship with the Ministry of Environment and Water, Regional Inspectorates of MEW, park administrations and local authorities.

**Croatia:** During an EU Biogeographical Seminar that was held in Zagreb, Croatia from 29 – 30 September 2014, the Croatian Sites of Community Importance (SCI) proposals (which cover some 36% of the land surface) were assessed as sufficient for most habitats and species, although some further work is required.

The inventory of bats in the continental region is ongoing, financed by EU NATURA 2000 Integration Project NIP (World Bank loan). Preliminary results from last year revealed some new important bat roosts and findings.

The Croatian fauna database as a part of the Nature Protection Information System is still under development and is now in the testing phase. Bat monitoring programmes and protocols are being tested and a certain number of nurseries and hibernacula are visited each year.

Several research and monitoring projects are planned for 2015 by the public institutions responsible for protected nature management. Regular winter monitoring at the Veternica Cave did not report any new suspected cases of infection by *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*.

The first report on wind farm bat mortality conducted on the Jelinak windfarm revealed one of the highest European mortality rates. The final report was submitted in March 2014 based on the mitigation measures which were prescribed almost a year ago but the legal procedure has not yet been completed. The comprehensive “Analyses of the State of Nature 2008-2012” by the State Institute for Nature

Protection also covered that particular case and it is available in Croatian on the SINP website.

The 13th European Bat Research Symposium was held in Solaris, Šibenik from 1 – 5 September 2014. It was organised by the Croatian Biospeleological Society (CBSS) in cooperation with 5 other organisations under the patronage of the State Institute for Nature Protection (<http://13ebrs2014.com/>). Overall 300 participants from 33 countries presented 78 oral and 79 poster presentations.

The capacity building workshop “Developing Monitoring Programmes and Analysing Trends in Bat Populations in the Dinarics” was held immediately after the EBRs from 5 – 9 September in Skradin, Croatia. This was an EPI funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Administration de la nature et des forêts. It was organised by BatLife Europe partners Croatian Biospeleological Society and the Vincent Wildlife Trust under the patronage of the State Institute for Nature Protection Croatia with the support of Krka National Park, Geonatura Ltd. and Croatian Electricity Company (Miljacka Powerplant). Fifteen enthusiastic participants from Albania (Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania - PPNEA), Bosnia Herzegovina (Centre for Karst and Speleology, Sarajevo), Croatia (Croatian Biospeleological Society, Geonatura Ltd), Macedonia (Macedonian Bat Research Group), Montenegro (Biology Student Association), Romania (Romanian Bat Protection Association) and Serbia (Natural History Museum Belgrade, Wildlife Conservation Society “MUSTELA”) were joined by seven course tutors. The report of the workshop is available on the EUROBATs website (under EPI).

International Bat Night celebrations and other bat-related events were regularly organised in an increasing number of places in Croatia by bat NGOs, public institutions governing protected areas, zoos and local and regional authorities. These events were covered in the media on both a regional and national level.

**Czech Republic:** Long-term monitoring (about 600 hibernacula, 120 maternity colonies, ultrasound detecting of bat activity in 10 PLA localities, 9 swarming sites) and short-term monitoring (bat populations in blocks of flats, occupation of gas heaters by bats) continues. This year a survey of bats is planned at Ramsar sites and wetland biotopes across the country.

Based on resolution 7.11 Bats and Insulation it was stated by the Ministry of Environment, that every company which plans to insulate buildings and asks the

government for financial support, must include in the request the results of a basic bat pre-insulation survey. The Ministry of Environment also held a meeting concerning the Bonn agreement and plan to hold a special meeting for EUROBATS.

NGO ČESON (CBCT) organised workshops for stakeholders of building insulation projects and suggested solutions for proper insulation planning when bats are found during construction. CBCT has also increased its bat-educational programs for schools. NGO Nyctalus increased its number of primary school and kindergarten programs focussed on bats. Together, they held two workshops in November concerning bats: on insulation, rescue and rehabilitation and health risks for officers, nature conservationists, veterinarians, bat workers and workers of rescue centres. In the meeting held by the NGO Czech Union of Nature Conservationists (CUNC) which also covered animal rescue centres, it was agreed to use the new protocols suggested by EUROBATS. Also it was agreed to provide dead bats for the research of diseases, parasites and toxicology.

**Estonia:** The 2014 monitoring report on bats in the National Environmental Monitoring Programme is now available in Estonian at:

[http://seire.keskkonnainfo.ee/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3375:nahkhiired-2014-a&catid=1270:eluslooduse-mitmekesisuse-ja-maastike-seire-2014-&Itemid=5781](http://seire.keskkonnainfo.ee/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3375:nahkhiired-2014-a&catid=1270:eluslooduse-mitmekesisuse-ja-maastike-seire-2014-&Itemid=5781)

The main improvements in bat monitoring from 2014 are:

- 1) The pond bat has its own special monitoring project in the programme, including colony counts and a waterways survey.
- 2) Four additional hibernaculas are monitored annually to generate a more reliable hibernation index (now five hibernaculas are monitored instead of one).
- 3) Addition of three new line-count sites in the summer line-count survey.
- 4) A systematic passive rabies survey has begun.

Some important facts from 2014:

- The Maleva (Saaremaa island) pond bat maternity roost was resurveyed: now 410 adults make it the biggest in Estonia.
- The recalculated hibernation abundance index shows negative trends for 2 (northern bat, pond bat), positive for 1 (Brandt's bat) and stable for 1 species (brown long-eared bat).

- The composite hibernation abundance index of 5 bat species (northern bat, Brandt's bat, pond bat, Daubenton's bat, brown long-eared bat) shows a significant decrease for the 21-year period. Trends for the 6- and 12-year periods are stable.
- The recalculated summer abundance index shows significant positive trends for 2 species (northern bat, Nathusius' pipistrelle) and is stable for 1 species (Daubenton's bat).
- The composite summer abundance index of 6 bat species (northern bat, pond bat, Daubenton's bat, noctule, Nathusius' pipistrelle, parti-coloured bat) shows an average 108% significant increase for the last 21-year period. Trends for the 12-year period also show a positive change.
- The autumn migration survey shows an increase of soprano pipistrelle (cf 2008).
- Research:
  - Kalda, Oliver; Kalda, Rauno; Liira, Jaan (2015). Multi-scale ecology of insectivorous bats in agricultural landscapes. *Agriculture Ecosystems & Environment*, 199(1), 105 - 113.
  - Kalda, Rauno; Kalda, Oliver; Lõhmus, Kertu; Liira, Jaan (2015). Multi-scale ecology of woodland bat. The rôle of species pool, landscape complexity and stand structure. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 24(2), 337 - 353. [forthcoming]

**Finland:** An interim Red List assessment is being conducted in 2015. Most probably there will be no changes concerning bats (of which two species are on the 2010 Red List), though new records especially of the rarer species are now available.

In order to streamline the species conservation and derogation cases in different regions and to give the environmental authorities easy-to-use information, a guidance document on the breeding and resting sites of bats and conservation of these sites is under preparation. Similar reports will be prepared for other Habitats Directive Annex 4 species as well. This work will use the EU Commissions guidance document on Habitats Directive Article 12 and EUROBATS publications as important references but guidance documents from other countries would be very valuable reference material as well.

Considering the fairly limited number of bat researchers and volunteer bat workers in Finland, it was delighting to have a delegation of 14 Finnish participants at the 4<sup>th</sup>

Berlin Bat Meeting. This is an indication of the growing interest in bat studies and surveys in Finland.

**France:** The preparation of the third national action plan has been delayed because of new instructions concerning action plans (which will focus on the most priority species only), and because of the creation of the agency of biodiversity, that was discussed last week by the parliament within the new law on biodiversity. However, conservation actions at regional level are ongoing across the country.

**Georgia:** In 2014 the first bat monitoring funded by the government under the National Biodiversity Monitoring Program was carried out. A monitoring report has been produced based on the results and submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia.

**Germany:** The monitoring scheme for the reporting according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive is still under review. The new approach shall also include an acoustic monitoring of species.

From 20 – 22 March 2015 the national meeting of voluntary bat workers (“BAG-Tagung”) took place in Thuringia. It is organised by the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) every two years. At this meeting the new national NGO called “Bundesverband Fledermauskunde Deutschland” (“Federal Association for Bat Research Germany”) was launched. Among the goals of this organisation are the strengthening of bat protection structures in Germany and the improvement of the knowledge of bat populations on a national level.

**Ireland:** reported that 7 out of the 9 bat species present in the country are subject to annual monitoring through 4 separate monitoring schemes: car transect monitoring, waterways monitoring, brown long-eared roost monitoring and lesser horseshoe bat roost monitoring. These schemes are funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and managed by Bat Conservation Ireland (BCIreland). The latest bat monitoring contracts covering these schemes, which have been in place for 3 years, have just been completed. A final summary report will be available shortly here: <http://www.npws.ie/publications/irish-wildlife-manuals>. A new 3-year contract, in which the four separate schemes will be consolidated into a single National Bat Monitoring Programme, has just been advertised.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Irish Bat Conference was held in Cork in October 2014. This was a great success with approximately 75 speakers and delegates from all over Ireland and the UK. There were also workshops on bat identification and on tree roost survey techniques.

A first book on Irish Bats has also been published. "Irish bats in the 21st century" was grant-aided by the DAHG and published by BCireland. It summarises the considerable body of bat research and surveillance that has been undertaken in Ireland in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, much of it by citizen scientists. The introductory chapters provide a background to bat work in Ireland, and methods for identifying and surveying bats. These chapters are followed by detailed species' accounts that cover current population trends, distributions, roost selection, habitats and biometric data for Irish specimens. The final chapter summarises conservation threats faced by Irish bats and places these in the context of available trend information. This book is an authoritative guide and reference, illustrated with colour photographs, and is available online through NHBS or directly from Bat Conservation Ireland. For enquiries contact: [niamhr@batconservationireland.org](mailto:niamhr@batconservationireland.org).

**Israel:** is the home of 33 bat species (32 insectivorous species and one fruit bat). All species apart from the fruit bat are protected by law. 29 species are listed in the Israeli Red List of Endangered Species.

Monitoring:

- The National long-term Monitoring Plan for Israel's Bat Species has finished its second year of monitoring. The National Plan was formulated based on the EUROBATS guidelines and carried out by the Science Division of the Israel Nature & Parks Authority (INPA) together with bat experts from the Mammal Center of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI). In 2014, 80 roost sites and foraging areas were surveyed throughout Israel, the majority in two seasons (winter and summer). The results of long-term monitoring will contribute new information to a future revision of the Israeli Red List of Endangered Species.
- Camera monitoring of temporal and seasonal human visitation practices in caves used as roosts in northern Israel, in order to re-evaluate the current visitation policy in bat-inhabited caves.
- Monitoring of bat populations in abandoned army bunkers in the Jordan valley. The Mammal Center of the SPNI in collaboration with INPA started a collaboration with

the Israeli Army for improving man-made bunkers for utilization by bats (see <http://www.batsinbunkers.org>). This includes the positioning of online cameras in abandoned army bunker refurbished for bat use for educational and scientific monitoring.

- Fruit bats are now monitored for zoonotic diseases as part of a national zoonotic survey of wildlife zoonoses, in collaboration with the ministries of Health, Agriculture and Environment.

Education:

- International Bat Night was celebrated in five nature reserves throughout the country with public educational programs.
- An educational program regarding light pollution and its effect on wildlife in general and bats in particular has been implemented as part of the high school educational program and as part of the nature parks on-site educational programs.

Israel has formally joined the EUROBATs Agreement. Bats are now monitored in the planning stage of wind farm and solar field projects. Light pollution regulations now take into account spectral output of light sources (specifically LED), based on studies on the effect of artificial light at night on bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

**Italy:** The most recent information regarding bat protection and research in Italy was presented at MoP7. It is worth adding that a paper resulting from scientific cooperation among researchers from Poland, Italy and the Czech Republic assessed the rôle of the Apennine refuge in the phylogeography of the western Palearctic. The study detected the presence of *Myotis punicus* in Sicily (a species previously known only in Sardinia as far as the Italian territory is concerned) and unveiled several genetic patterns which may have significant implications for conservation.

**Luxembourg:** After installing a nationwide monitoring scheme, the knowledge on bat species increased considerably especially for species reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. The outcome was that especially bat species of open land have poor conservation status. This monitoring scheme allowed also installing endangered appendix II species as target conservation species for several NATURA 2000 sites.

In autumn 2014 a nursing colony of *B. barbastellus* was discovered by radio-tracking bringing the number of reproductive bat species to 21 (*R. hipposideros* is unfortunately extinct).

A species action plan was established for *M. bechsteinii* by modelling potential repartition on the basis of a several-year inventory to the scale of local forestry districts. This will hopefully be a powerful conservation instrument for this forest-dwelling species. Also the implementation of the species action plan for *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* continues and migratory flight paths calculated to the closest populations in the border regions of France, Belgium and Germany. Finally there is a Life+ project on the protection of greenland species among which the conservation of hunting habitats of *M. emarginatus* will be a main target.

**Macedonia:** There has been no substantial news since the MoP7 report. Due to the project conducted for capacity building in Macedonia, kindly supported by DEFRA (UK) through EPI, the Macedonian “Batlife” society now have several people who are well-prepared to implement or join a monitoring program or bat study on a local or national level. Unfortunately there is still no national monitoring program for bats in Macedonia although there are some attempts of local monitoring.

Bat study group Macedonia (BSGM) is trying to involve bats as important bio-indicators not only for wind farm projects but also for other large scale impact projects in Macedonia. There is still a wind farm operating in Macedonia without any monitoring program for bats. BSGM contacted the Secretariat of the Bern Convention to try to solve this problem.

This year BSGM aims to publish a leaflet and organise a campaign on Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) which is bat of the year 2015.

**Moldova:** Significant success in attracting public attention towards bats was achieved. High-attendance public events were organised: International Bat Night celebrations, public exhibitions, radio campaign etc. Information materials were published and distributed and a thematic social web page Chiropteromania on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/chiropteromania>) was started. As a follow-up after these successful awareness raising campaigns, the Ministry of Environment created a special working group in cooperation with NGOs and the Moldovan Academy of Sciences.

There is an intention to establish some officially recognised and legally protected areas for bats in the near future. Tsiganca Bat Reserve has existed since 1998 but is a local initiative and needs to be upgraded to the national status under the direct auspices of the Ministry of Environment.

This year the Red Book of Moldova is on its way to being published. This time it will include most of the bat species. The species present in Moldova are sadly “migrating” from nature to the Red List. Hopefully this does not mean such a drastic decline in bat populations, but rather that their protection becomes more focussed and committed.

Last year cooperation with colleagues from Ukraine and Romania was re-established and new contacts with the chiropterological community in Belarus were formed, with whom a joint initiative was carried out last summer.

Concerning scientific research it is worth mentioning that bats are becoming more of a focus for Moldovan biologists and there is the real possibility of establishing a dedicated scientific community of chiropterologists in Moldova in the future.

**Montenegro:** The focus was on capacity building for bat monitoring, research and developing conservation measures in Montenegrin protected areas. The first winter census of bat populations was carried out by the project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity at Lakes Prespa, Ohrid and Shkodra/Skadar", with the support of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ).

With the support of many foreign experts, three additional new species for Montenegro have been found (*Myotis daubentonii*, *Barbastella barbastellus* and *Myotis bechsteini*). The number has risen to 29 bat species. All collected data are and will be distributed to the Agency for the Environmental Protection of Montenegro.

The scientific paper about the distribution of bats in Montenegro has been published. Future plans in the national parks will be focussed on cooperation with the international and regional organisations in order to enlarge the monitoring system to at least one more protected area and to continue the monitoring program in NP Skadar lake.

**The Netherlands:** The publication of a new atlas on the distribution of mammals, including bats, is in preparation.

The cooperation with Ukraine regarding the monitoring of the occurrence of the European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV) in serotine bats (*Eptesicus serotinus*) in Ukraine was continued and will be extended to other species. The brain samples collected for this purpose from dead bats were analysed by the Central Veterinary Institute (CVI) in the Netherlands. The DNA work on serotine bats from different European countries, in particular from Ukraine, was also continued and was also carried out by

the CVI.

**Norway:** reported that although no major new projects have been initiated since the national update report to the MoP7 in 2014, the Norwegian Environment Agency continues to support a number of bat-related activities, most of which are run by the Norwegian Zoological Society (NZF). These include: winter and summer monitoring projects, bat box studies, operation of a bat rescue centre and a bat help line and bat walks and talks aimed at the general public. Both the Environment Agency and the NZF were present at the XIIIth European Bat Research Symposium in Šibenik, Croatia. A revised Norwegian Red List for Species is being prepared by the Norwegian Biodiversity Information Centre for publication this autumn (the current red list is from 2010). 12 bat species were evaluated, six of which are listed, ranging from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened. The two species currently listed as Critically Endangered, *Barbastella barbastellus* and *Myotis nattereri*, remain at this status due to the limited records and information available.

**Poland:** In 2014 there were several important initiatives:

- Regional Directorate of Nature Conservation in Katowice received EU funds to rescue one of the largest bat hibernation sites called Szachownica cave, where c. 3,500 bats hibernate every year. Due to the limestone quarry which was in operation until 1962 the ceiling of the cave has started to collapse. The project to strengthen the roof and walls of the cave will be implemented in the years 2014-2017 in consultation with the Central Mining Institute and the National Society for the Protection of Bats (OTON).
- By use of EU funds the manuals "Best practices for the conservation of bats in forests" and "Determination of the impact of wood preservatives used in Poland on bats" were prepared. They will be available on the website of the General Directorate of Environmental Protection and distributed to the institutions dealing with the maintenance of wood in historical buildings.
- After a successful project on the habitat selection of the pond bat (*Myotis dasycneme*) in Kaszubia (Pomerania Region) in 2012 – 2013, Gdańsk University, Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences and PTOP „Salamandra” launched the cooperative radio-tracking in its second population in 2014. This is located in the Natura 2000 site PLH 200001 “Jeleniewo” (Suwalszczyzna Region) situated in the NE corner of Poland. The project will be continued this year and will

make it possible to increase the protection level of the pond bat by protecting the new roosts discovered by use of radio-tracking.

Two bio-geographical regions are represented in Poland: alpine (ALP), covering the Carpathians and continental (CON) covering the rest of the country. 21 bat species permanently occur and breed in the country and an additional four were recorded with no breeding records so far.

According to the report to the European Commission from the Habitat Directive in the period 2007 – 2013, 11 species reached favourable conservation status (FV) out of 20 species analysed in the alpine region. The status of the next eight was unknown and one species (the lesser horseshoe bat) was classified as unfavourable-inadequate (U1) with improving trend.

In the continental region 11 species reached favourable conservation status (FV) out of the 21 species analysed. The status of four was unknown, four (Leisler's bat, barbastelle, Bechstein's bat and pond bat) were classified as unfavourable-inadequate (U1) with unknown trend and two (lesser horseshoe bat, and Geoffroy's bat) as unfavourable-inadequate (U1) with improving trend.

An important change is that the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) changed its status from unfavourable-bad (U2) in 2007, to unfavourable-inadequate (U1) in 2013.

**Portugal:** In mainland Portugal the monitoring program of important underground roosts has continued since MoP7 and some papers have been published. Problems in some important underground roosts appeared; these situations have been closely followed, in order for them to be compatible for the continuation of the use of the roosts by bats.

A detailed report about the implementation of EUROBATS was published (<http://www.icnf.pt/portal/naturaclas/ei/resource/doc/convbon/Rel-implementacao-1995-2014-divulgacao.pdf>). It includes a point by point analysis of the degree of implementation of the resolutions.

**San Marino:** There have been no major changes since the last report. The Centro Naturalistico Sammarinese (Natural History National Museum) program for 2015 is to publish the national atlas of mammals and related Red List and to carry out the monitoring program especially in the important underground roosts.

**Slovak Republic:** The status of many bat species occurring in Slovakia was unknown but there is currently an extensive and complex monitoring project being carried out, which is supported by EU Regional Policy. Additional field data is expected as a result of the project and the status of the species will be updated.

The Life+ project “Protection of Common Swift (*Apus apus*) and bats in buildings in Slovakia” will run until the end of this year. Various conservation measures took place in Slovakia as well as general bat awareness raising activities.

Slovakia currently has 84 underground sites on the list of sites of international importance submitted to the Secretariat.

The new project about bat conservation in old mines is being prepared and financial support being sought.

**Slovenia:** Slovenian bat monitoring results from 2014 are mostly similar to those in previous years. The first midterm report is available on: [www.natura2000.gov.si/uploads/tx\\_library/Netopirji\\_monitoring\\_14-15\\_1dp.pdf](http://www.natura2000.gov.si/uploads/tx_library/Netopirji_monitoring_14-15_1dp.pdf).

Unfortunately many maternity bat roosts were destroyed or habitats were degraded. On the other hand mitigation measures were taken on five buildings and the first results have been positive.

International Bat Night was celebrated across the country.

Slovenian experts cooperated with colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina for winter monitoring and with experts from Montenegro and Macedonia in publishing the first substantial bat overview articles for their countries.

**Sweden:** The monitoring work in Sweden is an ongoing business, including an increasing use of autoboxes. The latter has proved to be very useful in monitoring a larger area, since there is still a limited number of bat workers in Sweden. There is also some hibernacula monitoring on a few important Swedish sites.

There is a relatively new bat group in Sweden, “Fladdermöss i Sverige” (Bats in Sweden). In cooperation with bat scientists, it is organising workshops on bat detector training, species identification, bat boxes, how to find colonies and so on. The bat group has recently come up with some really interesting hunting behaviors of *Plecotus auritus*, which have not yet been published.

There is an ongoing process in Sweden which aims to harmonize the demands on monitoring where wind turbines are concerned.

The active surveillance of bat rabies continues parallel to the passive surveillance which has been ongoing for more than thirty years. In the test results from 2013, there were no antibodies found at all, compared to the results of 2012 which showed the presence of antibodies in a few *Myotis daubentonii* in the south of Sweden. No antibodies have so far been found in any other species and no bats at all have been found with actual symptoms of bat rabies. Extensive bat rabies information can be found on several relevant governmental web sites (in Swedish).

The project Bat Forts is a cooperation of bat scientists, the WWF and the governmental agency Fortverket, which maintains the buildings of the Swedish Armed Forces. The project is an ongoing success in protecting manmade underground hibernation sites owned by Fortverket. Some sites have up to five different species present each winter, which is a very high number for Sweden.

A single *Barbastella barbastellus* has been hibernating in the same spot in one of the bat forts just south of Stockholm, for at least the last four years. This is possibly still the most northern finding of barbastelles in Europe.

**Switzerland:** The activities of study and protection of bats in Switzerland have been consolidated and funding has been secured until 2017 with important official support of the Swiss Confederation and the 23 cantons (Swiss Biodiversity Strategy). The network covers the entire territory. All efforts thank the support of an educated team of c. 600 volunteers.

Important developments in 2014:

- The finalisation of the project for the Red List of Swiss Bats
- Wind energy: National Guidelines to take bats into account are expected to be published in 2015
- Free-of-charge dissemination of scientific knowledge to European chiroptera specialists through the World Bat Library (Geneva) and EUROBATS network consolidated.

**Ukraine:** Bat work has continued and inventory and monitoring of bat sites and habitats (underground, building and forest habitats) are ongoing. New underground bats sites in northern Ukraine were explored and described this winter. This was in the framework of the project “Inventory of bat underground sites in ‘non-cave’ regions of Ukraine”, supported by the Bat Support Fund for Eastern Europe. The first steps

were taken to establish monitoring of forest bat fauna in different regions of Ukraine using mist-nets.

The work on bat popularisation is ongoing. The 3<sup>rd</sup> festive release of bats being rescued and rehabilitated this winter will take place on 28 March 2015 in the Bat Rehabilitation Centre of Feldman Ecopark.

Three projects supported by EPI were finalised in 2014 (summaries are available: [http://www.EUROBATS.org/summaries\\_of\\_conducted\\_projects](http://www.EUROBATS.org/summaries_of_conducted_projects)). The collaboration with bat workers continues to increase (Belarus, Germany, Moldova, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, and others).

### **Short reports from the Non-Party Range States**

**Armenia:** Scientific Activities: The studies of the species included in the Annex of the EUROBATS Agreement and a comparison and analysis of species encountered in Armenia is in the final stage. Representatives from the Ministry of Nature Protection, science research institutes, universities and non-governmental organisations are involved in this task.

Legal Activities: The legal activities which are directly connected with biodiversity conservation are as follows:

- Adoption of the Law on the amendments in the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment and Expertise.
- Developing the draft of the Law on amendments in the Law on Protected areas. New categories (conserved landscapes) of protected areas and separate chapter concerning migration routes are included.
- Adoption of the new Strategy and Action Plan on protected areas for the period 2015-2020 which is the important guideline for the monitoring and protection of biodiversity in general.
- Adoption of amendment in the list on natural monuments, which includes bat habitats.

Activities in the framework of the EUROBATS Agreement: The Republic of Armenia has been a Party to the CMS Convention since March 2011 and the process of joining the EUROBATS Agreement is included in the environmental policy agenda of Armenia. During 2014 the Collegial Body adjunct to the Minister of Nature Protection

was established and the issue about ratification of EUROBATS was included in the agenda of this body for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2015.

**Azerbaijan:** The intention of signing the CMS and EUROBATS Agreements is still under review by the Azerbaijan Government. A special request letter has been prepared and submitted to the MENR (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic, in order to accelerate the review process. There is an intention to collaborate with ornithological NGOs to encourage the above mentioned establishments.

Regarding research and study of bat populations, the Institute of Zoology is the only organisation conducting professional studies in this area. The recent government plan covers 3 years research of all small and medium size mammals including bats in the south of Azerbaijan. Bats are also part of the ESIA research which must be conducted prior to the implementation of oil industry infrastructure projects.

In terms of events and awareness raising, NGO Ecosfera arranged the International Bat Night in early September 2014 with the involvement of chiropterologists. The same NGO conducted special awareness sessions on the identification of bats and handling methodologies for the staff of different protection areas and national parks.

**Belarus:** In 2014 the work on the fourth edition of the Red Data Book was completed and *Myotis mystacinus* and *Plecotus austriacus* now have national conservation status. In addition:

- International Bat Nights were held in various cities.
- The translation, adaptation and printing of the EUROBATS “Bats and Forestry” leaflet and “Bats, trees and forests” brochure was completed.
- Belarusian-Moldovan Bat Festival (23.08.2014).

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Winter monitoring of bats was continued, including a few large colonies in caves in northern Bosnia. A two-year monitoring project, funded by CEPF was completed in the Neretva river catchment area (a part near the Adriatic Sea coast), with a significant colony of *R. blasii* in a cave.

A Bat Night event was organised on the Night of Researches, in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Awards were given for the best students’ work on the research of bats.

A supplement to the general cave-journal which publishes articles just about bats was produced. A pdf version of the first issue is available on the website: [www.centarzakrs.ba](http://www.centarzakrs.ba).

The number of bat species in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 29.

**Egypt:** As a result of the fruitful cooperation with the Czech bat research team, a new paper on the reproductive seasonality of *Rousettus aegyptiacus* was published in the Journal of Mammalogy and another paper on “Bat fauna of the Oases of Western Desert of Egypt” was prepared for publication.

According to the Mammalia paper of Benda (2014) which discussed the systematic position and taxonomy of *Pipistrellus deserti* and suggests considering *Pipistrellus deserti* as a junior synonym and desert morphotype of *Pipistrellus kuhlii*, it is suggested for all bat records of *Pipistrellus deserti* in the bat fauna database of Egypt to be updated as *Pipistrellus kuhlii* which lies under the protection of the EUROBATS Agreement.

**Jordan:** Habitat and acoustic studies research on the bats of Jordan is ongoing. Additional roosting sites for some horseshoe bats in northern Jordan were identified. A Bat Night will be organised during May-June in one of the nature reserves in collaboration with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

**Kazakhstan:** In 2014 bat research commenced in the Eastern part of Kazakhstan (Western Altay state natural reserve). This area had not yet been studied at all and one new species *Vespertilio murinus* was detected.

There is now a cooperation with the Duke-NUS Graduate medical school in Singapore for the study of viruses in bats in southern Kazakhstan.

**Lebanon:** Work on the MERS CoV is ongoing and will continue in 2015.

Two new roosts of *Rousettus aegyptiacus* were discovered in the North of Lebanon. Investigations and surveys on new *Rousettus* roosts will continue if funds are secured and the situation permits.

**Morocco:** This is the sixth participation of Morocco in EUROBATS meetings. The bat fauna of Morocco consists of c. 30 species. At least 18 species are within the range of European bats such as *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *Eptesicus isabellinus*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Myotis capaccinii*, *Myotis emarginatus* etc.

Current research is being conducted on the ecology and distribution of the bats of Morocco (two Masters theses this year). Considering the expansion of wind farm projects in Morocco, impact studies on bats are now a mandatory requirement.

Further research is required to update the bat fauna of Morocco, and more efforts are urgently required for public awareness regarding the importance of bats for the public and school students.

A large awareness program is being organised, targeted at various levels: the general public, NGOs and policymakers.

Morocco was invited to participate in the training workshop on the identification of bat calls. Through this workshop cooperation was established with the Maghrebis to support the Maghrebian bats. Thanks go to EUROBATS for funding this workshop via the EPI programme.

**Saudi Arabia:** Several activities related to bats in Saudi Arabia have been reported, including scientific research, conservation efforts, and public awareness. Updating the bats' species list and their distribution is a high priority for the Saudi Wildlife Authority. Identified roosting sites are monitored regularly and the newly discovered sites are being added to the monitoring plans. Luckily, over 300 underground sites throughout the kingdom have been identified and will be assessed for the presence of bats. In addition, other areas which might have new bat species have been identified and will be visited in the near future. Many bats roosting sites have been lost lately due to disturbance and unexpected weather conditions (i.e. heavy rain); therefore, work has continued to preserve the remaining sites and also to establish alternative man-made roosts.

With regard to public awareness, posters of Saudi mammals including bats have been finalised and will be distributed across schools in the country.

**Serbia:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection has been responsible for the environmental issues in Serbia for several months. Since then, the internal procedures within the Ministry in order to ratify the EUROBATS Agreement have been pushed forward. Accession to EUROBATS (as well as to AEWA) is now officially planned by the end of the year according to the Ministry's work plan.

There was still a total of 30 bat species.

Last year was probably the most fruitful year ever in Serbia for bat publications from the small Serbian bat worker community: c. 20 publications and conference presentations. Serbian guidelines for bats and EIA are available in English and in Serbian.

**Turkey:** NGOs in Turkey initiated the first hibernation monitoring study at a number of sites in the winter of 2014 – 15. This study also intends to feed its results into a pan-European monitoring programme and the organisers are willing to collaborate with international partners.

Unfortunately, there has been no progress with the ratification of the Agreement.

### **Short reports from the Observers**

**Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA):** Since the last MoP in Brussels, new activities have been realised in Albania. The cross-border project “Capacity building for bat monitoring on both sides of the Shkodra/Skadar Lake and realisation of an action plan for bat conservation in this area” began in January 2015, and will be ongoing until December 2015. This project is funded by the GIZ project CSBL and implemented by the Montenegrin Ecologist Society, a Montenegrin NGO. During the first session, two new species have been identified hibernating in Albania, and several important roosts have been recorded. In addition, 6 students and speleologists have been trained to implement a winter census, and collect information on roosts.

At an administrative level, an official cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Culture has begun dealing with the conservation of bat populations and cultural monuments in the country.

The first national winter census has been completed in Albania, thanks to the support of volunteers and PPNEA. Discussions are ongoing for an official winter census (starting next year), in order to have sustainable bat monitoring in Albania. With this kind of official monitoring, Albania will be able to take part in pan-European monitoring programs.

**SFEPM:** As 2014 activities of the French Mammal Society (SFEPM) have been presented at the MoP last September, this report only mentions the working axis of the SFEPM National Bat Group that was decided at the meeting of regional bat coordinators in December.

The following activities will continue:

- Organisation of the International Bat Night at the national level.
- Guidance of the SOS network (also regarding building works in buildings occupied by bats).
- Research on bats and forests.
- Permanent follow-up of the state of Natura 2000 sites.
- Follow-up of bat populations.
- Concerning the wind industry, the working group has planned to inform the media about its stand on wind turbines because the way wind energy is developed now in France is not sustainable with bat conservation.
- Work on bats and transport linear infrastructures (roads and railways).
- Collaboration with the ANSES regarding bat rabies and with the SMAC network for cases of abnormal bat mortality.
- Coordination with bat groups in French overseas territories.
- A new NGO, partner of the SFPEM, has been set up for effective protection of the network of important roosts of *Miniopterus schreibersii*. This protection should be achieved in agreement with the site owners by fencing off or by purchasing sites.

**IZW:** The Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW) was involved in various bat research projects, conservation activities and press campaigns related to bats. In autumn 2014, a collaborative project between the IZW and Latvian partners was launched (Latvian University of Agriculture in Jelgava, Institute of Biology at the University of Latvia in Riga). The starting point of this collaboration was set by the inauguration of the rebuilt funnel trap at Pape Bird Ringing Station on the shore of the Baltic Sea. The reconstruction of the trap was made possible by large funds from the IZW. It is the hope of the collaborative partners that future research will shed new light on migratory corridors and the biology of migratory bats. Along this line, the IZW has published two papers related to migratory bats and wind turbines (Lehnert et al. 2014 PLOS ONE and Voigt et al. 2015 Eur J Wildl Res) that highlight the central responsibility of Germany for the protection of migratory bats owing to Germany's central geographical location and the fact that assumingly millions of bats cross German territory when moving between breeding areas in Northeastern Europe and wintering sites in Southern and Western Europe. The IZW is currently finalising a book project on "Bats in the Anthropocene: The conservation of bats in a changing

world” that was stimulated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Berlin Bat Meeting. Owing to co-funding received via EUROBATS from the German Ministry of Environment, the book will be freely available to the public as an e-book. Most recently, the IZW organised the 4<sup>th</sup> International Berlin Bat Meeting on Movement Ecology of Bats. This meeting reviewed the current knowledge and breathtaking developments in tracking the spatial movements of bats. Financial support for this meeting was received via EUROBATS from the German Ministry of Environment. Lastly, the IZW has launched a project on the migratory behavior of *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, a bat species with a poorly understood movement ecology.

**BCT:** This report focuses on updates to the report at the MoP, September 2014. Following on from the last report where it was mentioned that a pilot survey for Nathusius’ pipistrelle in the UK had been carried out (with the help of six volunteer bat groups), there are now some preliminary results. As well as confirming some new roosts, stable isotope analysis has shown evidence of movement of Nathusius’ between the UK and mainland Europe. The results are only just out but a report will follow.

BCT hosted a ringing workshop in February, where those licensed to ring bats in the UK gathered to discuss protocols and good practice and the setting up of a centralised database. Funding is now being sought for the next phase of this project: developing the guidelines and setting up the database.

A Wildlife and Transport Infrastructure Symposium is being run on 24 March, similar to the one on lighting held last year. The talks will be videoed and will be available on the BCT website in due course.

The European Commission is currently carrying out a review of whether the Birds and Habitats Directive are ‘fit for purpose’. The member state consultation is happening now and this will be followed in April by a public consultation. BCT has spent some time working with other UK NGOs to provide evidence for the member state consultation. The focus is now on mobilising as many BCT members and supporters to submit responses to that consultation.

**BatLife Europe (BLE):** BLE now has 32 partner NGOs and one collaborating NGO. The Partner organisations met at the European Bat Research Symposium in Croatia in September 2014 and elected a board of trustees to direct the organisation for the next three years. This board consists of a number of existing trustees plus some new members. Jasja Dekker took over as chairman at this meeting. During the EBRS a

new prize for the best bat conservation presentation was awarded, this was kindly sponsored by Apodemus Field Equipment.

BLE has been establishing a rôle at a European level. BLE attended the European Habitats Forum meeting in Brussels along with other NGOs to discuss European-level policy issues and to meet with European Union DG Environment to lobby on topical issues. Important amongst these was the EU REFIT programme. BLE was also represented at a workshop in Brussels in November 2014 to discuss the Bat Action Plan being developed by The European Union (DG Environment).

BLE was a co-organiser of the second Bat Box Symposium held in Belgium in October 2014 and was the patron of a capacity building workshop for the Dinarics held in Croatia in September 2014.

The prototype bat indicator funded by the European Environment Agency and a cooperative project between the Bat Conservation Trust, Dutch Mammal Society, Statistics Netherland and many BLE partner organisations will soon be published in Mammalian Biology.

Finally, this month the Bat of the Year campaign was launched. BLE's partner organisations will be giving special attention to Nathusius' pipistrelle this year as a symbol of the need for international conservation of bats.

BatLife is on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/BatLifeEurope> and Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BatLifeEurope>

**Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT):** The Trust currently has three bat research projects, two of these are nearing completion this year. A joint project with Waterford Institute of Technology and Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences has been looking at the predation of hibernating bats by marten species in the Nietoperek Natura 2000 site in Poland. Using non-invasive molecular techniques this project has shown both *Martes martes* and *Martes foina* are active throughout the year in this underground site and are predating a wide range of resident species including Bechstein's bat.

The first paper from Artificial Lighting Project with the University of Exeter was published in "Animal Conservation" in March. This showed that the supposed ecological benefits of part-night lighting, a process where street lamps are turned off overnight during the periods of the least human activity, held no benefit for greater horseshoe bats.

In January a new PhD project with the University of Exeter was started studying population dynamics and landscape ecology in Bechstein's bat.

The training and advocacy work continues. Training courses on roost creation for lesser horseshoe bats have been run for ecologists from local government authorities and from other NGOs. Staff from a Life+ project from Poland who are conserving lesser horseshoe bats through enhancing and protecting roosts have been hosted. VWT staff will be visiting Poland in July to continue an exchange of ideas.

VWT is a partner NGO in BatLife Europe and is twinned with the Croatian Biospeleological Society. Following the EBRS in Sibenik a jointly-run Capacity Building workshop for the Dinarics took place. VWT was grateful for the financial support of the EPI for enabling this workshop to take place and to the Secretariat for their help in arranging the meeting.

## **7. Secretariat report:**

The Executive Secretary drew attention to the written report and highlighted the most important points. He informed the delegates that there were no changes in the staff and that the work during the previous year was dominated by the meetings – joint 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee and 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee (AC19/StC9) in April 2014, followed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP7) in September 2014. Nevertheless a lot of other tasks since MoP7 had been completed.

The EUROBATS publication series was still in high demand and the Secretariat had to organise a number of reprints. Furthermore, it was able to launch as Publication Series No. 6 the revised and enhanced guidelines on wind turbines in English, which had been adopted at MoP7. The German and French versions would follow soon. Similarly, the Implementation Guide, also adopted at MoP7, has been published.

### **a) EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)**

The Executive Secretary informed the delegates that the Secretariat was able to finance and co-ordinate a number of projects, thanks to voluntary contributions from Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. He also used the opportunity to thank the donor countries. Among the projects it was particularly worth mentioning the project enabling dissemination of scientific knowledge upon request to European bat specialists throughout the agreement area free of charge and through the World Bat Library (Geneva) and the EUROBATS network. The Executive Secretary thanked the World Bat Library for designing and developing the project.

Further, he informed the delegates on the progress with respect to the joint EU-EUROBATS Species Action Plan on Bats as well as of the fact that the CMS strategic action plan for migratory species was adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in November 2014.

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

The Executive Secretary was glad he could welcome Israel as a new party. He informed the delegates that several other countries were also preparing for accession, especially Serbia.

Portugal wanted to draw the delegates' attention to the great work that had been done by the scientific officer, who helped immensely with the preparation of the latest wind turbines publication. The Executive Secretary agreed with Portugal's point and expressed his hope that this would be taken into consideration by the Standing Committee when discussing the basis of the scientific officer's employment for the following period. The Chair also expressed his support in this regard and stressed the role the scientific officer had also played during the production of the Implementation Guide. He reminded delegates of the value of the scientific officer's work in preparing and organising the Working Groups during and in advance of the meeting.

#### **8. Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the EPI Evaluation Group**

Mr. Stéphane Aulagnier offered to continue as chair of the EPI Evaluation Group for the next period. He would be supported by Prof. Zuhair Amr, Dr. Lena Godlevska, Ms. Daniela Hamidović, Mr. Anthony Hutson, Mr. Peter Lina, and Prof. Branko Micevski. The Evaluation group planned to meet during the AC meeting, when other delegates would have the chance to join the group.

#### **9. Reports from Intersessional Working Groups (IWG) of the past quadrennium and**

#### **10. Review of implementation activities outstanding from the past quadrennium and before**

The Chair proposed to combine the two agenda items, which presented a review of the progress that had been made by the IWGs during the previous quadrennium, and the main outstanding issues.

The Chair referred to Annex 1 of Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.1.Rev.1 prepared by the scientific officer. He expressed his and the Vice-Chair's opinion that in the Annex the main outstanding issues according to the Conservation and Management Plan and the resolutions from MoP7 were correctly identified. He invited the Convenors of the

IWGs to give a brief report of what had been achieved in the previous four years and to confirm that what was stated in the Annex 1 would be covered within the future work of the group.

The Chair reminded all the Convenors of the importance of setting feasible terms of reference for the IWGs upon their establishment. They also needed goals that were achievable. The task of the AC was to implement the resolutions that had been passed by the MoP, and sometimes there was a tendency to try and set up a working group that would cover several related topics, which made the IWG hard to manage.

#### **a) IWG on Implementation of the Agreement**

The Convenor reported that the IWG had completed its work – the Implementation Guide was available online on the EUROBATS Publications site:

[[http://www.eurobats.org/publications/other\\_available\\_publications/eurobats\\_implementation\\_guide](http://www.eurobats.org/publications/other_available_publications/eurobats_implementation_guide)].

Discussions were in hand about the availability of printed copies. Therefore, the IWG was disbanded.

The original Resolution 6.16 also asked the AC “to assess setting up a system to review requests addressed to the Secretariat for advice concerning implementation”. It was intended that the compilers of the Implementation Guide would meet with the Chair of the AC, the Chair of the StC, and the Secretariat during this meeting, to discuss how to pursue this matter.

#### **b) IWG on Format of National Implementation Reports**

Using the updated document on the implementation of the Agreement, a new draft of the format of national reports was prepared and made available online. This draft would be amended at a meeting during AC20.

#### **c) IWG on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations**

In the previous quadrennium the IWG submitted reports for the AC meetings. A further report was submitted to AC20, with updated information regarding several topics. The IWG also prepared a draft resolution that was approved at MoP7. Further, a group of members and other colleagues prepared a revision of the guidelines, which were approved as an annex to the resolution. The revised guidelines had recently been printed as EUROBATS Publication No. 6 and were distributed at AC20.

The approved resolution requested the AC: (1) to keep the generic guidelines up-to-date, and (2) to continue to compile relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations.

It was not expected that the guidelines needed to be revised in the near future, but the IWG considered it useful and important to continue to compile relevant information, which meant continued reporting to the AC meetings. The IWG requested a meeting to discuss the topics which should be considered in the following quadrennium and to analyse the format of the report.

#### **d) IWG on Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management**

Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones reported that he had taken over as Convenor of the IWG from Ms. Jean Matthews. He reported that a new resolution was passed at MoP7, which repealed the previous resolution and summarised the status quo. Action arising from the new resolution was to identify research priorities for bats in forests and this would be addressed at the meeting of the group during AC20.

#### **e) IWG on Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats**

The IWG intended to meet during this AC to identify possible research areas and needs with regard to this topic, since new information was available on the movements of bats.

#### **f) IWG on Monitoring and Indicators**

It was reported that the aims of the IWG and the work undertaken since the last AC (see also Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.6) were:

1. Developing, and periodically updating, a pan-European population indicator based on existing data;
2. Building capacity for monitoring in countries which did not have national monitoring schemes;
3. Developing a data sharing structure for monitoring data.

A scientific paper based on the prototype bat indicator that was developed in 2011, and incorporating some previously unpublished analyses, was accepted in a special edition of *Mammalian Biology* which focused on indicators. It was available on early view online (see Meij et al. (in press) Return of the bats? A prototype indicator of trends in European bat populations in underground hibernacula, *Mammalian Biology* doi:10.1016/j.mambio.2014.09.004) and the journal volume was expected to be published in full in the early spring of 2015.

Aim 1: The conveners discussed participation with several NGOs that were not in the prototype indicator. For aim 1 (develop a population indicator) the plan was to include more countries, more species, and more monitoring methods. In the following year a proposal for a project to do this would be submitted to several funding bodies by BatLife Europe. To keep momentum, the prototype bat indicator would be updated in summer 2015.

Aim 2: A capacity workshop was organised by BatLife Europe partners, Vincent Wildlife Trust and Croatian Biospeleological Society, after the European Research Symposium in Croatia. This provided training in both field skills and the analysis of monitoring data with TRIM/Birdstats. New opportunities to organise similar workshops (possibly within national or regional conferences) were welcome.

Aim 3: no progress was made on aim 3.

It was proposed to retain the IWG in order to continue the work programme on the European indicator and to provide support to all those with interests in monitoring. Much of the work would continue to be done outside AC meetings, and the group would be periodically convened at ACs as needed. It was not necessary to convene the IWG during this AC, as informal discussion would be held among the participants.

**g) IWG on Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes**

The Convenor reported that the work of the IWG was at a fairly advanced stage. The group needed to continue its work in order to finalize and publish the guidance document, as demanded by Resolution 7.8.

**h) IWG on Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats**

In the absence of the Convenor, Mr. Branko Karapandža reported for the IWG. During the last European Bat Research Symposium in Šibenik the group presented a poster called “Bat Casualties in Traffic - An EUROBATS region perspective”, which summarised the data on traffic induced bat mortality from literature and from EUROBATS questionnaires. At MoP7 a revised resolution was adopted and the priority task for the IWG was finalising the guidelines that should help minimise the impact of transport infrastructure projects on bats.

Mr. Karapandža also informed the delegates of the project funded by the Conference of the European Directors of Roads that was commissioned to look into the effectiveness of mitigation measures for the impact of roads on bats. As this project

was quite connected to the work of the group, he intended to familiarise the IWG members with it during the meeting of the group at AC20.

**i) IWG on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation**

In the previous years the IWG worked to prepare a draft resolution, which was then adopted at MoP7. The Convenor referred to the detailed report available under documents for AC20 on the EUROBATS website. In the following years the IWG would concentrate on developing guidelines and a system of collecting information for international cooperation.

**j) IWG on Bats and Building Insulation**

The IWG worked to prepare a draft resolution, adopted at MoP7. The group would focus during AC20 on developing guideline documents.

**k) IWG on Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts**

The focus of this IWG was the collection of examples of best practise in the construction of artificial bat roosts either as conservation projects or as part of mitigation plans during development work. The IWG initially collected examples of purely new constructions, but these proved to be limited in terms of the species involved and geographic range of such projects – essentially, they were limited to activities in Western Europe.

At AC 19 in Crete the IWG submitted an interim report on its findings to date and agreed to expand the scope of the examples collected to include the development of existing structures into new bat roosts. It was hoped that this would capture illustrations over a broader geographical area and for a wider range of species.

The IWG would like to continue its work and examples collected since the last AC were to be discussed during this meeting with the view to concluding the work of this IWG in AC21.

**l) IWG on Light Pollution**

As there was new information received from the recent symposia in Europe with regard to the impact of light pollution on bats, as well as with regard to noise pollution, the IWG needed to meet again in order to reconsider some of the topics.

The Chair advised the Convenor to consider separating light and noise pollution as a way of setting tasks for the Working Group that would be manageable.

#### **m) IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation, and Public Health**

The Convenor, Prof. Paul Racey, apologised for being unable to attend the meeting. He had asked Mr. Anthony Hutson to act on his behalf to convene a working group meeting at AC20. This meeting should discuss the next activities and should confirm that this group was expected to be a semi-permanent IWG to monitor and react to issues relating to bats and public health and, in some cases, to bat health, in line with Resolution 7.13, para 8a.

#### **n) IWG on Education**

Ms. Kit Stoner, on behalf of the Convenor, reminded the AC that this was a new IWG and that it needed more time to develop its work. During the previous year it focused on two areas:

##### **1. Gathering resources**

- Bat Conservation Trust had provided some online resources;
- The IWG has corresponded with some active bat organisations and bat scientists, informed them about its goals, and asked for their help in collecting resources.

##### **2. Creating new ways or improving current ways of developing public awareness**

- Introducing Life Café for bat education in Iran;
- A young bat researcher magazine would write about Life Café in the next issue;
- Holding some general bat workshops for school students and interested people;
- Training for trainers;
- Holding higher level course for educators.

#### **o) IWG on Quality of Assessments and Experience and Skills of Experts**

The Chair explained that from the resolutions adopted at MoP7, there was a need to set up this new working group. Ms. Ruth Petermann from Germany and Dr. Danilo Russo from Italy would co-convene the new IWG.

#### **p) IWG on Autecological Studies for Priority Species**

Resolution 7.12 provided a new list of priority species and the four topics that should be considered by researchers. The IWG would meet at the AC meeting before the next MoP to evaluate the results and the need to modify the list.

The Chair then summarised that out of 16 IWGs, three had either finished their work or would not need to meet during AC20, and it would be necessary to arrange for the work of 13 IWGs. The schedule for the meetings was to be prepared.

#### **11. Discussion on work plan priorities and the future operation of the Advisory Committee and Intersessional Working Groups taking into account outstanding activities and the Resolutions adopted at MoP7**

and

#### **12. Establishment of Intersessional Working Groups**

The Chair suggested taking these two agenda items together. He explained that, at the first AC after every MoP, the delegates were required to formally re-establish the IWGs – to reconfirm or select a new chair and to re-establish the membership. For each of the IWGs that were due to meet, the Chair would announce the Convenors and would ask the delegates to identify whether they wished to join the group.

Before proceeding to the establishment of the IWGs, the Chair reminded the delegates of the fact that most of the work of the AC was done in the IWGs and that joining a group implied a commitment, not only to offer one's expertise, but also to help the group achieve its goals. Too often in the past there were big working groups where most of the work load was carried by a few people. The work of the IWGs was very significant as it had more and more been referred to by governments and international bodies, which was particularly the case with the produced guidelines and publications. Thus, it was of great importance that the IWGs work effectively, deliver on schedule, and meet the requirements given by the MoP.

The Chair then proceeded to the establishment of the IWGs (for the information about Convenors and the IWG members see Annex 2 of the Record). The Chair also explained that, for the IWG Autecological Studies for Priority Species, it was too early to establish its membership, as it was only planning to meet at the AC before the next MoP.

With regard to the IWG Conservation of Key Underground Sites, it was also not necessary to re-establish its membership and have it meet during this AC, as it had already completed its two main tasks: preparing and publishing the guidelines, and preparing and publishing the list of most important underground sites. The work of the IWG was providing ongoing updates and it did not need to meet at every AC.

The Chair further asked for two points in terms of IWGs: 1) that IWGs check their terms of reference and 2) that they identify the support they expected they would

need from the Secretariat. Some IWGs had very old terms of reference, and for some they did not even exist. The new quadrennium was a chance to review the terms of reference, to check what had been adopted at MoP7, to identify what would be achievable, create a time table, and make sure to have the right members for achieving the set goals. Similarly, it was of great importance to identify the support expected from the Secretariat, whether it was administrative or scientific support. This was essential for informing the StC of what would be needed for the following year as well as the quadrennium, and for the Secretariat to plan its work and resources.

### **13. Reports from working groups convened during the Meeting**

#### **a) IWG on Implementation of the Agreement**

Resolution 7.3 requested the Advisory Committee “to re-examine, with the Chair of the Standing Committee, the need for a system to review requests for advice addressed to the Secretariat concerning the implementation of the Agreement”. To address this matter, Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Co-Convenor of the IWG and Chair of the AC), together with Mr. Anthony Hutson (Co-Convenor of the IWG) and Dr. Danilo Russo (Vice-Chair of the AC), met with the Executive Secretary and the Chair of the Standing Committee (Mr. Jeroen Panis). They discussed the types of requests for advice received by the Secretariat and the Executive Secretary explained the current process for handling these requests. It was agreed that this system was effective and that no new system was required at this time. The Secretariat will prepare a written description of the current process and make it available on the EUROBATS website within the next few months. The matter of implementation of the Agreement in general by the Parties was also discussed. It was agreed that the new Implementation Guide, together with the more detailed and helpful National Report format that was being developed, would help countries to identify more readily where they needed to undertake further work on implementation. The new National Report format would also facilitate more useful and detailed analyses of the Parties’ progress with implementation. It may also help identify areas and topics where further attention, guidance, and advice from the AC was required by the Parties.

#### **b) IWG on Format of National Implementation Reports**

Attended the IWG meeting: Stéphane Aulagnier (Convenor), Anthony Hutson, Thierry Kervyn, Noam Leader, Monika Lesz, Ferdia Marnell, Ruth Petermann, Luisa Rodrigues, Anatoliy Taran, Philippe Théou.

The draft Format of National Reports (Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.11) was carefully revised according to the texts of adopted resolutions (Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.11.Rev.1). All the members agreed on the format that would be passed to the Secretariat for preparing the on-line reporting which should be tested for the next AC meeting.

The question arose with regard to a more specific time line for online reporting. The Executive Secretary responded that the new format would be put online within the next month and that the Parties would be encouraged to have the first test run for the next AC meeting, which would enable the Secretariat to work on possible problems before the next MoP.

### **c) IWG on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations**

Attended the IWG meeting: Luisa Rodrigues (Convenor), Abdulaziz Alagaili, Zuhair Amr, Jelena Burazerović, Emrah Çoraman, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Marina Đurović, Daniela Hamidović, Helena Jahelková, Branko Karapandža, Thierry Kervyn, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Dina Kovač, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Noam Leader, Branko Micevski, Anthony Mitchell-Jones, Pascal Moeschler, Jasminko Mulaomerović, Marie Nedinge, Ruth Petermann, Jacques Pir, Üllar Rammul, Dino Scaravelli, El Ayachi Sehhar, Per Ole Syvertsen, Christian Voigt.

Further to Resolution 7.5, the IWG would continue compiling relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations, and it would continue preparing reports for the AC meetings. The work-plan was revised, and the membership of some sub-groups was changed.

#### **IWG's Work-plan – Preparation of annual reports for the AC**

<b>Sub-group</b>	<b>Coordinator (c) and members</b>
Update/reorganizing of the list of references	Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c), Laurent Biraschi
Compilation of data on bat mortality per country	Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c), Lothar Bach
Updating of tables on monitoring studies done in Europe and on bats' behaviour in relation to windfarms	Anna Nele Herdina (c), Laurent Biraschi, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage
Mitigation and compensation measures	Joana Bernardino (c), Branko Karapandža, Dino Scaravelli, Lothar Bach, Luisa Rodrigues, Thierry Kervyn
Estimation of mortality rate taking into consideration predation, efficiency and	Lothar Bach (c), Dino Scaravelli, Jasja Dekker,

controlled area; choosing of best estimator for Europe	Joana Bernardino, Petra Bach, Rita Bastos
Impact of mortality rate on populations	Christian Voigt (c), Jasja Dekker, Lothar Bach, Rita Bastos
Deterrents	Lothar Bach (c), Branko Karapandža, Dino Scaravelli, Luisa Rodrigues
Maximum foraging distances of species and detectability coefficients to compare activity indices	Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c), Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Dina Kovač, Zuhair Amr, Christine Harbusch
Collect national guidelines	Andrzej Kepel (c), Branko Micevski, Dina Kovač
Use of dogs vs humans during carcass searches	Dina Kovač (c), Fiona Mathews, Jan Collins, Joana Bernardino, Petra Bach
Comparing measurement of activity at ground level and rotor height	Lothar Bach (c), Jan Collins, Johanna Hurst, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Petra Bach, Thierry Kervyn
Small Wind Turbines	Kirsty Park (c), Jan Collins, Lothar Bach
Offshore windfarms	Lothar Bach (c)
Wind farms and forests	Christian Voigt (c), Andrzej Kepel, Branko Karapandža, Christine Harbusch, Fiona Mathews, Lothar Bach, Johanna Hurst, Thierry Kervyn
Implementation of mitigation and post- construction monitoring	Daniela Hamidović (c), Branko Micevski, Per Ole Syvertsen, Jasja Dekker
200 m buffer distance to habitats particularly important for bats	Branko Karapandža (c)

The IWG expected to prepare a questionnaire in the course of 2015 and asked for the Secretariat's assistance in circulating it.

#### **d) IWG on Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management**

Attended the IWG meeting: Anthony Mitchell-Jones (Convenor), Mounir Abi-Said, Zuhair Amr, Serghei Andreev, Stéphane Aulagnier, Jelena Burazerović, Emrah Çoraman, Aurora Dibra, Marina Đurović, Lena Godlevska, Daniela Hamidović, Nijat Hasanov, Anna Nele Herdina, Helena Jahelková, Thierry Kervyn, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Meelis Leivits, Monika Lesz, Branko Micevski, Martiros Nalbandyan, Ioseb Natradze, Marie Nedinge, Jeroen Panis, Ruth Petermann, Boyan Petrov,

Jacques Pir, Danilo Russo, El Ayachi Sehhar, Marina Spahić, Per Ole Syvertsen, Anatoliy Taran, Christian Voigt.

The group reviewed tasks arising from Resolution 7.7 as well as remaining tasks from the previous intersessional period and identified three work areas for the current session:

1. Monitor implementation of Resolution 7.7, particularly the development of national guidance on bats and forestry;
2. Share best practice forest management guidance via the EUROBATS website;
3. Promote research into forest management that is sustainable for bats, into the requirements of bats dependent on forest habitats, and into understanding the factors negatively influencing them.

The first of these will be addressed by a combination of collecting guidance from the Parties as it is published and checking for the announcement of publications in national implementation reports. A report on progress will be submitted to the next MoP. For the second, the Secretariat will be asked for advice on the best way to set up and maintain a web page resource of guidance and best practice. Support for research will be addressed by preparing a list of priority research topics, where research would be helpful to inform and improve forest management. An initial list of research priorities was developed during the meeting and will be circulated to members by the convenor. Further comment by research experts will then be sought via scientific focal points. A well-developed list should be available for discussion by the next AC meeting.

#### **e) IWG on Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats**

Attended the IWG meeting: Dino Scaravelli (Convenor), Aurora Dibra, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Wael Elsheikh, Lena Godlevska, Nijat Hasanov, Anna Nele Herdina, Anthony Hutson, Branko Karapandža, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Meelis Leivits, Branko Micevski, Anthony Mitchell-Jones, Primož Presetnik, Anatoliy Taran.

Bat migration is a keystone characteristic in European bat populations and the daily and seasonal movements of bats are important points in a global conservation policy. Recently there has been an increase of knowledge about the topic owing in particular to new technologies and new effort by research groups.

At the AC the IWG met to provide new terms of reference. The members noted that the important ecological movements, critical for many bat species and based on daily

rate, were actually being covered by other IWGs and they proposed to concentrate their work on seasonal and long distances movements.

The suggested new name of the IWG was the **IWG on Monitoring Seasonal and Long Distance Movements of Bats**. The proposed terms of reference were set as:

1. Collect and revise available literature to provide an updated status in particular related to mapping long distance movement, corridors, and stop over points;
2. Try to identify the main lack of knowledge on species or geographical areas;
3. Verify the ongoing research;
4. After one year provide an update to the Parties and a questionnaire to verify knowledge and gaps in information;
5. Provide indications to the Parties for the next MoP to increase monitoring in trans-boundary movements.

The IWG wanted to check possible information exchange with the IWGs on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations, on Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas, as well as on Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management, since daily and seasonal movements, as well as the management of stopover points, were common issues.

There would be discussions with the IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health in order to provide clear messages also about the role of migration.

It was further required to contact international and national authorities related to bird ringing and migration studies to encourage common work at least to identify stations where bats were regularly caught.

The possible estimated milestones were to have in June 2015 a map of the magnitude of movements by species. This map and the list of references would be circulated within the group and to migration specialists in order to upgrade the state of the art in October 2015. The review of the document would provide an upgrade that can be presented to the next AC meeting and a questionnaire would be prepared in 2016. The IWG would then need the assistance from the Secretariat to circulate the questionnaire.

#### **f) IWG on Monitoring and Indicators**

The group was not convened during the AC meeting, but the results of informal discussions were reported by Mr. Primož Presetnik in the plenary session. According

to Resolution 7.13, interviews with 28 delegates from countries so far not involved in the prototype bat hibernacula index took place. General results were very encouraging. No country refused participation in the preparation of such an index. Four countries had data ready for analysis and population trends already analysed (Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia and Ireland). So there were no general obstacles to immediate incorporation of their population trends in the pan European index. However, more detailed discussion was needed with the heads of the monitoring programmes in Ireland and Czech Republic, and the potential technical problem of combining statistical outputs from the different statistical programs used for population trends calculation needed to be solved. An additional eight countries had to prepare data and/or complete their first national trends analysis and it was estimated this could be achieved in 1 to 2 years (Bulgaria, Finland, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Norway, and Serbia). Six countries had recently started or were starting their monitoring programmes (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Montenegro, and Turkey) and could participate in the pan European bat indexes in 3-4 years. In other countries various obstacles were preventing short-term involvement in preparation of prototype bat hibernacula index. The IWG short-term recommendation to EUROBATS and all range states was to actively support possible workshops and/or education activities on data analysis especially for the countries which were close to calculating their hibernation bat index and to encourage the creation of monitoring schemes in countries which were currently without it.

Portugal asked whether the IWG considered starting the process for developing the indicator regarding maternity colonies. The IWG preferred to concentrate on hibernation colonies as this was the most used and widespread method. Though it would be good to include maternity colonies, this would have been a far reaching idea and was not a goal for this session.

The Chair then asked what the final result of the IWG's work was supposed to be: a EUROBATS indicator, or a BatLife indicator, etc. Mr. Presetnik answered that besides the scientific gain of having indexes on the regional level (Europe, North Africa, Middle East), another indirect gain would be the establishment of connections between neighbouring countries and creating trust among them to share their data.

**g) IWG on Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes**

Attended the IWG meeting: Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Convenor), Abdulaziz Alagaili, Zuhair Amr, Stéphane Aulagnier, Jelena Burazerović, Emrah Çoraman, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Marina Đurović, Daniela Hamidović, Nijat Hasanov, Anthony Hutson, Helena Jahelková, Thierry Kervyn, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Meelis Leivits, Ferdia Marnell, Anthony Mitchell-Jones, Ioseb Natradze, Jacques Pir, Danilo Russo, Henry Schofield, El Ayachi Sehhar, Per Ole Syvertsen, Philippe Théou.

The Convenor gave a short update on the background as well as the work done by the IWG so far. The main task arising from the latest Resolution 7.8 was finalizing the guidance document. The table of contents of the guidance was presented during the IWG's meeting and the recent progress as well as the tasks to be done next were discussed. All chapters of the document's general part had been prepared. Also many of the species texts had been revised and amended based on the new literature. It was agreed that the species texts should be checked and revised where needed by the person responsible for each text.

The group agreed on the following tasks and timetable:

1. The Convenor to send the latest version of the guidance and a picture wish list to the group as soon as possible.
2. The Convenor to contact species text writers, asking them to check and revise the texts. When available new references to be sent as well. The writers had two weeks to do this work.
3. The Convenor to send an updated version of the guidance with revised species texts to the IWG for comments in early May 2015. The deadline for commenting was mid-September 2015.
4. The updated guidance document to be sent to all focal points, as requested in MoP7. Deadline for comments was set for the end of January 2016.
5. The guidance to be sent to the Secretariat in February 2016. Proofreading and layout work to be done by the Secretariat. The Guidance to be ready for the next AC meeting.

Several group members volunteered to do the proofreading. Assistance from the Secretariat will be needed in early 2016 for preparing the layout of the final draft as well as for acquiring pictures to be included in the guidance.

## **h) IWG on Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats**

Attended the IWG meeting: Branko Karapandža (Co-Convenor), Primož Presetnik (Co-Convenor), Stéphane Aulagnier, Jelena Burazerović, Emrah Çoraman, Marina Đurović, Daniela Hamidović, Helena Jahelková, Dina Kovač, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Noam Leader, Monika Lesz, Ferdia Marnell, Branko Micevski, Anthony Mitchell-Jones, Martiros Nalbandyan, Ioseb Natradze, Per Ole Syvertsen, Philippe Théou.

The IWG discussed its terms of reference and concluded that it was established to look into the methods of minimizing the impact of roads and other infrastructures (railways, airports) on bats. The main task of the IWG as it was set up by Resolution 7.9 (MoP7.Record.Annex12) was to produce EUROBATS guidelines highlighting the effects of roads on bats and providing guidance on minimising the impact of transport infrastructure projects on bats.

In the absence of the Convenor, Ms. Jean Matthews, Mr. Branko Karapandža and Mr. Primož Presetnik convened the IWG meeting. They referred to the progress report (Doc.EUROBATS.AC20.10) and highlighted several aspects:

1. Since the last AC meeting progress has been made on the guidelines. The literature review has been updated. Chapters on mitigation and impacts have almost been finished and were briefly presented to the IWG; those should be completed in the next two months and then circulated among the IWG members. The IWG expected the draft guidelines to be ready for AC21. Until then no assistance from the Secretariat would be necessary. However, once the guidelines were finished, assistance would be needed for the print and dissemination of the guidelines.
2. A poster that was presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> EBRS in Šibenik, Croatia, was displayed during the IWG meeting and it was already made available through the EUROBATS website.
3. The IWG members were asked to help with the chapter on monitoring that had not yet been drafted and Ms. Daniela Hamidović volunteered to do it.
4. The IWG was informed about an ongoing project, commissioned by the Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR), looking at the effectiveness of mitigation measures for the impacts of roads on bats and the co-operation with the IWG so far. The CEDR questionnaire had already been distributed by the Secretariat.

### **i) IWG on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation**

Attended the IWG meeting: Helena Jahelková (Co-Convenor), Lena Godlevska (Co-Convenor), Serghiu Andreev, Laurent Biraschi, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Daniela Hamidović, Anna Nele Herdina, Branko Karapandža, Monika Lesz, Peter Lina, Marie Nedinge, Ruth Petermann, Üllar Rammul, Luisa Rodrigues, Dino Scaravelli, Aliaksei Shpak, Kit Stoner.

During the IWG meeting a summary of evaluated questionnaires from 35 countries was presented. The main goal was to collate the information relating to bat rescue and rehabilitation in view of bat conservation, public education, and bat distribution, and to develop guidelines.

The contents of the guidelines were discussed and the work on particular chapters was assigned to the members of the group. The following themes were agreed upon: general aim of the guidelines, summary of the situation in the Parties and Non-Party Range States based on the circulated questionnaires, basic information on handling and keeping bats including correct methods of euthanasia, health risks for bat rehabilitators, FAQs from the general public, use of captive bats in public education, case studies, examples of evaluation of data extracted from standard bat record protocols agreed by EUROBATS and provided to bat rehabilitators, list of references including most important regional websites, list of organisations and experts in the Parties and Non-Party Range States dealing with bat rescue and rehabilitation. Protocols agreed at MoP7 would be included. The deadline for the collection of data and drafting of particular chapters was the end of November 2015.

The IWG asked the Secretariat to remind the Parties and Non-Party Range States after the meeting to fill in the questionnaires on the EUROBATS work space or in the .doc form. The IWG also asked the Secretariat to insert the Annex to Resolution 7.10 (bat record protocol) to the EUROBATS website in MoP7 documents and in the working group.

### **j) IWG on Bats and Building Insulation**

Attended the IWG meeting: Helena Jahelková (Convenor), Mounir Abi-Said, Abdulaziz Alagaili, Zuhair Amr, Emrah Çoraman, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Marina Đurović, Lena Godlevska, Daniela Hamidović, Nijat Hasanov, Anna Nele Herdina, Anthony Hutson, Branko Karapandža, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Dina Kovač, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Meelis Leivis, Peter Lina, Anthony Mitchell-Jones, Pascal Moeschler, Jasminko Mulaomerović, Martiros Nalbandyan, Ioseb Natradze, Marie Nedinge, Ruth

Petermann, Boyan Petrov, Primož Presetnik, Üllar Rammul, Luisa Rodrigues, Dino Scaravelli, El Ayachi Sehhar, Kit Stoner, Per Ole Syvertsen, Christian Voigt.

During the IWG meeting a short summary of the evaluated questionnaires from 14 countries was presented. The main goals of the IWG were to collect and share the information on best practice for surveys, avoidance of fatalities and roost loss, as well as on effective mitigation and compensation measures, and to develop guidelines. The contents of the guidelines were discussed and the work on particular chapters was assigned to the members of the group.

The following themes for the guidelines were agreed upon: general review of bats, buildings, and biology in relation to insulation, overview of the situation in particular countries based on the questionnaires, methods and materials used in insulation, main threats to bats, mitigation measures, technical solutions, educational programmes and workshops for bat workers and stakeholders participating in insulation projects, pre-insulation surveys, case studies, list of references including most important regional websites, list of organisations and experts taking part in bats and insulation projects. The deadline for the collection of data and the drafting of particular chapters of the guidelines was set for the end of November 2015.

The group asked the Secretariat to remind the Parties and Non-Party Range States after the meeting to fill in the questionnaires on EUROBATS work space or in the .doc form. During MoP7 it was also agreed that the IWG should update the information in the draft of the Action plan for the conservation of bat species in the European Union 2014-2020. The group asked the Secretariat to inform them as soon as they could provide the additional information concerning bats and insulation to the latest draft of the plan.

#### **k) IWG on Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts**

Attended the IWG meeting: Henry Schofield (Convenor), Abdulaziz Alagaili, Serghei Andreev, Laurent Biraschi, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Wael Elsheikh, Daniela Hamidović, Anthony Hutson, Branko Karapandža, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Noam Leader, Ferdia Marnell, Jasminko Mulaomerović, Boyan Petrov, Luisa Rodrigues, Dino Scaravelli, Aliaksei Shpak.

Terms of Reference: The role of this IWG is to gather case studies of projects to create new roosts for bats either by constructing new purpose-built structures or adapting existing structures so they provide roosting opportunity for bats. The objectives are to:

1. Draw together examples of effective bat roost creation projects from as wide a range of countries and species as possible;
2. Compile a set of case studies illustrating these examples, which can be used as a source of templates or concepts that could be applied elsewhere;
3. Synthesise this information into a format that could form the basis of a publication.

The IWG discussed the revised terms of reference for the group.

Some of the responses to the original questionnaire which did not meet the criteria of the original Terms of Reference of this group were reviewed. These ranged from modified military bunkers in Israel for *Rhinopoma spp.* and *Asellia tridens* to an INTERREG funded project in Lorraine modifying derelict buildings for bats. Further projects are taking place in Saudi Arabia, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Poland.

Members of the group will follow up further examples that they have knowledge of, and a modified questionnaire will be submitted to the Secretariat for circulation to the Scientific Focal Points.

The Convenor was asked for a more specific time line. He answered that the questionnaire would most probably be done by the next day.

Serbia commented that the delegates would appreciate not to receive the questionnaires they have already responded to. The Executive Secretary ensured to stay in close contact with the Convenors of the working groups to avoid doubling of the requests.

## **I) IWG on Light Pollution**

Attended the IWG meeting: Christian Voigt (Co-Convenor), Dino Scaravelli (Co-Convenor), Laurent Biraschi, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Wael Elsheikh, Nijat Hasanov, Branko Karapandža, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Dina Kovač, Noam Leader, Pascal Moeschler, Jasminko Mulaomerović, Jacques Pir, Primož Presetnik, Henry Schofield, Kit Stoner, Philippe Théou.

The task of the IWG is to collect information and evidence on the direct and indirect impacts of artificial light (AL) on bats. In this context, it is important to collect and evaluate information on the impact that different types of AL (e.g. varying in strength or wave length spectrum) have on bats. In addition, it is important to assess the legal framework for the use of AL and potential conflicts with bat conservation. Over the past few years, new information on the general topic of AL has been generated and several focal projects provide new, important insights on the effects of AL on bats.

The number of publications on this topic is steadily increasing. The IWG aims to cooperate with other stakeholder groups such as insect conservation groups and astronomy groups.

At the IWG meeting the new convenors introduced themselves and outlined the general concept for the upcoming quadrennium. Specifically, they asked the participants if they agreed to omit the topic of noise pollution from the agenda of the group. The participants agreed in consensus to this suggestion. They also agreed that the final outcome of the IWG light pollution should be a draft of a resolution and a first guideline. The guideline should be finalized well ahead of the next MoP.

The convenors further introduced a list of subtopics that were relevant for the topic of light pollution and bats. The participants suggested and agreed to prepare a questionnaire to receive feedback related to light pollution and bats from the Parties. A first draft of the questionnaire was finalized during AC20 and the Secretariat will be asked to help in finalizing and sending the questionnaire to all focal points.

The following is the proposed organization of the IWG into subgroups and the details of responsible (c = convener) and involved people for specific topics and tasks:

<b>Subgroups/Topics/Tasks</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
Literature on bats and light pollution Use database of COST action LoNNe	Christian Voigt (c)	Ongoing
Questionnaire	Primož Presetnik, Noam Leader, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Dina Kovač	During AC20
Technical aspects: Types of AL: ML, LED; Types of AL regimes: indirect (diffuse) and direct light (street lamps, illumination of historical buildings, private lighting, advertisement lighting); AL in caves Contact COST people for technical information	Jasja Decker to be contacted by the convenors to coordinate this subgroup, Laurent Biraschi, Henry Schofield, Daniela Hamidović	March 2016
Political and legal frame: political goals/environmental policy/legal framework with respect to AL (as part of questionnaire)	Primož Presetnik (c), Philippe Théou, Daniela Hamidović	March 2016 (after question- naire feedback end of 2015)
Effect of AL on other animals with a focus on those related to bats (insects and predators)/ similar to bats (nocturnal terrestrial mammals)	Noam Leader (c), Dino Scaravelli	March 2016

Effect of AL on bats: Evidence for light-sensitive and light-tolerant species, level of conservation status for light sensitive species (Nature 2000 reporting in 2013)	Dino Scaravelli (c), Branko Karapandža	Branko sends first collection end of May 2015
Compilation of local, national reports, current practice of mitigation measures	➔ Questionnaire	Send out questionnaire by early June 2015; request feedback by December 1, 2015 and incorporate it by AC21
GAP AREAS Population effects of AL Effect of AL on diurnal rhythms, migration		

In the plenary it was then discussed if it was necessary to establish a separate working group on noise pollution. The Vice-Chair commented that there was not much data available on this issue and that it would not be the time to start defining the working group. This was accepted unanimously.

#### **m) IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health**

Attended the IWG meeting: Anthony Hutson (Convenor), Mounir Abi-Said, Abdulaziz Alagaili, Zuhair Amr, Serghei Andreev, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Wael Elsheikh, Lena Godlevska, Nijat Hasanov, Anna Nele Herdina, Thierry Kervyn, Tomasz Kokurewicz, Peter Lina, Ioseb Natradze, Marie Nedinge, Jacques Pir, Luisa Rodrigues, Dino Scaravelli, Aliaksei Shpak, Kit Stoner, Anatoliy Taran.

In the absence of the Convenor (Professor Paul Racey) the meeting was convened by Mr. Anthony Hutson. The group had been established at AC18 to broaden the scope of a former IWG dealing specifically with Lethal Fungal Infections. It was agreed that the new group should be a more or less permanent group to deal with issues as they arise. The meeting agreed to identify Terms of Reference for the group, and activities to be undertaken in this quadrennium.

Terms of Reference were adopted as follows:

1. Monitor issues and incidents related to bats and public health;
2. React to negative publicity and misinformation;

3. Provide information appropriate to incidents of concern to public health and bat health;
4. Encourage the surveillance of emerging diseases and other lethal infections as appropriate;
5. Establish the compilation of background data on bat parasites and pathogens.

Discussion focussed on Ebola, MERS-CoV and Lyssaviruses, with brief discussion on *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*. From these discussions (and recalling EUROBATS.MoP7.Record.Annex16, Resolution 7.13, para 8a, and activities identified for *P.destructans* in EUROBATS.AC16.Record, 13k, p.35), the following activities were selected for particular attention in this quadrennium:

1. Identify laboratories willing to help with testing bat samples and people at risk;
2. Provide adequate information on the EUROBATS website (fact sheets, FAQs, etc);
3. Develop generalised contingency plans for bat/public health incidents;
4. Encourage the Parties to develop good relations with the media and direct them to WHO/OIE (FAO) for information.

At present, the IWG looks to the Secretariat to facilitate the placing of information on the EUROBATS website.

#### **n) IWG on Education**

Attended the IWG meeting: Hossein Zohoori (Convenor), Mounir Abi-Said, Serghei Andreev, Laurent Biraschi, Wael Elsheikh, Lena Godlevska, Nijat Hasanov, Anna Nele Herdina, Jana Pokrievková, Aliaksei Shpak, Kit Stoner, Anatoliy Taran.

The working group met to discuss its priorities for the coming year. As a new WG the first priority was to review what educational resources were already available before deciding what additional resources needed to be developed and what needed to be adapted for use in different countries.

The following tasks were identified for 2015/16:

1. Collate all available educational resources (leaflets, books, educational material, training courses, photos, etc.) by the end of May 2015;
2. Add these to the workspace by the end of June 2015;
3. Review any training course material for educators and establish by the end of June 2015 what guidance needed to be developed;
4. Develop guidelines for educators by March 2016;

5. Review what resources were available and identify what needed to be developed and adapted at the next AC.

The IWG did not anticipate using a great deal of Secretariat's time except in guidance about the workspace. In 2016 the IWG would likely need more support as it would start to develop its own resources.

#### **o) IWG on Quality of Assessments and Experience and Skills of Experts**

Attended the IWG meeting: Ruth Petermann (Co-Convenor), Danilo Russo (Co-Convenor), Stéphane Aulagnier, Jelena Burazerović, Emrah Çoraman, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage, Lena Godlevska, Daniela Hamidović, Helena Jahelková, Branko Karapandža, Thierry Kervyn, Dina Kovač, Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen, Monika Lesz, Peter Lina, Branko Micevski, Ioseb Natradze, Marie Nedinge, Boyan Petrov, Primož Presetnik, Üllar Rammul, Luisa Rodrigues, Dino Scaravelli, Aliaksei Shpak, Kit Stoner, Philippe Théou, Christian Voigt.

In the first meeting of the newly established working group the aims and goals were identified according to Res 7.14, which instructs the AC "to develop criteria of the required standard experience and skills of experts assessing the impact of projects, plans and programmes on populations of European Bats". The IWG aims to identify such criteria and propose them for a further Resolution to be adopted at the next MoP.

Two main actions were decided upon:

1. To develop a questionnaire to be submitted to the Parties in order to gather information on the existence of legal obligations, licensing system/procedure and standards of qualification, required skills, and/or experience, regarding the following areas:
  - Conducting bat surveys including acoustic methods;
  - Assessments of impacts on bats;
  - Post-construction bat monitoring.
2. By the end of May 2015 to propose criteria to identify appropriate skills, experience and knowledge in order to set (minimum) standards for bat workers involved in the above mentioned processes.

The IWG also agreed on defining standards for the evaluation process in the future.

It was planned to send a first draft of the questionnaire to the IWG members for comments and then draft a final version by May 2015, which would then be sent to the focal points. The answers would be analyzed within 2015.

The IWG also agreed to ask the Secretariat to check whether the latest national reports also provide information on any existing licensing system in this context and to make it available to the group members.

At the end of the IWG reports, the Chair summarized the tasks for the Secretariat, which included to circulate four new questionnaires and to re-circulate two of the existing ones. The Chair advised the Convenors of the IWGs to be careful when drafting the questions. It was worth spending time on designing the questionnaire to have a limited number of concrete questions which were easily analyzable.

Germany asked the Secretariat, when distributing questionnaires, to try not to send them too often and to consider combining more questionnaires together.

Finally, France suggested that EUROBATS should create a list of overground roosts important for bats as it was done for the underground roosts. Though no resolution specifically asked for listing and compiling data for overground roosts, it would be useful to do so, and it might be advisable to prepare a new resolution on the topic. The Chair answered that this could be discussed at the next AC and asked Senior Advisor Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones to look at how the work already done on collecting data for underground sites could be used in this case.

#### **14. Date and venue of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee**

The Secretariat reported that discussions were under way regarding the host country for the next AC meeting. Concerning the date of the meeting – the Secretariat received suggestions to schedule the AC meetings approximately one month later, for the third or the fourth week of April, depending on the Easter break. Thus the meetings would still take place before the field work season. After short discussion was decided to have the AC meeting in 2016 in April.

#### **15. Any other business**

Mr. Peter Lina reminded the delegates of the preparations of the publication on bat names in different languages, which was supposed to come out for the EUROBATS 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. He asked to receive any outstanding information before the end of May 2015, to be able to prepare the publication in autumn 2015.

The Secretariat further raised the question with regard to the use of blue folders provided to the delegates for the meeting material. They caused unnecessary costs since this was extra luggage that the Secretariat needed to transport and that needed to be paid for. It was agreed for the delegates to re-use their blue folders, and the Secretariat would provide them with new labels for every meeting, including a couple of spare copies for those delegates who for the first time participated at the meetings.

**16. Adoption of the record of the Meeting**

The Record was adopted unanimously.

**17. Close of Meeting**

There being no further issues, the meeting closed at 18:34.

20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Budva, Montenegro, 23 – 25 March 2015

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23 - 25 March 2015

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