

Welcoming address on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom

Chair, Executive Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom, in our role as a Party to the Agreement and as Depositary for it, I would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Slovenia for hosting this 5th Meeting of the Parties.

These meetings are vital to the effective operation of the Agreement and present a wonderful opportunity for Parties to learn more about the territories that host the species protected by the Agreement.

As you will know, the Government of the United Kingdom has been supportive of the Agreement from the start. We are glad to have hosted the Meeting of the Parties on two occasions. We are also glad to have seen the number of Parties grow over the years and to have been able to provide additional support for the work of the Agreement.

We are grateful to the Executive Secretary and his team for their efforts to deliver as much as possible with the available budgetary resources. We are also pleased to note the acknowledgment in the address of the CMS Executive Secretary that in recent times, Governments have found themselves under particular resource pressures.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom remains committed to the Agreement and the effective conservation of Europe's diverse species of bats. We are fortunate to have several bodies with expertise in conservation issues within the UK, and I am glad that we are able to reap the benefits of sharing such knowledge and experience with others through Agreements such as this.

Under your guidance Chair, the UK delegation looks forward to working with you all in a spirit of understanding and constructive debate during this 5th Meeting of the Parties.

I would also like to thank the Executive Secretary for the acknowledgement of the United Kingdom's continued support for the work of the Parties to the Agreement.