EUROBATS.AC29.Record

29th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Bonn, Germany, 4 – 6 November 2025

Record

1. **Attendance**

This is listed in Annex 1 to the record.

2. **Opening Remarks**

The Chair of the Advisory Committee, Ms. Ruth Petermann, opened the meeting by warmly welcoming delegates to Bonn — her home for the past 25 years. She noted that Bonn was a fitting place to organise the 29th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC29), being the seat of both the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the EUROBATS Secretariat. Ms. Petermann highlighted that this meeting was special as it was the first under the leadership of the new Executive Secretary, Ms. Zrinka Domazetović, whose commitment and vision she praised. She thanked the Secretariat for organising the event, the Parties for their voluntary contributions enabling the in-person format, and the delegates whose presence witnessed their continued dedication to the Agreement. Finally, she expressed her appreciation to Ms. Eeva-Maria Tidenberg, the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee, for her ongoing support, and wished everyone a productive meeting before giving the floor to Germany's administrative Focal Point, Ms. Carolin Kohzer.

Ms. Kohzer welcomed delegates on behalf of the Ministry, thanking the Secretariat, the AC Chair and Vice-Chair, and her colleagues for their cooperation. She noted that this was her first Advisory Committee meeting and expressed her hope for a pleasant and productive session.

Lastly, Ms. Zrinka Domazetović, EUROBATS Executive Secretary, addressed the delegates and expressed her pleasure at welcoming everybody to AC29 in her new role. Her becoming the Executive Secretary of EUROBATS was a personal milestone she felt her whole career was leading to. It was also very special for her that she knew most of the delegates already from her previous role of the administrative Focal Point for Croatia. Ms. Domazetović proceeded to thank the Government of Germany not only for hosting this meeting in its Ministry of the Environment but also for making a voluntary contribution that made this in-person meeting possible. She also thanked other countries that made voluntary contributions to the same end, which, since there were many of them, she could not list all separately. Ms. Domazetović underlined the importance of AC29 in preparing key documents and guidelines for the 10th Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP10). The next meeting would be a joint Standing and Advisory Committee meeting in spring 2026, the location of which she hoped to be able to confirm still during AC29. Drafts of the documents and resolutions to be discussed at MoP10 would have to be ready for online publication 90 days before the session. She closed by wishing all the delegates a productive meeting.

3. **Adoption of the Agenda**

The AC-Chair asked whether there were any objections or comments to the agenda. There being no objections, it was adopted.

4. **Summary Reports by Parties, Non-Party Range States and NGOs**

Below listed are the written reports the Secretariat has received from the AC29 delegates for inclusion in the record.

PARTIES

CROATIA:

Croatia continued to implement the provisions of the EUROBATS Agreement, giving, among other, particular attention to the application of Resolution 7.6 “Conservation and Management of Important Underground Sites for Bats.” New expert proposal of the Important underground sites in Croatia is under development.

In the procedure for issuing permits for derogation, the competent Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition (MEPGT) assesses the case in the procedure and systematically applies the principles set out in Nature Protection Act and EUROBATS Resolution 7.6. The important step in implementation was made with the aim of reducing disturbance of bats and pressures on populations in the important underground sites due to multiple research effort at the same locations for the same goal- only one team can conduct research during each period and is obliged to use field forms and standards set up in the National bat monitoring programme. In the period from 4/2024 to 10/2025 in total 24 permits were issued, derogating forbidden activities with bats - 16 of them are related to scientific research, 4 are related to permitting the disturbance in the overground roots (with the aim to keep the roost and protect the colony) and 4 are related to the closing the overground roots in private houses.

Overground sites continue to be under serious pressure and efforts are under way to minimize all pressures and keep or improve the roosts mainly through cooperation of the Institute for Environment and Nature on the state level with the public institutions for nature protection on the regional and local level, and owners of overground roosts and the Ministry of Culture if the roost is in the cultural heritage building. However, this is still on a case-by-case basis.

In the process of reporting under the Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for the period 2019-2024, analyses generally indicate that all 33 bat species present in Croatia are in an unfavourable–bad (U2) or unfavourable-inadequate (U1) conservation status. Systematic and continuous conservation measures on national level are still lacking despite unfavourable- conservation status of bats in Croatia and will be developed in the future 6-year period in cooperation with other relevant sectors. The report on conservation status of species and habitats has been submitted in September 2025 and data will be available for public at EEA dashboard upon validation.

Croatia launched BioAtlas - Croatian Living Atlas, an on-line platform on biodiversity observation, maintained and organised by Institute of Environment and Nature (Institute). Till now, bat dataset includes 12.403 bat occurrences from 1995 till 2023. Old bat data were collected and validated and new data on the abundance and distribution of bats were gathered. New data aim to test adequacy for long-term monitoring of species to evaluate their conservation status. Due to sensitivity concerns, the coordinates of bat records have been generalised for public and coded according to the National bat monitoring protocol.

The Institute is analysing Plans of lighting submitted by counties, supporting the public institutions and Department for climate transition in the MPGET in making plans of lighting, providing the guidelines for minimizing light pollution on bats and in general.

Croatia has launched a national set of biodiversity sensitivity maps designed to support the siting of large-scale renewable energy projects (solar and wind). The process was led by the Institute with external experts supporting the sensitive species groups (bats, birds and large carnivores). Experts contributed by refining model outputs, providing non-modelled data (e.g., rare habitats, nesting/roost sites) to ensure sensitivities were captured even where data gaps existed. The maps are publicly accessible (https://bioportal.hr/gis/), enabling planners, developers and conservation stakeholders to use them for screening potential project sites. Among other aims, the maps support the designation of “Renewables Acceleration Areas” (RAAs) as required under the EU Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) and its recast (RED III), but this step is still in progress.

The Institute is an active partner in biodiversity monitoring as part of the Biodiversa+ project (https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodiversity-monitoring/) and, among other project tasks, is a partner in the monitoring pilots which are also dealing with bat monitoring: ABMS Pilot that deploys automated visual and acoustic sensor systems to monitor nocturnal insects, birds and bats. A new pilot will begin in 2026 with monitoring of bats as one of the key priorities.
A doctoral thesis "Distribution of the Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*) in the continental biogeographical region of the Republic of Croatia – an indicator species for forest habitat management" has been completed.

ESTONIA:

The Estonian Red List was updated in 2019 GetFile.aspx and next time the process is planned for 2029.
The EU programm - *RePowerEU* which supports the green transition and limits EU dependence on Russian fossil fuels by reducing energy waste, producing clean energy – has helped to collect information about bats. The developmental areas of wind energy has been intensively studied on bat activities. The Environmental Board has an important role in assessing the environmental impact assessment reports. The Environmental Board worked out the new requirements for studies in wind farm developmental areas. At least the development of one wind farm has been stopped because of a common noctule colony which was registered nearby.
New and interesting data has been collected on bat activities in marine areas also:
Nahkhiirte uuring Liivi ja Soome lahel juunist oktoobrini 2020. aastal
Liivi lahe tuulepargi nahkhiirte uuring
There has been an increasing interest in citizen science and voluntary monitoring of bats. Larger summer inventories have been carried out in the capital city of Tallinn, using recording detectors attached to smartphones. Based on the data, Christel Bachmann has performed a confidence analysis of the results of the voluntary monitoring tracks. Inventory of hibernating bats in private basements and cellars has been initiated by the Environment Agency.
International Bat Night 2025 has been celebrated by all major natural history museums, in Tallinn Zoo and by interest groups.
A new interest group dealing with bats has been formed this year - NGO EstBat.

FINLAND:

The list of bat species in the country now consists of 13 species, as *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* has been removed from the list. Data on species was collated in the Habitats Directive Article

17 reporting process. Species for which enough data was available for evaluation were assessed as being in a favourable conservation status. Bat monitoring is currently continuing on two schemes: acoustic monitoring at 10 research stations around the country and hibernacula censuses mainly in South-Eastern Finland. Acoustic monitoring as a citizen science project was launched two years ago but is currently at a stop due to limited resources. As highlights from research, two projects should be highlighted. The study by Anna Blomberg et al. from BatLab Finland has used acoustic methods to study winter ecology of bats and has provided new insights into bat hibernation in rock boulders and outcrops. Bat activity and migratory movements around the Swedish and Finnish areas of the Baltic are being studied in a co-operative project.

GERMANY:

Since AC28 (online) in 2024 Germany has translated the factsheet on rabies into German and made it available to German speaking volunteers and bat workers. In regard to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Germany has submitted the FFH-report 2025. All bat species have been reassessed considering their conservation status. Whereas Greater and Lesser horseshoe bats show improvement despite their unfavourable-bad status, Serotine, Leisler's and Noctule bats as well as Grey long-eared bats face further decline with an already unfavourable status. Barbastelle, Brandt's and Geoffroy's bats for example show a stabile status. An improving good status has been documented for Greater mouse-eared, Natterer's bats and Soprano pipistrelle.

Considering governmental-funded projects addressing bat conservation, the national project on barbastelle conservation ("Schutz und Förderung der Mopsfledermaus") held a conference as part of its closing event in November 2024 and published guidelines on barbastelle conservation.

The project on grey long-eared bats and their feeding ecology in the face of insect decline has closed with an online workshop and a final report, while publications are in progress. Within projects covering the topic of wind energy publications are in review dealing with putative deterring effects of wind energy plants.

The project Batlas is online (https://batlas.info) and new data are being constantly added. BatTrend, which started in 2023 is running and will be extended to include further long-term data on hibernacula and maternity roosts. The project on the action plan for lesser noctules entered its third year and shows encouraging results concerning migration of lesser noctules and its distribution in Germany. In 2024 a project started to study possible effects of floating PV on different biota, inter alia bats.

With the start of the national species recovery programme (nAHP) in 2023 first project-sketches for bat projects have been reviewed and first projects focussing on the conservation of noctule bats in eastern Germany are planned to start in November 2025. Another nationwide project within the nAHP addressing conservation measurement for forest bats will presumably start in February 2026.

HUNGARY:

A wide range of bat conservation activities were carried out in Hungary since the last meeting, including research, practical conservation and education (public awareness raising). A brief overview of these is presented below.

Research activities:

- A countrywide monitoring programme was launched in 2004 which includes the long-term survey on the trends in bat populations in order to introduce effective conservation management based on the collected data. The programme involves regular monitoring of hibernating sites (e.g., caves, mine tunnels), summer roosts in buildings (e.g., churches, castles), swarming sites, regularly checking of the roosts of Schreibers' bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) and monitoring of the impact of different bat conservation activities. The programme is still ongoing. In 2024, 49 different hibernating sites (caves or mine tunnels), 141 roosts in buildings, 9 swarming sites and 9 roosts of Schreiber's bat were surveyed.
- More and more solar farms are deployed in Hungary and their ecological effects are largely unknown. Behavioural experiments proved previously that smooth surfaces, such as solar panels, act as sensory traps for bats and insects, increasing collision risk, and suggesting that solar farms may affect local ecosystems in a complex way. The effect of solar farms were tested in Hungary using bioacoustics methods.
- The effects of different silviculture methods in hilly areas were examined using acoustic methods.
- Large-scale virological investigation of the Hungarian bats is an ongoing project. This includes many aspects of virology, from screening for new pathogens to studying the effects of different ecological and behavioural traits on bat viromes.
- In the frame of the OneBAT Horizon program a detailed virological and ecological investigation of certain Schreibers' bat populations is ongoing. This includes studying the disease ecology of three main viral groups: coronaviruses, lyssaviruses and filoviruses (*Lloviu cuevavirus*), the study of bat-virus interactions, and host ecology (movements, population health, etc).

- Microclimate is measured at 15 different sites to assess and evaluate the impact of climate change on bats in maternity roosts.
- Between 17th and 19th October 2025 the XVth Hungarian Bat Research and Protection conference was held in Szokolya (Királyrét). 20 presentations and three workshops were held during the three days.
- The Bat Conservation Expert Group was established in 2024 under the coordination of the Department for Nature Conservation within the Ministry of Agriculture. It serves as an advisory body with consultative and proposal-making authority, supporting professional coordination and oversight of bat conservation activities in Hungary. The group generally plans to hold two meetings per year to discuss key issues, develop recommendations, and strengthen cooperation among stakeholders.
- Between 2023 and 2024 at least 20 new forest biotopes were discovered supported by two Visegrad Fund projects ("*Help Bats in V4*" and "*Urban Bats*") in the Pilis-Visegrad Mts., Budai Mts., Budapest and its surroundings.
- Leiser's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) as forest indicators played an important role in the research activities. Further, local and regional migration of the Leiser's bat was examined by regular mist-netting and banding actions.

<u>Conservation activities:</u>

- At least 14 summer roosts in buildings were cleaned and maintained for bats.
- The renovation of churches reached an enormous number, and this threatens many bat colonies. Progress has been made in regulating the renovation of buildings, but these rules are often neglected. Only a few buildings have been renovated in a suitable way. A detailed information sheet was collated to introduce good practice in renovating buildings.
- A significant number of buildings are renovated and insulated in Hungary and in some cases, the need of exclusion of bats arose. Also, in some cases, the owners of houses want to get rid of disturbing bat colonies. A guideline was released to detail the recommendations for the appropriate exclusion of bats from buildings.
- Numerous bat boxes and other artificial roosts were placed in forests and on buildings to mitigate the loss of roosting places (e.g. within the framework of a SK-CZ-PL-HU Visegrad Fund (consortium) project ("*Help Bats in V4*" and "*Urban Bats*") in the Pilis-Visegrad Mts., Budai Mts., Budapest and its surroundings).
- In 2024, the bat rescue work continued in several rehabilitation centres in Hungary.

- The building of wind farms will be eased in the future in Hungary, hence information about their possible negative effects on bats and bat populations are collected and presented to the stakeholders.

Public awareness raising activities:

- International Bat Nights were organized by national park directorates and NGOs.
- Permanent and temporary poster and photo exhibitions were organised by national park directorates and the BirdLife Hungary Mammal Working Group.
- More than 50 presentations and lectures were held in schools and other places.
- News about bats (e.g. *'The bat species of the month'* series) and different guidelines on the protection of bats (e.g. how to save bats, how to make bat boxes) are published regularly on the website of BirdLife Hungary (https://mme.hu/deneverek-altalanos).
- A webcam was installed in an attic to show the life of a bat colony.
- In recent years, within the framework of the *"Biodiversity Days"* organised by Hungarian Biodiversity-research Society, special field courses were held for students and the public of interest. In those sessions, protection of bats and the importance of bat research played a key role.

IRELAND:

The National Bat Monitoring Programme is being managed for the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) by Bat Conservation Ireland under a 5-year contract. The current contract runs until 2027. The Programme involves four separate projects: a car transect survey, a waterways survey, brown long-eared bat roost monitoring and lesser horseshoe bat roost monitoring. The report from the last contract can be accessed here:
https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/IWM137.pdf

A new scheme to monitor woodland bats (*Myotis mystacinus* and *M. nattereri*) is also underway:
https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/Woodland2023FinalReport_April2024_V2.pdf

A new research project to examine whether Irish bats are migratory has started. This project will be run from the Atlantic Technical University with funding from NPWS and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. The project will examine the uses of isotope analyses and genetics for assessing whether Irish species cross the Irish sea to the UK or to the continent, in particular *P. nathusii* and *N. leisleri.* Offshore windfarms are seen as an essential element of a sustainable energy future for Ireland and consequently wind turbines are expected to expand significantly in number in Irish coastal waters over the coming years.

Active implementation of the Species Action Plan for the Lesser horseshoe bat continues, with good participation from all stakeholders. Modelling of landscape connectivity for the species across its range has been done and also training courses for local authorities and forestry staff have been organised, as well as repairing and building roosts for the species at strategic locations:
https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/Lesser%20Horseshoe%20Bat%20Species%20Action%20Plan%202022-2026.pdf
Ireland submitted its Article 17 report under the EU Habitats Directive in July 2025. The lesser horseshoe bat was assessed, again, as Unfavourable inadequate. The other eight species were all assessed as Favourable. The report on all species will be published shortly here: https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports

ITALY:

A national monitoring programme has been launched across all 26 national parks, funded by the EU through the Ministry of Environment as part of the National Recovery Plan. The project focuses on several animal groups, including bats. For bats, monitoring activities include roost surveys, mist-netting, and acoustic recordings. The working group includes academics and consultants, with the ultimate goal of developing a monitoring strategy that park personnel can implement in the future.
Ongoing studies of bats in the Sicilian Channel are shedding light on their biogeography on the islands in the channel and helping to identify key conservation priorities.

LUXEMBOURG:

Luxembourg has finished reporting under article 17 from the Habitat Directive with assessing trends of national bat populations. Cause of concern is that the conservation status of former common species, such as *P. pipistrellus*, has now to be considered as U1 unfavorable-inadequate. This means that over 75 percent of the actual 22 bat species of Luxembourg are in an unfavorable or bad conservation status, and that urban species seem to be more affected by biodiversity decline than forest dwelling ones. Whether this is due to the lack of roosting sites or reduction of hunting habitats and insect decline within and in direct proximity of the urban areas still has to be determined.
A cooperative protection project on underground habitats (habitat 8310) together with the National Natural History Museum and the local speological society GSL is ongoing.
IBN was organised on 5th July 2025 in the village of Lasauvage.
First wildlife towers, as potential bat roosting sites, were installed in the Eastern part of the

country by the Nature and Water Administration (ANF).

In Luxembourg's last nursing colony of *R. ferrumequinum* in the Upper Moselle valley, after two years of renovation work and problems of predation by garden dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*), the numbers have again increased to a maximum of 200 female *R. ferrumequinum* and over 1,000 females of *M. emarginatus*.

MONTENEGRO:

During the past reporting period, significant progress has been made in species mapping, environmental assessment procedures, and habitat protection initiatives. Montenegro is in the final phase of mapping Natura 2000 species, including bat fauna. The process has been led by the same expert team throughout its duration (since 2019.), ensuring methodological consistency, continuity in fieldwork, and reliable interpretation of results. This long-term engagement has contributed to a coherent and comprehensive dataset on bat species relevant to Natura 2000 designations.

Three Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) were adopted during the reporting period, and all associated field surveys were conducted in full accordance with the EUROBATS Guidelines for Wind Turbines, with specific attention to potential impacts on local and migratory bat populations. These EIAs demonstrate Montenegro's increasing alignment with international standards for protecting bat species in the context of energy development and infrastructure expansion. One EIA report, concerning the Sinjajevina Wind Farm, was annulled after review, as the assessment was found to be non-compliant with EUROBATS Guidelines and failed to meet the required environmental standards. This decision highlights Montenegro's commitment to ensuring that development projects adhere strictly to international conservation obligations.

A revision study is currently underway for the protected area of Magara Cave, one of Montenegro's significant bat roosting sites. The study focuses on at least six bat species present within the cave system and aims to update existing conservation measures, improve long-term protection of critical habitats, and ensure that management strategies reflect current ecological needs and scientific findings.

Montenegro is also actively working on mapping and developing a national database of underground objects, including pits and caves, with a special focus on documenting the fauna present in these habitats. This effort aims to support the long-term protection of subterranean biodiversity and improve the management of sites of importance for bat conservation.

NETHERLANDS:

There are 18 bat species recorded; the first maternity roost of Barbastelle has been discovered in the eastern part of the country, and bat boxes are being installed in cooperation with Christian Giese.

Requirements for enhanced monitoring of European Habitats Directive species are recognized. The Dutch ministry, Statistics Netherlands and the Dutch Mammal Society join forces to focus on bats. The main aim is Annex II species without neglecting Annex IV species.

NEM-VTT, the car-based monitoring scheme for species not being monitored in e.g. (winter/summer) roost counts has been running for more than ten years now. The number of volunteers and therewith the number of transects still increases, resulting in monitoring data on *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *Pipistrellus nathusii* and *Nyctalus noctula* in sub-urban areas.

In urban areas the VleerMUS bike transect method is now at a level where population trends at urban level can be developed.

In 2023, the council of the state ruled that post-insulation of cavity walls of houses can no longer take place without the so-called duty of care for bats. This was always an illegal activity, now also in focus of law enforcement. The hold on post-insulation production puts a stronger than ever focus on bats (and birds) in the legal and conservation context. As a positive outcome for bat conservation, it triggered extensive debate, development of workarounds and innovation on bat survey and conservation techniques. The following points are direct or indirect results of the 2023 council of the state rule:

a. Special field equipment is being developed to allow bats to move out of their roost without the option to return (with so-called exclusion flaps). The scientific data on the efficacy of the exclusion flaps is still to be collected.
b. Mitigation measures for bats are widely being developed (market) and implemented. The measures are not (yet) evidence-based, data collection on the effectiveness is needed.
c. eDNA technology to identify bat roost locations was developed in the course of 2024 and implemented as lawful survey tool. Further development and regulation are still required.
d. Press coverage on bats has increased, with both positive and negative reporting.

To combat the conflict between protection of urban species and post-insulation or other (re)construction, the development of *species management systems* has increased and is required for all urban areas.

To properly survey bats and their roost locations in urban areas a special survey method is developed to cover larger areas.

The increasing demand for information on bats and their requirements resulted in the development of several new expert reviewed government owned bat publications.

PhDs were initiated on pond bat habitat segregation and on the effects of light on bats, with several additional studies ongoing in both areas.

An increasing number of telemetric surveys are being conducted to locate roosts of specifically vulnerable species such as *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Myotis vivesi*, *Myotis dasycneme* for protection measures.

A training and licensing scheme for fieldworkers is being developed and implemented in cooperation with bat ecologists, consultants, and education specialists, including a license certifying bureau.

The number of participants in bat tours and talks (e.g. bat night) keeps increasing, indicating an increase in public awareness. The number of bat volunteers, enthusiasts and consequently amateur fieldworkers is still increasing too.

NORWAY:

There has been a growing awareness of the importance of bats in Norway, accompanied by an increase in bat-related activities across research institutions, NGOs, and public agencies.

- BatLab Norway at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences has developed national guidelines on bats and wind turbines (onshore and offshore) for the Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA).
- NEA has published general information about bats on the agency's website: Flaggermus - miljodirektoratet.no.
- NEA has developed a brochure on bats in churches in collaboration with the Church of Norway, and has supported the translation of the EUROBATS rabies brochure into Norwegian.
- The Norwegian Zoological Society (NZF) has received funding for a part-time bat ambassador (50% position for two years from June 2025).
- A bat tower is being constructed at Vatneleiren military camp in southwest Norway to relocate bats from a barracks; the completion is expected in December 2025.

- Successful relocation of a soprano pipistrelle maternity colony from a storehouse to bat boxes in a location in southeast Norway (Soli Brug) has taken place, in collaboration with the local County Governor.

- Annual hibernation surveys in mines continue, coordinated by the NZF.

- Analysis of 15 years of NZF bat box monitoring in Eastern Norway is ongoing, mainly involving soprano pipistrelle, with one site hosting many Daubenton's bats and occasional records of brown long-eared bat and northern bat.

- Long-term data from a northern bat colony (Jeroen van der Kooij) is being summarised and published.

- First confirmed record of Nathusius' pipistrelle as a wind turbine casualty in Norway was reported, in addition to previous records of soprano pipistrelle, northern bat, and parti-coloured bat.

- Two Motus stations established by NZF have been operational in Trøndelag (mid Norway) for a few years; seven new stations got established along the southwest coast in 2025 by BatLab Norway.

- The bat research group BatLab Norway at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences has been established and is led by Professor Katrine Eldegard. The lab currently includes two PhD students, two postdocs, and one researcher. The group is mainly working on topics related to impacts on bats from wind energy, forestry, and climate change.

- Reed McKay defended her PhD in April 2024 on bat activity and habitat use in boreal forest; one study documented *Barbastella barbastellus* in a boreal forest wind farm, marking the second known location of the species in Norway.

POLAND:

Since AC28, activities continued under the project dedicated to the lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* — "LIFE+ Podkowiec Towers" (which was presented during AC28). The work within the project is ongoing: the first roosting towers for the species have already been completed, and further ones are under construction. In September, a workshop was organised in Baligród (Poland) with participants from Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, and Croatia, as well as with the representatives of the State Forests and environmental protection institutions in Poland.

In 2024, the project *"Active protection of the Western barbastelle at the selected forest areas in Poland"*, carried out by the Polish Society for Bat Protection, was completed. It had been running since 2021. The project's main outcome is the publication of a book in Polish: *"Mopek* *zachodni Barbastella barbastellus. Biologia i ochrona gatunku"* ("The Western Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*: Biology and Species Protection").

During the weekend of 10th –12th January 2025, the 24th International Bat Census took place in the Międzyrzecki Fortified Region (the "Nietoperek" nature reserve and Natura 2000 site). The event was organized by Dr T. Kokurewicz and Dr G. Apoznański. Nietoperek is the largest bat hibernation site in Poland and an important reference point, as bats are among the indicators of climate change. Scientists from ten countries participated: Serbia, Bosnia, Georgia, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Poland, together with researchers and students from the Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences and members of the "Nietoperek" Nature Conservation Society. The overall census result was optimistic — the second-highest count in the history of the study. However, a shift in species composition was observed, showing an increasing presence of thermophilous species (e.g. *Myotis myotis*).

On 27th September 2025, the 8th International Conference "Bats of the Sudetes" was held at Książ Castle near Wałbrzych. This series of meetings has been organised alternately in the three Sudeten countries since 2002. The event brings together scientists, students, and nature enthusiasts from all over Europe and beyond. This year's edition attracted a record number of participants, including attendees from Georgia and the United Kingdom.

In November 2025, the annual 32nd National Bat Research Conference took place, with more than 100 participants and numerous presentations, including those focused on bat conservation.

In 2025, the Polish State Council for Nature Conservation (PROP) issued an official opinion concerning the placement of wind farms in forests, largely devoted to the negative impacts of such investments on bats. The Council is an advisory body to the Minister of Climate and Environment in Poland. The opinion was submitted to the Ministry, and based on the supporting materials, a scientific review paper is currently being prepared.

Also in 2025, the project *"Impact of the European spruce bark beetle (Ips typographus) outbreak on the occurrence and use of spruce and mixed stands by a guild of forest bat species in a European lowland forest (Białowieża Forest)"* was completed. The study was conducted from 2021 to 2025 and funded by the National Centre for Scientific Research (Poland). Preliminary results were presented at the EBRS in Tarragona in August 2024. Two papers based on these results have already been published, and further ones are in preparation. The general conclusion is that the bat assemblage responded positively to structural changes caused by the bark beetle outbreak, with *Barbastella barbastellus* being the main beneficiary. The study suggests conserving standing dead coniferous trees as

important habitats for this species.
In 2025, a new research project was launched by the Forest Research Institute, focusing on modelling the distribution of *Barbastella barbastellus* in Poland. One of its aims is to provide a better basis for the species' conservation.
During the 20th International Bat Research Conference (2025, Australia), Martyna Woltyńska and Monika Breza, students of the Poznań University of Life Sciences, presented the results of their study *"Wooden panels as a cheap and effective bat roost in managed forests"*. They investigated whether simple wooden panels mounted on existing forest infrastructure (wooden buildings and installations) could serve as temporary shelters for bats in managed forests. The wooden panels achieved the highest occupancy rate among all tested designs, making them a promising tool for supporting biodiversity conservation in commercial forests.
A broader overview of NGO activities would be presented by Dr Andrzej Kepel, representative of the "Salamandra" Nature Conservation Society.

ROMANIA:

In the period from May 2024 till November 2025, with the involvement of several bat experts, the new cycle of national bat monitoring under Art. 17 of the Habitats Directive has started. The monitoring is coordinated by the National Cave Research Institute, and, besides caves, it involves all other habitat types in Natura 2000 sites that were designated for bat species. In parallel, several national parks run projects on the implementation of their management plans, with significant bat conservation components. Unfortunately, the destruction or displacement of nursery colonies during church renovations also must be report on, partly also due to unresponsive local authorities. At least two known nurseries of *Myotis myotis*, *Myotis blythii*, *Myotis emarginatus* and *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* were destroyed or displaced in the summer of 2025.
However, NGOs continue their voluntary work to counter or prevent such losses. In the reporting period, the Centre for Bat Research and Conservation finished all conservation activities in frame of the LIFE+ Podkowiec Towers project, coordinated by Poland, specifically the bat-friendly closing of two caves, a protective fence at one cave, blocking access by deepened riverbed at one cave, consolidation of a collapsing mine entrance, and by placing nine information and warning boards at these locations. The CBRC also organised a bat-themed workshop for the staff of Romanian national parks in October 2024, in the frame of the LIFE+ project. In September 2024, CBRC attended the EBRS in Tarragona, with one presentation and one poster. In October 2024 the CBRC organized the 6th edition of the national bat conference, with attendance from five countries (Romania, Moldova, Hungary,

Germany, France). In September 2025, the CBRC organised the International Bat Night in Orșova city, together with the Iron Gates Nature Park, where hundreds of people attended, most of them children. In the reporting period, the CBRC also implemented an education and conservation project together with the Iron Gates Nature Park and was funded by MOL Romania. Several training and educational events took place, about bats and bat conservation, held for caver clubs and scout organisations. Two documentaries also premiered in the reporting period, where the CBRC contributed to bat sequences: the documentary "Wild Transylvania" (created by the Irish company Crossing the Line) and "Bran Castle – in the shadow of predators" (created by a French team under Xavier Lefebvre). These are the first major documentaries with significant elements and educational aspects about Romanian bats, reaching a wide audience. Members and volunteers of the CBRC also undertook extensive fieldwork in 2024 and 2025, to cover areas of Romania that are deficient for bat data. Together with the Myotis Group for Bat Conservation, as well as colleagues from Poland, Germany and the EUROBATS, the CBRC continued its voluntary monitoring of the most important bat roosts and colonies of Romania.

The Wilderness Research and Conservation NGO is currently conducting a thermal insulation monitoring project in Bucharest, called BatWatch. The project is in its second year and offers a platform where the public can report colonies which are being sealed alive in the constructions. At the same time, WRC has spread over 20 bat detectors to the public and has developed a data collection center where bats can be continuously monitored in problematic sites. So far, a sudden decrease in bat activity has been observed where insulations projects begin. The NGO has pushed for bat exclusions in thermal insulation projects, with on the field results. After the release of the best practice guidelines of bats in urban areas, for two years now the authorities have employed bat specialists to check the buildings before insulations, but the implementations of projects are lagging and the surveys become irrelevant. Colonies are still sealed alive due to heavy bureaucracy. New guidelines are being developed with the current accumulated knowledge and experience, pushing the authorities to adequately respect the law and help the constructors deal with these issues in a timely manner. Educational activities are also intensely performed, with bat walks and school talks.

SERBIA:

A collaboration with the authorities of the Deliblato Sands Special Nature Reserve has been established to repair the roof of an abandoned building hosting the most significant maternity colony of *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *Myotis emarginatus* in the Banat region of Serbia. Ringed *R. ferrumequinum* from this roost have been regularly detected in hibernation sites in Romania for almost a decade. The reserve authorities secured initial funds to begin the roof reconstruction, while additional fundraising activities have been temporarily put on hold due to the current political situation in Serbia. During 2024, the first bat monitoring programme within the Kopaonik National Park was launched, which increased the number of known bat species in the park from five to 24. A productive collaboration has been established with the National Park authorities, and continuation of monitoring activities is planned for 2026. In summer 2025, the first nursery colony of *Vespertilio murinus* was confirmed in the north of the country, verifying reproduction of this species in Serbia for the first time. Although there is no official national bat monitoring programme, monitoring of the most important roosts has continued. The International Bat Night was organized jointly by the Institute for Biological Research "Siniša Stanković" (IBISS), the Natural History Museum in Belgrade, and the Wildlife Conservation Society "Mustela." It was held in Belgrade during the last weekend of September, attracting more than 500 participants. Outreach efforts also included media engagement through newspaper articles and TV appearances, which significantly contributed to raising public awareness about bats. Finally, through joint efforts of IBISS and the Natural History Museum in Belgrade, bat rescue and rehabilitation activities in Serbia have continued.

SPAIN:

This is the first time for Spain to officially join the AC meeting as a Party, following the ratification of the Agreement in May 2023 and the formal acceptance in June 2024.

Joining EUROBATS is a big step for Spain. It reflects the country's growing commitment to bat conservation and to working together across borders to protect biodiversity. Spain is excited to be part of this community of experts and practitioners who share a passion for bats and their habitats.

Spain has a decentralised system, so its autonomous communities play a key role in managing species and habitats. At the national level, MITECO — the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge — coordinates efforts, sets basic regulations, and promotes national strategies. Recently, a new inter-administrative working group on bats has been set up, bringing together regional governments, research centres, and conservation NGOs. The goal is to improve coordination, share knowledge, and start building a national bat conservation strategy whose implementation should start next year.

Since joining EUROBATS, MITECO has stepped up its work on bat conservation through several initiatives:

- The *Manual for the Conservation and Monitoring of Forest Bats*, a practical guide for fieldwork and species protection, has been published.
- Technical guidelines to help assess and reduce bat mortality in wind farms — a growing issue in Spain — have been developed. These ones include the *Guidelines for the Assessment and Correction of Bat Mortality in Wind Farms*, based on the best available science.
- All bat species are now included in Spain's national protection lists, ensuring legal safeguards and conservation priority.
- Bat data has been integrated into the National Biodiversity Data Bank, improving access to updated information on distribution and population trends.
- This year, the preparation of the six-year report to the European Commission offered a chance to reassess the conservation status of all bat species in Spain.
- Coordinated monitoring programmes are being promoted — acoustic surveys, roost inspections, habitat assessments — in collaboration with regional authorities, universities, and NGOs.
- Targeted conservation projects, like the assessment of *Myotis capaccinii*, one of Spain's most threatened bat species, are being supported.

All of this reflects a science-based, collaborative approach to bat conservation. Also, the opportunity to work with great organisations such as Spanish Association for the Conservation and Study of Bats (SECEMU) and Center for Ecological Research and Forestry Applications (CREAF), whose expertise has been key in advancing the understanding of bat ecology and threats, is greatly appreciated.

As newcomers to this Committee, Spain is looking forward to contributing to the working groups, exchanging ideas, and learning from all the experts, as there is a lot that can be done together.

SWEDEN:

Bat investigations are conducted at three different levels: within the environmental authorities, by the NGO BatLife Sweden, and as research at the Universities.

The authorities (The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the County Administration, Swedish Species Information Centre) focus mainly on:

- Reporting to EU according to article 17 within the Habitats Directive.
- New updated version of the Swedish red-list.
- Continuation of the Swedish monitoring programme. There is national and regional monitoring at about 70 permanent sites surveyed twice a year during summer. In cooperation

with BatLife Sweden, eight permanent sites are being monitored, collecting data during the whole year.

- Continuation of the citizen-science reporting system and validation. To make this system reliable, a validation group has been formed with 20 bat experts reviewing recordings and other observations.
- Giving advice concerning bat conservation in combination with exploitation, forestry, etc.
- A bat specialist group with representatives from the county administration, the Swedish Biodiversity Centre, and Swedish Species Information Centre has been formed to support the authorities with advice in monitoring programmes and validation of bat observations.
- A special programme for the rarest species which are difficult to cover in ordinary monitoring programmes (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus, Myotis bechsteinii, Nyctalus leisleri*).
- Development of new survey standard in cooperation with consultant companies and the University of Agricultural Sciences.
- A new action programme for bat conservation.
- New standard for bat surveys.
- New red-list of bats in Sweden.

The NGO BatLife Sweden focuses mainly on (see also separate report):

- Education, e.g. species identification based on sound and morphology, trapping and handling of bats and survey methods.
- Conferences. The Swedish bat conference will be organised from 7th till 9th November 2025, with 240 participants. In August 2025, the yearly summer conference with field excursions was arranged.
- Advice related to impact assessment.
- Local activities and excursions to raise bat awareness.
- Development of bat surveys.
- International cooperation, e.g. with BatLife Europe.

The bat research in Sweden (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Stockholm University) focuses mainly on:

- Studies on the effect of land-use change on bats particularly in relation to forestry.
- Metabarcoding studies investigating bat diet.
- Morphological change in bats due to climate and land-use change.
- The effects of light pollution and skyglow on bats.
- Environmental pollution (mercury methylation and pesticides).

- Mitigation in infrastructure projects to increase connectivity.
- The effects of wind-power plants on bats.
- Bat viruses.
- The research is supported by the Transportation Agency, the Energy Agency, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, WWF and the Swedish research council (Formas).

SWITZERLAND:

This report only includes what has been carried out at the national level and mainly relates to national strategies and support to the regional sections in charge of protection.
After having functioned, for several decades, with a West and an East centre, bat protection in Switzerland has finalised the ultimate steps towards InfoBat, the Swiss centre for data and information on bats, that will be operational in 2026. This project is supported by two institutions, the Swiss Foundation for bat protection and the Museum of natural history of Geneva. It benefits from a financial support from the Federal Government. This administrative fusion is strengthened by the centralisation of all bat data into a single national database, connected to the national and international species data servers.
Below is a selection of some additional projects that were carried at the national level:
Development of services, recommendations, and tools for bat protection:

- A GIS layer has been published with models of flight corridors around a selection of roosts of national and regional importance. This layer is mainly used by the public authorities within the framework of the "ecological infrastructure". It is available for download on an open webpage.
(https://www.infospecies.ch/fr/projets/infrastructure-ecologique.html#geodata)
- National priority species: Switzerland implements a system to support the protection of biodiversity by elaborating a list of priority species at the national level. For bats, 21 out of the 30 indigenous species are present in the list.
(https://www.news.admin.ch/fr/newnsb/4Gcq4wCObUH5SlRVVRSKR)

Examples for operations and public relations:

- A flyer "Sanitising buildings while protecting birds and bats" has been published with the Federal Government and the Swiss Ornithological Institute in three languages. It highlights the ideal procedures to follow and redirects to the network of experts available nation-wide.
- A section about bats has been created within a permanent exhibit about animals in human environments at the Papiliorama (more than 300,000 visitors annually).

- The offer of courses and workshops addressed to different publics is ongoing: basic courses (for beginners) and specialized courses (e.g. bat handling, bat identification, bat rehabilitation, public relations, excursions, school workshops, or for professionals such as architects, pest controllers or forest managers).
- Bat night: more than 2,500 persons took part in the events organised nationwide.
- The National congress of bat protection took place in Bern. Some 150 persons attended to celebrate the 40-year anniversary of the bat network.
- A short movie producted by the Geneva antenna has been translated in German and Italian. The movie explains the impacts of light pollution on bats and presents possible solutions. It is free to use.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ellnL90cwAk)

NON-PARTY RANGE STATES

ARMENIA:

Bat specialists' group from Yerevan State University is continuing to develop bat research and conservation activities in Armenia. The following has been done:

1. Scientific Research and Monitoring

- Long-Term Monitoring of Maternity Colonies

Three *Plecotus macrobullaris* maternity colonies continue to be monitored, with acoustic and observational data collected. This ongoing work contributes to understanding population dynamics, breeding patterns, and habitat use.

- Bats ecoto-endo parasite Project

A research project on bat endo-ectoparasites is currently ongoing, aiming to document parasite diversity, host–parasite relationships, and possible pathogen transmission risks among Armenia's bat species.

- Bat Acoustic Monitoring – International Collaboration

Wind farm pre-construction assessment has been done in Armenia.

2. Education, Public Engagement and Scientific Communication

- University Exhibitions Featuring Bats

Yerevan State University has organised BioExpo and several science exhibitions, where bat conservation was prominently represented. These events increased public awareness about bat diversity, ecological roles, and current conservation challenges.

- Student Capacity Building – Erasmus+ Cooperation with Italy

A new Armenian–Italian Erasmus+ collaboration has been launched together with the University of Naples. This program will provide academic exchange opportunities, joint research activities, and student training on bat ecology, monitoring methods, and conservation science.

3. Upcoming Scientific Events in Armenia

- COP17 – Bat-Related Scientific Engagement

Armenia will host the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2026 and bat conservation will be represented through scientific outreach and awareness activities. A special focus will be placed on integrating bat conservation into biodiversity policies and youth engagement.

- Eastern European Bat Research Conference in 2026

Armenia will host the Eastern European Bat Research Conference next year, bringing together researchers, conservationists, and EUROBATS partners from the region. This event will serve as a major platform for scientific exchange, strengthening regional cooperation and showcasing Armenia’s growing role in bat research.

- Bioacoustics Workshop will be held after the conference

The workshop will gather regional and international experts to discuss monitoring standards, data analysis methods, and the integration of acoustic research into conservation planning across Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

AZERBAIJAN:

Between 2022 and 2025, there was no progress regarding the ratification of the EUROBATS Agreement or the Convention on Migratory Species by the Government of Azerbaijan. Following the structural reorganisation of several ministries, including the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR), the issue of ratification was not brought to the agenda of the responsible authority, MENR. Nevertheless, meetings continued to hold with environmental authorities to discuss possible next steps. At present, the focus is on the CMS rather than the EUROBATS Agreement, as it is viewed as the initial stage toward further progress.

From the monitoring perspective, between 2022 and 2025, several ESIA baseline surveys were conducted to assess bat populations, activity dynamics and potential impacts associated with proposed wind turbine and transmission line installation projects which are in the development stage in the county. The first ESIA baseline survey on bats in Azerbaijan related to wind turbines was done in 2020. In 2025, the first modern wind turbines became operational, marking the start of the first operational-stage monitoring surveys. Later that year, in September 2025, at the request of the EBRD, the first "post-construction bat fatality monitoring" surveys were initiated.

Over the period of 2023-2025 surveys, several new hibernation sites of certain bat species were discovered. Species such as *Vespertilio murinus*, *Nyctalus leisleri*, and *Nyctalus lasiopterus* were identified both acoustically and physically, particularly during the migration period. These species remain rare in Azerbaijan; for instance, *N. leisleri* had previously been recorded only once, in 1939, by Kuzyakin. The presence of *Nyctalus lasiopterus* was still predicted only based on the global range.

No public awareness sessions were organized by NGOs in 2025, and the last Bat Night event took place in 2024. Hopefully, the situation will improve in 2026.

OBSERVERS

Armenian Association of Mammologists:

Over the past year, the Armenian Association of Mammalogists NGO has implemented a series of conservation, education, research, and awareness–raising activities dedicated to bat protection across Armenia.

Below is an overview of the key achievements and future plans:

1 Public Awareness & Education

- International Bat Night – Yerevan

The International Bat Night event was held in Yerevan's Hrazdan Canyon, engaging schoolchildren of different ages, university students, and members of the public. Participants learned about bats through mist-netting demonstrations and acoustic recording sessions, fostering interest in bat ecology and conservation.

- Educational Seminars in Schools

A number of educational seminars were delivered in schools across the country, providing students with scientific knowledge about bats, their role in ecosystems, the threats they face, and the importance of their conservation. These sessions helped dispel myths and promote positive attitudes towards bats.

2 Research and Monitoring Activities

The members of the NGO together with bat working group of Yrevan State University have implemented several research and monitoring projects in Armenia.

3 Capacity Building and Collaboration

- Cooperation with the Armenian Speleological Society

A cooperation agreement was established between the Armenian Association of Mammalogists and the Arm Speleo Network NGO. Joint training sessions were developed for speleologists and tourist guides to enhance their knowledge of cave-dwelling bat species and promote responsible behavior during cave visits, minimising disturbance to bat colonies.

4 Future Plans – Engagement in COP17

- Armenia to Host COP17 in 2026

With Armenia hosting the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity next year, the Armenian Association of Mammalogists will actively contribute to bat-related conservation awareness during the event.

Association for Bat Conservation 'Tragus', Croatia:

Tragus has continued monitoring of bat fauna at Kamenjak significant landscape, also a Natura 2000 site, with a known maternity roost site with 300 - 500 individuals *(Myotis myotis/blythii, M. capaccinii, M. emarginatus, Miniopterus schreibersii, Rhinolophus euryale, R. ferrumequinum*). For the first time, Lesser mouse ear bats from that roost have been tagged to study their movements and to propose management plan for the protection of important habitats for bats in the site. In the Brijuni National Park, where surveys have continually been conducted in the last 15-year period, Greater noctules presence has been confirmed again. For the first time Greater noctule individuals have been tagged with SigFox, VHF and GPS/UHF tags, in collaboration and with the support from Dr Christian Voigt. A forest dwelling species survey has been implemented in Maksimir city park in Zagreb, and it is planned to install custom made bat boxes in areas with significant forest habitat loss where trees were damaged due to a storm. At Grabovača Cave Park, two Natura 2000 cave sites have been monitored during all seasons to determine seasonality of the usage by bats. Tragus has also been involved in monitoring of three maternity colonies in churches in Krapina-Zagorje County. Traditionally, Tragus continues supporting International Bat Night events, including in National Park Brijuni, on cape Kamenjak, Krapina and for the first time an event has also been organised in Zadar. These events are organised by the public institutions responsible for protected areas and Tragus members provide lectures about bats, guided tours with bat-detectors, presentations of bat research methods and take part in creative activities for children.

Tragus is implementing bat monitoring during the construction phase and the usage phase of a new highway in the coastal part of Croatia. It is the first time road construction has been monitored with the application of DEFRA guidelines in Croatia. All field activities scheduled for the construction phase have been completed in 2025, and further monitoring will continue after the road is opened for use. The area through which the road passes is a part of a Natura 2000 site tied to an important bat roost (Zagorska peć cave). Monitoring of the populations in the cave will be conducted during the use phase of road construction monitoring.

French Mammal Society (SFEPM):

The French Mammal Society federates the NGOs for bat study and conservation in 17 French regions, including the overseas. In 2025, 11 working groups have been active.

Several short notes to alert about the threats of human activities on bats have been published in the scope of wind turbines and insulation work.

A list of known roosts for the three Noctules (greater, common and lesser) has been compiled and national maps have been released. This now allows the French Mammal Society to produce maps of the known roosts of 25 species and five species groups at the national scale. A work about the updated prioritisation of French roosts according to the species they host and their size is ongoing.

Moreover, a national network has been formed to centralise bat carcasses collected anywhere in France, particularly at wind turbines. In the past, many carcasses were thrown away, and cases of misidentification were common. One of the objectives is to use genetic analyses to confirm species found at wind turbines and to make their carcasses available for scientific studies.

In 2025, two regional bat meetings took place, for a total of 290 participants.

Finally, 402 events have been registered for the International Bat Night this year.

French Museum of Natural History (MNHM):

The CESCO laboratory at the French Museum of Natural History hosts several bat researchers and their students. The MNHN is involved in the facilitation of the citizen science programme, Vigie-Chiro, since 2006, which monitors bat populations using acoustic recordings. Recently, population trends became available for new species, including the Western Barbastelle and the European free-tailed bat. The MNHN also facilitates the training of bat mist-netting in France, called CACCHI. Since 2013, more than 600 persons followed a theoretical training. 99 trainees participated in the field session after a training of several years, and 80 obtained their habilitation to capture bats. This year, the first national database for mistnetting data became operational. It is based on DB-Chiro, an open-source project for bat databases used by several NGOs for bat study and conservation in France, mostly for roost monitoring.

Several research projects are ongoing at the MNHN concerning bats, particularly in the topics of wind turbines, agriculture, solar panels, migration, and the development of methods for the passive acoustic monitoring of bats. The project Bat migration routes in Europe is still ongoing, with the goal of revealing hotspots of activity in Europe for migrating bats thanks to the collection of raw acoustic recordings collected by dozens of European partners. The project has recently made progress in the development of methods to standardise acoustic recordings obtained with recorders of different sensitivities and the next step is to process the raw recordings collected up to now. Bat migration routes in Europe uses data collected by the project Migratlane, also coordinated by the MNHN. Migratlane collects acoustic recordings in the Atlantic and in the Channel to better understand bat activity offshore. The project APOCOPE analyses bat mortality data computed from several hundreds of post-construction monitoring studies in France.

Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Germany:

Over the past year, IZW has continued its research on migratory bats in collaboration with Professor Pētersons from Latvia.

The IZW has contributed to the offshore bat migration project of the NABU Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; a project financed by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. The state of the knowledge was presented by the IZW during the Conference on Wind Energy and Wildlife Conflict in Montpellier.

The project about the efficacy of replacement roosts during insulation measures went into its second phase, with funding received from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. This work is part of a collaboration with the NABU Rheinland-Pfalz.

The IZW has co-organized the NABU bat expert meeting in April 2025, with almost 400 participants.

The IZW has co-authored fact sheets about migratory bats and the wind energy-bat conflict as part of its contribution to the Renewable Energy Task Force of the CMS. Furthermore, the IZW has co-organized and contributed to a workshop on the wind energy-bat conflict, with an emphasis on efficient mitigation schemes in various geographic regions.

The IZW has created a list of migratory bat species to be included in the revised Annex I and II for submission to an upcoming CMS COP.

The IZW has also presented the EUROBATS guidelines on light pollution (Publication Series No. 8) and the guidelines on the wind energy-bat conflict (Publication Series No. 6) in Taiwan.

Lastly, the IZW has published various papers on bat protection, specifically on the wind energy–bat conflict (Katzner et al., 2025; Merlet et al., 2025; Scholz et al., 2025a), light pollution (Reusch et al., 2025), forest management (Scholz et al., 2025b), urbanisation (Scholz et al., 2025c) and the impact of climate change on the geographic distribution of bats (Kravchenko et al., 2025; Nouioua et al., 2025).

Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Germany:

NABU Germany continues its various activities on communication and education on bats, their ecology and needs for protection. The homepage offers a variety of advice on bats for the public, ranging from information on biology and ecology to the newest scientific findings interesting to a large public. Also, the so-called "Bat Hotline" can be found on the homepage. This helpline was established in 2016 and is continuously being a great success story with usually more than 3,000 instances of advice given per year on different topics concerning bats and humans.

A common problem of the interaction between humans and bats is concerning species conservation at buildings (birds and bats). A NABU project is giving detailed advice for planners and architects as well as house owners by offering a brochure to solve the most current problems. The project on "bat friendly houses" is continuing to be pursued in several Länder. This project aims to acknowledge efforts of house owners enhancing or protecting bat roost in their buildings.

A further project is giving information on light pollution and its effects on insects, birds and bats. Advice is given how to reduce and avoid negative effects on those protected species, taking into account the Publication Series No. 8 on bats and lightening projects.

The main event to celebrate the International Bat Night in 2025 took place in August in Mayen (Rhineland-Palatinate). With more than 550 participants, the nocturnal observation of swarming bats at this exceptional winter and swarming site of national importance (more than 50,000 bats out of 17 species hibernating in this underground basalt quarry), many events for children and guided walks through the overground area made this bat night an overwhelming success. A further two hundred smaller and local bat night events were held by the local NABU groups all over Germany.

The NABU national bat congress was held in Berlin, Zitadelle Spandau, from 11th till 13th April 2025 (in collaboration with the Leibnitz Institute for Zoo and wildlife research, Berlin). 420 participants attended 36 presentations, two workshops were organised and 19 posters displayed.

Bat experts of the NABU attend meetings of national Competence Centre for Nature Protection and Energy transition KNE. Controversial discussions show the conflict between climate protection and species conservation.

NABU is a member of Bat Life Europe.

Polish Society for Nature Conservation "Salamandra":

Polish non-governmental organisations are currently implementing several projects concerning bats, two of which deserve particular mention:

1. The “Bat Towers” Programme– implemented within the framework of the “Podkowiec Plus” project, co-financed by the EU LIFE Fund and coordinated by the Polish Society of Friends of Nature “pro Natura” – was presented at the last year’s Advisory Committee meeting. The first towers have already been erected and are increasingly being occupied by bats representing several species.
2. The Polish Society for Nature Conservation "Salamandra" is carrying out, among other initiatives, a large project entitled “Nocek” (meaning *Myotis*), co-financed under the European Funds for Infrastructure, Climate and Environment 2021-2027 Programme. Among the many actions implemented within this project, two are particularly noteworthy:

- The round-the-clock, year-round Bat Helpline has met very high and continuously increasing demand. Currently, six consultants are employed to operate the service. During the last three months alone – from August to October 2025 – the consultants handled over 2,500 phone calls related to approximately 1,500 individual cases.
- “Bat-Friendly Home” programme is a new initiative aiming at promoting awareness that the presence of bats in buildings is common, poses no health or safety risks in Europe, and—with the application of appropriate measures—such coexistence can be friendly and mutually beneficial. Homeowners who host bats can register their houses through a dedicated online platform and mark them with special plaques displaying the programme’s logo, house number, and a QR code linking to the website. Salamandra also provides free expert and technical assistance in cases where bats cause any inconvenience.

Salamandra has also recently completed, under commission from the General Directorate for Environmental Protection (GDOŚ), the development of national guidelines for assessing the impact of onshore wind farms on bats. These guidelines are expected to be released for public consultation in November 2025. Other national guidelines—concerning the assessment of impacts of linear infrastructure projects on bats—are currently being developed, also under commission from GDOŚ.

Significant progress has been made in Poland regarding bat rehabilitation centres. A few years ago, only a handful of such centres accepted bats for care. Currently, 55 centres are officially registered, and an additional five operate under derogation decisions. This represents a substantial increase. These centres are managed by a variety of entities, including private, governmental, and local authorities. Grassroots efforts are now being undertaken to improve and standardise the quality of assistance provided to bats across these facilities. In this regard, EUROBATS guidelines would be extremely valuable and helpful.

Spanish Bat Association (SECEMU):

SECEMU would like to highlight the following tasks undertaken during the period 2024/2025:

- The European Bat Research Symposium (EBRS) was hosted in Tarragona (Catalonia) during the summer of 2024 (2-6 September). A total of 402 participants from 50 countries attended the symposium, presenting 165 oral communications and 101 posters. The symposium's photo gallery is available online at: https://photos.app.goo.gl/7f8fuynjD7fonKsa9.
Several discussion panels and workshops were organised during the symposium. Dina Dechmann, Vanessa Mata, Winifred Frick and Orly Razgour offered excellent plenary talks. Peter Lina, Carlos Ibáñez, and Toni Arrizabalaga were awarded honorific recognitions for their contributions to bat research and conservation. The 1st Edition of the EBRS Bat Photo Contest was organised, and all photos are displayed in the online gallery. Four post-conference workshops were held by international participants. Finally, it was decided that Poland will be the next host for the EBRS! [LINK]
- The Annual Spanish Bat Society conferences took place in December 2024, with more than 100 participants in Andalucía. [LINK]
- The preparation of the Atlas of Spanish Bats officially began in 2023 and is expected to be finalised by the end of 2025. Species distribution maps will be updated through captures, acoustic surveys, and roost censuses, and species conservation statuses will be assessed in accordance with the IUCN criteria.
- The working group on wind farms has conducted several studies under the umbrella of the MITERD initiative, including assessments to determine the permanence of carcasses, acoustic activity levels at regular distances from the turbines, and overall mortality rates.
- Several members of the society will contribute to the preparation of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Bats, a project that will take place between 2025 and 2026.
- The bat recovery and rehabilitation working group organised an online course with more than 100 participants at the end of 2024. More recently, a new protocol has been prepared to improve the reunification of mother bats and their pups [LINK].

- Regarding the educational initiatives, tens of 'bat-night' events and many other activities have been organised across the country, either coordinated by SECEMU or by local research and conservation groups.
- ADENEX has awarded the Spanish Bat Society for its role in bat conservation [LINK]
- The *Journal of Bat Research & Conservation*, published by the Spanish Bat Society, has published the 17th and 18th issues (2024-25) with a total of 8 manuscripts in each issue. All delegates are highly encouraged to publish their studies and actively contribute to the journal: https://secemu.org/en/journal/.
- The Bat Monitoring Programme (www.batmonitoring.org), as an online tool and research initiative, has been widely improved, covering many more areas and species. The tool has been designed to be efficient in all the countries included in the EUROBATS Agreement and is currently fully functional and operational. It represents a valuable tool for storing and handling bat research data and monitoring counts, as well as calculating population trends. The services include a repository for data from capture sessions, roost counts (both underground and overground), passive acoustic monitoring, bat box inspections, and waterway surveys.
- The Great Migration book, published by EUROBATS, has been translated into Spanish and published online [LINK]
- Many members collaborated with the Noctule trackers project led by Dina Dechmann and Edwuard Hurme, from the Max Planck Institute, to study the migration of the three present noctule species across Europe.
- Many other scientific projects from independent research teams are taking place, from establishing monitoring programmes using Citizen Science, to specific marking projects of forest-dwelling species like *Nyctalus lasiopterus*, etc. If more specific information is required, please contact the SECEMU secretariat by email.

BatLife Sweden:

BatLife Sweden is a non-profit organisation consisting now of 400 members. BatLife Sweden's purpose is to increase interest and spread knowledge about bats and to contribute to their conservation. As in previous years, the majority of the work in BatLife Sweden is carried out by volunteers in its nine working groups. There is a new working group dedicated to Forests and it recently translated the EUROBATS Bats and Forestry leaflet into Swedish. BatLife Sweden's other groups work with Taxonomy and Morphology, Species Monitoring, Bat Boxes, Inventory methods, Swedish Bat Conference, International Collaboration, Local Activities, and Consultations. The Consultations working group receives many consultation

requests for development projects (e.g. wind and solar projects) and has been very active in providing responses.
During 2024/25, BatLife Sweden organised several courses in bat morphology, sound analysis, bat handling for professionals and a series of workshops in R programming language. Furthermore, the association organized a summer workshop focusing on sharing knowledge and practicing different survey techniques. It also had its annual bat conference in Helsingborg (the Swedish Bat Conference), the fourth in the series with focused theme of bats and forest management. It ran over three days in November with around 40 lectures (in Swedish and English) and attracted 140 attendees from all over Europe with invited lectures from Finland, Norway, Netherlands, UK and France. The 2025 conference will be held in Västerås in November 2025 with 250 attendees. BatLife Sweden also continues to engage with international projects during the biennium. This includes several volunteers from the association participating in the Swedish-Finnish project Kvarken bats, which studies the migration routes of *Pipistrellus nathusii* in the northern Baltic Sea.

BatLife Europe:

Since the last AC meeting, the organisation has completed its three-year strategy outlining its future aims and objectives. In order to increase its capacity within BatLife Europe, a LIFE operating grant in 2024 was applied for. The application was unsuccessful, but constructive feedback was received that would help with future applications. During 2024/5 BatLife Europe continued its successful webinar series with webinars on wind energy and light pollution on bats. The citizen science project The Noctule Count has continued to collect data on common noctules in autumn across Europe. During summer 2025 BatLife Europe partner organisations voted for the Bat of the Year 2026-27 and the winner will be announced publically in the beginning of December. The association will soon prepare infographics, postcards and a fact sheet to share with its partners and distribute on social media. It has also been active in providing letters of support for its partner organisations regarding development projects with potential negative impacts on bats. Furthermore, it has responded to a number of EU consultations including the open consultation on the proposed changes to LIFE funding.

Mammal Conservation Europe:

Mammal Conservation Europe has continued to expand its membership over the past year, and now includes four NGOs specifically focused on bats as well as Bat Life Europe. It co-organised the 9th European Congress of Mammalogy in April 2025. The meeting included

15 presentations on bats and a workshop on the conservation of woodland specialist species. This workshop brought together participants working not only on bats but also other species such as small mustelids, highlighting potential synergies and conflicts between woodland management strategies for different species. Mammal Conservation Europe is continuing work on this topic, with the objective of producing a review article and action plan over the next twelve months.

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), UNITED KINGDOM:

Since the last AC BCT has published the latest National Bat Monitoring Programme trends. While the longer-term trends (from the baseline year of 1999) show that population trends for five bat species in Great Britain have increased and six remain stable, short-term trends suggest fewer increases and some emerging declines, particularly in specific regions.
BCT has published guidance on Bats and Large-Scale Housing Maintenance Projects Guidance for England. The guidance is designed to advise property owners, ecologists, architects and Natural England on how to take bats into account when managing extensive housing repairs/maintenance.
BCT, the University of the West of England, and the University of Stirling have completed a Natural England-funded project on the impacts of offshore wind farms on bats. The final report, Assessing migration of bat species and interactions with offshore wind farms, is now published: NECR562 Edition 1 Assessing migration of bat species and interactions with offshore wind farms - NECR562.
Research from the National Bats in Churches Study and the Church Bat Detectives, part of the Bats in Churches partnership project (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund) was published last month in the British Ecological Society's People & Nature journal (Understanding bats in English churches: A citizen science approach - Boothby - People and Nature - Wiley Online Library). The research reveals that half of all Church of England churches are home to bats. In older churches that rises to nearly eight in ten.
BCT has now published the 'Let's talk about bats, people and health' communications toolkit. It aims to provide engaging, accurate and science-based information about bats and diseases, using effective storytelling to tackle the increase in misinformation and misuse of research findings in relation to bats and diseases in the UK and internationally. It is available in English and Spanish on the BCT website: Bats & health communication guide - Bats and health - Bat Conservation Trust.

5. **Secretariat Report**

Ms. Domazetović referred to the written report available on the EUROBATS website as Doc.EUROBATS.AC29.4 and continued to highlight only the main points.

a) Outreach, publications, and new EUROBATS website

Ms. Domazetović mentioned that EUROBATS had a new website. The Secretariat speeded up the launch of the website to be able to use it for the online registration for AC29. It was a safer way of sharing documents than the previous way of sending them by email. The website had a layout that was harmonised over the entire Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Family and could help with the visibility of the Agreement. It still had several bugs and mistakes that had to be fixed, and Ms. Domazetović mentioned that if such mistakes were spotted, they should be communicated to the Secretariat. The next step would be to expand EUROBATS' presence on social media platforms, but this would be tackled once the work on the website was completed. The new website would also be used as a platform for IBN announcements. One major improvement was the possibility to collectively upload IBN event announcements for big organisers. Ms. Domazetović invited the delegates to try this option out and spread the word about it.

Speaking about increasing visibility, Ms. Domazetović mentioned that the Global Union of Bat Diversity Networks (GBatNet) had suggested 2027 as the Year of the Bat and had invited the Secretariat to participate in this initiative. After the preliminary contact, the initiative was put on hold.

The Executive Secretary also thanked Dr Suren Gazaryan from the EUROBATS Secretariat as well as the representatives of the EUROBATS IWG on Bats and Wind Turbines, Drs Fiona Mathews and Christian Voigt, for their participation in a webinar organised by the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ). The audience was big and interested in the EUROBATS Wind Turbine Guidelines and the implementation as well as the scientific research behind it. The presenters' contributions highlighted the Guidelines as a leading example of policy translated into practice.

Ms. Domazetović also thanked the Chair of the Advisory Committee as well as Ms. Tine Meyer-Cords from the Secretariat for using the 16th Meeting of the Federal Bat Committee (BFA) of the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), held in April 2025 in Berlin, to present the EUROBATS Agreement through a poster.

Also, the entire Secretariat team contributed to the English translation of the film "The Project "Protecting and Promoting the Barbastelle Bat in Germany" - Results and Actions, part III". This project was a joint initiative of the FLEDERMAUS Foundation, the Naturstiftung David, the regional branches of NABU in Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony, and the University of Greifswald. The link to the film was available on the EUROBATS website.

Referring to the EUROBATS Publication Series, Ms. Domazetović explained that, in the past year, with the funding received from Germany and Monaco, the Secretariat produced online versions of the EUROBATS Publication Series No. 10, "Guidance on the Consideration of Bats in Traffic Infrastructure Projects", and No. 11, "Guidelines for Bats, Insulation and Lining Materials" in English. Both publications were currently available for download from the EUROBATS website. The French and German versions of Publication Series Nos 10 and 11 were produced thanks to a voluntary contribution from Switzerland, that generously allowed the funds received already in 2019 to be used for this purpose. The Swiss contribution also covered the layout of the translations of Publication No. 11, which was also available for download from the EUROBATS website. The Secretariat currently lacked the necessary resources to finance the layout of the translated versions of Publication Series No. 10. Efforts were ongoing to secure funding for these activities. Ms. Domazetović asked delegates to promote the use of the online versions of EUROBATS publications, to reduce the need for the printed versions and the associated costs.

Ms. Domazetović further continued to thank Mr. Peter Lina as well as Dr Olena Godlevska for continuous revisions of the leaflet "Rabies in European Bats: Information for Professionals, Volunteers and Stakeholders". Mr. Lina even financed the layout of several language versions on his own. The leaflet was currently available in English, Ukrainian, German, Dutch, French and Spanish on the EUROBATS website. There were also volunteers announcing translations to be made into Italian and Norwegian as well.

In the last year, the Secretariat also ensured the production and printing of new promotional items, including playing cards with fun facts and pictures of different bat species occurring in the Agreement area, colouring postcards, a children's bat mask and a festoon.

b) EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)

Ms. Domazetović was glad to announce that all past projects could have been finalised, also in terms of UN administrative procedures. These included:

1. "CHIROHUB: a multi-tool for bat research and conservation in Romania and Moldova", conducted by the Romanian Centre for Bat Research and Conservation, funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).
2. "Survey and monitoring of bats in abandoned railway tunnels in Bosnia and Herzegovina", conducted by the Centre for Karst and Speleology, Sarajevo. The project

was financed by the Luxembourg Ministry of Environment, Climate and Biodiversity.

3. “Bats of Egypt survey and conservation & Bats’ Atlas of Egypt”, conducted by a freelance biodiversity consultant, Mohamed Ibrahim Habib, and financed by the BMUV.
4. “Identification of critical habitats for the conservation of the highly endangered Madeira pipistrelle (Pipistrellus maderensis)”, conducted by Sérgio Teixtera (Madeira Fauna & Flora, Biology & Conservation), and funded by the BMUV.
5. “Creation and implementation of the informational and educational illustrated assets about Caucasian bats in Georgia and Armenia”, conducted by Bohdana Vaschenko (Field Researcher's Union CAMPESTER, Georgia), and funded by the BMUV.
6. “Bat stronghold II: Keeping the ongoing bat research, education and rehabilitation in Ukraine after the full-scale war invasion”. The project was implemented by the Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group and funded by the BMUV.

Two more projects were selected for funding, based on the ranking done by the EPI Evaluation Working Group to start in 2025:

1. “Bat indicator 2.0”, a proposal submitted by BatLife Europe, registered in the Netherlands. Ms. Domazetović mentioned that this project was at a standstill as the UNEP procedures in terms of registration of implementing partners were not favorable for small partners. The administrative demands and due diligence of the implementing partners requested by the new UNEP Partnership Policy were the same for big and small organisations alike. There were ongoing negotiations with this regard with UNEP and the Secretariat was awaiting further guidance on the simplified measures for implementation partnerships, that would hopefully be applicable to the partners implementing EPI projects.
2. “Conservation and monitoring and protecting vulnerable cave-dwelling bat communities in Racha Karst Massif, West Georgia: Biodiversity assessment and community engagement”, to be conducted by the Institute of Vertebrate Biology CAS, Brno, Czech Republic, in collaboration with the Institute of Zoology, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia. Ms. Domazetović explained that this project was finalised in terms of administration, however, since the project was dealing with cave bat fauna monitoring, it would have to be implemented next year too.

Only one application was received in 2025 to be implemented next year, and it was forwarded to the EPI selection group for assessment. The Executive Secretary used the opportunity to ask the delegates to promote EPI, despite the complicated administrative procedures, to ensure there were more project applications which the EPI selection group could evaluate and rank.

c) Cooperation within the CMS Family

The Executive Secretary and the Project Officer had been actively engaged in supporting the CMS Secretariat regarding bat-related matters, together with the relevant representatives of the EUROBATS IWGs. This cooperation included the revision of the resolutions on insect decline and light pollution for the 15th CMS Conference of the Parties (CoP) in March 2026, and the following continuous cooperation:

1. The CMS Energy Task Force

Two fact sheets on bats and wind energy facilities had been funded from the Small Grant Fund, that were developed by the Bat Conservation International. The EUROBATS Secretariat, together with Dr Christian Voigt who was representing EUROBATS in the CMS Energy Task Force, had provided feedback to the drafts, ensuring that best practices guidelines developed by the EUROBATS Advisory Committee were adequately reflected.

2. Taxonomic revision and expansion of the CMS Appendices I and II

The Secretariat had been approached by the CMS Secretariat to support the revision and expansion of its list of bat species for consideration at the future CMS CoP. A recommendation on bat species listings was agreed upon and submitted for adoption by the CMS Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its eighth meeting (ScC-SC8, Bonn, 15–18 December 2025), after which this recommendation would be submitted to the CMS CoP15. Proposals for species to be listed in the CMS Appendices needed to be submitted by the CMS Parties and this was a very slow process. It was realistic to expect that this would be put forward only at CMS CoP16.

3. CMS Working Group on Climate Change

The EUROBATS Secretariat was in contact with the CMS Secretariat exploring opportunities of collaboration between IWG on Bats and Climate Change and recently established CMS Working Group on Climate Change. There was not much cooperation, also due to the slow activity of the respective EUROBATS IWG.

d) Preparations for the 10th Session of the Meeting of Parties and Joint StC26 and AC30 Meeting

In March 2025 Malta confirmed its willingness to host MoP10. The planning and preparations were underway, coordinated by the Secretariat and the representatives from Malta’s Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Public Cleanliness and the Environment and Resources Authority. MoP10 would take place either in the second or in the third week of November 2026. During the 25th Meeting of the Standing Committee in June 2025, Czech Republic announced that they were considering hosting the joint 26th Meeting of the Standing

Committee and 30th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in spring 2026. The Secretariat was still waiting on the confirmation of the hosting from the Czech colleagues.

6. **Reports from the Intersessional Working Groups on the activities since the last AC meeting combined with the discussion on the outputs and future work plan priorities taking into account outstanding activities until MoP10**

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Monitoring and Indicators**; Dr Adrià López-Baucells reported that:

1. The European Monitoring Schemes online dataset had been published in the Zenodo repository and the Eurobats website under the following doi code: 10.5281/zenodo.15346727. Link to the database: https://zenodo.org/records/15346727. Regular futures updates were possible and expected.
2. There had been little advance on the Guidelines update (EUROBATS Publication Series No. 5), although most sections had already been covered/written by several authors. The IWG expected to finalise the document by spring 2026.
3. The IWG had continued developing the online tool (www.batmonitoring.org) and improving its capabilities to offer all countries covered by the EUROBATS Agreement an online, easy-to-use, and open platform to upload bat-related data and calculate their population trends. Contributions and participation by all countries were encouraged.

It was confirmed that the IWG needed no meeting during AC29 and that it planned to finalise the guidelines in spring to be discussed at the joint meeting.

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats**, Dr Ivana Budinski, reported that the IWG Convenors continued compiling data about diurnal and seasonal movements of bats.

The IWG collected contributions for the publication on “Diurnal and seasonal movements of bats”. Until that point, 3 out of 5 framing chapters had been received, 23 out of 37 species chapters, and 3 out of 5 threat chapters.

The main challenge during this period was limited communication with some volunteering authors who had agreed to write species accounts but were unresponsive. This had delayed the completion of several chapters. However, substitute authors had been identified for most of the missing accounts to ensure progress towards the final draft was not delayed. Dr Budinski expressed her hope that the IWG would have the chapters ready by the end of the year, with the first draft being ready for the joint meeting. The IWG did not need to meet during AC29.

The Convenor of the IWG on **Light Pollution**, Dr Christian Voigt, explained that the members of the IWG and external experts who had previously co-authored the guidelines started revising EUROBATS guidelines published as Publication Series No. 8. Contributing experts met several times via Zoom to finalise the table of contents and discuss contributions to each section. Until that day, almost all sections of the guidelines had been received from the corresponding authors, and the draft guidelines were under review by all contributing authors. Only a few sections needed additional input, and this could be discussed during AC29.

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Purpose-built Bat Roosts**, Dr Henry Schofield, explained that following his retirement from the Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT), the role of the Convenor was taken over by Mr. Tom Kitching. However, since Mr. Kitching had also left the VWT, the group had made little progress since then. Ms. Petermann recalled that a report of the IWG had been published a few years ago on the EUROBATS website and stated that no further updates or drafts were expected for the next meeting. Dr Schofield mentioned that while there had been many developments in the field, the group should remain inactive for the time being. Dr. Ferdia Marnell suggested that the group should “hibernate” if no new convenor could be found. As no volunteers came forward, it was agreed that the IWG would go into hibernation, pending future review.

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on the **Conservation of Key Underground Sites**, Dr Szilárd-Lehel Bücs, reported that as of that day, 42 examples of evidence-based conservation measures had been gathered either through the online questionnaire, or via completed Word documents, from a total of 15 countries: Poland (8), Spain (5), Germany (4), Portugal (4), United Kingdom (4), Albania (3), Croatia (2), France (2), Hungary (2), Romania (2), Slovenia (2), Algeria (1), Armenia (1), Italy (1), Switzerland (1). While some of these examples required further clarification and additional details from the authors, it was encouraging that so many of them had been received. Periodic reminders should aim to reach a wider audience and more experts, possibly through direct contact with individuals known to be involved in concrete conservation examples (e.g. in Germany). Four of the collected examples were already available on the EUROBATS website and the remaining examples would be formatted and prepared for inclusion on the new website, in a dedicated subsection with search filters, depending on the further development of the EUROBATS web platform.
With regard to the database of key underground sites, since the last online meeting, the IWG had agreed with Mr. Tony Mitchell-Jones on the original purpose of the key underground

sites, which had been defined as: ″The fundamental purpose of the list of internationally important underground sites is to assist Parties in identifying and managing this threatened bat habitat″ (cited from the IWG's report during the 2014 AC meeting in Heraklion, Greece). Also, a detailed document from Mr. Mitchell-Jones on the background and history of the IWG had been received. Given the existence of the new EUROBATS website, the group considered exploring options for a simpler online submission of the list of key underground sites, or for updating existing data. Meanwhile, due to the current lack of updates — and in some cases, the absence of any data — countries should be reminded of the submission process and the exact steps or protocol to be followed. Additionally, there must be a certain minimum of information about the sites to be useful (see IWG purpose). Since there was a clear interest among IWG members, the topic of database of key underground roosts should be the main discussion point for AC29.

Ms. Petermann asked whether the IWG planned any output for the discussion at the joint meeting. Dr Bücs explained that there would be no update of the guidelines, not for the joint meeting, and that the collected examples were seen as complementary. Ms. Petermann confirmed that the resolution foresaw an update every eight years, so that there was no reason to hurry with it. Dr Gazaryan suggested that an amendment was made to the resolution to consider this update as it was a good collection of cases useful to refer to. Dr Marnell reminded the Advisory Committee that there was no obligation for the Parties to submit updates at this point but that some of the countries had never submitted any data. It might be more useful to identify which countries these were and to approach them directly. Dr Gazaryan mentioned that the submission of data represented a challenge because the access database was not functioning. This could probably be done online, which was what the IWG wanted to discuss. Ms Petermann agreed with Dr Marnell and mentioned that the submission of national reports for the following MoP would be challenging as well, which was why no additional pressure should be put on the Parties. Mr. Erik Broer suggested that some other repository could be used to upload big sets of data, but there were some concerns if Parties would be willing to submit data to such external providers.

The IWG on the **Protection of Overground Roosts**, with Dr Ferdia Marnell and Mr. Primoz Presetnik as Co-Convenors, reported that the group was established at the AC in Sarajevo in 2023. The group followed on from a previous IWG on Protection of Overground Roosts, which completed its work and produced a EUROBATS publication in 2010. The main justification for the new group was to review and update the understanding of this issue across the Agreement area.

In its work plan for the first few years was to review the topic (e.g. through the analysis of national reports), which the IWG did and reported the results in the IWG report of the online AC 2024. A short summary was that only a few countries presented information on the interactions between the relevant cultural and nature conservation agencies in their national reports, and that at least some countries faced difficulties in protecting bat roosts in buildings of cultural heritage.
It was clear from this review that more detailed information was needed. Therefore, a questionnaire had been prepared and the plan for AC29 was to circulate the questionnaire directly to a small sample of 10 people instead of using an online questionnaire. This could make the information gathering more effective and allow the IWG to test the questionnaire.

Professor Danilo Russo reported for the IWG on **Bats and Climate Change**, since none of the Convenors was present at the meeting. On 23rd September 2025, Professor Russo, Ms. Daniela Hamidović, Dr Orly Razgour and Dr Hugo Rebelo attended a short, restricted, on-line meeting, with the support of the Secretariat (Dr Suren Gazaryan and Ms. Zrinka Domazetović).
At the online meeting, Ms. Hamidović presented the current state of work carried out by the IWG as outlined in the latest AC meeting report. A questionnaire on the impact of climate change on bats had been circulated by Dr Gazaryan. While some responses were received, many countries did not provide any feedback. It was agreed that the questionnaire would be sent again to the IWG leaders for possible refinement, after which Dr Gazaryan would prepare an online version to be completed by interested experts.
The group decided not to update the list of articles on bats and climate change, as this would be too time-consuming. Instead, the IWG report would focus on summarising current knowledge of the impacts of climate change on bats and on potential mitigation measures, with reference to the final report of the CLIMBATS COST Action. This report had two different parts:

1. Climate change and bats: emerging evidence and conservation implications – prepared by Professor Russo;
2. Existing Questionnaire to be discussed at AC29 to make an improved on-line version.

Ms. Petermann asked whether the IWG planned to prepare guidelines or just the report. Professor Russo replied that he was not the Convenor of the IWG but that, in his opinion, the effect of heatwave on bats roosts was missing and that the resolution needed to be amended to include this aspect as well. The IWG would briefly meet to discuss this. Professor Russo was asked if he was willing to co-convene the IWG, which he accepted.

Dr Fiona Mathews, Convenor of the IWG on **Strategic Planning for the Restoration of Species across their Former European Range**, reported that the IWG had meetings in March and April 2025 and had shortlisted 15 species to be prioritised as most in need of restorative action. However, progress had recently slowed, and it was unlikely that the group would be able to present substantive results at the upcoming joint meeting or MoP.
Dr Mathews suggested that a short document listing the shortlisted species could be prepared and distributed during AC29 for feedback. The IWG should convene at AC29 to remind members of their tasks, agree on an updated timeline, and determine the next steps.

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on the **Potential Impact of Solar Power Plants**, Dr Heather Wood, explained that the group had focused on aims 1 and 3 during the last period (to collate all relevant literature and compile a summary report of the literature and future development). Since the previous AC meeting, it had two full IWG meetings (6th February and 20th May 2025) where all members were invited and two co-ordination meetings (10th Dec 2024, 28th April 2025) with Dr Mirna Mazija, Ms. Alice Baudouin and Dr Heather Wood attending. The IWG counted 20 members.
Important developments to point out since May 2025 when the IWG already submitted a full report included:

- IWG meeting on 20th May to discuss progress on the literature review;
- Completion of a first draft of the literature review at the end of May 2025.

The IWG needed to meet during AC29 to present the findings of the literature review and discuss if a resolution was required for MoP10.

The Convenor of the IWG on **Bats and One Health**, Dr Sasan Fereidouni, reported that:

- Several internal online IWG meetings had been organised. Two online meetings were organised by the members of the IWG, during which engaging discussions were held on advancing the establishment of a One Health approach. A wide range of topics was covered, including bat health and immunity, ongoing research and activities related to these areas in Armenia, as well as recent studies on bat rabies. These meetings provided an excellent opportunity for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and identifying future directions for research and public health initiatives within the One Health framework.
- A scientific webinar for IWG and other EUROBATS members had been organised. The invited speaker for the webinar was Professor Ken Field from Bucknell University, who delivered a fascinating presentation on “Immune Responses to Ebolavirus Antigens in Little Epauletted Fruit Bats.” The event took place on Tuesday, 29th July 2025, at 16:00 (CET), and

attracted EUROBATS participants as well as other participants from various institutions. Professor Field shared valuable insights into the immunological mechanisms that enable fruit bats to tolerate Ebolavirus infection without developing disease symptoms. The lecture was followed by a lively and thought-provoking discussion, during which participants exchanged ideas on bat immune adaptations, and potential directions for future research.

- Two manuscripts had been prepared. The IWG prepared a review article with several authors, including IWG and other EUROBATS members. It also prepared a manuscript based on EUROBATS project 'monitoring of COVID-19 coronaviruses in European bats' with several authors including IWG and other EUROBATS members.
- The IWG had made efforts on collecting data on bat immunology and health parameters. Currently, the group was in the preliminary stages, focusing on defining key parameters, standardising sampling protocols, and identifying potential collaborators and data sources to ensure consistent and comparable results across regions and species.
- A webinar was planned for the beginning of 2026 on White-Nose Disease (WNS) in Europe and eco-immunological factors influencing pathogenicity.

Ms. Petermann asked what the IWG planned in terms of the outputs for the joint meeting – were there any intentions of producing a report or a draft resolution. Dr Fereidouni explained that the database on the most important infections in bats in European countries was being prepared but that he was not sure if it could be finalised in time for the joint meeting. Additionally, guidelines on safe bat handling to reduce transmission of bat pathogens among colonies when handling bats were also being prepared. Ms. Petermann pointed out that this topic was not covered by a resolution and that it would be necessary for the group to prepare one. Professor Racey informed the delegates that IUCN working group on One Health had already produced comprehensive guidelines on safe handling of bats and these were available online. Dr Fereidouni explained that the group would meet during AC29 to consider next steps. Ms. Domazetović mentioned that, in case the IWG decided to have a resolution, this would be the last meeting to discuss it in order to have a solid draft for the joint meeting. Due to financial restrictions, for the joint meeting the Secretariat could not afford to support the groups that were not in the position to produce output for the MoP. Ms Petermann understood that different IWGs had different levels of activities – some had a clear mandate, others had just started because new threats had been identified – but she was in support of Ms. Domazetovicć's appeal for the IWGs to focus their efforts on productive work.

The Convenor of the IWG on **Anthropogenic Deadly Traps**, Dr Andrzej Kepel, reported that an online questionnaire had been prepared and made available. The analysis of the answers received yielded 30 different types of traps, out of which 28 met the criteria for the inclusion in the IWG's work – namely, that they caused significant mortality and required specific mitigation measures and rescue methods for bats. Dr Kepel would not suggest that the list was complete, but it was quite comprehensive. The types of traps submitted so far were:

I. Traps with vertical smooth walls
   - gutter downspouts
   - ventilation shafts in apartment blocks
   - chimneys and fireplaces
   - double-glazed window gaps
   - swimming pools
   - plastic cable-cover strips
   - pheromone traps for insects
   - church organ pipes
   - other small containers with vertical smooth walls (lampshades, vases, jars, buckets, etc.)

II. Immobilising traps
   - barbed wire
   - various other spikes (antennas, potted cacti, anti-bird spikes)
   - jamming in various wires
   - fishing lines with hooks hanging from branches over water
   - tilted inward windows
   - sticky insect traps
   - various adhesive agents
   - threads in vapour-permeable roof membranes
   - walling up or sealing of roosting crevices
   - rodent snap traps

III. Sensory traps
   - staircases with motion-activated lighting
   - light traps
   - ultrasonic sound emitters attracting bats to buildings
   - glass or other smooth walls reflecting sound like water (causing collisions)

IV. Poorly executed conservation actions
   - poorly designed or incorrectly mounted bat boxes
   - improperly constructed platforms under colonies

- unprotected water-humidity containers in hibernation sites

V. Other traps

- metal roofs (overheating during hot weather)
- openings leading from roost spaces into inhabited parts of buildings.

Each submission contained a description of the trap and its geographical scope, time frame when the trap was dangerous, which species were affected, as well as avoidance and mitigation measures. Some of these submissions were quite complete, others required discussion and more information. Dr Kepel indicated that the group could prepare guidelines but was afraid to promise these would be ready for the joint meeting. If the work were divided among IWG members, this might be doable. Dr Kepel then proceeded to give a presentation of the traps. In conclusion, Ms. Petermann commented that this IWG, as well as the IWG on One Health, needed to prepare a draft resolution to provide a mandate for these working groups. It was not always necessary to have guidelines as the output of the IWG – it was acceptable also to, in a resolution, signal the problems and recommend that the AC works on the solutions. A resolution could also refer to conservation measures that were simple. It would be a pity to postpone suggesting these simple measures just because comprehensive guidelines were missing. Further, Dr Gazaryan asked whether the group needed to meet during AC29. Dr Kepel explained that he was told there was no possibility for a meeting, but that he would be glad if the group could convene. Ms. Domazetović replied that no time slot was reserved for the IWG since, despite asking repeatedly, the Secretariat had not received any response that the group had any output to discuss. Finally, it was concluded that the next steps for the IWG to discuss during this AC meeting were to a) complete the list of traps; b) gain a more detailed understanding of each trap type, including geographical range, species affected, scale of damage caused, best practices for minimising impact; c) provide detailed descriptions of individual trap types (division of labour among IWG members); d) draft a resolution on the issue; e) hold a final discussion on the guidelines and, if appropriate, conduct external consultations. The discussion was concluded with a reminder that the Secretariat was at the Convenors' disposal to help with the distribution of questionnaires, to motivate people to take an active part in the work of the groups, or to help Convenors, in case they were too busy, with finding Co-Convenors that could offer support.

Since both Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Improving Methodologies of the Assessment of Favorable Conservation Status in Bats**, Ms. Daniela Hamidović and Dr Marcus Fritze, were not present at the meeting, they reported in writing that so far the updated list of bat species was sent to the Expert Group of Reporting under Nature Directives for the previous

reporting period (2019-2024), compiled by Mr. Tony Hutson in front of EUROBATS. In communication with this Group it was not an obstacle for EUROBATS (members of the IWG or Scientific Officer) to be present as observers, such was the case for BirdLife or FACE. Also, such guidelines were highly welcomed in the future by EEA and DG Environment and could be placed on the Reference Portal for the future six-year period.
The scope of the IWG goals included:

1. The list of active IWG members should be updated;
2. The list of country reports and methodology stated at the end of the document should be updated;
3. The Framework of guidelines was set up - Parameters for evaluation of the conservation status and active members may set their preferences for work to be done;
4. Members acting as observers should be determined by their own preferences and the Secretariat with the goal of updating the checklist of bat species to be reported and included in the development of new reporting format and of sending best practice guidelines when finalised;
5. Regarding timeline, the proposal was for part of the work to be done by the next MoP and before 2030 (reporting of conservation status for the period 2025-2030).
6. Draft resolution for the next MoP regarding guidelines should be prepared.

Dr Gazaryan also reported that the Secretariat met with the Convenors in September 2025 where it was suggested that the Secretariat should check with the European Commission whether the joint EU-EUROBATS bat action plan was still valid and whether there were any plans with regards to its revision for the next period. It was also suggested that EUROBATS should be represented through the Secretariat at the meetings of the Article 17 technical committee. It was necessary to discuss how to move forward with the work of this group. Dr Gazaryan commented that the IWG had no concrete output and there was no real understanding of how to tackle this issue. The structure of Article 17 reporting was very rigid, it was already adopted by the countries, and the question was what the Secretariat could achieve by taking part in the Article 17 technical committee meetings. Ms. Petermann commented that this was one more of the IWGs that did not have a clear mandate from the MoP or from the conservation and management plan. Nevertheless, the AC could still work on this task, however, there was also no report from the group on what had happened and what the results had been. Ms. Petermann stated that it needed to be decided what to do with this IWG. Article 17 reporting took place every six years and the EU member states had just finished reporting. Doubts were expressed about the IWG being able to come up with a resolution for the joint meeting. Ms. Domazetović expressed her interest as to what should be the content of the draft resolution. Even if the Secretariat would take part in the meetings of the European Commission technical committee as an observer, it could not do much and the EU member states had more influence. She also mentioned that there were more areas for cooperation between EUROBATS and the European Commission, such as the joint bat action plan that was supposed to be revised, but that this was not suitable content for a resolution.

Since none of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation**, Dr Lena Godlevska and Dr Helena Jahelková, were not present at the meeting, Dr Gazaryan reported that the IWG had completed its work on the draft guidelines, however, that the document was outdated and should be revised. The draft was with Ms. Kit Stoner for proofreading the language, but the content also needed to be restructured and revised. The Secretariat plans to discuss the issues with the Convenors. There were many issues with the document: the questionnaire was outdated; it was disputable whether the legal part should be kept as it could be compromising for the Secretariat to intervene in animal welfare issues. Also, good examples with pictures of rescues were missing, especially from West Europe. Mr. Broer suggested that Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines should be checked for pictures. Regarding the legal part, Professor Katrine Eldegard explained that different countries had different legislation regulating rescue centers. Therefore, the document should just give guidelines on how to do it best if it was allowed, but not to go into whether this was allowed or not. Sweden supported Norway. Mr. Broer explained that in the Netherlands bat care was very restricted and bat workers were responsible for awareness raising. Dr Marnell explained that the document was not intended to set requirements, but to offer best practice examples, provide advice and guidance, and was in favor of omitting the legal part.
It was further discussed if the guidelines should be altogether discarded. Some stated that this would be unfair since so much work had already been put into it. Ms. Petermann suggested keeping the draft guidelines but explaining that they were offering the state-of-the-art from ten years ago. Ms. Domazetović mentioned that it might be useful to include also veterinary practitioners in the drafting process – not to stick only to the animal welfare but to also include veterinary requirements. Finally, it was concluded that the guidelines needed to be restructured and a new Convenor needed to be appointed. Dr Dragoș Ștefan Măntoiu offered to do this and get his team on board that had expertise in this field. Dr Gazaryan concluded that the Secretariat would organise a meeting after AC29 inviting Dr. Măntoiu and the Convenors.

Since none of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on **Bats, Insulation and Roofing Membranes**, Dr Jahelková and Mr. Herman Limpens, were present at the meeting, Dr Gazaryan reported that the IWG had completed its work on the draft guidelines that had already been published. Only after MoP10 should it be considered if this IWG should reconvene. There were crosscutting issues with the IWG on Anthropogenic Deadly Traps, so the members of this group could consider joining the group on traps.

The Convenor of the IWG on **Priority Species for Autecological Studies**, Professor Stéphane Aulagnier, was not present at AC29 but he explained in writing that this IWG would not prepare a new list for the next MoP as the list was updated every eight years in order to give time to colleagues to find funds for new studies.

Regarding the IWG on **Education**, Ms. Domazetović explained that the Secretariat received an email from the Convenor, Dr Hossein Zohoori, on 24th September 2025, containing the pamphlet entitled "World of Bats – A Brief Explanation of the Ecology, Biology, and Importance of Bats". The Convenor considered this "a first educational pamphlet for use on the EUROBATS website and potentially in printed form to raise public awareness". The Secretariat needed directions from the Advisory Committee on the need for this IWG to continue its work and what should be done with its output. It was recognised that the pamphlet needed further polishing and revision. There would be no need to deal with it at the moment, as the meeting needed to focus on the preparation of the joint meeting and MoP.

During the discussion on the activities of the IWG on **Insect Decline**, Professor Eldegard mentioned that she had agreed to co-convene this group together with Mr. Jacques Pir. The group had not been very active. It had prepared a literature review on the diet of all European bat species, completed by Professor Aulagnier. Also, a reference list on insect decline and best practice examples had been gathered. As the subject remained to be of importance, the IWG should convene during AC29 to discuss how to progress. While insect decline due to the use of pesticides in Central and Southern Europe was certainly a key problem for insectivores such as bats, Scandinavian countries, for example, were likely to be less affected by this. Core prey insects/habitats per species needed to be identified as well as recommendations and good practice examples and the possibilities of synergies with the CMS insect decline group.

With passing of Mr. Tony Hutson, the **Ad-hoc Working Group on the Amendment of the Annex of the Agreement** needed a new Convenor. Dr Emrah Çoraman volunteered. As the necessity to have at least two Convenors for each IWG had been emphasised upon several occasions during the meeting, Professor Russo volunteered to co-convene the group. A draft resolution with the annex was to be prepared before the joint meeting in spring 2026.

For the **Ad-hoc Working Group on the Implementation of the Agreement**, the Convenors, Ms. Petermann and Dr Marnell, reported that their work was to be done only after the MoP. The purpose of the Implementation Guide was to direct the member states as to what their obligations were resulting from the resolutions. Ms. Domazetović informed the AC of the Swiss initiative for EUROBATS to develop its vision and strategic plan, for which purpose it also provided a voluntary contribution. It would be good to connect this strategic document with the Implementation Guide.

Referring to the **Ad-hoc EPI Evaluation Group**, Dr Gazaryan reported that the Secretariat had received only one project proposal which was forwarded to Professor Aulagnier, the Convenor of this group. The Secretariat also announced that it would propose changes to the EPI resolution mainly referring to the way the assessment of projects was presented. In case of procurement, UNEP required that three offers were gathered. In case of EPI projects this was compensated through the assessment of the EPI evaluation group. However, the way the assessment was currently done was not presentable: It needed to have a higher level of elaboration and not just the grades. Also, applications would have to be assessed not only from the perspective of bat conservation, but also in terms of the project partners and their capacity to implement the project, their finances, etc. Ms. Petermann summarised that, since the resolution needed to be amended, the Secretariat should get in contact with Professor Aulagnier to have a draft ready to be discussed at the joint meeting.
Additionally, the ways were considered how to attract more EPI applications. The suggestions included extending the deadline for submitting proposals, using the website to advertise EPI funding, etc. Ms. Domazetović explained that the Secretariat was reluctant to do so because of the complicated administrative procedures UNEP established. The new due diligence process introduced by UNEP was very complicated and demanding and it was not suitable for small NGOs. The entire CMS Family was facing the same problem and UNEP Corporate Services Division was made aware of this. The discussions were ongoing as to how to tailor the new process to small-scale funding projects. As soon as the Secretariat had more information, it would prepare instructions and guidelines for possible applicants. One feasible way of solving the problem included finding a bigger NGO that could fulfill the administrative requirements of UNEP and coordinate with smaller project partners.

Finally, Mr. Branko Karapandža, the Convenor of the IWG on **Wind Turbines and Bat Populations**, reported that the group was drafting the guidelines for offshore wind turbines. A dedicated group of 20 volunteers had been working on it since the last AC, and the current version of the draft had been circulated before AC29. The drafting and discussion would continue during and after this meeting, and the final document was expected to be ready by the joint meeting in spring 2026.

A comprehensive report that reviewed the state-of-the-art had been prepared (as requested by Resolution 9.4) and would be made available during AC29. Also, a new questionnaire/form to collect data on bat casualties had been prepared and would be discussed during this meeting.

Further, as there had been changes in the membership and work plan of the IWG, the designation of tasks for the next intersessional period would also be discussed during AC29.

A position paper regarding changes in EU regulation and practices related to renewables that could affect bat conservation was initiated during the previous AC meeting. As it had not been completed, the group needed to decide how to proceed.

Additionally, the IWG still needed to discuss and decide whether to prepare a new resolution. However, the prevailing opinion seemed to be that Resolution 9.4 was as valid as when it got approved.

Dr Voigt asked whether it was necessary to have a separate resolution that would deal with the topic of offshore energy production. His concern was that the offshore guidelines did not come with the mandate of the current resolution. Several opinions were expressed that Resolution 9.4 was passed exactly to deal with and include the offshore aspect. Dr Voigt clarified that point 12 in the resolution referred to developing and ensuring "implementation of national guidance following EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6" and that the Publication Series No. 6 were the Guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects. It was strongly emphasised that Resolution 9.4 should not be reopened for discussion. Instead of changing the resolution, only the title of the guidelines could be changed to make them fit the resolution. After some debate, Ms. Domazetović summarised the options: one would be to amend the resolution, and the other to leave the resolution as it was and to amend the guidelines as a revision of Publication Series No. 6. The second option was preferred.

Finally, the Secretariat informed the Committee that Dr Luisa Rodrigues after 20 years of dedicated work and having been instrumental in driving the progress of this IWG, was stepping down from her role of the Convenor. The Committee formally expressed its gratitude to Dr Rodrigues for her long-standing commitment and significant contributions, noting that she left “big shoes to fill”. Ms. Petermann encouraged members to consider appointing a second Convenor, underlining the value of shared leadership and mutual motivation within the group.

The Convenor of the IWG on **Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health**, Professor Paul Racey, reported that:

1. Members of the IWG co-authored:

Fenton, M.B., Faure, P.A, Bernard, E., Becker, D.J, Jackson, A.C., Kingston, T., Lina, P.H.C., Markotter, W., Moore, S.M., Mubareka, S., Racey, P.A., Rupprecht, C.E., Worledge, L. (2024) Bat handlers, bat bites and rabies: vaccination and serological testing of humans at risk. FACETS 9: 1-11.

2. IWG member, Mr. Lina, continued to commission translations of the Bat Rabies leaflet into European languages (now available in English, Ukrainian, Dutch, German, French, and Spanish). Translations in Lithuanian, Italian, and Catalan later this year, and Croatian were also expected.

3. The IWG continued to raise awareness of the potential dangers of physical contact with domestic and wildlife vectors of disease with particular emphasis on scratches.

In continuation, Professor Racey gave a presentation on the paper that the members of the IWG co-authored.

Additionally, Mr. Lina gave a presentation on bats and rabies.

He stated that this year marked 40 years since monitoring rabies in bats in the Netherlands had started. It had been known since 1954 that rabies could occur in certain bat species, but until the death of Rudy Lehmann in Finland, virtually no one in the medical and veterinary world alerted the European bat researchers and conservationists about this.

Thanks to research on bat rabies in various European countries, it was currently known that some European bat species might pose a certain risk to people who were involved in the research and conservation of bats, particularly when handling these animals. It was EUROBATS, and not the World Health Organization (WHO) or the World Organisation for Animal Health, the veterinary counterpart to the WHO in the United Nations, that took the initiative to organize the first workshop in Vilnius in 2004 on bat rabies in Europe.

So far, nearly 7,000 bats in the Netherlands had been tested for rabies, revealing that approximately 22% of grounded Serotine Bats carry the rabies type EBLV-1, which had then been given the scientific name Lyssavirus hamburg. In addition to the usual method of testing brains in dead bats, a method had also been developed for detecting fragments of the rabies

virus in feces, making it possible to identify the virus in live bats without using an invasive method.
Since 1988, data on abnormal behaviour that could occur in Serotine Bats infected with the rabies virus had also been collected, so that in many cases a preliminary diagnosis could be made based on clinical symptoms in human contact cases before a bat could be tested in the laboratory, making it often possible to decide whether post-exposure vaccination was necessary.

Professor Mathews gave a presentation on the online trade of bats in Europe. Considering recent evidence that European trade in ornamental objects made from bats was a driver of global bat exploitation, a proposal to consider this topic was made by three representatives: Professor Mathews, Professor Russo, and Ms. Petermann. Current trade included species listed on the EUROBATS Agreement (*Nyctalus noctula*, *Pipistrellus kuhlii* and *Vespertilio murinus*). Much of the trade was via e-commerce platforms, but sales were also made in physical stores within member states (e.g. the UK). There was widespread agreement among the delegates that sale of such objects was not aligned with the promotion of positive attitudes among the public to the conservation of bats. The practice also raised risks of potential transmission of zoonoses. It was agreed that a group would meet to consider the ways forward. A discussion was held about different mechanisms that could be used to discourage such trade, and it was agreed that, because of the complexity of international trade, a focus on the social aspects of trade rather than the legal regulation of the practice would be most likely to achieve positive results. A suggestion of working with the CMS to assess whether other mechanisms of discouraging such trade might be available was agreed, and the EUROBATS Secretariat offered to provide support in this. Concerns about the potential issues raised for bat research should all bats be listed on CITES was noted. It was also recognised that a general CITES listing would be very unlikely at this time owing to the lack of the detailed evidence needed to support such a large addition to CITES. The group would meet again to consider the framing and format of a potential resolution to be considered at MoP10.

After the IWG held their meetings, they submitted the following reports on the progress achieved during AC29.

The IWG on the **Protection of Overground Roosts** explained that it did not hold a meeting, but that it handed out ten questionnaires to selected individuals at the start of the AC meeting. The individuals were selected to provide a geographic spread across the

Agreement area and to represent different job profiles (e.g. Ministry officials, university academics, NGOs). All the ten questionnaires had been completed and handed back to Dr Marnell. After the AC meeting the Co-Convenors would review the responses and decide what next steps were required (e.g. whether a new resolution was needed for the next MoP).

The IWG on **Bats and Climate Change** convened to finalise a strategy and define the desired outputs in view of the next MoP. It was decided that the group would amend the current Resolution 8.7 to include heatwaves, droughts, and cold spells, all directly related to climate change, as recognised causes of mortality in roosting bats. The revised resolution would also highlight the need to monitor these events and to design and position artificial roosts in ways that mitigate heatwave-induced mortality.

Since only a limited number of countries answered the questionnaire, a new online version would be developed, and a link would be made available to all Parties to encourage active participation and to gather key information on the effects of climate change across the EUROBATS range.

As previously agreed, a list of all published articles on the effects of climate change on bats would be finalised and updated by the end of 2025. However, in the future, it was considered more effective to focus on a selection of publications whose content was particularly relevant for immediate conservation actions or policy making, rather than maintaining a fully comprehensive list.

Finally, a summary of the currently observed effects of climate change on bats had been prepared and would be made available online.

During the meeting of the IWG on **Anthropogenic Deadly Traps**, the following topics were discussed:

1. Definition of “anthropogenic trap”

While discussing the scope of the term “anthropogenic trap”, it was agreed that it did *not* include mortality caused by wind turbines or linear infrastructures, including means of transport. These issues were covered by separate EUROBATS resolutions and guidelines. The term also did not include mortality caused by invasive alien species – including domestic cats.

2. Completeness of the list of reported traps

It was proposed to add open rainwater barrels to the list. During the AC session, a case of bat poisoning caused by lead contained in roof sheets (covering a building with a maternity colony underneath) was also reported. The list remained open, and further proposals could still be submitted: https://forms.gle/t6xcou7njLoeSMCFA.

3. Further work and online collaboration

Subsequent work would be conducted online. All AC and IWG members would receive a link to the collected materials, with the option to add comments, supplements, and corrections. The form was available at: https://forms.gle/m4rZwm6mdae1ijx38, where IWG members could indicate their willingness to prepare sections describing individual types of traps, following a common format.

Comments and declarations of readiness to contribute could be submitted until 8th December 2025. After that date, specific sections would be assigned to the interested IWG members, and the drafting of detailed descriptions would begin.

4. Joining the Working Group

Those wishing to join the IWG were asked to send this information to the EUROBATS Secretariat, with a copy to andrzej@salamandra.org.pl.

5. Request to AC members

All AC members were kindly asked to:

a) submit (to the Convenor – email address as above) descriptions of cases of bats falling into anthropogenic traps (both mass incidents and individual cases), including, as far as possible:

- locations
- date
- species concerned
- number of individuals
- case description
- photograph(s), along with information on the author and their consent for non-commercial use in EUROBATS guidelines;

b) disseminate this request among all potentially interested specialists across Europe.

6. Draft resolution

The first, working version of the draft resolution was presented. Together with the Secretariat, a shorter, revised version would be prepared and circulated among IWG members for further discussion.

7. Next meeting

The next IWG meeting would be held online, tentatively scheduled for 10th –13th December 2025.

The IWG on **Underground Sites** reported that, at its meeting, the members agreed to send out a reminder to fill in the questionnaire about best practice examples right after the AC meeting, and if possible, to approach experts directly. The collected examples needed to be placed on the EUROBATS website where they were easy to find, and filter options should be added when the possibility arose. While it was agreed that the guidelines did not need an update, it was decided that the group worked on a short amendment of the resolution, to indicate the collected examples. Regarding the database of key underground roosts, while it continued to be important and updates were welcome (due to the willingness of several IWG members to update their countries records), countries could not be forced to submit an update. Since the necessary support for the Access format was no longer there, the update process could be aided if the Secretariat shared an Excel file that corresponded to collected parameters. A clear overview about the status of updates, or even the existence of first submissions would help the process, and the Secretariat should assist with this. The amendment proposal to the resolution and the overview of country updates should be ready for the joint meeting.

During the meeting of the IWG on **Light Pollution**, the Convenor thanked the IWG members for their support over the past year, specifically the IWG members and external expert authors for contributing to the revision of the guidelines.
Further, the IWG's actions over the past year were reviewed, which culminated in the advanced revision of the guidelines. These were submitted to the EUROBATS Secretariat on 29th October 2025 for further review by the AC. During the meeting in Bonn, the Convenor discussed the extended list of content and which sections had already been finalised. Several sections were still missing, particularly those providing examples of best practice from range countries. Dr Schofield agreed to add a chapter on 'Artificial light inside daytime roosts of bats' and two chapters on dark sky initiatives: one covering dark sky reserves at the landscape level, and one on a model village that eliminated all artificial light at night. The Convenor noted that any additional material should be submitted by the end of December 2025. The aim was to have a final version ready in time for the joint meeting in spring 2026.
Before thanking the auditorium for the constructive discussion, the Convenor invited it to contribute to the work of the IWG and specifically to the revision of the guidelines. Interested experts should write an email to the EUROBATS Secretariat.

The Ad-Hoc Working Group on the **Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement**, consisting of Dr Çoraman, Professor Russo, Dr Gazaryan, and Dr Charlotte Roemer, met to

discuss recent developments in the taxonomy of European bats. A new taxon from the *Myotis nattereri* group, *Myotis nustrale*, was recently described from Corsica. Based on the current knowledge, the IWG agreed that it should be included in the species list.
Recent studies on the genus *Eptesicus* had proposed reassigning all species occurring in Europe to a new genus, *Cnephaeus*. The IWG had decided to adopt a conservative approach and retain the genus name *Eptesicus* for now, adding a note to the resolution that explains the proposed nomenclature and the rationale for maintaining the current name, pending further developments before making any formal changes to the species list.
Dr Marnell recommended that the WG follow the approach used by the previous convenor – Mr. Hutson – in particular when preparing the supporting document for the MoP resolution. Mr. Hutson would include short paragraphs summarising the information for all the various taxonomic or nomenclature issues that had been considered by the WG. This meant that even if only a small number of changes were proposed there was still a record of the other changes that had been considered by the group and the reasons why those possible changes were not being recommended at this time.

The **IWG on Bats and Wind Turbines** convened in plenary during AC29. The IWG and subgroups membership, work plan and the designation of tasks for the next intersessional period were discussed first.
Mr. Karapandža, the Convenor of the IWG, informed about the progress made during the intersessional period, on the following tasks:

- The comprehensive report that reviewed the state-of-the-art was prepared (as requested by Resolution 9.4) and made available during the AC meeting.
- The guidelines for offshore wind turbines were being drafted (as requested by Resolution 9.4), and the current version of the draft had been circulated before the AC meeting.
- A new questionnaire/form to collect data on bat casualties was prepared and made available for discussion during the AC meeting.

The Convenor also briefly presented the draft guidelines for offshore wind turbines and initiated the discussion on several topics. The IWG decided that:

- Writing out 'offshore wind turbines' and 'onshore wind turbines' throughout the document was preferred to using acronyms, to avoid potential confusion for readers;
- Possible construction impacts and their mitigation should be considered, if feasible;
- Legal issues (on a European scale) must be taken into consideration when deciding whether to request or recommend certain actions;

- Recommendations for monitoring should be included in the document. In the light of limited evidence being available, it was agreed that acoustic monitoring at two heights should be recommended as a minimum, and the subgroup working on this topic would meet to consider additional recommendations for further assessments using techniques such as imaging;
- Blade swept height, and the lower reach in particular, should be considered if possible – Dr Roemer informed the IWG that a large-scale study on the topic would be available soon and volunteered to provide further information;
- Existing national guidelines covering the offshore wind turbines should be explicitly listed.

Dr Mazija and Professor Mathews, coordinators of the Reported Fatalities per Country Subgroup, presented a new questionnaire/form to collect data on bat casualties which would include a request for information on survey effort and estimated true fatality rates.

An ongoing discussion about whether to prepare a new resolution was briefly reintroduced. The general opinion was that Resolution 9.4 was a strong resolution and remains valid in the format used when it approved. Thus, the IWG's final decision was that it should not be recalled or amended.

It was decided that a small group of volunteers (Dr Voigt, Dr Roemer and Mr. Karapandža) should meet to discuss the possibilities to proceed with a position paper regarding changes in EU regulation and practices related to renewables that could affect bat conservation.

Following the plenary IWG meeting, the **team drafting the guidelines** for offshore wind turbines also met, with some of the members taking part online. (Sub)chapter coordinators presented any outstanding issues within their (sub)chapters and led the discussion on these. The team agreed on all the discussed issues, including IWG's decisions on the guidelines. The course of further action was also agreed as following:

- (Sub)chapter coordinators would consolidate all the track changes and comments/discussions within their (sub)chapters as soon as possible;
- Ms. Antje Seebens-Hoyer and Mr. Lothar Bach would help Professor Mathews draft recommendations for monitoring;
- Once drafted, recommendations for monitoring should be linked to those for mitigation;
- Dr Anaïs Pessato and Mr. Karapandža would explore further possibilities to rearrange the text as to improve consistency and flow;
- Following the above, the team would undertake a second round of the internal review.

During its meeting, the progress of the IWG on **Potential Impact of Solar Power Plants on Bats** since AC28 was presented. The results from the literature review on the potential effects of solar power plants on bats were available on IWG Sharepoint and accessible to all IWG members. Members were asked to send other available literature if they knew of any. A summary table was presented, with the categorised main impacts to bats and insects, and, more generally, how bats were affected by obstacles and smooth surfaces. This literature review would be finalised and sent to the Secretariat for distribution.
A draft resolution was presented with the intention to raise the importance of the issue of solar power plant development. The draft resolution was intended to be finalised and ready for the joint meeting in spring 2026, in preparation for the MoP10 in Malta in November 2026. As part of the resolution the IWG proposed to develop appropriate guidelines on Solar Power Plants and bats.

The IWG on **Insect Decline** reported that it was agreed with the Secretariat it would send a list of missing references to the scientific delegates. Also, a reference list on insect decline and best practice examples were gathered. The subject remained of importance, and the following was considered with regard to:

- Missing diet articles: The Secretariat should approach the members;
- Identifying core prey insects/habitats per species – It was decided that help of an entomologist was needed;
- Recommendations and good practice examples were still to be gathered;
- Synergies with CMS / bird insect decline: As CMS was referring to EUROBATS resolution, the Secretariat would provide the contact details of the responsible person from the CMS to the Convenor;
- Update of the resolution: There was no update planned for the joint meeting in spring 2026 or MoP010.

The conclusion was to focus on the most threatened bats species and to analyse, on a taxon level, which good practice measures consist in a species-specific conservation level. A report should be produced within the following two weeks with outlooks for the next term. Dr Frauke Krüger, Professor Eldegard, Dr Marnell and Ms. Hamidović (participating online) volunteered to contribute to the IWG.

The IWG on the **Strategic Planning for the Restoration of Species Across Their Former European Range** met during AC29 and agreed on a work plan for the coming year. Authors were confirmed for each section of a review document that would be produced for the next AC meeting. A questionnaire was also circulated to the delegates to seek opinions on the shortlist of priority species that the IWG had prepared, and a call was made for additional datasets that could be used to assess the change in species distributions over time. A description of a successful species translocation (of *Rhinolophus euryale*) was made by a representative from Hungary, and it was agreed that this would be included as a case study in the report of the IWG.

7. **EUROBATS Vision and Strategic Plan initiative**

Ms. Domazetović explained that this agenda item was included not for the Advisory Committee to discuss the initiative, but just to be informed about it. She noted that the Secretariat's report contained further details; however, when presenting the report, she had not elaborated on this section and intended to now provide background information. In early spring 2025, the Secretariat was approached by Switzerland with a proposal for EUROBATS to develop a long-term vision and strategic plan, similar to processes undertaken for the Bern Convention and other agreements within the CMS family. To this end, a meeting was held in April 2025 with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Standing and Advisory Committees, as well as Ms. Danielle Hofmann, EUROBATS administrative Focal Point for Switzerland, who presented the initiative and the approach used for the Bern Convention Vision and Strategic Plan. It was underlined that such a strategic document would cover a broader period and help Parties consider priorities and timelines when planning funding, including the basis for voluntary contributions. Switzerland offered to fund the preparation of the draft strategic document for EUROBATS. The initiative was presented and further discussed at the 25th Meeting of the Standing Committee, which mandated the Secretariat to pursue this task, with the intention that a draft resolution on the vision and strategic plan could be prepared for the next MoP for discussion and possible adoption.

In parallel with AC29, a workshop was held with colleagues from CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), who shared their strategic documents as well as challenges experienced when drafting and implementing them. The need to take account of limited resources and to avoid creating additional reporting burdens for the Parties was highlighted. The workshop also included a presentation by BCT on its strategy and concluded with an overview of the Swiss bat conservation system, illustrating coordination between cantons, the government, and bat scientific institutions. It was agreed that the Secretariat would develop a draft vision and strategic goals aligned with the implementation plan, the Secretariat work plan, the budget, and national reports. The idea was to have a dedicated working group for this purpose, outside the scope of the Advisory Committee, and involving administrative Focal Points with experience in drafting such documents. However, AC members with relevant experience were also welcome to participate. The overarching aim of the initiative was to move away from ad hoc funding and provide a clearer, longer-term basis for Parties to plan the financing of EUROBATS activities.

8. Date and venue of the 30th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

As announced at the Standing Committee meeting in June 2025, the Czech Republic considered hosting the joint 26th Meeting of the Standing Committee and 30th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat received an update the previous day indicating that, following recent elections, the Czech colleagues would currently be inclined to respond negatively if a decision were required now. As a result, it would not be possible to confirm a host country for at least another month. The Executive Secretary, therefore, reiterated the invitation to the Parties to consider hosting the joint meeting (approximately 80–100 participants), preferably not later than April 2026. If no Party was able to host the meeting, the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany, would be used as the venue. Ms. Petermann further clarified that hosting did not entail an excessive workload, as the Secretariat carried out most of the organisational tasks. Ms. Domazetović added that arrangements could be adapted to the host's capacities, and she provided examples of possible hosting formats.

9. Any other business

The Executive Secretary informed the Advisory Committee that the Secretariat had been notified by Professor Paul Racey that this would be his last meeting. Professor Racey would, therefore, step down as the Convenor of the Working Group on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health. Ms. Domazetović, on behalf of the entire Advisory Committee, expressed her sincere gratitude for his long-standing commitment and valuable contributions to EUROBATS over many decades, and acknowledged his role as one of the Agreement's founders and most prominent members.

10. Adoption of the record of the Meeting

After an addition to the record was made upon request of one of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on Improving Methodologies of the Assessment of Favorable Conservation Status in Bats, Ms. Daniela Hamidović (participating online), referring to the report on the IWG activities prior to the meeting, the record was adopted.

11. Close of the Meeting

There being no further things to discuss, the meeting closed at 12:55.