



26th MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

5 – 8 May 2026, Bonn, Germany

ONLINE TRADE IN BAT SPECIMENS AND PARTS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document presents a proposed new Resolution on online trade in bat specimens and parts, prepared by the Secretariat with the support of a drafting group comprising representatives from UK and Italy.

Background

During the 29th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC29) in November 2025, Professor Fiona Mathews from the University of Sussex 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 put forward by three representatives: Professor Mathews, Professor Russo, and Ms. Petermann. The current trade included species listed under 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 EUROBATS Parties (e.g. the UK).

There was widespread agreement among the delegates that the sale of such objects was not aligned with efforts to promote positive public attitudes toward the conservation of bats. The practice also raised risks of potential transmission of zoonoses. It was agreed that a group would meet to consider possible ways forward. A discussion was held on mechanisms to discourage such trade, and it was agreed that, given the complexity of international trade, focusing on the social aspects of trade rather than on legal regulation would be more likely to achieve positive results. It was further suggested that cooperation with the CMS could be explored to assess whether other mechanisms of discouraging such trade might be available, and the EUROBATS Secretariat offered to provide support in this regard. Concerns were also noted about the potential implications for bat research should all bats be listed on CITES. It was further recognised that a general CITES listing would be very unlikely at this time, owing to the lack of 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.

Recent activities:

Following AC29, Professor Danilo Russo of the University of Naples, in his role as the EUROBATS Scientific Focal Point for Italy, contacted Ms. Silvia Giardina of the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, who acts as the EUROBATS Administrative Focal Point for Italy. Along with Professor Mathews, who originally proposed the initiative, they began preparing the initial draft of a resolution on online trade in bat specimens and parts.

Professor Mathews and Professor Russo compiled background information demonstrating the importance of monitoring and regulating online trade in bats for their conservation (Annex 2).

In close cooperation with the initial drafting group, the Secretariat further refined the draft resolution and now submits it for discussion at the joint StC26/AC30 meeting.

Recommended actions during the joint 26th Meeting of the Standing Committee and the 30th Meeting of the Advisory Committee:

1. The Advisory Committee is recommended to:
 - a) note the progress made in implementing the conclusions of AC29;
 - b) consider background information on bat trade in Europe contained in Annex 2;
 - c) suggest further considerations and actions to demonstrate the relevance of monitoring and regulating online trade in bat specimens and parts for the conservation of bats.

2. The Standing Committee and the Advisory Committee are recommended to:
 - a) consider background information demonstrating the importance of monitoring and regulating online trade in bats for their conservation contained in Annex 2;

 - d) discuss the Draft Resolution on Online Trade in Bat Specimens and Parts contained in Annex 1 to this document and suggest further amendments, if appropriate.

ANNEX 1

Draft Resolution 10.X

Online Trade in Bat Specimens and Parts

The Meeting of Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter “the Agreement”),

Recalling the objectives of the Agreement and the need for coordinated action by Parties to conserve bat populations in their territories;

Recalling that, under the Agreement, Parties shall prohibit the deliberate capture, keeping or killing of bats except under a permit from their competent authority;

Recalling further that Parties shall adopt and enforce legislative and administrative measures necessary to give effect to the Agreement;

Recalling also that Parties shall promote public awareness of the importance of bat conservation and shall exchange information on their experiences;

Noting an increasing use of international online platforms for trade in taxidermized bats, mounted bat specimens and bat parts, offered to buyers within the territories of Parties;

Noting with concern that, due to frequent uncertainty and misidentification in online listings, trade in bat specimens and parts offered online and entering the territories of Parties may include specimens of species occurring in the Agreement area and protected under the Agreement;

Recognising that online listings may contain incomplete, ambiguous or incorrect information on species identity and origin, potentially hindering enforcement and compliance checks;

Recognising also that limited capacity for species identification of bat specimens and parts, including in an enforcement context, may enable specimens of species protected in the Agreement area to be misdeclared as originating from outside the Agreement area or misrepresented as non-protected extra-European species, thereby hindering effective controls;

Concerned that consignments containing bat specimens may enter or transit through the territories of Parties via postal and courier routes, including through undeclared or misleadingly declared shipments;

Aware that the movement and handling of wildlife specimens may require coordination among competent authorities, including (as appropriate) customs, veterinary or sanitary services and wildlife enforcement bodies;

Emphasising the importance of cooperation among Parties and relevant stakeholders, including e-commerce platforms and other intermediaries, to prevent illegal trade affecting bats;

Requests the Secretariat to:

1. Engage, as appropriate, with relevant international processes and organisations (including CMS and CITES) to promote coherent approaches to addressing online trade affecting bats.

Requests the Advisory Committee to:

1. Prepare a survey to assess the level of knowledge and awareness of Parties and non-Party Range States on online trade in bat specimens and parts and related actions;
2. Compile and synthesise the information submitted by Parties and non-Party Range States and make it available in a practical and accessible format;
3. Provide advice, as appropriate, on good practice approaches for addressing online trade affecting bat species protected under the Agreement, including cooperation among competent authorities, engagement with e-commerce platforms and intermediaries, and communication approaches consistent with the conservation objectives of the Agreement;
4. Report to the next Session of the Meeting of the Parties on progress and any further recommendations.

Recommends Parties, non-Party Range States and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations, as appropriate, to:

1. Assess the scale and main pathways of online trade in bat specimens and parts affecting their territories, including by monitoring online marketplaces and relevant shipment pathways, such as sales to domestic buyers and consignments entering or transiting through postal and courier routes;
2. Strengthen cooperation among relevant competent authorities (including, as appropriate, customs authorities, CITES authorities, wildlife enforcement bodies, and

veterinary/sanitary services) to improve detection, inspection, investigation and enforcement actions related to suspected illegal activities and non-compliance involving bat specimens and parts offered or traded online;

3. Enhance capacity for identification of bat specimens and parts in an enforcement context, including access to appropriate taxonomic expertise and, where feasible, the use of suitable diagnostic approaches consistent with national law and procedures;
4. Promote risk-based sanitary and biosecurity controls for postal and courier consignments that may contain wildlife specimens, including improved screening of undeclared or misleadingly declared shipments, in line with national frameworks and available resources;
5. Engage with e-commerce platforms and intermediaries (including marketplaces, social-commerce services, payment providers and shipping brokers) to ensure clear and accurate declaration of bat specimens and parts in trade and, where illegal activities are suspected, to facilitate timely action in response to notifications from competent authorities;
6. Promote targeted public communication discouraging the purchase, sale and display of bat specimens and parts, in a manner consistent with bat conservation objectives and avoiding reinforcement of negative perceptions of bats;
7. Share information with the Secretariat, voluntarily and in accordance with national law, on relevant observations and actions (e.g. market monitoring outcomes, seizures, routes, trends and effective interventions) to support coordinated understanding and action across the Agreement area.

ANNEX 2

Background Information - Bat Trade in Europe

Compiled by prof. Fiona Mathews

Dead bats are readily available for purchase in Europe. Trade occurs through traditional shops and also via online trading platforms. Many bat specimens are marketed as 'Gothic', 'Oddity' or 'Curiosity' objects for ornamental use, whilst others are promoted for use in taxidermy.

Research using AI-assisted monitoring pipeline retrieved 4,479 unique listings on Etsy and eBay over an 18-month period starting in 2022, Etsy and eBay (Hunter et al. 2024). Each listing was associated with a median of 11 objects for sale (range 1 to 995), indicating that the numbers of individual animals traded is likely to be very high. A wide variety of different bat products were on sale, including skulls, skeletons, framed taxidermy displays, jewellery and accessories. Bats were sold from **seven European countries** (UK, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, France and Ukraine).

Many online sales were associated with a taxonomic name. Among the 47 different species identified in the research, some were those listed as protected by the Eurobats Agreement (*Pipistrellus kuhlii*, *Nyctalus noctula*, *Vespertilio murinus*). Others were associated with a vague statement such as 'Common species not listed on CITES'. Most sellers sold multiple species, alongside many other types of animals, and there is a high likelihood that other European Protected Species are also traded but are misidentified.

Whilst Etsy and eBay have recently improved controls on the sale of bat specimens, following the specific prohibition of the sale of *Kerivoula picta* in the USA, they are still widely available in Europe via other online platforms such as Amazon and Google (see below for examples, accessed 6th April, 2026). Given the risks to bat conservation as well as the potential for zoonotic disease transfer, there is an urgent need to discourage the trade in bats.

Hunter SB, Weeds J, Mathews F. 2024. Monitoring the trade in bat taxidermy and specimens on e-commerce platforms. *Biological Conservation*. 1;299:110827. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2024.110827>



The screenshot shows an Amazon product listing for a bat specimen. The product is titled "Bat Specimen, Resin Taxidermy Animal Specimens, Framed Bat Decoration for Educational Displays, Taxidermy Enthusiasts, Oddities Collectors, Science Education (7.3cm x 7.3 cm x 2.2cm)". The price is £9.99, and it is marked as "Amazon's Choice". The product is in stock, and the seller is "deyio". The listing includes a "Click to see full view" link and a "Rufus" label. The product image shows a bat specimen mounted in a clear resin block.

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