



**26<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**30<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*5 – 8 May 2026, Bonn, Germany*

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## RECORD

### 1. Attendance

This is listed in Annex 1 to the Record.

### 2. Opening remarks:

The Chair of the Standing Committee (StC Chair), Mr Jeroen Panis (Belgium), opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. He mentioned that, as it was the first in-person Standing Committee Meeting (StC Meeting) after some time, he could see many familiar but also many new faces, sharing commitment to work collaboratively for bat conservation.

He thanked the United Nations for the use of its facilities and the Secretariat for organising the meeting, which marked a moment of transition. Mr Panis referred to the retirement of Mr Andreas Streit, the former Executive Secretary, whom he thanked for his longstanding guidance and regretted that he could not be present to be thanked in person. The StC Chair also welcomed Ms Zrinka Domazetović as the new Executive Secretary, with whom he was certain to also have cooperation in a spirit of trust and whom he wished all the success. He thanked all the delegates for attending the meeting and expressed hope that the discussions would be constructive.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee (AC Chair), Ms Ruth Petermann (Germany), expressed her pleasure in welcoming the delegates, some of them once again, to Bonn. While noting that Bonn was a good location and a beautiful city, she hoped that there would be an opportunity for delegates to meet at a different location for the next meeting.

She also noted with concern the absence of participants from Non-Party Range States. While acknowledging the budgetary constraints, she stressed the importance of their participation and the value of their contributions to the discussions. She invited the Standing Committee to reflect on this point when discussing the budget and the allocation of funds for the organisation of meetings. She looked forward to the discussion as there were numerous draft documents to be finalised.

The Executive Secretary, Ms Zrinka Domazetović, thanked the Chairs of both Committees and welcomed the participants of the meeting to Bonn. While the meeting was again taking place in Bonn, the location had changed, and she hoped that the participants would be satisfied with the arrangements. The last meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC Meeting) was hosted by Germany, and this time, although the meeting took place on the UN premises, it was still organised with the help of the donor countries, namely, Germany, Luxembourg, Monaco, and Croatia, whom Ms Domazetović thanked for their support. Ms Domazetović also thanked Germany for its support in covering the costs of the premises, noting that this arrangement did not apply to all United Nations agencies but did apply to the CMS Family. She regretted that, due to budgetary constraints, it had not been possible to sponsor more delegates and explained that the available funds had been used to enable the participation of representatives of the Parties from economies in transition as well as the Convenors who needed to present the documents of their Working Groups to the Committees.

She informed the meeting that Mr Andreas Streit had hoped to attend but was unable to do so following an operation the previous week. He had conveyed his wishes for a fruitful and successful meeting.

The Executive Secretary finally noted that the preparation of documents had taken longer than expected. She thanked the Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs), their Convenors and the Advisory Committee for their substantial work, noting that they had been pushed hard but could be proud of what had been achieved. The documents were, to the extent possible, ready for consideration before the Meeting of the Parties (MoP). She explained that the meeting structure had been adjusted to allow plenary discussions at the beginning during which draft amendments to resolutions and draft resolutions prepared by the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat could be presented to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee would then split off to discuss the budget documents and the draft Vision and Strategic Plan, while the Advisory Committee would consider any remaining technical matters in relation to the draft resolutions and draft guidelines. The aim was to harmonise the outcomes and finalise the documents.

Both Chairs agreed that the Chair of the Standing Committee would facilitate the joint plenary sessions.

### **3. Adoption of the Agendas:**

There being no remarks to the Agendas, they were adopted.

#### **4. Secretariat report (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.4):**

Ms Domazetović presented the Secretariat report, also available on the EUROBATS website, which contained detailed information on important matters the Secretariat had worked on since the last StC and AC meetings.

Regarding administrative matters, she referred to the post occupancy in the Secretariat as well as to the increases in the General Service salary scale for the Bonn duty station. Further points included the national reporting and the new Online Reporting System, preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Meeting of the Parties, the two projects being funded under the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI) for 2025 and the issues related to the only application received for funding for 2026.

Referring to the outreach and cooperation within the CMS family, the Executive Secretary reported on her participation in the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), including her participation in the High-level Segment as well as side events. Dr Ferdia Marnell (Ireland) commented that it was a great pleasure to see EUROBATS represented at the CMS CoP, which had not been the case in the previous years. He noted Ms Domazetović's active networking and asked whether there were indications that the EUROBATS's model could spread to other regions – if there were signs of other multilateral bat agreements being considered. Ms Domazetović replied that she had talks with Bat Conservation International and IUCN. It seemed that New Zealand, Australia, South-East Asia, South America, were moving towards the initiative of having their regional agreements. Ms Domazetović offered that EUROBATS could provide support by sharing its experience.

Finally, the Secretariat report also covered publications and the EUROBATS website, International Bat Night and the marking of the 30<sup>th</sup> event in 2026 and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2027, EUROBATS strategic plan and the Secretariat Workplan.

In relation to the International Bat Night anniversary, Mr Erik Broer (Netherlands) asked whether there were any plans to link the International Year of the Bat to the International Bat Night anniversary. Ms Domazetović explained that the Global Union of Bat Diversity Networks (GBatNet) had announced plans to organise a Year of the Bat in 2027 and that the Secretariat had asked for further details but had not yet received additional information. EUROBATS had offered cooperation in terms of promotion but had no financial resources to contribute. She recalled that EUROBATS had not contributed financially to the previous Year of the Bat either but had concentrated on promoting it through the United Nations channels.

Dr Ivana Budinski (Serbia) noted that GBatNet would meet in person in June this year and that this matter might be discussed at this occasion. Ms Domazetović added that she and Dr Suren

Gazaryan (EUROBATS Scientific Officer) had also been approached to take part in this meeting. As the six-year funding period was coming to an end, the continuation of the network would likely be discussed upon this occasion, and the possible Year of the Bat might also be addressed.

#### **5. Draft Amendments to Resolution 5.4: Monitoring Bats across Europe (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.13)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft amendments to Resolution 5.4. Dr Gazaryan explained that this was a technical resolution required for the publication of the new monitoring guidelines. A second issue addressed by the amendments was the database of monitoring studies carried out in Europe.

Dr Adrià López-Baucells (Spanish Association for the Conservation and Research of Bats/ SECEMU), Co-Convenor of the IWG, provided further information on the monitoring guidelines, outlining the revision process of the latter and informed that they were available as an information document.

The Standing Committee was invited to provide any comments. There being no comments, the draft amendments were then set aside for further consideration by the Advisory Committee.

#### **6. Draft Amendments to Resolution 7.4: Format of National Implementation Reports (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.14)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft amendments to Resolution 7.4, noting that they were also of a technical nature. It was explained that, over time, four separate resolutions on national reporting had been adopted. Some had been repealed earlier ones, whereas others had not, resulting in overlaps in substance. The proposed amendments, therefore, aimed to consolidate the various resolutions and to reflect the present state of play by including reference to the current practice of submitting reports through the Online Reporting System (ORS) and by emphasising a deadline for the submission of national reports 90 days prior to the opening of the Meeting of the Parties in accordance with Article VI of the Agreement. The question of repealing earlier, overlapping resolutions and provisions was identified as a key element of the proposed changes.

The AC Chair thanked the Secretariat for preparing the draft and noted the emphasis on the 90-day deadline. She raised the concern that such a deadline might discourage Parties that were not able to submit their reports in time, potentially leading to non-submission.

In response, Ms Domazetović clarified that, within EUROBATS, the only formal deadline in relation to MoPs concerned national reports. She noted that there were no formal procedures or deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions or for identifying proposing Parties.

Referring to the reporting deadline, Dr Gazaryan indicated that, in practice, some Parties submitted reports late or did not submit them at all.

The AC Chair thanked the Secretariat for the clarification and noted that this was reassuring. At the same time, she emphasised the importance of explaining the purpose of the deadline to the Parties, to allow the Secretariat sufficient time to analyse the national reports and to review the implementation of the Agreement. The Secretariat indicated that approximately one month would be required to carry out a meaningful analysis. There were no further comments on this agenda item.

#### **7. Draft Amendments to Resolution 7.6: Conservation and Management of Important Underground Sites for Bats (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.15)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft resolution prepared by the Secretariat and the Intersessional Working Group on Underground Sites. Dr Gazaryan noted that the Working Group had been very active, with several meetings held and questionnaires circulated.

Dr Szilárd-Lehel Bücs (Romania), IWG Co-Convenor, provided further information on the results of the questionnaire. He reported that 69 examples of bat conservation measures in underground sites, both successful and unsuccessful, had been received from 17 countries, although some required additional information from the authors before they could be used and made available on the website.

Dr Gazaryan explained that the resolution had been amended to reflect the new results of the questionnaires and to urge Parties to provide further responses. Information was needed on the effectiveness of bat conservation measures and their impact on bats, especially in relation to grilles and fences. It also referred to the need to modify the reporting format for underground sites. Many respondents had indicated that they did not have Access databases, so it was proposed to make the format available as an Excel sheet. Once sufficient information had been collected, a technical review could be prepared and published on the website. There were no further questions or remarks.

#### **8. Draft Amendments to Resolution 8.3: Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.16)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft amendments to the resolution, explaining that it was mainly technical in nature and was required to provide a mandate for publishing literature review. It was further noted that the document was not yet available on the website, but that the intention was to publish it for comments before MoP10.

One of the Co-Convenors, Dr Budinski, noted that the publication of the review depended on the progress made and continued to report on the current state of work. Data had been

collected over the previous years and compiled in an internal Excel database. On this basis, a publication on the movement ecology of bats in Europe had been prepared. Of the 36 species chapters, 28 had been completed. New authors had been identified to lead on four chapters, and the IWG was considering how best to finalise the draft document. This was going to be discussed during the AC meeting. There being no questions or comments on the amendments, the Meeting moved to the next agenda item.

**9. Draft Amendments to Resolution 8.7: Bats and Climate Change  
(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.17)**

Professor Danilo Russo (Italy), one of the Co-Convenors of the IWG, explained that the amendment had been developed to include heatwaves, droughts, and cold spells, all directly related to climate change, as recognised causes of mortality in roosting bats. This element, as well as proposition of mitigation measures had previously been missing from the resolution. There were no comments or further requests for amendments for this draft.

**10. Draft Amendments to Resolution 9.2: Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement  
(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.18)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft amendments to the resolution, explaining that the resolution was intended to update the list of species in the Annex. However, following some discussions with the CMS Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council Working Group on Taxonomic and Nomenclatural Issues and on Potential Taxa for Listing and Prof. Christian Voigt (Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research/ IZW, Germany), it had become clear that there was no definition of what should be considered “European species”. For example, several species listed in the Annex had never been recorded in Europe, including some Asian species, and the background for the inclusion of those species was unclear. The Secretariat noted that basic definitions were, therefore, needed before the Annex could be amended.

Mr Branko Karapandža (Serbia) stressed the need to define “European” before deciding which species to include. The rationale before was to include species occurring in countries considered to belong, at least partly, to Europe. The Secretariat agreed, noting that this was reflected in the draft resolution. Dr Marnell suggested consulting previous meeting records to clarify the origin of the current list. He recalled that Mr Tony Hutson, who had led earlier discussions on the topic, had worked very methodically. Ms Petermann referred to the Implementation Guide as another possible source. The Secretariat noted that, so far, only Resolutions 2.5 and 5.11 could be identified as a relevant source, but both were repealed by Resolution 6.3 while not providing a definition of “Europe” and “European bat populations”. The definition of European bats needed to be resolved, as the Agreement currently covered also

African countries, Iran, Iraq, etc. If all the species occurring in those countries were included, the list would become excessively long. The Advisory Committee was mandated to find an appropriate solution.

**11. Draft Amendment to Resolution 9.4: Wind Turbines and Bat Populations (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.19) and Draft Guidelines for Consideration of Bats in Offshore Wind Farm Projects (Inf.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.6)**

The Secretariat introduced the proposed amendments to Resolution 9.4. The purpose of the amendments was to reflect recent developments concerning offshore wind turbines and to incorporate the new draft guidance on offshore wind energy projects. The amendments also corrected a few factual and technical points. In particular, references to CMS resolutions were amended to reflect that there were two relevant CMS resolutions rather than one; incorrect references to EU directives were amended; and the reference to the European Commission guidance document was clarified, as the previous wording had suggested that two separate documents existed, whereas the reference was to a single document.

Mr Karapandža, one of the Co-Convenors of the IWG on Wind Turbines and Bats, then explained that the previous version of the guidance contained only limited information on offshore wind energy developments due to the lack of available knowledge at the time. To address the increasing significance of offshore wind energy, the decision was made to split the existing EUROBATS guidance into two parts, covering onshore and offshore wind energy projects separately. The offshore part had been prepared first, as this was considered more urgent. The onshore part would be revised when the need arose.

Mr Karapandža noted that the draft offshore guidance was already at an advanced stage and that the Meeting was not expected to discuss it in detail. Written comments were welcome so that the drafting team could address them before finalisation. He expressed his gratitude to the 14 contributors who had actively worked on the document and stated that only final refinements were still outstanding.

Ms Petermann asked until when the draft would remain open for comments and feedback. It was explained that, although the general deadline for MoP documents would be three months before MoP10, the drafting team would need sufficient time to consider and incorporate comments. It was therefore suggested that comments should be submitted by the end of June 2026. The document had already been circulated for comments between AC29 and the present meeting and was therefore not expected to undergo major changes at this stage.

Dr Gazaryan asked whether a peer review of the document was planned. The Convenor replied that, as the authors of the individual chapters had consulted closely with one another and the

document had been prepared as a team effort, a peer review was not considered necessary at this stage. However, such a review could be envisaged if the Advisory Committee deemed it necessary.

## **12. Draft Resolution: Prevention of Adverse Effects of Anthropogenic Traps on Bats (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.20)**

Dr Gazaryan introduced the draft resolution and recalled that a presentation had been given by Dr Andrzej Kepel (Polish Society for Nature Conservation "Salamandra"/ PTOPS), the Convenor of the Working Group, at AC29. It was agreed at that time that the IWG would meet to prepare a draft resolution, to further elaborate the list of anthropogenic traps and to consider possible mitigation measures. However, this meeting had not taken place. An outline of a draft resolution was received a few months ago, but it was not considered ready, and the Secretariat had therefore substantially changed the text and prepared a new draft resolution. Dr Gazaryan explained that the revised draft focused on continuing the collection of information on traps and raising awareness of the threats anthropogenic traps posed. If the IWG became more active, it could also collect and further develop information on mitigation measures.

The Convenor apologised for the limited progress of the IWG, referring to serious private circumstances. He noted that progress had not been entirely absent and that the work undertaken would be presented at the AC meeting. Regarding the draft resolution, he expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to shorten the text, noting that the original draft had been very extensive and overly detailed. However, he considered that the proposed reductions might have gone too far, as the original 15 recommendations had been reduced to four rather general recommendations. He therefore suggested that some of the deleted elements should be reinstated and discussed further within the IWG.

Ms Domazetović intervened by recalling that no output had been received from the IWG before AC29. Following the presentations at AC29, the IWG had been expected to meet, and the Secretariat had offered support. However, no information on further progress had subsequently been received. The Secretariat then discussed the matter with the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee, and since it was stressed that the issue was important and should not be postponed for another four years, the Secretariat had tried to extract the essential elements from the proposal presented at AC29 and convert them into a more suitable format. The AC could still discuss and amend the text. Ms Domazetović concluded by underlining that the work of an IWG should not depend on one person alone. Given the length of the intersessional period, the Secretariat recommended that all IWGs should have more than one Convenor and that the members of the IWG should actively contribute to the group's work.

### **13. Draft Resolution: Potential Impact of Solar Power Plants (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.21)**

The Secretariat introduced the item and recalled that the initial objectives of the IWG on Solar Power Plants and Bats had been to collate relevant literature, to assess the scale of solar power plant development across the Agreement area and prepare a summary report on existing knowledge and projected developments. Consequently, it had also been agreed that the IWG would prepare a draft resolution. The Secretariat had made only minor corrections to the text.

One of the Co-Convenors of the IWG, Dr Mirna Mazija (Croatia), reported that the draft resolution had been presented at AC29 and that minor amendments had subsequently been made based on the comments received during that meeting. She noted that solar power development was expected to more than double and stressed the importance of addressing its impacts on bats at an early stage. The draft resolution recommended that further work should continue under the Advisory Committee, in particular to continue compiling relevant literature on the impacts of solar power plants on bats, including methods to assess such impacts on bat populations, to assess the scale of solar power plant development across EUROBATS, and to develop appropriate guidelines on solar power plants and bats.

### **14. Draft Resolution: Online Trade in Bat Specimens and Parts (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.22)**

The Secretariat introduced the draft resolution, explaining that it had emerged as an *ad hoc* issue during AC29 following a presentation by Professor Fiona Mathews (University of Sussex, UK, and Mammal Conservation Europe) on the online trade of bats in Europe. Recent evidence showed that the current trade included species listed under the Agreement, such as *Nyctalus noctula*, *Pipistrellus kuhlii* and *Vespertilio murinus*. Much of the trade was taking place through e-commerce platforms, but sales had also been recorded in physical stores within EUROBATS Parties, including the United Kingdom. It was noted that these bat species were not sufficiently covered in the context of regulation of online trade.

Prof. Russo, who led drafting of the resolution, underlined the importance of the issue, describing trade in bats as a neglected but significant conservation problem. He noted that several species affected by trade were declining, and that the increasing online trade in bat specimens also raised biosecurity concerns. There had been discussion on possible mechanisms to discourage such trade. It was noted that, given the complexity of international trade regulation, practical measures focusing on the social aspects of trade were more likely to achieve positive results than attempts to address the issue primarily through legal regulation.

Ms Petermann and Mr Panis announced that they had a few comments on the text that they would pass on to Prof. Russo. A correction to point 5 was also suggested – the text should refer to “species” rather than “specimens”, since there should be no trade of bats if it cannot be determined whether that was a protected species or not.

#### **15. Draft Guidelines for Consideration of Bats in Lighting Projects - Revision 2026 (Inf.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.5)**

Dr Gazaryan explained that no revision of the relevant resolution was required. The purpose of the item was for the Parties to review the revised guidelines and provide comments.

Prof. Voigt reported that the decision had been taken to revise Publication Series No. 8. A drafting team had been established, consisting of former members of the original authoring group as well as new external experts. He thanked the Secretariat for its assistance and briefly presented the structure of the revised guidelines, noting that the document reflected several months of work. He invited feedback from the Committees.

Ms Petermann thanked the IWG, led by Prof. Voigt, for its work. She noted that the revised document was substantial, comprising around 150 pages, and that she had not been able to review every detail. However, the parts she had reviewed appeared convincing.

The question arose if the revised guidelines should continue to be published as Publication Series No. 8. Dr Gazaryan noted that there had not always been full consistency in previous cases. Mr Karapandža observed that the offshore wind guidance was a separate document, whereas, where the scope of a revised document remained the same, it would be preferable to keep the existing number. The Executive Secretary supported this view, noting that replacing the number could create confusion and leave gaps on the website. Ms Petermann suggested that the previous version should remain available for reference. Mr Karapandža agreed, noting that older versions were occasionally needed, for example to compare survey approaches. Ms Helene Lindahl (Sweden) suggested that the revised and earlier versions could be distinguished as No. 8.1 and No. 8.2.

It was further noted that copyright information for the images still needed to be checked. The drafting team had aimed to use open-access material, but some images might still require additional verification. There was no further discussion on the substantive content of the guidelines, however, Prof. Voigt asked from which point onwards the guidelines could be regarded as final, with no further changes allowed. Ms Petermann noted that, if publication before MoP10 was intended, the document would in principle need to be closed for changes at the present stage. The Executive Secretary explained that the document could either be submitted to MoP10 or adopted through a written procedure. She noted that not all participants

may have had sufficient time to review the full document, and that the Advisory Committee would need time to finalise it before the Secretariat could prepare it for endorsement. Ms Petermann recalled the deadline discussed for the guidelines on wind turbines and suggested that the same deadline should apply here. Prof. Voigt indicated that only minor changes were expected and supported the use of the written procedure, as the guidelines were urgently needed and could then be made available before November. Ms Petermann noted that the Secretariat would still need time for formatting and proofreading. The Secretariat explained that the document itself could be submitted to the Parties for adoption through the written procedure, while layout and final publication could follow at a later stage.

## **16. Implementation of the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (Inf.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.7)**

The Secretariat introduced the information document on the implementation of the EUROBATS Project Initiative (EPI), explaining that it had not been prepared for publication but to inform the Committees of the administrative procedures currently in place. The document had been prepared following a request by the StC Chair, Mr Panis, to reflect on the administrative workload associated with the implementation of the EPI.

It was recalled that the EPI had originally been established as a useful instrument to support small conservation projects, in particular smaller organisations to apply for limited funding. However, the administrative requirements currently involved were considered increasingly disproportionate to the scale of the projects. In addition to the UNEP Partners Portal and UMOJA, the introduction of the new UNEP Partnership Policy in 2025 meant that each partner also had to register on the UN Partner Portal. All the procedures entailed complicated administrative work, the load of which fell mainly on the Scientific Officer, especially with regards to the due diligence phase. Before project implementation could even begin, applicants and the Secretariat had to work through two separate portals, followed by further processing in UMOJA.

The Secretariat then presented the workflow described in the information document. It underlined that one of the main problems was that, even after repeated requests for simplification for small grants made by the CMS Family Agreements, the administrative requirements remained essentially the same as for much larger funding arrangements. It was noted that other Secretariats had suspended comparable initiatives for similar reasons.

The main challenges identified included excessive and partly duplicative due diligence requirements, a mismatch between UNEP procedures and the EUROBATS framework, and rigid financial constraints requiring repeated revisions of project budgets. In particular, the USD

4,000 procurement threshold frequently led to discussions and adjustments of project applications, even where the amounts involved were modest. It was also noted that the current procedures did not correspond well to the existing EPI resolution, which focused mainly on the conservation rationale of the initiative and did not address the administrative requirements aspects.

Mr Karapandža stated that, in its current form, the mechanism was not workable and was not cost-effective. Ms Petermann noted that this was regrettable, especially as the EPI had been particularly valuable for small projects in Non-Party Range States. She stressed that the issue should also be reflected in the Standing Committee discussions and urged the Committee to find solutions that would allow the initiative to continue in a way that was feasible both for applicants and for the Secretariat.

**The following agenda items were discussed only by the Standing Committee in a separate session:**

**17. Financial matters:**

**a. Report on income and expenditure for the financial year 2025**

**(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.5)**

The Executive Secretary introduced the report by noting that the financial year would only be formally closed at the end of March. Accordingly, the figures available at the time of preparation of the report were not yet final. However, no major changes were expected.

She explained that most expenditure in 2025 was related to staff costs. Some savings had arisen under the first Administrative Assistant post, as Ms Christine Meyer-Cords provided temporary support to the AEWA Secretariat at 30 percent post occupancy during April, May and June 2025. These savings had been used to finance the temporary 20 percent increase in Dr Gazaryan's post occupancy, which was needed to cover the increased workload during the preparation of AC29.

The Executive Secretary further explained that Umoja costs, which had not previously been reflected as a separate budget line, had been covered from the individual staff budget lines. In addition, during the absence of the Administrative and Financial Management Officer, another staff member had taken over these duties under a temporary P3 post, so that these additional staff costs had to be shared among the Secretariats in the CMS Family.

It was noted that the contribution from Spain had been particularly helpful, as it had been allotted to the budget line for the second Administrative Assistant. This had allowed the occupancy of that post to be increased to 80 percent. Significant savings had also been

achieved across other budget lines, enabling the Secretariat to remain within the overall approved budget. There being no questions or comments, the discussion on this agenda item was closed.

**b. Overview on voluntary contributions received in the financial year 2025 and projection of 2026 expected income through voluntary contributions (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.6)**

The Executive Secretary took the opportunity to thank the countries that had provided voluntary contributions, mentioning them individually. She noted that Germany had been the largest contributor in 2025. Its voluntary contribution had helped finance the two 2025 EPI projects and had also supported the sponsorship of delegates to AC29.

Monaco had provided EUR 10,000 in 2025 for the sponsorship of delegates. In addition, the second instalment for the two projects would be covered from this voluntary contribution.

Luxembourg's contribution had been used for meeting-related costs, including AC29 and the present meeting, thereby allowing savings under the regular budget. Dr Laurent Schley (Luxembourg) stressed that Luxembourg prefers their voluntary contribution to be used for projects, reminding that the use of the voluntary contribution for meetings should remain the exception.

Croatia had also provided support for the present meeting.

Regarding 2026, the Executive Secretary informed the Committees that Germany and Luxembourg had again provided voluntary contributions, and that the respective donor agreements had been signed. The related invoices still had to be sent. Monaco had confirmed its contribution, and the Secretariat would provide the invoice accordingly.

Ms Domazetović further announced that a general request for voluntary contributions would be sent to the Parties. Possible areas for support included the anniversary of International Bat Night and the production of publications.

The Executive Secretary also reported that Switzerland had provided EUR 20,000 for the preparation of the EUROBATS Strategic Plan. Since this contribution was explicitly mentioned in several other documents, it had been omitted from the overview, but this would be corrected. The voluntary contribution would be used to finance the temporary 20 percent increase in the Scientific Officer's post occupancy for six months (Jan-June 2026), as well as meeting costs related to the organisation of the strategy workshop, and to the workshop facilitation if needed. The development of indicators for the Strategic Plan could be a suitable project. Switzerland would like to have projects that the Parties could co-finance. The Executive Secretary explained that, while the Secretariat had moved away from small project funding under the EPI

for the time being, voluntary contributions could still be used to finance Secretariat-led projects, including related staff costs. She stressed that the Secretariat would need to develop its own project proposals for this purpose.

**c. Trust Fund Status as of 31 December 2025**

**(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.7)**

It was explained that the report was an interim one and that the figures were stated in USD. Though the Secretariat had requested the report already in January, the final report could not be produced before the completion of the audit procedure. As the financial year only closed in March, the Secretariat hoped that the final report would be available by the end of April, which unfortunately was not the case.

The Executive Secretary noted that ca. USD 199,000 remained in the trust fund but that this figure could change as it depended significantly on fluctuations in the EUR-USD exchange rate. Mr Panis also reminded the Committee that, during the previous two quadrennia, funds had been withdrawn from the Trust Fund to compensate for the discrepancy between the approved budget and the sum of contributions to be paid by the Parties.

Mr Charles-Henri De Barsac (France) asked for further clarification on the reporting process, in particular why the final report could not yet be made available and how the final figure was calculated. The Secretariat indicated that it would ask Administrative and Financial Management Unit to provide further explanations for inclusion in the document.

Ms Céline Impagliazzo (Monaco) asked about the meaning of “revenue” and why only USD 5,000 was shown as revenue from voluntary contributions. It was mentioned that the figure probably referred to gains or other income credited to funds originating from voluntary contributions. The Executive Secretary noted that the issue was also related to unspent balances from some voluntary contributions that had been transferred to the unearmarked fund, but that the procedure for utilising such funds was complicated. She noted that AEWA had identified a significant amount of such funds, whereas this was not the case for EUROBATS.

**d. Status of assessed contributions to EUROBATS in 2026**

**(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.8)**

Ms Domazetović reported that approximately 65 percent of the contributions invoiced for 2026 had already been received. This was considered a good level, given that the payment deadline was in June. She further noted that the total amount of arrears was not significant and could be attributed to a small number of Parties. Ms Domazetović thanked the major contributors for arranging their payments in a timely manner and concluded that the overall situation was

satisfactory. Mr Tornike Zautashvili (Georgia), informed the Committee that Georgia's contribution would soon be paid, explaining that the payment request had been submitted to the Ministry and was undergoing internal procedures.

#### **18. Secretariat Work Plan 2026 - 2027 (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.9)**

The work plan was introduced by Ms Ana Thiel, one of the EUROBATS Administrative Assistants. She explained that the document reflected the Secretariat's obligation to update its work plan annually, covering the period from June of the current year to May of the following year. In addition, before the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee, the Secretariat had been requested to prepare a separate overview of the tasks arising from EUROBATS resolutions currently in force. As decided at that meeting, this overview had been combined with the annual work plan in a single integrated document.

Ms Thiel explained that the tasks and outputs of the Secretariat were not only linked to the relevant resolutions but also grouped into categories that could correspond to the future goals of the EUROBATS Strategic Plan. Another new element was that the allocation of staff time to the different categories of tasks was expressed in percentages rather than in days.

Mr de Barsac thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken and noted that the document provided a useful overview of the overall workload. It also showed that administrative work represented a substantial part of the Secretariat's work, while also making visible that some resolutions required more staff time than others.

Mr de Barsac asked whether a zero percent allocation of time meant that the respective staff member was not involved in a task at all. Ms Thiel explained that the work plan had been prepared on the basis that no overtime should be assumed and that the Secretariat had to work within the staff time available. As a result, some tasks could only receive limited or no attention.

Mr de Barsac further asked how the Secretariat dealt with situations in which the staff member responsible for a particular issue was absent. The Executive Secretary explained that the Administrative Assistants stepped in for each other where needed. Similarly, the Executive Secretary supported the Scientific Officer where possible. She noted that, in a small team, this was the only practical way to ensure continuity when staff members were absent. The same principle also applied among the Secretariats, which supported each other where possible.

In response to a question on how the work plan would relate to the future Strategic Plan, it was explained that the Strategic Plan would provide the overall direction, while the work plan would remain a more operational document. Once the Strategic Plan had been adopted by the MoP, the Standing Committee could request the Secretariat to adapt the 2027 work plan accordingly.

The next work plan would therefore reflect the Strategic Plan as well as the new Conservation and Management Plan, including the resolutions adopted by MoP10.

**19. Draft Resolution: Financial and Administrative Matters – Budget 2027 - 2030  
(Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.10)**

Ms Domazetović introduced the draft resolution on the next period budget and hoped that the Standing Committee delegates had had sufficient time to review the document. She explained that the most important factor shaping the proposed budget was the substantial increase in General Service staff costs. Unlike some other Secretariats with larger teams and more staff fluctuation, EUROBATS, as a small team, was able to calculate and apply actual staff costs rather than standard costs.

The Secretariat proposed two budget scenarios. Scenario 1 was presented as a baseline scenario, maintaining the structure and level of activities approved by MoP9, but adjusted to reflect actual staff costs. For General Service posts, the announced salary increases had been considered, and from 2028 onwards a two percent inflation adjustment had been applied. The same inflation adjustment had also been applied to Professional posts budget lines. In Scenario 2, staff costs were kept unchanged, while a two percent inflation adjustment was applied to all the other budget lines as well.

Ms Domazetović further explained that, for the first time, the draft budget resolution specified that the UN scale used for calculating contributions would remain fixed throughout the four-year budget period. Previously, if the UN scale changed during the quadrennium, the new scale would apply, and contributions would be recalculated accordingly. She noted that there was no clear explanation why EUROBATS had followed this practice in the past, but that it appeared to be specific to EUROBATS. Fixing the scale would also provide more predictability for the Parties. She also noted that, unlike in the previous quadrennium, no withdrawal from the Trust Fund was proposed.

The Secretariat also introduced proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the administration of the Trust Fund. These included defining the unrestricted reserve and introducing a provision allowing the use of unearmarked funds.

Mr Petri Ahlroth (Finland) noted that the possible withdrawal of the Parties from the Agreement represented a risk that should be considered. Mr Panis observed that the budget did not return to a normal level of one Advisory Committee meeting per year. Ms Domazetović explained that the Secretariat had presented the situation as it currently stood. She added that it was assumed that the Parties would not welcome increases across budget lines. She further clarified that the current figures for meetings were anyways not realistic. The present meeting, with

approximately 55 participants, had cost roughly twice the amount budgeted, despite all the savings made.

Ms Danielle Hofmann (Switzerland) asked whether Scenario 2 was essentially intended to cover staff costs as well as meetings. Mr Keith Barber (United Kingdom) asked what the realistic amount would be for a meeting. The Secretariat replied that approximately twice the current amount would be needed. It was explained that, when a meeting was held in a less expensive country, the host country was often not able to provide more than just basic support. In response to a further question, Ms Domazetović explained that Bonn was used only when no other option was available, but that it was not necessarily the cheapest option. While premises were covered, catering still had to be provided, and the largest cost difference resulted from DSA rates. The StC Chair mentioned that it might be useful to know the approximate costs per sponsored delegate.

Mr De Barsac asked whether Spain's contribution had been included in Scenario 1, in view of the substantial increase in assessed contributions. Ms Domazetović confirmed it and noted that the increase in General Service staff costs amounted to approximately EUR 40,000, while Spain's contribution amounted to approximately EUR 39,000. She also recalled that no withdrawal from the Trust Fund had been included in the proposed budget.

Ms Impagliazzo observed that neither scenario would be sufficient to cover the actual expenditure. Mr Barber noted that, in practice, the Trust Fund might have to be used to cover costs, as meetings could not be fully financed from the regular budget.

Ms Domazetović stressed that the Secretariat's main concern was to ensure that staff costs could be covered. She noted that, in other Secretariats, the key question had been how to avoid staff reductions. EUROBATS had sought to avoid such a situation by presenting realistic staff costs. Regarding meetings, she noted that some Parties had in the past been able to sponsor delegates from economies in transition through voluntary contributions. However, if the Parties wished to invest in more substantial projects, the current level of delegate sponsorship could not be maintained. This would affect not only Non-Party Range States, but also Parties with economies in transition.

Ms Hofmann suggested preparing a third, more realistic scenario, covering the real costs of the Secretariat and the meetings. A realistic scenario based on obligatory contributions should therefore show what the budget would look like if all costs, including meeting costs, were fully reflected.

Mr de Barsac suggested adding a Scenario 0 with zero nominal growth, maintaining the previous budget level with the resulting consequences, including potential staff reductions. It was also suggested considering an intermediate scenario between the zero nominal growth

one and Scenario 2, possibly reflecting a reduced level of activity. Ms Domazetović noted that, since most costs were related to staff and very limited resources were available for other activities, a reduction in the budget for EUROBATS would effectively mean reducing staff. It was concluded that the budget contained no significant scope for further reductions.

Finally, it was decided to prepare 4 scenarios: Scenario 0 with zero nominal growth, the two originally presented by the Secretariat, and then Scenario 4 with realistic costs on all the budget lines.

It was then proposed to increase the minimum contribution by 1,000 EUR in all scenarios. A similar discussion had taken place within ACCOBAMS, where the minimum contribution had also been raised. It was noted that 19 countries currently paid the minimum contribution. To reduce the administrative burden on the Parties paying the minimum contribution, it was recalled that they could pay their contributions for the full four-year period in a single payment. Mr Stephen Saliba (Malta) indicated that for Malta it would not be a problem with such an increase, while Mr Zautashvili needed to first check internally. Ms Carolin Kohzer (Germany) commented that even an increase of 1,000 EUR could help cover additional costs for the Advisory Committee meetings. Ms Impagliazzo (Monaco) stressed that raising the minimum contribution should not be used merely to reduce other contributions, but to allow the adoption of a budget scenario that would provide additional resources for activities. The Secretariat was asked to calculate the effect of increasing minimum contributions by 1,000 EUR.

Referring to the request for Scenario 4, Ms Domazetović mentioned that the staff costs were already realistic. There might be some issues here as well – for example, in case announced health insurance cost increases for staff members materialised, but these most likely would be absorbed by various small savings. The only budget lines requiring adjustment were the meeting costs. The amount of EUR 20,000 was considered unrealistic, as the current meeting already involved costs of approximately EUR 45,000. Under Scenario 4, the Secretariat would only need to identify additional EUR 25,000 for the meeting costs (per meeting).

The Secretariat also reported on the requested calculation of the effect of increasing minimum contributions by EUR 1,000. As 19 Parties currently paid the minimum contribution, such an increase over the four-year period would result in an additional EUR 76,000. It was therefore noted that no further complex calculation was required, as the increase in minimum contributions could exactly match the higher costs for the meeting organisation. However, it would have been useful to hear from, for example, Italy or France what their view on this proposal were.

It was agreed that the four scenarios would be included in the draft resolution.

Regarding paragraph 17 of the draft resolution, the following revised wording was proposed: “Instructs the Standing Committee, through the Secretariat, to advise the Executive Director of UNEP, upon request, on expenditure priorities relevant to the use of Trust Fund reserves or unearmarked funds arising from the transition to the new financial system.”

Ms Impagliazzo asked whether it was the Chair or the Standing Committee that should be instructed. It was noted that this should be regulated in the Terms of Reference for the Standing Committee. A revision of those Terms of Reference for MoP10 was proposed. It was also noted that other old technical resolutions, such as Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee, might need to be amended as well.

Ms Impagliazzo also proposed a revision to paragraph 8, suggesting the following wording: “Requests the Secretariat, with support of the Standing Committee when needed, to investigate the reasons that Parties are in arrears and approach national focal points to facilitate payment of outstanding contributions.”

Regarding paragraph 10, Ms Impagliazzo referred to the invitation to the Parties to consider the feasibility of providing gratis personnel and/or Junior Professional Officers, in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations, to strengthen the capacity of the Agreement Secretariat. The question was whether such secondments from the Parties would be problematic. It was noted that this would not be the case for junior positions.

## **20. EUROBATS Vision and Strategic Plan (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.11)**

The AC Chair and Vice Chair, former AC Chairs – Prof. Russo and Dr Marnell, as well as the Scientific Officer joined the StC meeting for this discussion.

The Secretariat introduced the draft resolution on the Adoption of EUROBATS Strategic Plan 2026-2038 and explained the basis for the revised draft. Ms Domazetović explained that the comments submitted by Switzerland had not been fully integrated in the version under consideration. Some had been incorporated where possible, while others related to the issues that had already been amended following comments from other delegations.

The Executive Secretary then referred to the request for SMART targets. It was explained that the Strategic Plan had been kept at a broader strategic level, while more concrete actions would be addressed through the Secretariat’s workplan, eventual Programme of Work and the Conservation and Management Plan.

With regard to the draft resolution, it was noted that references had been made primarily to the CMS Strategic Plan, as this was considered the most relevant framework and the easiest to relate to the EUROBATS Strategic Plan. Other relevant strategic documents had also been

referenced but were grouped together in a single preambular paragraph. If considered useful, separate paragraphs could be dedicated to each strategic document.

The Secretariat further explained that the operative part of the draft resolution set out the proposed requirements and follow-up actions for the Parties, the Advisory Committee, the Standing Committee and the Meeting of the Parties. Mr Panis suggested that this could be discussed later, noting that, from the perspective of the Advisory Committee members who attended this part of the Standing Committee meeting, the substantive content of the Strategic Plan was the more important issue.

Dr Gazaryan presented the main changes made to the Strategic Plan in response to the comments received. These included adjustments concerning the achievability of the goals and the proposed time frame. He noted that the deadlines had been aligned, where relevant, with those under the EU Habitats Directive and EU Nature Restoration Regulation reporting cycle, while also considering the timing of EUROBATS Meetings of the Parties.

He explained that the overall structure of the Strategic Plan had remained unchanged. The five goals continued to be linked to the Global Biodiversity Framework, the CMS Strategic Plan, the Bern Convention framework and relevant EUROBATS resolutions. Following extensive discussions on each of the goals, the current version reflected the latest state of the draft. He noted, however, that the text remained open for further comments.

Ms Petermann, referring to the text of the draft resolution, asked how the Advisory Committee was expected to develop technical guidance on achieving targets that were scheduled for 2030. Ms Domazetović explained that the wording “as appropriate” had been included to allow the Advisory Committee to provide advice if it considered this useful or necessary.

The Swiss delegation suggested considering whether Goals 4 and 5 could be merged, noting that five goals might be too many. The scientific knowledge and resources could be brought together under a single goal.

Switzerland further noted that, as a non-EU country, it wished to move away from terminology used in reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive or the Bern Convention, in particular the term “favourable conservation status”, and to consider using IUCN terminology instead. Switzerland does not want to increase the work on the reporting. It was stressed that the wording “favourable conservation status” was also used in the text of the Agreement itself. Regarding threats, Switzerland suggested keeping the text more general rather than listing specific threats. Since the table did not include all possible threats, a more general formulation would ensure that all relevant threats were covered. Dr Gazaryan explained that the draft had sought to align the goals with CMS and existing reporting frameworks, so that Parties could

use the same or similar information in their reporting. It was noted, however, that the Strategic Plan should provide direction and should not be drafted with reporting requirements in mind. It was also suggested to delete the column referring to resolutions, since the relevant resolutions might change over time, whereas the goals of the Strategic Plan would remain for longer. Ms Domazetović noted that the Meeting of the Parties would be asked to adopt the Strategic Plan, while individual resolutions referred to in the table might subsequently be amended or repealed.

Mr Panis suggested preparing two documents. One would be an information document listing the relevant resolutions linked to each goal. The second one would be the draft resolution with the Strategic Plan without the column on resolutions. Ms Domazetović noted that this approach would also make it possible to include draft resolutions in the overview.

Ms Impagliazzo suggested, if resources would allow for it, to further develop the Strategic Plan by linking concrete actions from the resolutions to the targets.

A question was raised regarding the fact that some draft amendments and draft resolutions referred to the Strategic Plan. This could create a risk if the Strategic Plan were ultimately not adopted. It was also questioned whether all resolutions still in effect should be amended to include a reference to the Strategic Plan. It was decided that only the new resolutions and those needed to be amended should refer to it. Once adopted, the Strategic Plan should be reflected also in the Conservation and Management Plan and the Secretariat's Work Plan.

A discussion also took place on certain wording in the Strategic Plan, including the use of the terms "sites" and "habitats". Concerns were further raised regarding references to historical sites, whether the text could be understood as calling for the restoration of all historical bat sites. The alternative wording suggested was "creation of bat habitats".

The comments were then included in the final draft which was again discussed by the Standing Committee. Apart from some minor errors being corrected, quite some discussion took place to find appropriate wording for individual targets. It was also noted that the reference to strategic projects was missing from the draft resolution. The Secretariat was requested to produce a paragraph, between the first and the second instruction for the Secretariat, stating that it was mandated to propose strategic projects for submission to the Standing Committee for approval, with implementation subject to the availability of funds and resources.

Referring to one of the preambular paragraphs, Ms Impagliazzo noted that the EU Council Directive was neither an international convention, nor an international framework. The solution proposed was to separate the EU Council Directive from the conventions and state that it would be noted. Mr Panis asked that the EU Nature Restoration Regulation be mentioned as well, so it was decided to put EU legislation as a separate point. Mr Barber mentioned that this might

be a problem for the UK since EU regulations were listed, though not binding for the non-EU countries. He suggested that this could imply that non-EU parties' regulations could be included as well. Ms Domazetović indicated that this was the case for almost all resolutions: New ones were softer in this regard since before stronger wording than just "noting" was used.

## **21. Draft Amendments to Resolution 3.1: Integration of EUROBATS into UNEP/CMS Agreements Unit (Doc.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.12)**

Ms Domazetović introduced the draft amendments to the Terms of Reference annexed to Resolution 3.1, explaining that they were outdated in several respects. It had become apparent during the recruitment process for the new Executive Secretary that the Terms of Reference contained provisions that needed to be revised. This had initially been brought to the attention of the Standing Committee by the former Executive Secretary, Mr Andreas Streit, who had also provided support in preparing the draft amendments and had kindly contributed historical background.

Ms Domazetović explained that one of the proposed changes concerned the reference to "Agreements unit". This terminology reflected an earlier intention to establish a joint secretariat structure for the CMS instruments, comparable to existing joint communication or administrative units. However, this terminology was no longer appropriate in the present context.

Another proposed amendment concerned the provision stating that the Chairpersons of the competent bodies of the Agreements shall contribute to the annual performance appraisal of an Agreement's Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary explained that performance appraisals were regulated by the UN rules and regulations. It was therefore not possible for the competent bodies to be formally involved in this process, although they could raise any concerns if issues arose. Mr Panis asked why the text referred to Executive Secretaries in the plural. Ms Domazetović explained that the original text had been drafted with the wider CMS Family in mind.

With regard to the point referring to the recruitment, the Executive Secretary explained that the proposed amendments reflected current UN requirements. References to CMS had been amended to reflect that job openings were now initiated by the relevant Executive Secretary. Chairpersons of competent bodies could no longer serve as members of recruitment panels, as panel membership was reserved for the UN staff, but they could participate as observers. Mr Panis asked why the text stated that the Executive Secretary should desirably come from the Agreement area and whether this wording should be omitted. Ms Domazetović explained that UN job openings distinguished between required and desirable criteria. Given the

geographically defined nature of the Agreement, it was reasonable to indicate that a connection with the Agreement area was desirable. However, this would not prevent the appointment of a candidate from outside the Agreement area if no more suitable candidate from within the area were available. She stressed that the purpose of the amendments was mainly to clean up the Terms of Reference and bring them into line with current UN rules and regulations. Mr Panis noted that this was not really an issue requiring further debate.

Dr Laurent Schley (Luxembourg) suggested using “Agreement Secretariats” rather than “Agreements Secretariats”, as this would be simpler and clearer.

As requested by the Advisory Committee, the Standing Committee needed to reconsider **Implementation of the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (Inf.EUROBATS.StC26-AC30.7)** to find solutions that would allow the initiative to continue in a way that was feasible both for applicants and the Secretariat.

The StC discussed the future of the EUROBATS Project Initiative (EPI) in light of the increasingly disproportionate administrative burden associated with the current system, both for the Secretariat — in particular the Scientific Officer — and for project applicants. StC delegates stressed that the current EPI mechanism should be fundamentally reconsidered. At the same time, it was noted that simply discontinuing the EPI without replacement would risk losing a valuable instrument for supporting small-scale projects that could make a meaningful contribution to bat conservation in a particular region or country. A revised mechanism should therefore preserve this objective while reducing the administrative burden on both applicants and the Secretariat.

The discussion focused on the possibility of transforming the EPI into a more strategic “match-making” mechanism. Under such an approach, the Secretariat would launch calls for project concepts linked to priorities defined in the Agreement’s implementation documents.

It was emphasised that the workload for applicants also needs to be taken into account. Rather than requiring fully developed project proposals from the outset, applicants would initially submit only a concise application containing the basic information, including the proposed time-frame and the funding required. More detailed proposals could be requested only at a later stage once the basic suitability of the project had been assessed.

Project ideas could be submitted through a form on the EUROBATS website. The question of developing such a form was raised. Ms Domazetović explained that, upon transferal to the new version of Drupal, the Secretariat had asked the web developers to design a registration form for the meetings and a form for submitting the information on underground sites. Hopefully, the Secretariat would be able to adapt these forms for the purpose of submitting project

applications. It was suggested that this form should contain yes/no questions so that a simple initial screening of applications would be possible.

The Evaluation Group would continue to assess eligible projects using simplified and standardised evaluation criteria and a uniform scoring system, in order to facilitate consistent evaluation. It was also proposed that evaluators provide brief written justifications for their assessments.

The StC further discussed the need to revise the mandate and composition of the Evaluation Group, including the establishment of clearer appointment criteria, terms of reference, regional representation provisions and conflict-of-interest rules. Ms Impagliazzo suggested introducing both general conflict-of-interest declarations upon joining the group and case-specific declarations for each evaluation process.

Project proposals that received a positive evaluation would subsequently be brought to the attention of the Parties with a view to possible funding support. The Secretariat's role would therefore focus primarily on facilitating connections between project proponents and interested donors, rather than directly administering complex funding procedures.

Several participants noted the growing interest among donors in longer-term, programmatic funding approaches and joint initiatives, rather than ad hoc support for isolated small-scale projects. It was therefore suggested that project priorities should be more closely linked to the EUROBATS Strategic Plan, as well as to the Conservation and Management Plan.

For this purpose, however, the Conservation and Management Plan would need to be adjusted as the current one was considered to be largely descriptive and repetitive of existing resolutions, rather than a genuinely strategic programme of work. It was therefore suggested that future implementation priorities should distinguish more clearly between essential and desirable actions and provide a better basis for identifying projects suitable for external financing.

It was also noted that, if the Secretariat were to act only as a matchmaker under a revised EPI approach, there could be a risk when voluntary contributions would no longer be channelled through the Secretariat. This would reduce the funds available to the Secretariat for longer-term strategic projects. It was therefore suggested that, in addition to any revised EPI mechanism, a separate mechanism could be considered through which the Secretariat could receive funding for strategic projects of broader relevance to the Agreement.

It was discussed whether this could be reflected in a resolution, possibly in the Resolution on the Strategic Plan. Under such an approach, the Secretariat could identify strategic project proposals or priority activities, with the approval of the Standing Committee make them available to Parties on a regular basis and seek voluntary funding for their implementation.

Since the targets in the Strategic Plan were necessarily broad, it was considered whether an operational plan or a programme of work might be needed to translate them into more concrete activities and project ideas. The main question was whether such a programme of work would be required to make the targets more concrete and to ensure that projects were strategic in nature, or whether the Secretariat could proceed directly with individual projects. Such projects would need to remain within the Secretariat's capacity to implement them.

Mr Panis noted that it was not necessary to rely solely on resolutions. He pointed out that national implementation reports had been mentioned frequently, particularly in relation to the useful information that could be obtained through their analysis. It should be in scope of a strategic project to adapt the reporting format to the Strategic Plan and to consider how the information collected through reporting could be used more strategically.

It was suggested that the resolution on the Strategic Plan could mandate the Secretariat to identify priorities for the implementation of the Vision and Strategic Plan and to develop possible project proposals. These could then be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval and implemented upon availability of funds.

Regarding the new mechanism for the implementation of the EPI, it was concluded that the Secretariat should prepare a draft EPI concept by the end of May 2026. The concept would then be considered by the Standing Committee till end of June, with July and August used for drafting the resolution. The draft would be open for comments by the Parties. The revised concept should elaborate the proposed changes to the application procedure, the evaluation process and the match-making mechanism. Until then, it was agreed that a note should be placed on the EUROBATS website stating that the EPI Programme was suspended while the mechanism was under review.

## **22. The following agenda items were discussed only by the Advisory Committee in a separate session:**

The AC Chair together with the Vice-Chair and the Scientific Officer compiled a provisional list of topics for the discussion at the AC meeting.

The list with work items was agreed on and the committee started with the Wind Turbines and Bat Populations and Draft **Guidelines for Consideration of Bats in Offshore Wind Farm Projects**. The AC Chair expressed her gratitude for the draft document and the work of the group and mentioned that Germany still had comments on the draft. She mentioned that it was this morning pointed out by the Convenor, Mr Branko Karapandža, that the draft amendment of the resolution was more of a technical nature. She therefore asked the AC if anyone saw the need to discuss the draft amendment of the resolution. Prof. Alek Rachwald (Poland) asked

if the onshore wind turbines document would be discussed as well and the AC Chair answered that the document had not been revised. It was confirmed that the AC saw no need to discuss the changes to the draft amendment of the resolution and that the committee could proceed to discuss the guidelines for consideration of bats in offshore wind farm projects.

Mr. Karapandža led the committee through the document. He described how the split of the document evolved. He explained that the document, that was presented at the last AC meeting in 2025 and was online since then, was in a very advanced stage. The group did work on the draft in between the meetings, and he would be grateful if comments of very general nature could be avoided. As the document was available online for a longer period, it had already been possible for the AC to comment. Therefore, he would ask only for comments of minor nature and those were very welcome until the end of June. The Convenor thanked all contributors of the document for their huge commitment to it. He asked the Secretariat if it was possible to have a place where sources of information that were not easily accessible could be collected and made available online. The Secretariat answered that it would depend on if the sources were restricted and the Convenor confirmed that he had only sources in mind without any copyright issues, but that an online compilation would be useful to provide easy access to the sources. The Scientific Officer agreed that it was not a problem. The Convenor asked for any comments to be provided by the end of June. The proof reading was done already by several native speakers, and the editorial work will be done also by the group members. The floor was then opened to the Committee to comment on the explanations. The AC Chair mentioned that it was necessary to check text passages in the introduction with regard to the EU legislation. Sweden asked the Convenor if the group formulated any guidance with regard to curtailment schemes. The Convenor answered that no thresholds were mentioned but that the principles were discussed and that several factors had been incorporated. This was the only question from the committee and the topic was closed, after the AC Chair expressed her gratitude for the work again.

The AC Chair then asked Dr López-Baucells to inform the committee about the **draft amendments to Resolution 5.4** and on the **Draft Guidelines for Long-Term Monitoring of European Bats**. The Convenor explained that he considered the draft resolution as finalized and introduced the document. He underlined that the compilation of the draft guidelines was a real group effort, not only from members of the working group but also with contributions from outside the group. He underlined the expertise that was gathered in the guidelines.

The draft Amendments to Resolution 5.4: Monitoring Bats across Europe was projected and the committee followed on screen and the Convenor led through. He described a major change in the draft document to delete the specification “underground” in connection with roosting sites

and that they proposed to broaden the phrase to all roosting sites. Dr Cibois raised the question if the addition of all bat species in point 1 would be difficult to achieve and asked if a prioritisation of species might be necessary. The Convenor agreed that countries could prioritise and set up schemes for individual species and that the wording would be agreed on and circulated then. Dr Johnny de Jong (Sweden) commented that in Sweden only the common species were subject to monitoring and trends were visible and that the rare species were not so easily monitored and that a limitation with regard to species would not be advisable. This was agreed by the Convenor.

Dr de Jong then focused on implementation and raised the question about methods and that it might be difficult to have a European standard, and that Sweden had a long history of bat monitoring, that the country liked to keep as an asset and the Convenor fully agreed. The Convenor explained that it would be absolutely necessary to work with what was available in the different countries and that a Pan-European approach should in the best way compile already available data and should work with the differences. In addition, countries which did not yet have a monitoring scheme in place would be advised to use the standardized methods then.

Mr Broer raised the issue if the group worked on a standardisation of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) that identified acoustic data. The Convenor stated that it needed to be developed still and that it was a difficult topic as the technical development of AI was so fast, but that it surely needed to be standardised. Dr Godlevska wished to have point 7 more tailored to monitoring.

Prof. Voigt noted the absence of demographic data and raised a general concern about possibility of prediction. The Convenor answered that it was not included as it would be too difficult and that it was discussed and agreed to leave it out.

The Scientific Officer raised the question to the Convenor if the merging of this group with the group on Improving Methodologies of the Assessment of Favourable Conservation Status in Bats would be an option for him. The approach was discussed within the AC but was rejected. The French Society for the Study and Protection of Mammals (SFEPM) raised a concern about the level of detail of the draft resolution and wanted to remind the delegates that in the old monitoring guidelines a monitoring scheme was provided for each species. The Convenor emphasised that the old guidelines should not be replaced but that these were two different guidelines.

The Convenor, Dr López-Baucells, summarised the guidelines document on screen and encouraged everyone to comment on the draft. Ireland agreed to proofread the guidelines. Comments were welcome until mid-June and then the document should be ready for proof

reading that would start end of June. The Convenor raised that pictures could be added and that he would be grateful for submission of pictures from colleagues with clarified copyright. Dr Charlotte Roemer (France) asked about incorporation of citizen science and the Convenor agreed that it would be incorporated. Prof. Stéphane Aulagnier (SFEPM) raised the issue of marking bats and that GPS transmitters were not in the document yet, although in France, Spain and Germany projects with GPS transmitters were conducted currently. The Convenor agreed that it was discussed intensively but that it was decided to leave GPS out for the time being as it was not considered important on a population scale. Prof. Aulagnier gave several examples about the use of GPS transmitters in France for studying migration and long-term monitoring of forest bat populations and recommended that it be mentioned. It was agreed to include a reference to these methods in the chapter on marking techniques. Prof. Voigt added that sensory networks then should also be added, but he was not sure if that was relevant for population monitoring. Ideas for changes should be sent to the Convenor and the topic was closed.

The AC Chair summarised how the topic of Improving **Methodologies of Assessment of Favourable Conservation Status in Bats** had evolved. The draft document was not published before the meeting and was only shared with the Secretariat, the AC Chair and Vice Chair. The Secretariat, AC Chair and Vice Chair discussed the draft and provided the following summary: The draft contained important technical elements particularly regarding monitoring and knowledge gaps and assessments of the conservation status of bats, but in its current form it remained unclear what specific added value the draft resolution was intended to provide within the framework of EUROBATS. A key issue was the strong focus on the EU legislation. The draft also reiterated existing obligations a lot and addressed tasks outside the mandate of the EUROBATS Agreement which was not considered appropriate. While it could be possible to polish the draft resolution, the document was currently not in a state to be presented to the AC. Unfortunately, the Convenor was not able to attend the AC meeting and hence was not able to discuss the draft. Mr Karapandža wanted to recognize that the topic as such was worth discussing but the draft document was difficult. Dr Marnell emphasised that the topic was important and that EUROBATS was the correct platform for discussing it, but as the document was in an early stage it was not possible to develop it further during this meeting. The topic was closed.

The next topic was the discussion on the status of the IWG on **Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe** that was established on basis of Resolution 8.13. The Convenor, Mr Pir gave an overview on the work that was done to date, mainly a collection of literature

compiled by Prof. Aulagnier, whom the Convenor thanked. The Convenor asked the opinion of the Committee if the group should continue to convene or if the work should be shut down. The tasks for the AC were on screen and opinions were searched. The Scientific Officer pointed out that the AC had a clear mandate to work on the topic. It was discussed further and opinions were collected. Dr Roemer supported keeping the group active. Prof. Voigt thanked the group for compiling the literature on bat diet. He marked that it was not really obvious that populations were threatened by insect decline and that he thought guidelines were not necessary. He emphasised, however, that it was important to continue monitoring the literature and to be aware of changes if they came. Ms Eeva-Maria Tidenberg (Finland, AC Vice-Chair) asked if the results were available and the Convenor answered that they could be made available.

The Convenor answered Prof Voigt, that species loss and insect decline was related and that he thought that the IWG was necessary. As an example, he stated the possible change of the conservation status of *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* being no longer favourable. The AC Chair asked the Convenor to continue the work, with the resolution being still valid for the Parties. Mr Karapandža underlined that it was necessary that a group was active and that not one person could work on an item on his own or only with two persons. Prof. Voigt wanted to make the results of the literature research available for example on the EUROBATS SharePoint. Prof. Aulagnier was willing to provide the list of scientific papers and articles and referred to the CMS resolution on the topic. He stated that he still needed to collect articles to complete the work. Prof. Mathews pointed out that the IWG was important and noted that less information than one may have thought was available on nocturnal insects. Therefore, one major point for the group would be to show that this knowledge was missing. The AC Chair summarised the discussion and clearly stated that the Parties still had their duties from the resolution. Prof. Aulagnier and Prof. Rachwald volunteered to help the group. The Committee agreed that it would not be necessary to have a new resolution as the valid resolution was good, but now the IWG should conclude the work. It was agreed that the literature compilation should be made available. The AC Chair asked the Convenor to prepare a comprehensive report as an information document for one of the next meetings. SFEPM asked the Secretariat to distribute the final CMS resolution on the topic.

The next topic was discussed, the IWG on **Overground Roosts**. The Co-Convenor, Dr Marnell, gave a summary on the work of the IWG and informed that he would no longer be able to co-convene the group. The valid resolutions were 5.7 and 8.5. The topic was agreed to be a very important, one specifically with regard to cultural heritage buildings and bats. It was discussed that Mr Primoz Presetnik (Slovenia, the Convenor) would need support to continue the Working Group. Mr Karapandža pointed out that, if a group was not able to find active

members within the AC, it could be an idea to encourage people from outside the AC to get in touch with the IWGs. Prof. Aulagnier, Dr Henry Schofield (University of Sussex; UK) and Dr Bücs all volunteered to help the group. The AC agreed that the work of the group was important and would continue with the support of new members who should contact Mr Presetnik in the future. Dr Godlevska asked if the list of overground roost mentioned in Resolution 8.5 was compiled. That was not the case, but the question was included in the national report. She asked if the Secretariat had plans to publish the list of sites on the EUROBATS website. The Scientific Officer questioned the value of the list on the website, as the format of data was not homogeneous. A lively discussion took place about the importance of roosts and the changes of roost over time. SFEPM wanted to make sure that these important roosts were acknowledged on a European scale. Dr Godlevska asked how many countries had officially recognised lists with overground roosts. Dr Marnell mentioned that there were countries having lists with overground roosts due to Habitat Directive relevant species. Other countries had regional lists. Dr Roemer pointed out that the prioritisation of roosts was very important and that it would be useful that countries applied the same index instead of sending the list to EUROBATS. But EUROBATS could define the index of the importance of roosts. Dr Mazija noticed that roosts important for bats should not be published in a way that roosts could be harmed due to the publication. The AC agreed that it was crucial to ensure the publication of the data in a safe way so that the data could not be abused.

The IWG on **Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats** reported on the status of the work of the group. The Co-Convenors, Prof. Voigt and Dr Budinski were searching for volunteers to work on single species chapters. Dr Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic) offered to take over the work on *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The work was organized through the SharePoint and Prof. Voigt asked if the AC had any other ideas of items that needed to be included in the review. The timeline was defined so that the document should be finalized by July 2026. Only short chapters were still needed (2,000 words maximum). The Scientific Officer questioned if anthropogenic traps were a threat and this was further discussed. Dr Roemer suggested adding a chapter on agricultural practices and this was discussed further. Mr Markus Melber (German Bat Research Association) suggested adding forestry as a threat to migratory bats. Prof. Voigt summarised that anthropogenic traps and intensive landscape use (such as agriculture and forestry) would be additional chapters to be reflected in the review. Prof. Aulagnier volunteered to review the species. The timeframe for the finalisation of the review was discussed and the process needed to allow the Parties to review the draft of the publication. Dr Marnell reminded the AC that the Parties would need to be given an opportunity to check the review before it was published. This could be done by written procedure or at the

MoP. Dr Budinski summed up that the timeline could perhaps not be met for a written procedure before MOP10; in which case the review would then be submitted to MOP10 and, if that would not work out, the written procedure would afterwards again be an option. The AC Chair noted that an opportunity for comments from the Parties was necessary and that agreement should be sought in any case.

The AC Chair opened the next item - the draft resolution on the **Prevention of Adverse Effects of Anthropogenic Traps on Bats**. The Convenor of the group, Dr Kepel, presented the draft and suggested some additions. Prof. Mathews suggested to keep the draft resolution prepared by the Secretariat instead of adding text without being sure of the additional value. This approach was supported by the AC Chair. The wording of the draft resolution was further discussed. The Convenor sought the opinion from the Committee and would agree to the prepared draft resolution if the Committee did not have any additional suggestions. It was agreed that the draft resolution as prepared by the Secretariat should be kept with only minor changes.

After the draft resolution, the Convenor presented to the group the technical document and Dr Dragoş Ştefan Măntoiu (Wilderness Research and Conservation, Romania) and Dr Jahelková volunteered to contribute to the work. It was clarified by the Secretariat that the compilation of anthropogenic traps to bats could be published on the EUROBATS website anytime, as it was a technical document and not a guideline and therefore would not need the approval of the Parties. The Convenor prepared a list of volunteers who could sign up to contribute for specific items. This list was sent to the Secretariat and to other colleagues of the group. Ending the report the Convenor again asked for support as 32 traps were listed in total and, so far, only four were described in detail. The AC Chair encouraged the group to volunteer on the topic and thanked the Convenor again for his work. The group met again during the AC meeting and Dr Măntoiu was appointed as Co-Convenor.

The AC then discussed the Draft Amendments to Resolution 9.2: **Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement**. The Annex to the draft resolution and the species names were discussed. Prof. Russo noted that the IUCN nomenclature should be followed and that was supported by Dr Marnell. The definition of Europe/the geographical scope of the Agreement as in the Implementation Guide was noted. Dr Marnell summarized that the Agreement area was defined as in Resolution 6.3 and that Northern Africa was included as bat species migrate from Europe to Northern Africa, and that not all species occurring in Northern Africa needed to be included in the Annex to the Agreement. To fully protect European bat populations the Agreement needed to include countries where they might migrate to, to the East as well as in

the South to Northern Africa. Prof. Aulagnier raised the point that the range area of the Agreement and Europe were differently defined. It was pointed out by the AC Chair and the Secretariat that Resolutions 2.5 and 5.11 were repealed and so no longer applied, but that Resolution 6.3 only defined the Agreement area. Mr Karapandža suggested amending Resolution 6.3 to address these definitions. Prof. Aulagnier suggested to define both terms, “Europe” and the geographical scope of the Agreement area, as the Agreement area was broader than physical Europe. The AC Chair summarised that the definition of “Europe” from Resolution 2.5 would be used and extended to the islands of the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands and reflected in an amendment of Resolution 6.3. This would solve one problem, but the second problem, stated by the Scientific officer, would be to define European bat species and populations. The AC Chair reminded the AC of the definition that the species listed in Annex one under the Agreement were defined as the species of the European populations. Prof. Aulagnier seconded this and explained why species were listed on the Annex and why some North African species were not listed on the Annex as they were resident to Northern Africa and would not migrate to Europe. Dr Mazija suggested to have a criterion of percentage of species occurrence or a similar criterion to have the species listed on the Annex. Dr Roemer seconded the idea of defining criteria for the listing of species. The AC Chair would ask the group to discuss these suggestions further. It was further discussed why the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands were included in the Agreement area. Prof. Aulagnier explained that it was a political decision to include the islands. Prof. Russo added that the islands were included in the IUCN assessment scope for Europe as well. The AC Chair and Vice Chair added to the discussion that, at the time Resolution 5.11 had been adopted, there were efforts from CMS to develop bat agreements in other parts of the world. This would result in new regional agreements on the conservation of bats and, in the future, for example the Agreement area of EUROBATS would have a clear southern border if an African Agreement would be defined. The AC Chair asked the Secretariat to draft amendments to Resolution 6.3 before the Plenary on Thursday.

Draft Amendments to Resolution 7.6: **Conservation and Management of Important Underground Sites** were discussed by the AC. The Convenor, Dr Bücs summarised that at the last meeting of the AC it was decided to amend Resolution 7.6. He noted that several examples of best practices were collected. The Secretariat raised the issue of how to maintain the database in the future. The wording of the proposed amendments and the reporting cycle were discussed. Dr Roemer asked about the usage of the data. The Scientific Officer explained that the data was compiled to make visible that many underground sites were unprotected and that it was set up before the Habitat Directive came into force. Dr Roemer pointed to the criteria

in the Monitoring across Europe Guidelines. Dr López-Baucells suggested that, even if countries did not report, it was necessary to keep the information on important underground sites for bats. The Convenor seconded this view. The Convenor asked if the AC was satisfied with the proposed changes. Dr Roemer asked for the update of the map and the Scientific Officer explained that he did update the data in the past and only did not include the last submission. The AC Chair asked if it would be possible for the Secretariat to summarise and the Secretariat answered that the question was included in the online national report. After submission of national reports, it would then be available publicly to the working group. The Convenor agreed that the group would use the data accordingly.

The IWG on **Potential Impact of Solar Power Plants on Bat Populations** gave a short presentation on the overview of recognised impacts of solar power plants (SPP) on bat populations. It gave an overview of the scale of solar power plant development in Europe, a summary of the impacts documented in the available scientific literature, and the need for further research and targeted guidelines for assessing and minimising the impacts of solar power plants on bats. It was suggested that urban spaces, such as parking places of shopping centres should be used for the installation of solar power plants instead of valuable natural sites. The placing of SPP along railways and highways was discussed. The group asked the Secretariat for an operational share point connection and would be willing to save the literatures in that folder. Subsequently, the IWG presented the draft resolution. Discussion brought some minor wording changes and additional important points were suggested and added. Some key amendments included the removal of “potential impacts of” from the title of the resolution, addition of need to assess the impact of infrastructure associated with solar power plant development and the need to define ecovoltaics.

The AC continued to discuss an inf document on **Bats, Healthy Ecosystems and One Health**. The AC Chair presented the draft prepared by Dr Sasan Fereidouni with comments from Dr Allyson Walsh, Dr Krüger and the Secretariat and would like to discuss with the committee if the group should continue work and if a resolution was needed. BCT suggested as there were overlaps between this draft and Resolution 9.6 and that it would be better to have an amendment of Resolution 9.6. Dr Krüger, Dr Walsh and Dr Marcus Fritze (German Bat Observatory) agreed to help. Prof. Aulagnier mentioned that Dr Laurent Dacheux who worked at the Pasteur Institute would like to volunteer. Dr Godlevska and Mr Peter Lina (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Netherlands) would also like to volunteer. It was agreed that the Secretariat would send the last version of the draft resolution to the mentioned persons and would assist the group with the work. The AC Chair asked the group to also include the Convenor, Dr

Fereidouni, in the exchange of information. She inquired if it would be feasible to draft a resolution or an amendment of Resolution 9.6 for MOP10, depending on the group's decisions, and the group members present expressed that this should be feasible and the topic was closed.

The IWG on **Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation** reported that before the AC meeting, corrections and additions to the text were done (chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 were updated). During the AC meeting the IWG members (Ms Stoner, Mr Lina, Dr Măntoiu, Dr Jahelková, Dr Godlevska) had two meeting sessions. The available corrections were considered. Some needed reconceptualisation of the guidelines and reclarifying of the target audience were done. The text was reviewed thoroughly. Chapter 1 was agreed to be shortened and rewritten. Chapter 2 was discussed and improved. Issues of keeping permanently disabled bats were discussed. Chapter 3 was agreed to be revised according to the results of the discussion. The corrections to the section on euthanasia were discussed and accepted. A plan for the finalisation of the guidelines (aimed to be done in 2026) was agreed.

Finally, the AC Chair asked if anybody wanted to take part in drafting the **Resolution on the Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan**. Dr Marnell agreed to help.

### **23. Other draft documents emerging from the Advisory Committee**

When informing the Standing Committee on the output of the AC meeting, Ms Petermann noted that the Advisory Committee had previously compiled a list of points to be discussed and that she would go through that list.

With reference to the draft amendments of the wind turbines resolution as well as the related draft guidelines, it was noted that the amendments later discussed by the AC were technical in nature. Regarding the guidelines, it was mentioned that some minor refinements had been made and that the deadline for the submission of comments to the Convenor was mid of June 2026. Amendments from Monaco to the draft resolution included proper citing of EU legislation and a correction of the preambular paragraph on the Kummung-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

With regard to the draft guidelines on the monitoring of bats across Europe, participants were informed that a newer version was available on the website. Some questions were addressed during the discussion. Participants were invited to send any further comments to the Convenor by mid-June.

Concerning the issue of improving methodologies of assessment of favourable conservation status in bats, Ms Petermann reported that a draft document had been shared with the

Secretariat and subsequently with the AC Chair and Vice Chair. She noted that the document contained some useful elements. However, at this stage, it was considered premature to develop a resolution on this matter. The development of a methodology for assessment could be further explored by the Advisory Committee but not based on the current draft.

With regard to the topic of insect decline, it was stated that the Convenor of the IWG had been asked how the group should proceed. It was suggested that the group could continue to carry out a horizon scan on the issue of bats and their prey. Some work had already been undertaken. It was agreed that the IWG could prepare a report on the topic for presentation at the next meeting. The existing resolution was considered still valid and should remain unchanged.

Concerning the issue of overground roosts, it was reported that the working group consisted of only a few members. A questionnaire had been distributed. Several delegates expressed their willingness to support the work of the group. It was hoped that some progress could be made, although not in time for the next MoP.

The guidelines on daily and seasonal movements of bats were in a very advanced stage. Volunteers were invited to contribute to the remaining chapters. It was hoped that the document could be completed by summer 2026.

The Convenor of the IWG on the Prevention of Adverse Effects of Anthropogenic Traps on Bats asked for the appointment of a Co-Convenor. Dr Măntoiu was proposed for this role. A smaller group had met to work on the draft resolution, which was subsequently presented to the plenary. It was clarified that guidelines would also be developed. The first draft was expected to be prepared by mid-June, after which it would be reviewed by the full working group and discussed further, with the aim of finalising the document by mid-August. Chapters had already been divided among members. It was also suggested that specialists from outside the Advisory Committee and the IWG could be invited to contribute, although it was acknowledged that this was very ambitious. The AC Chair welcomed the availability of the draft resolution and thanked the Co-Convenors and Dr Gazaryan for their work in preparing it. Dr Gazaryan asked the Co-Convenors for the Annex mentioned in the draft resolution to be sent in its current form to the Secretariat.

With regard to the amendment of the Annex to the Agreement, Ms Petermann reported that the AC had held intensive discussions on defining both the bat species of interest and the geographical scope of the Agreement. As the new draft resolution was intended to repeal the two previous resolutions defining the range and Agreement area, it had been suggested that the relevant definition from Resolution 2.5 be incorporated into the draft amendments. The

Executive Secretary questioned whether it was appropriate to include elements from a resolution that would be repealed by the new resolution.

Dr Krüger announced that further requests for changes to country names would be sent to the Secretariat. Ms Domazetović recalled that, as the Annex was important for national lists of strictly protected species and for those working with them, it might be useful to include references to previous species names in the Annex, to avoid any confusion. Other views expressed were that, at some point, changes in genus names had to be accepted. Various possible solutions were suggested, including adding English common names or inserting footnotes with previous genus names. However, these proposals were ultimately not retained. Dr Marnell and Ms Petermann both expressed gratitude to the AC members for their substantial work on this topic.

Regarding underground sites, no further amendments had been made to the draft resolution.

With regard to Bats and One Health, it was recalled that the topic was included in the current Conservation and Management Plan. The possible need for a resolution, or other ways to take the matter forward, was discussed. It was noted that the IWG had only a limited number of members. A draft document had been submitted to the Secretariat, and external experts had also been consulted. It was agreed that additional members would step in to support the Convenor. It was further suggested that the IWG on Bats and One Health and the IWG on Public Health should coordinate more closely and possibly merge. Some of the useful elements developed under the Bats and One Health topic could be taken up in the work on Public Health.

One of the Co-Convenors of the working group on Solar Power Plants and Bats, Dr Mazija, reported that the group convened during the joint meeting. A short presentation had been given on the recognised impacts of solar power plants on bat populations, also in view of the increasing scale of solar power plant development. The draft resolution had also been presented. Some minor changes in the wording had been made, and some important points raised, one of them being the change of the draft resolution's title and the working group's name. The term "potential impacts" should no longer be used, as there was already evidence in the literature that solar power plants had impacts on bats. SFEPM wanted to see prioritisation of development of solar power plant on artificial areas and then on degraded natural sites without mentioning examples.

In relation to the guidelines on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation, the outcomes of the IWG meeting held during the joint meeting were presented. It was reported that the finalisation of the document was expected in 2026.

The draft resolution on Online Trade in Bat Specimens and Parts was not discussed, as the Convenor was not present. Requests for minor changes and any comments should be sent to the Convenor directly. Mr Panis reminded the Convenor of the comment he had made in relation to paragraph 5.

In conclusion, Ms Petermann thanked the AC delegates and Convenors for their excellent work. She expressed her satisfaction with the progress made and the results achieved, and thanked the Vice Chair, Ms Tidenberg, for all her support.

The AC Chair asked Prof. Voigt to introduce the topic of listing of species on Appendix one and two of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, CMS. Prof. Voigt noticed that there were not many bat species on the CMS appendices and tried since CMS COP14 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in 2024, to add more bat species to the CMS appendices. He described which species were listed and noticed that due to worldwide bat species richness this would be a poor record. Bat experts, with support from CMS and EUROBATS Secretariats, submitted a proposal with bat species to be added to the Appendices to the Scientific Council of CMS, which was accepted and consequently adopted at the recently concluded CMS COP15. He gave several examples of why the process of listing species was a difficult one. Prof. Voigt suggested to use the instrument of Concerted Actions (<https://www.cms.int/documents/concerted-actions>) that was supported by the Scientific Officer. Dr Marnell agreed that bats needed more conservation efforts on the global scale and that the EUROBATS Agreement could serve as a prototype. The Executive Secretary thanked Prof. Voigt and other involved colleagues for this initiative and emphasised that the CMS listing of additional European bat species would be advantageous as, for example, bat populations in Non-Party Range States to EUROBATS would be better protected. The AC Chair added that it would be a great benefit for bat conservation if an African Bat Agreement would be set up under CMS. Mr Nick Warmelink (Netherlands), supported the approach of Prof. Voigt and the idea of strengthening bat conservation under CMS and suggested to form a group of Parties to further explore the options for joint bat initiatives such as listing proposals, concerted actions and side events towards CMS CoP16. Ms Eva Fejes (Hungary) supported the idea and shortly described the procedure within CMS for listing proposals and international collaborations. She emphasised that it was important and not impossible that more bat species were listed. The EUROBATS Advisory Committee was capable of providing evidence for proposals. The Executive Secretary summarised that a contact group could be established, and that EUROBATS would be pleased to assist with this process. Mr Warmelink, Ms Fejes, Ms Impagliazzo, Prof. Aulagnier, and Prof. Voigt were the first members of the contact group for exploring joint bat initiatives towards CMS CoP16. Other members were welcome to join.

Finally, Mr Panis reported on the discussions held during the Standing Committee meeting, noting that the Committee had held lively and constructive debates on three main points: the draft budget resolution, the future of the EPI initiative, and the discussions on the Strategic Plan.

On the draft budget resolution, Mr Panis noted that several scenarios would be presented, and a few possible distributions of contributions. He expressed confidence that agreement could be reached on a balanced option.

On the EPI initiative, Mr Panis reported that agreement had been reached on a possible alternative approach. The Secretariat would further develop the concept, circulate it for comments, and prepare a draft resolution on this basis.

On the Strategic Plan, Mr Panis reported that several workshops had been held to clean up the text, sharpen certain points and refine the wording. He noted that the draft introduced a new concept in the workings of EUROBATS, namely strategic projects. The Strategic Plan would be examined to identify underlying issues that needed to be addressed to help make EUROBATS a more efficient and impactful organisation. Mr Panis also indicated that references to the Strategic Plan should be included in each draft resolution, in brackets, so that they could easily be removed if necessary.

Mr Boer asked whether a brief preview of the proposed alternative approach to the EPI could be provided. Mr Panis explained that simply discontinuing the EPI had been disregarded as an option, as this would mean losing an instrument aimed at supporting small-scale projects. The discussion had therefore moved towards a matchmaking system, under which the Secretariat would serve as a connecting point between project applicants and possible donors. Such a system would require further development, including application forms and evaluation procedures, before it could become operational. The Secretariat was requested to develop a concept for this alternative approach.

Dr Marnell asked whether the various budget scenarios would be circulated, which was confirmed. Ms Domazetović indicated that the preparation of draft resolutions should not take too long and suggested that they could be available in June. Mr Gazaryan asked what would happen if the Parties wished to propose further amendments. Dr Marnell proposed that the 90-day deadline could be applied, as in the case of national reports, and recalled that this deadline would fall in mid-August. Mr Panis suggested that this deadline be formalised. Ms Impagliazzo supported early circulation of the budget scenarios to allow for consultations. Party representatives were instructed, in case of major concerns, to inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Mr Panis expressed pride in the work undertaken and looked forward to the final draft resolutions being made available on the website, allowing further discussions at national level before agreement on the resolutions at the MoP. Ms Domazetović stated that she was pleased that discussions had moved in a constructive direction.

#### **24. Any other business**

Ms Domazetović made a short point of order, noting that it had been brought to her attention that participants should be reminded of their obligation to respect the UN standards of conduct applicable not only to all UN staff members but also to all UN delegates. She recalled that these standards emphasised professionalism, courtesy and dignity in all interactions, and that ethics and integrity were core UN values. She stressed that this was particularly important in view of the different backgrounds, origins and sexual orientations of participants, and underlined that any form of misconduct would not be tolerated.

The Executive Secretary asked the Parties to consider hosting the next Advisory Committee meeting in spring 2027 for tomorrow's agenda item 24.

Dr Schley reminded the delegates of the forthcoming publication of the Atlas of European Mammals and thanked EUROBATS Focal Points and experts for providing data and writing species accounts. The tentative publication date was July to September 2026.

All members present wished to recognise that the 8<sup>th</sup> of May marked the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sir David Attenborough.

#### **25. Date and venue of the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee and 31<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee**

Ms Domazetović explained that the next meeting of the Standing Committee would take place in November in Valletta, Malta, in the margins of MoP10, during which the new members of the Standing Committee would also be elected. Regarding the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, Ms Domazetović asked whether any country would be willing to host the 31<sup>st</sup> AC meeting. Mr Jaime Castañer de Diego (Spain) stated that, as a new Party to EUROBATS, Spain would be willing to consider hosting the next AC meeting and thereby contribute to the strong collaborative spirit of the Agreement. This offer was warmly welcomed by the Committee.

#### **26. Adoption of the record**

Following some corrections, the record was adopted.

## **27. Close of the Meeting**

Mr Panis thanked all the participants for their contributions to the meeting as well as the AC Chair and the Vice Chairs for keeping the discussions well-structured and the Secretariat for the organisation of the meeting.

Ms Petermann thanked the Secretariat for organising the meeting and all participants for coming to Bonn. She noted that she had appreciated the constructive work and discussions. She also thanked her Vice Chair for her valuable support.

Ms Domazetović thanked the Convenors and active members of the Intersessional Working Groups, noting that it had been a pleasure to follow the progress made before AC29 and during the current meeting. She acknowledged the considerable demands placed on the AC members by the Secretariat but stressed that the number and quality of documents prepared were impressive. She expressed pride in what had been achieved and noted that the effectiveness of the meeting was due to the commitment of all involved. She also thanked the Chairs and Vice Chairs, noting that, while coordination and approvals had often been required, the Secretariat had greatly appreciated their support and guidance.

The meeting closed at 12:41.

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