



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

*Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*

## WELCOME ADDRESS TO 10<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO EUROBATS

Robert Hepworth, Executive Secretary of CMS sends a welcoming address to the participants of the meeting as the representative of UNEP-Executive Director Dr Klaus Töpfer as well as on behalf of CMS.

He emphasises the importance of EUROBATS, an Agreement, which kept growing over the years to 30 Parties. More countries are expected to accede to the Agreement this year. In its efforts to attract new Parties a particular focus is given to the Mediterranean Region. The CMS Executive Secretary expresses his firm belief that this Meeting's focus on a comprehensive work programme and on the 12 intersessional Working Groups will be an important milestone in evaluating and implementing activities undertaken under the Agreement. Another promising initiative will be a first discussion round on an implementation mechanism. This will further enhance target orientated conservation projects. EUROBATS thus contributes to reduce the rate of biodiversity losses and attaining the targets set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. UNEP and CMS both appreciate their association with EUROBATS as an important member of the CMS "family" that came into effect more than ten years ago.

Mr Hepworth also recalls his own personal commitment to EUROBATS from his previous career in the UK Government, when the UK took the lead in negotiating it as a pioneering Article IV Agreement – indeed the first of a series later joined in the CMS family by ASCOBANS, AEWA and ACCOBAMS. "EUROBATS and all the people who work to conserve bats will always have a special place in my heart", he says.

UNEP and CMS hope that Estonia - which became a Party to EUROBATS in 2004 - will also soon accede to CMS as the parent Convention. The Executive Secretary also praises the role of the Slovak Republic, including hosting the current Meeting. He also thanks several other countries for their role as donors providing volunteer funds and support in-kind, in addition to subscriptions. He notes the extent and quality of Parties' reports to the Meeting, and emphasises the indispensable role of reporting in EUROBATS, as in all Multilateral Environmental Agreements. He gives special thanks to Italy as well as to Serbia and Montenegro that are in the process of acceding hoping this will also strengthen the Agreement.

Mr Hepworth also welcomes the support given to EUROBATS by NGOs in organizing the European Bat Night, an important event that raises public awareness in the whole of Europe. EUROBATS' further cooperation with national government authorities, scientific institutions as well as international governmental organisations contributes substantially to highlighting threats to migratory species and thereby raising visibility of the Convention and EUROBATS alike.

Finally the Executive Secretary of CMS thanks Germany for its remarkable generosity and professionalism in hosting the EUROBATS Secretariat. The work of the United Kingdom as depositary, turning EUROBATS from a legal agreement into a genuine working instrument for conservation is also highly appreciated. Mr. Hepworth wishes much success for the rest of the Meeting also on behalf of UNEP-Executive Director Dr Klaus Töpfer.