



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

STATEMENT BY ROBERT HEPWORTH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF UNEP/CMS

Dear Participants in the 12th Meeting of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee,

I very much welcome the opportunity to say a few words to you – also on behalf of the UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner – from the new CMS Family HQ in Bonn, where the three UNEP Secretariats of CMS, ASCOBANS and EUROBATS moved last month into new offices in the former German Parliament building which will allow us to work even more closely together in the interest of conservation. The generosity of the German Government is much appreciated.

My personal commitment to a successful and autonomous EUROBATS – which I believe is shared by most CMS Parties – remains undimmed. Recent events such as the ASCOBANS Parties' decision to merge their Secretariat with that of CMS do not affect this as the circumstances of EUROBATS – a well-managed Secretariat with strong scientific and political support amongst its Parties – are very different. Indeed the decision at the EUROBATS MoP to plan on a four-year basis was a signal of the confidence which Parties have in their Secretariat and its developing relationship with CMS and UNEP.

The role of the Advisory Committee is crucial. You now have for the first time an opportunity to focus on science and conservation, leaving administration to the new Standing Committee of EUROBATS.

The scale of commitment by range states is easily visible from the quality and detail of the national reports. Glancing through them I picked out one species – *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* – or in English the Greater Horseshoe Bat.

The report of one of the smallest range states – San Marino – to this meeting explains that the country has as many as 13 species of Bats. The large Tunnel "Montalbo" near Borgo Maggiore has been a major issue there and was "barred" thanks to the Centro Naturalistico Sammarinese. Inside the tunnel, during the last two summers, a group of around 50 Greater Horseshoe Bats bred successfully. I next turned to the report of my own home country of UK which has rather more territory than San Marino but interestingly just 4 more species – 17 in all. One of those is also the Greater Horseshoe – and there is data in the report to show that the population is stable and that 34,000 meters of hedgerows suitable for the species are under management with a farm stewardship scheme. Finally I noticed that the Greater Horseshoe is one of the 28 species found much further south in the non-Party range state of Azerbaijan: again the population is reported to be stable.

Many bat species face serious ongoing threats. The collective analysis of national reports has allowed the Secretariat to produce in its synthesis – also before the meeting – figures showing that damage to bat roosts and habitat are the most common threat across the entire Agreement area, closely followed by disturbance and chemicals.

I hope the Committee will consider these and other findings carefully over the next few days, and continue to provide EUROBATS with the informed impetus it needs to lead and support the joint efforts of all the range states, Parties and non-Parties, to continue to conserve these irreplaceable migratory mammals. I hope you are also able to find time to enjoy the many attributes of Budapest and the surrounding countryside of Hungary.