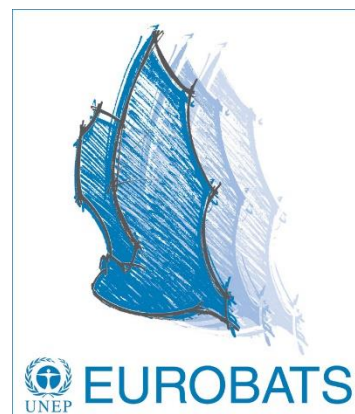


9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Report of the Chair of the Standing Committee



In the period since the 7th Session of the Meeting of Parties, the Standing Committee has met annually to discuss administrative and financial matters as well as other relevant business pertaining to the Agreement.

15th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Monte Carlo, Monaco, 10 October 2018

At MoP8 Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Sweden and Ukraine were elected as members of the Standing Committee. In addition, Germany as host country of the Secretariat and United Kingdom as Depositary are both permanent members. The 15th Meeting took place on the last day of MoP8 in order to welcome the newly re-elected members and to elect the Chair and Vice Chair for the term 2018 – 2022. Mr. Jeroen Panis (Belgium) was re-elected as Chair and Mr. François Lamarque (France) was re-elected as Vice Chair of the Standing Committee. Due to a change in post assignment of Dr. Perret, the seat of France and the post of Vice Chair were handed over to Mr. François Lamarque in November 2017. Due to an anticipated change in post assignment, Mr. Panis informed that his tenure would end sometime before the following MoP.

16th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Sofia, Bulgaria, 6 June 2019

The Committee dealt with administrative matters including income and expenditure of the financial year 2018, the Trust Fund Status and financial projections for 2019.

The prevailing topic of the discussions was the very unfavourable development of the EURO/USD exchange rate. This had two negative impacts. The expenditure on staff cost was to increase but more importantly, the trust fund reserve had been revalued according to the new exchange rate and significantly shrunk. The budget 2019 – 2022 foresaw important withdrawals from the trust fund reserve which would no longer be possible. The Secretariat had already prepared a strict austerity plan for all expenditures, but this alone was not sufficient to cover the expected shortfalls. As a result of intense discussions, it was decided that the Chair and Vice chair should send a letter to all Parties explaining

the situation and calling for additional contributions. This turned out to be very successful and thanks to partly significant additional contributions from Croatia, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and Monaco the situation was saved.

For reasons of economies and reducing the environmental footprint, the Committee also instructed the Secretariat to explore possibilities for having meetings of the Standing Committee via videoconference (e.g. every second meeting).

17th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Videoconference, 2 July 2020

At this meeting the Secretariat informed about the departure of the Secretary as of April in that year and explained that the post was not planned to be filled again in the coming years. The Standing Committee then endorsed using the saved funds for increasing the post occupancy of the scientific officer to 80% in line with decisions taken by the Parties at MoP8.

The Committee further took note with satisfaction that the austerity plan put in place by the Secretariat the previous year had generated significant savings and that the call for additional contributions by the Chair and Vice-Chair had been so successful. In summary the financial crisis was considered overcome.

Also, at this meeting the Chair, Mr. Jeroen Panis, informed about his assignment to a new post and thus the end of his tenure after the meeting. The Vice-Chair, Mr. François Lamarque, informed about his retirement later in the year and also the end of his tenure.

18th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Videoconference, 16 September 2021

At this meeting Ms. Barbara Geschier (Belgium) introduced herself as new Chair and Mr. Charles-Henri de Barsac introduced himself as new Vice-Chair.

The Secretariat informed about the accession of Bosnia & Herzegovina as 38th Party to the Agreement. It also informed about a new expenditure component related to the UN Enterprise Resource Planning software called UMOJA that every staff member had to use for all matters relating to finance, travel, projects and human resources matters. The costs per staff member would be USD 2,000 per year and be paid through the budget lines for staff costs.

Apart from that the Secretariat reported about a wide range of publicity material produced for the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Agreement.

The Committee took note that the financial situation had further improved, also because of savings since no in person meetings took place due to the pandemic.

19th Meeting of the Standing Committee, Online Meeting, 9 – 12 May 2022

In preparation for MoP9, the meeting was held jointly with the 26th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in order to review and finalise all draft resolutions for submission to the MoP.

Ms. Zrinka Domazetović, EUROBATS administrative focal point from Croatia, informed about Croatia willing to host MoP9 as an in person meeting on the Brijuni Islands.

In separate sessions the Standing Committee discussed the three draft budget scenarios prepared by the Secretariat.

It once again recognised the importance of increasing the scientific capacity of the Secretariat which was also strongly supported by the Advisory Committee. The third scenario also foresaw increasing the posts of the two Administrative Assistants from 50% to 80% and to allocate some more funds for the Agreement meetings. In the course of its deliberations the Committee developed two additional variations of the third scenario. Thus in total five scenarios were then submitted to this MoP9 in Draft Resolution 9.1-