

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee



Introduction

This report summarises the activities of the Advisory Committee between the 8th and 9th Sessions of the Meeting of Parties. Full details of the Advisory Committee meetings held during this period are available on the EUROBATS website in the respective Records of these Meetings. Three AC meetings were held since the last MoP. Two of them were organised as videoconferences due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The 24th Meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Skopje, North Macedonia, from 1 – 3 April 2019. It was attended by 80 participants from 44 countries.
- The 25th Meeting of the Advisory Committee was organized online as a series of IWGs' meetings in April 2021. The plenary session was held online as a videoconference on 30 April 2021. It was attended by 91 participants from 45 countries.
- The 26th Meeting of the Advisory Committee was held online from 9 – 12 May 2022. About 120 participants from 48 countries joined the videoconference.

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee

At the 24th Meeting of the Advisory Committee, Prof. Danilo Russo (Italy) and Ms Ruth Petermann (Germany) were elected to the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee respectively.

Intersessional Working Groups

The Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) are the main actors to advance the work of the Advisory Committee, as outlined in the Conservation and Management Plan. At the first AC meeting after MoP8 (i.e., the 24th AC Meeting in Skopje), a review of the Conservation and Management Plan 2019-2022 was undertaken to identify the priorities for the Advisory Committee. To help implement the work identified, the following IWGs were (re-)formed and worked actively during the reporting period:

1. IWG on Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe
2. IWG on Monitoring and Indicators

3. IWG on Bats and Public Health
4. IWG on Bats and Light Pollution
5. IWG on Bats and Wind Turbines
6. IWG on Bats and Climate Change
7. IWG on Bats Rescue and Rehabilitation
8. IWG on Bats, Insulation and Lining Materials
9. IWG on Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures
10. IWG on Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats
11. IWG on Education
12. IWG on Evaluation criteria for Assessment Reports Concerning Bats
13. The ad hoc Working Group on the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Agreement
14. IWG on Purpose-Built Man-Made Roosts
15. The ad hoc Working Group on the Amendment of the Agreement
16. IWG on Autecological Studies
17. The ad hoc EPI Evaluation Group

After some discussion about the EU-EUROBATS joint Action Plan and on the reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, the AC decided to establish an (18.) ad hoc Working Group to review the methodology of assessing the conservation status of bat species in the Article 17 reports and develop recommendations to be submitted by the Secretariat to the European Commission.

In each case, the first objective for every IWG was to agree on a clear set of aims and to produce a realistic timetable of actions. Time was then allocated to these groups to convene and progress their work plans.

The full lists of members for the IWGs are available in the meeting reports on the EUROBATS website. I would particularly like to acknowledge the hard work of all the conveners and co-conveners in pushing and progressing their IWG work plans over the last four years despite the critical difficulties faced due to the pandemic and the reduced work capacity induced by meeting online. Significant progress was made in all groups with several completing their work programs successfully. In certain cases, the IWGs are addressing ongoing issues and further work for these groups will be incorporated into the next Conservation and Management Plan.

Scientific Officer

The appointment of a Scientific Officer to the EUROBATS Secretariat has greatly facilitated the work of the AC and in particular the working groups. The continuation and indeed the expansion, of this role to full-time, would further improve and enhance the productivity of the AC.

Resolutions

Five draft Resolutions were prepared by the Intersessional Working Groups at the AC26. These Resolutions were discussed, amended as necessary, and agreed upon at the plenary session of that meeting. The Resolutions will be submitted to the 9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties for adoption. They cover the following topics:

- Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement
- Priority Species for Autecological Studies
- Wind Turbines and Bat Populations
- Support to Authorities Dealing with Bat Assessment Reports
- Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health

In September 2022, the Chair and Vice-Chair assisted by Dr Ferdia Marnell (Ireland) held a one-day meeting in Bonn to draft the next Resolution on the Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan (2023-2025). Significant progress was made on preparing the text for this Resolution, which can only be finalized at MoP9 once all relevant Resolutions are adopted.

Acknowledgements

I herewith take the chance to express my gratitude to the Vice-Chair, Ms Ruth Petermann, for her assistance during the AC meetings and in the preparation and aftermath of meetings throughout the last four years. The meeting in Bonn for drafting the Conservation and Management Plan would have never taken place without her kind support. I further commend the ongoing support of the Secretariat. The smooth planning, organization and running of the Advisory Committee meetings have been a testament to their excellent work. Mr Andreas Streit and all his team demonstrate great competence in all aspects of their work and their continuing assistance has been critically important to all activities carried out by the AC.

Prof. Danilo Russo

Chair of the EUROBATS Advisory Committee, 2019-2022