9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Record

1. Attendance

This is listed as Annex 1 to the Record.

2. Opening remarks:

The Host

The acting Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr. Jeroen Panis, opened the 9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties and gave the floor to Mr. Igor Kreitmeyer, the Director of the Nature Protection Directorate within the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development.

Mr. Kreitmeyer was glad to greet the participants on behalf of the ministry and was honoured to welcome everybody to Croatia and to Brijuni. Furthermore, he was proud that Croatia was chosen to host this meeting, being a country hosting 33 bat species while the National Park Brijuni hosted 18 of them. Croatia was the European hotspot for biodiversity largely contributing to the Natura 2000 network designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives. Its Natura 2000 sites covered almost 37 percent of the land territory and 10 percent of the sea under national jurisdiction. Many of its Natura 2000 sites included bat species and were designated for their conservation. Having in mind the obligations from the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Nature Restoration Regulation, Croatia was determined to protect more, restore, and improve management of its nature. With the energy crisis putting again challenges in terms of trade-offs between mankind short term needs and ecosystem services, biodiversity provided for the sake of mankind existence. Mr. Kreitmeyer concluded by asking the bat friends and experts to keep up with their good work and wished them a successful meeting.

The Chairs of the Standing and Advisory Committees

Mr. Jeroen Panis thanked the Croatian government for hosting this session of the Meeting of the Parties, as well as the representatives of the Parties as well as Non-Party Range States for joining the meeting. There were quite a few new faces whom Mr. Panis greeted to the EUROBATS community as well as old faces whom

he welcomed back. The acting Chair of the Standing Committee also thanked the Secretariat for the organisation and wished everybody a successful meeting, being convinced that the challenges would be tackled in a respectful way.

Professor Danilo Russo, the Chair of the Advisory Committee, stated that it was difficult to hide all the emotions when he was finally able to again meet the distinguished delegates in person. He also thanked the Croatian friends for their excellent hospitality. Professor Russo stated that we were living in difficult years when, despite going through an environmental crisis, the humanity seemed to have problems in understanding that, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic was in fact the result of our devastating relationship to the planet and how, instead of fighting brutal wars, we should fight to save biodiversity and our own existence on Earth. Precisely for this reason, the commitment to the conservation of biodiversity must be stronger than ever. This was why Professor Russo believed in the initiatives such as EUROBATS, looking beyond national borders, as it was the only way to achieve long-term results in the protection of nature and make a real difference.

The United Nations Environment Programme and the Convention on Migratory Species

Ms. Amy Fraenkel, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), who joined the meeting online, also greeted the participants and thanked the government of Croatia, a dedicated and active Party to EUROBATS, for hosting this important international meeting as well as all EUROBATS Parties, stakeholders, and partners who were engaging to make MoP9 a success.

Ms. Fraenkel stated that EUROBATS had proven to be a highly successful Agreement, expanding its reach over the years, and helping the recovery of bat populations in many regions.

The co-location of the Secretariats in Bonn allowed numerous areas of programmatic synergies. One example was the joint work in providing input to scientific articles as well as outreach and communication to ensure the dissemination of accurate information regarding any potential link of bats with the origins of COVID-19. There were also many areas of synergy which provided cost savings and immeasurable benefits, including administrative services, collaboration on human resource management, and addressing broader UN policies in a manner that considered the needs of each of the Secretariats.

The success of EUROBATS demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of the overall approach of CMS and its numerous specialized instruments, at a time when unprecedented biodiversity loss was seen globally. The work of EUROBATS, CMS, and the other parts of the CMS family had never been more needed.

Later in the year, a new Global Biodiversity Framework was to be finalised in Montreal. The Secretariats had been working hard to ensure that the Framework included key priorities that would help achieve the targets of CMS, EUROBATS, and other instruments on migratory species, including those related to ecological connectivity and species conservation. There would be significant areas where the Secretariats could collectively contribute to the implementation of the GBF.

Given all of this, Ms. Fraenkel encouraged MoP delegates to provide strong support for the work of the EUROBATS Secretariat, especially when considering options for increasing its budget. This was a key moment for advancing work for the conservation of bats, as well as biodiversity more broadly. The EUROBATS Secretariat had managed to deliver on much of its mandates, though it was stretched to the limit, trying to cope with a very ambitious work programme. Thus, Ms Fraenkel expressed her hope that necessary steps to strengthen bat conservation in the Agreement area and to ensure EUROBATS would remain a highly effective treaty would be taken. The CMS Executive Secretary concluded by wishing everybody a successful and productive meeting.

The Secretariat

Mr. Andreas Streit, EUROBATS Executive Secretary, expressed his happiness to see all the delegates after a long break caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He was glad to see everybody present, but at the same time also very sad, that this meeting had to take place at sinister times for Europe and beyond. Mr. Streit expressed great joy that the delegates from Ukraine managed to come to the meeting. He also expressed his gratitude to Croatia for hosting the meeting. The Executive Secretary commented that the agenda for this MoP was somewhat shorter but still quite demanding, with important resolutions pending, and he was looking forward to the coming days and fruitful discussions.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Streit explained that there was a small mistake made in the agenda, for which reason a new, revised, agenda needed to be published on the website shortly

before the meeting. The former agenda item 5 – election of the Chair of the Administrative and Scientific Working Groups was removed because at the last MoP the decision had been taken that, if either the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee were present at the meeting, they should chair the Administrative Working Group. Similarly, if the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee were present, they should chair the Scientific Working Group. The Chair of the Standing Committee asked whether there were any remarks or additions to the agenda. Germany announced that, under agenda item "Any Other Business", it was already arranged to show a film produced on the barbastelle bat. The film was to be shown on Thursday. There being no further remarks on this subject, the agenda was adopted.

4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

The acting Chair of the Standing Committee explained that the rules of procedure were identical as those at MoP8 and asked if there were any remarks to them. There being no remarks, the rules of procedure were adopted.

5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Parties were requested to nominate and elect the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the 9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties. For the post of the MoP-Chair Finland nominated Croatia, which was seconded by Italy and Sweden. Since there were no other nominations, Croatia was elected as Chair of MoP9. Ms. Zrinka Domazetović, acting as MoP9-Chair, welcomed the participants and mentioned that this was Croatia's first MoP since 2009. She was glad to have everybody in Croatia and hoped the meeting would continue to go smoothly. Ms. Domazetović asked for MoP9 Vice-Chair nominations. Luxembourg nominated Ireland, which was seconded by Germany and Norway. Since there were no other proposals, Ireland was elected as MoP9 Vice-Chair.

6. Establishment of the Credentials Committee and Election of Chair

Ms. Domazetović asked for nominations for the Chair of the Credentials Committee. Latvia suggested United Kingdom, which was seconded by Ukraine and Estonia. There were no other candidates for the Chair of the Credentials Committee and the UK was kindly asked to take the post. The MoP-Chair stated that at least two more volunteers were needed for the Committee, and Luxembourg and Germany expressed their willingness to join it. Mr. Streit reminded the

representatives of the Parties that the Secretariat had not yet received the originals of all the credentials and asked them to hand these over to any of the staff members over the day to allow the Credentials Committee to take up its task at the latest the following day.

7. Admission of Observers

MoP-Chair mentioned that the list of meeting participants had been published well in advance, so she asked that the observers were admitted to MoP9 or that any objections in this regard were expressed. There being no objections, the observers were admitted to the meeting.

8. Report of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee

Mr. Panis explained that Ms. Barbara Geschier, who was currently holding the post of the Chair of the Standing Committee for Belgium, could unfortunately not be present at MoP9, so that he took the post due to his previous experience with EUROBATS. Mr. Panis referred the participants to the written report available on the website as Doc.EUROBATS.MoP9.5 and explained that he would only highlight a few points. At the previous MoP, the main issue regarding the financial and administrative matters revolved around going back to the UN scale of contributions as well as the increase in the post occupancy of the Scientific Officer. These issues had to be observed during the whole quadrennium. However, a significant drop in the exchange rate between the Euro and the US Dollar starting in 2019 complicated the matters even more. The Standing Committee was, thus, obliged to approve a very strict austerity plan and to call for voluntary contributions to protect the trust fund and its role in smoothening the transition back to the UN scale. On behalf of the Standing Committee as well as the entire MoP, Mr. Panis thanked to the Parties that stepped-up to do so: Germany, Luxembourg, Croatia, Malta and especially Monaco. Other Parties also voluntarily contributed for more targeted goals, such as EPI projects, AC meetings, and much more. The introduction of the work plan for the Secretariat at the MoP in Brussels paid off during the current quadrennium. It allowed the Standing Committee to weather this breeze and gave confidence that, when a workable compromise on the budget for the next quadrennium was found, there was no need to fear the thunder clouds on the horizon.

9. Report of the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee

Professor Danilo Russo informed the plenary that in current quadrennium the Advisory Committee had three meetings – one in-person meeting in Skopje in 2019 and two online meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, the Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) were the main actors to advance the work of the Advisory Committee, whose commitment was critical for the success of EUROBATS. During the meeting in Skopje, the Conservation and Management Plan was reviewed and the priorities were identified for the work of the Advisory Committee. There were in total 17 IWGs, whose first objective was to agree on a clear set of aims and to produce a realistic workplan. Professor Russo particularly wanted to thank all the Convenors and Co-Convenors for pushing and progressing their IWG work plans during the last four years, despite the difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic and the reduced working capacity induced by meeting online. Significant progress was made in all group, with several completing their work programme successfully. In certain cases, IWGs were addressing ongoing issues and, in these cases, their work was going to be incorporated into the next Conservation and Management Plan.

The appointment of the Scientific Officer to the EUROBATS Secretariat had greatly facilitated the work of the AC, particularly the Working Groups, and the continuation of his work was highly important to enhance the productivity of the Advisory Committee.

Five draft resolutions were prepared to be submitted to this session of the Meeting of the Parties. Professor Russo concluded by expressing his gratitude to Ms. Ruth Petermann, the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee, for her support during the last four years as well as Mr. Streit and the Secretariat team.

10. Report of the Depositary

The United Kingdom in its capacity as Depositary was pleased to inform the Parties that since the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had acceded to the Agreement, raising the number of Parties to 38. The accessions entered into force in March 2019 (Serbia) and August 2021 (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In July 2022 the Spanish Government approached the Depositary, stating their intent to accede to the Agreement and requested additional information. The Depositary had no further information about when this accession might take effect. Up-to-date status lists for the Agreement (Annex 1)

as well as for the 2nd Amendment of the Agreement (Annex 2) were attached to the written report.

11. Secretariat Report

Mr. Streit referred to the written report, available on EUROBATS website as Doc.EUROBATS.MoP9.8. In summary, as of 1 April 2020, the Secretariat had one staff member less – Ms. Kate Horn had accepted a new assignment outside of the UN. It was decided to leave this post vacant for an undetermined period of time and to use the savings thus made for increasing the P2 post occupancy to at least 80 percent, subject to the availability of funds. Due to these and other savings, in the past months the Scientific Officer was working on a 100 percent basis for the preparation of MoP9. The situation from November onwards would very much depend on the budget decisions to be made at MoP9.

The issue of the Agreement membership was already dealt with in the report of the Depositary. Mr. Streit added that the Secretariat was also contacted by Spain concerning requirements for its accession. The Executive Secretary was optimistic that after many years of efforts for Spain to accede the Agreement, this was soon to be realised.

In terms of outreach, the Executive Secretary reported that all of the very valuable guidelines produced by the EUROBATS Advisory Committee as well as other publications made available free of charge were still highly demanded. Ms. Streit also drew the delegates' attention to a beautiful exhibition in front of the plenary, set up by Tragus, a very important Croatian NGO of which the MoP-Chair was an active and a long-standing member. Mr. Streit thanked Tragus for having brought the exhibition and making it available to the MoP9 participants. Ms. Domazetović mentioned that the exhibition was showing original Brijuni bats and expressed her hope that the delegates would also find the time to check the bat populations on the island using bat detectors.

Lastly, Mr. Streit pointed out that a lot of special projects became possible owing to continuing voluntary contributions from Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. The results of those projects conducted within the framework of EPI projects initiative were a very valuable and significant contribution to the implementation of the Agreement.

12. Review of the Implementation of the Agreement

The Parties were invited to give brief oral reports on their implementation activities. Non-Party Range States were asked to report on progress made in their preparations to accede to the Agreement. Below listed are the written summaries of the oral reports the Secretariat has received from the MoP9 delegates to be included in the record.

PARTIES:

BULGARIA:

In terms of conservation work, the Ministry of Environment and Water through Operational Program Environment has financed a project for developing an action plan for the protection of cave bat populations in Bulgaria for a period of ten years. Under the same program several municipalities have been working on the improvement of the conservation status of several bat species in different Natura 2000 sites.

The Ministry of Environment and Water has also issued an Opinion on Environmental Assessment in connection with the Regional Development Program 2021-2027 for building insulation and infrastructure. Under this assessment at the earliest stage, a survey for the presence of synanthropic protected species in the buildings (bats, swallows, swifts, etc.) should be done. In this way, the season of construction activities should be considered according to the established protected species.

Since 2018 the colleagues from the NGO sector have been carrying out volunteer building inspections before insulation procedures. A project about protecting "wild neighbors (including bats)" inhabiting buildings in Stara Zagora town has been carried out by the NGO Green Balkans.

The summer and winter monitoring of important underground habitats and sites was restarted in 2021-2022. Several new roosts have been discovered, and, currently, the data are being analysed and the population trends across the country are being investigated. Using the bat cave vulnerability index, the most vulnerable underground bat roosts in Bulgaria have been evaluated. This helped in prioritising roosts sites which needed additional protection. Until now, the evaluation was only based on colony size and the presence of protected species. The problem was that this approach led to equal conservation efforts for caves which were not so

vulnerable to disturbance due to their lack of easy access, whiles neglecting the need for additional conservation for roosts famous for caving activities. Using the new approach, the most vulnerable bat roosts in Bulgaria have been identified and the ways for adequate protection proposed. This will be included in the report for EUROBATS.

Finally, the IUCN Bat Specialist Group recommended strategy for bat researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic has been adopted.

In terms of research, the winter activity patterns of several bat species from some of the largest aggregations of bats in hibernacula have been followed. This was combined with the adaptation of the monitoring methods to collect better data on the effect of climate change on bats, especially during sensitive periods like in winter. Some preliminary data on the winter diet of bent-wing bat *Miniopterus schreibersii* has been collected. Work on determining the individual health state in important bat colonies in Bulgaria has been carried out, and currently, data on the oxidative stress levels of bats in Bulgaria has been analysed in a lab as part of the PhD research of the Bulgarian scientific representative in EUROBATS.

From 2020 – 2022, the team from the National Museum of Natural History – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences conducted research regarding the role of cavers and bat researchers in the spread of the causative agent of the White-nose disease (*P. destructans*). They collected swab samples from cavers' clothes and equipment and analysed them for the presence of those fungus and evaluated viability of the fungus on caving clothes and equipment at the room temperature. Additionally, the effectiveness of common hygiene practices for the removal/killing of the fungus on caving clothes and equipment was evaluated, and measures to be followed by cavers and bat researchers to reduce pathogen pollution in caves were suggested. From 2017 – 2022 the museum team also performed a fine-scale population genetics analysis to this pathogen to calculate its population size and genetic diversity distribution within important bat hibernacula in Bulgaria. The team estimated the frequency of multiple infections in bats and made inferences about the seasonal dynamics of White-nose disease as well as its transmission routes in the country.

Data has been collected for several European initiatives: The Earth Hologenome Initiative looking at bat hologenome adaptations towards climate change as well as data for the project Bat Migration Route in Europe. Bulgaria is actively

collaborating in the COST Action for a better understanding of the effects of climate change on bats and adopting new strategies.

Finally, DNA metabarcoding has been used to study the fine-scale differences in the diet of the greater and the lesser mouse-eared bats in Bulgaria.

In terms of public awareness and outreach, the National Museum of Natural History team has conducted multiple popular talks and workshops at the Sofia Science Festival, European Researchers' Night, Muzeiko Adventure Kids festival, Bansko Film Fest, and European Bat Night; multiple workshops and summer camps at the National Museum of Natural History, Sofia; and talks at schools. In 2020 and 2021, educational workshops and field trips funded by the National Geographic Society and iNaturalist Bioblitz were organized as well. Students across the country got acquainted with biodiversity, including bat diversity, in Vitosha mountain and "Sinite kamani" Natural Park, close to Sliven. This year a workshop will be organised to attract new biology students and enthusiasts for bat research and conservation work in Bulgaria. Additionally, a fascinating video project named 'What About Bats' was created in 2021, in which the artists from the "36 monkeys" team talk about the daring hypotheses of Antonia Hubancheva, a Bulgarian scientist doing experiments in the field of sensory ecology. The production is available on Youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJW0fDt1BZQ

In September and October, the Green Balkans Team organised a national campaign for celebrating International Bat Night. The NGO organised the events in 14 cities. More than 20 institutions and organizations were involved - DPP "Blue Stones", House - Museum "Geo Milev", Municipality of Pomorie and PC "Pomoriysko Ezero", RPNM - Plovdiv, cave club "Jendema" and club "Agarta", Association of parents of hearing-impaired children (ARDUS), ROME - Blagoevgrad, DPP "Vrachanski Balkan", Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, AK "Skalna Dusha", NB "Paisiy Hilendarski", ROME - Ruse, Municipality of Lovech, ROME - Pleven, Natural History Museum Cherni Osam, NU for mountain guides village of Cherni Osam. More than 1,000 citizens participated. Partners of the events were three national media - Darik Radio, DnevnikBg, and Hobby TV. Green Balkans and Hobby TV have produced two movies about bats.

BOSNIA AND HERZWGOVINA:

Since the last report, only two important activities should be highlighted. The International Bat Night was celebrated with an event in the municipality of Zavidovići. A climate monitoring project in the Uvir cave has started. In this cave the largest colony of *Barbastella barbastellus* is located.

CROATIA:

The Croatian fauna database (that will include all bat data) as part of the Nature Protection Information System is still under development and its finalisation is planned by the end of 2023.

Development and testing of the National bat-monitoring programme started at the end of December 2021. It should be finished by September 2023. One of the important results will be the updates of the lists of internationally important underground and overground sites. More than 150 roosts will be re-visited and a number of new roosts have been discovered.

Croatia is currently implementing a national strategic project "Development of Natura 2000 management framework in Croatia". One of the project activities is the elaboration of management plans for 40 percent of Natura 2000 area in Croatia, including Natura 2000 sites designated for bat conservation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on June 3rd 2020, the Institute for Environment and Nature published and distributed the Recommendations for researchers and cavers regarding precautionary measures to minimize the risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2 from humans to bats (http://www.haop.hr/hr/tematska-podrucja/prirodne-vrijednosti-stanje-i-ocuvanje/bioraznolikost/sismisi/preporuke-iz-mjera). Acting in accordance with these recommendations is since then prescribed in all new permits for bat research issued by the Ministry. Research was not forbidden, as well as caving or cave research, since it would have been impossible to control such a restriction. Therefore, the recommendation has been not to visit caves when large colonies are present (there is a list of underground sites included in the recommendation). Nevertheless, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, most of bat monitoring stopped in 2020 or was performed on a limited basis.

Overground roosts continue to be under significant threat, even those in which bats are a conservation target.

During this year, one important nursery roost of the grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus*), located in a church, has been preserved despite restoration works. The restauration works in the church, which is a cultural heritage, started during the breeding period. The State Inspectorate, in coordination with the Institute for Environment and Nature, stopped the works. After the coordination between the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development – Nature Protection Directorate and the Institute for Environment and Nature, as well as the cultural heritage departments of the Ministry of Culture and the Diocese, and the building contractors, a derogation licence was issued. Two other new roosts, one nursery of Geoffroy's Bat (*Myotis emarginatus*) in a castle, and one of the grey long-eared bat, were recorded. Based on the cooperation between the Institute for Environment and Nature and the public institutions responsible for the nature protection at the county level, the conservation guidelines were formulated for the restoration works planned.

Regarding light pollution, two new regulations are under procedure regrading:
1) lighting plans and 2) measurement of emitted light. Together with the Law on the protection against light pollution from 2019 and the Regulation on enlightenment zones, permitted lighting values, and methods of managing of enlightenment systems from 2020, a legal framework to minimise light pollution should be in place within the next decade:
(https://www.ecolex.org/details/legislation/law-on-the-protection-against-light-pollution-lex-faoc191885/).

Lastovo Islands Nature Park was proposed by the Croatian Astronomical Union to the International Dark-Sky Association to be registered as an International Dark Sky Park. The county of Jelsa on the island of Hvar was admitted into the International Dark Sky Communities. This is very important in raising awareness about light pollution, as well as in conservation of Croatian bat fauna.

International Bat Night is being celebrated regularly by Croatian nature protected areas – nature parks and national parks, as well as public institutions responsible for nature conservation at the regional and local level. The IBN events include education and raising awareness activities with the participation of children and public in general.

CYPRUS:

In Cyprus, until today, there are nineteen bat species formally known to exist on the island and all of them are protected through legislation as well as the relevant Directive of the European Union. Of course, this number may be amended as the research on the species occuring in Cyprus is still being carried out. Many of these species are found in the Natura 2000 sites, which have been declared according to the Habitats Directive and efforts are focused on the enhancement on the measures for their protection.

Among the known species found in Cyprus, a very important species is the Egyptian fruit bat *Rousettus aegyptiacus.* Cyprus is the only country of the European Union that hosts this specific species, and this fact gives the country a great privilege but, at the same time, a very big responsibility for its conservation and protection. As the only fruit eating bat in Cyprus, it has suffered continuous victimizations from the farmers since it was believed to be causing damages to their crops. As a result, the population of the species came down to very low numbers which made the authorities in Cyprus take measures to enhance the protection of bats and recover their populations.

Aiming at the protection of bats, during the procedure for designation of Nature 2000 sites in Cyprus, many areas that host bat populations, such as abandoned quarries and natural caves, have been included.

Today the efforts are focusing on enhancing the knowledge about the biology of bats, through scientific research and through taking concrete measures for the protection of bats. Specifically, school education is a major task being targeted, since young children are the future of the world and are more open to the general environment protection, including bats. Officers from the ministry as well as from NGOs involved in the issue visit schools and give lectures to students regarding bats, their positive contribution to the environment, thus trying to overcome the superstition that has been following bats for many years.

It is also important to note the implementation of the project entitled “Managing of Natura 2000 network in Cyprus and shaping a sustainable future”, with project acronym “LIFE IP PHYSIS”, which is being implemented within the framework of the LIFE Integrated projects 2018 call. The project started in 2020 and has a duration of 10 years. The overarching objective of the integrated project is to

achieve and / or maintain a favorable conservation status for species (including bats) and habitat types of community importance to Cyprus.

Restoration actions for priority and other key habitats and conservation actions for animal and plant species will be carried out through the implementation of action plans by implementing partners in order to prevent and mitigate the impacts of threats and pressures that deteriorate the species' conservation status. The implementing partners will also introduce targeted measures and actions for habitat and species in order to restore and re-connect natural and semi-natural areas within or near Nature 2000 sites through the establishment of Green Infrastructure.

CZECH REPUBLIC:

27 bat species occur in the Czech Republic, with an increase of findings of mediteranean bats species *Hypsugo savii*, *Pipistrellus kuhlii* and observations of *Nyctalus lasiopterus*. All bat species are protected by legislation and belong to the categories of critically endangered and strongly endagered. Capturing, sampling, handling and keeping bats is governed by permits of competent authorities. Every company which plans to insulate buildings and asks for government financial support, must include in its request the results from pre-insulation survey, and all official buildings which should be insulated must document bat expert assesments.

Monitoring of hibernacula has covered 726-907 sites, and during monitoring of summer roost 314-394 colonies were controlled.

International bat nights were held on 45-53 sites across the whole country and hundreds of other bat events for public and schools were held yearly by different NGOs. Both scientific and conservation activities were influenced by restrictions during COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerning particular EUROBATS resolutions, the list below summarises most important activities related to them:

Concerning resolution 7.6., a updated list of underground sites was provided to EUROBATS in August 2022;

Concerning resolution 7.9., two bachelor‘s theses about the impact of traffic to bat populations have been published;

Concerning resolution 8.3, the research has continued within the international cooperation for a pan European monitoring of migration routes;

Concerning resolution 8.8, a publication about bat care and rehabilitation was updated and printed in 2020;

Concerning resolution 8.9, data about bats in buildings is being collected, with expert assessments prior to insulation work and workhops for stakeholders being held. In 2021, a workshop on bats, insulation and lining Material was organized for Parties and Non-Party Range States by the Ministry of Environment together with Czech Bat Conservation Society.

DENMARK:

Since 2018, Denmark has continued monitoring its bat populations, showing the general trend that the populations are stable and not declining. Lately, the EPA have financed a monitoring project in two big lime pits. Besides that, monitoring is also being financed by private funds, filling in valuable data.

Further activities involve:

- The third round of the National monitoring programme 2018-2021. Site species richness as described in EUROBATS guidelines has been monitored to record changes in distribution. Acoustic survey of ca. 192 sites has been performed every 6 years during summer. Manual and passive monitoring were included. Overall, the results were good.
- More fine-scaled bat surveys in some national parks and municipalities
- Population estimates of Pond bats and Daubenton's bats from two large hibernacula (Mønsted & Daugbjerg) based on trapping during spring emergence in 2022 (4700+ bats handled)
- Project on a new monitoring method of bats to estimate population size and trends in hibernacula – species identified from photos
- Passive monitoring of rabies and corona by SSI. In this study, more than 1,000 bats in the hibernacula were swabbed for rabies this spring. Additionally, samples for corona-survey have been collected (Danish bats host Alfa-coronavirus, which is quite different from Beta-coronavirus that includes the COVID-19-type.

ESTONIA ˇ

In 2021, without any change in comparison to the previous years, there were 12 bats species in Estonia. A renewal of the action plan for bat protection in Estonia was initiated in 2021. Public hearings and advertisements of this document are planned for 2023. It is particularly important to get more information about bat populations such as *Myotis mystacinus* and *Myotis nattereri*.

In terms of public awareness raising, the exhibition “The Night Flyers” has taken place in the Estonian Museum of Natural History and was visited by more than a million people. Several events have been organised within the framework of the International Bat Night, such as old houses' inventory and search for bat colonies with local groups in the Karula National Park. Plans for expanding wind energy in Estonia are ongoing and most of Estonian bat experts are involved in this process.

FINLAND:

- The Finnish Red List was updated in 2019. Of the two bat species listed in the Red Data Book the Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) was assessed as vulnerable (VU) and the Natterer's bat (*Myotis natteri*) as endangered (EN).
- A new species has been observed in Finland: the Greater Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus lasiopterus*). There are a few acoustic observations from Southern Finland, recorded during several years. With this addition, altogether 14 species of bats have been recorded in the country.
- The status of the Greater Noctule Bat, however, is not clear as its main area of occurrence is quite far away. Probably the observations are of vagrant individuals covering very long distances during favourable weather conditions.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, many bat events had to be cancelled. However, the Finnish NGO devoted to bat conservation, the Finnish Chiropterological Society, organised online meetings and other events, when possible. The society has also started publishing a high quality, yearly, bat magazine and has prepared a new and amended version of the guidelines on bat surveys.
- Active bat research on a variety of topics ranging from functional traits to pathogens of bats are being carried out mainly in BatLab Finland, a research group based at the Finnish Museum of Natural History - Luomus.
- Luomus has also started coordinating a nationwide passive monitoring project, which was earlier coordinated by individual researchers with limited time resources. In this monitoring scheme data is collected at research stations around

Finland. The aim is to strengthen the network in the future. A volunteer-based monitoring scheme is also under preparation.

- The expansion of wind farm projects poses an increased challenge to bat conservation, as there is only limited information on areas important for bats or their migration routes. Increased attention should also be paid to the quality of adequate bat surveys, both in pre- and post-construction phases of the projects.
- There is a clear need for stronger collaboration and synergies across taxa with regard to influencing the development of windfarms – both at the national and the international scale.

FRANCE:

Since the last MoP, a new species has been recognized in southern France, *Myotis crypticus*.

Most issues of bat conservation are addressed by the national action plan that covers all Eurobats resolutions (https://plan-actions-chiropteres.fr/). This action plan is implemented by all NGOs and state agencies working on bats.

The French national report for the EUROBATS Agreement provides many references of studies and conservation achievements completed during the last quadrennium.

GEORGIA:

From the activities that have been carried out in Georgia since the last Meeting of the Parties, the following should be highlighted:

- In 2019, for the Emerald site Ghliana, which at the same time is included in the EUROBATS important underground sites, a management plan was elaborated.
- In close cooperation to the National Centre for Disease Control of Georgia, sampling of bats from different colonies with non-lethal methods is underway.
- Four new maternity colonies have been found: One colony of *Myotis blythii* and *Minioterus schreibersii* with about 2,500 individuals; two colonies of *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *Myotis emarginatus* with about 500 and 1,200 individuals respectively, as well as a colony of *Myotis blythii* with about 1,500 individuals.
- In 2020, a 10-minute-long public awareness video about the importance of bats was produced by one of the main TV stations in Georgia and this video has been viewed more then 300,000 times.

- Georgia is updating the National Red List. In the new Red List, seven species of bats are considered as threatened species.
- A project on small mammal's DNA-barcoding and verification of faunal composition is being implemented. In the frame of this project, samples for 25 bat species have been collected and results of sequencing will be uploaded in the GenBank.
- Construction of several wind farms is being planned in different regions of Georgia. As part of the feasibility study of these constructions, bat surveys are being carried out. The survey methodology follows the EUROBATS guidelines.

GERMANY:

This year the German government has decided to enlarge the use of wind energy to tackle the energy supply problems. The German government is aware that the construction of new wind-energy plants bears problems, in particular for birds and bats species. For this reason, a considerable help for species concerned was agreed upon – 80 million Euro for protection projects are foreseen as well as additional financial support by wind energy companies. Germany will inform EUROBATS in its next national report about the respective projects for bats.

With reference to the already submitted written national report, some projects should be highlighted: as the conflict between bat conservation and the expansion of wind energy remains acute. Several studies and research projects to expand knowledge on this subject and find solutions to prevent negative impacts on bats are ongoing, for example on bat migration across the North and Baltic Seas, the enhancement of curtailment algorithms for wind turbines and the investigation of possible disturbances caused by the operation of wind turbines in forests.

A project on Bechstein's bat within the framework of the Federal Programme on Biological Diversity has been finished successfully and practical guidelines for collaboration with foresters have been published. Another similar project on the Barbastelle under the framework of the same programme started in 2019. Also, a project on the effects of insect decline on bats is ongoing, in which the grey long-eared bat is being studied as an example. A new project on bats and light started in 2022 and is being conducted by the IZW (Leibniz-Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research). It focuses on long-eared bats and commuting routes.

After EUROBATS MoP8, a script with German translations of the resolutions from the previous two EUROBATS Meetings of the Parties has been published to make

those available to the German bat conservationists and to promote the Agreement. The script also contains the German versions of the last two German national reports as well as contributions from the German Länder.

A new Red List of Mammals was published in 2020. 11 of the 25 species are classified as endangered. In the case of the greater mouse-eared bat, whiskered bat, and lesser horseshoe bat, there are signs of a cautious easing of the endangerment situation. 9 species are assessed as not endangered.

IRELAND:

Ireland has prepared and submitted a full national report which is available on the EUROBATS website. In summary, there are still only nine bat species in Ireland – the smallest list of any EUROBATS country.

The Irish National Bat Monitoring Programme is continuing. A report summarising all of the results up to the end of 2021 has been recently published and is available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/IWM137.pdf

A new five-year contract to run the national monitoring programme was signed with the national bat NGO – Bat Conservation Ireland – in early 2022. The Programme consists of four separate multi-annual monitoring schemes: – the car transect surveys, the waterways surveys, the lesser horseshoe bat summer and winter roost surveys, and the brown long-eared bat maternity roost surveys. These schemes cover seven of the nine bat species in Ireland and the latest report confirms that the population trends for each species is stable if not positive. Two of these schemes – the car transect surveys and the waterways surveys – are run on an all-Ireland basis with the colleagues in Northern Ireland.

The two remaining species are *Myotis nattereri* and *M. mystacinus*. These two species appear to be widespread across Ireland, but they occur at low densities, and work is still being done to identify a robust monitoring method for them.

New Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland were published in 2022. These guidelines replace the previous 2006 Guidelines and provide updated best practise information for ecological consultants and developers. They can be downloaded at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/IWM134.pdf

An updated Red List of Irish mammals was published in 2019. All bat species were assessed as “Least Concern”. The Article 17 report under the Habitats Directive, however, identified some concerns about the decline in the range of the lesser

horseshoe bat despite the positive population trend for this species. As a result, this species was assessed as “Inadequate”. The Nathusius pipistrelle remains listed as “unknown” in the Article 17 report and additional mist netting, ringing and other survey work will be continued in an attempt to better understand the status and migration behaviour of this species in Ireland. A summary of Ireland’s Article 17 report and the complete background report are both available on the website of the National Parks & Wildlife Service:
https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports

Finally, a new 5-year species action plan (SAP) for the lesser horseshoe bat has just been published. This plan has veen developed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service with Dr Kate McAney of the Vincent Wildlife Trust and aims to steer and coordinate the conservation efforts of a wide range of stakeholders. Implementation of the listed actions is already underway. The SAP can be downloaded at:
https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/Lesser%20Horseshoe%20Bat%20Species%20Action%20Plan%202022-2026.pdf

ITALY:

The COVID-19 pandemic has attracted much attention to bats, mostly due to the poor information regarding the relationship between bats and the origin and spread of the virus. Conservationists have taken this opportunity to dismantle myths and present the biological and ecological significance of bats to the general public, in the media, as well as in public events such as the International Bat Night. A study done at Naples University Federico II has tackled the issue of reverse transmission of SARS-CoV2 from humans to bats and found no evidence of virus presence in bat populations of central and southern Italy. Another study has highlighted the critical situation of the only bat species endemic to Italy, *Plecotus sardus*, whose population has crashed by over 66 percent in the last two decades (practically since the species’ description). This case, more generally, sheds light on the extremely precarious situation of bats on the Italian islands, from the major (Sicily and Sardinia) to the small islands, adversely affected by urbanization, as well as summer drought and wildfires. The Italian Chiroptera Research Group has recently revised the IUCN National Red List, which will be published soon, and the assessments for several species, such as *Rhinolophus mehelyi*, are not optimistic about their future.

LATVIA:

During the last four years no new bat species have been found in Latvia. A new development is an increasing number of winter records in species previously considered to be migratory ones, like Nathusius' bat, common noctule, and parti-coloured bat.

A national bat data base has been finalised and included all the historic data until 2018. Afterwards the data from the state financed monitoring and inventory projects as well as the species records from the open portal www.dabasdati.lv have regularly been added to this data base. Several state-financed bat monitoring programmes are running in Latvia: Counts of hibernating bats in underground roosts (since 1992), capture and acoustic monitoring of bats during the autumn migration (1986/1993), monitoring of pond bats by counts of adult females in nursery colonies and acoustic recordings over the large waterbodies (2014), a countrywide passive acoustic monitoring (2020). The monitoring data reveal a possible decline in the brown long-eared bat and in the pond bat. Latvian bat researchers continue the international collaboration in studies of bat migration with the research groups led by Dr. Christian Voigt, the Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research Berlin, Germany, and Dr. Oliver Lindecke, University of Oldenburg, Germany, as well as cooperate with a group of Finnish bat scientists, led by Dr. Thomas Lilley. The Latvian Bat Research association has now the website https://www.latvijassiksparni.org/. The national guidelines of Latvia for consideration of bats in wind park projects are close to being finalised. Two fruitful online discussions between Estonian and Latvian bat experts and decision-makers have been organized by Kaja Lotman. There are some other bat related activities that are ongoing. One large project is running on the development of the Latvian Red List according to IUCN criteria. Eleven bat species will be evaluated as well. The other important activity – the designation of a new Natura 2000 site for the barbastelle bat – is also under preparation in Latvia. It should be the first Natura 2000 site created primary to protect a bat species in this country.

LUXEMBOURG:

Three points should be highlighted:

1. Research and Monitoring:

- The nationwide bat-monitoring program for several species, mainly for *Myotis emarginatus* and *Myotis myotis*, has continued, also in terms of Article 17 reporting for the Habitats Directive.
- Under the scheme of M. emarginatus action plan, the search for new reproductive colonies has continued, and 17 new colonies have been discovered.
- The results of the analysis of the genetic structure of 74 nursing colonies of *Myotis emarginatus* population in Europe has been published: Frantz, A.C., Viglino, A., Wilwert, E. *et al.* Conservation by trans-border cooperation: population genetic structure and diversity of Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*) at its north-western European range edge. *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2022).

2. Implementation of Protection Measures:

- A general concept for integrative forest management has been prepared, focusing on bat conservation, production of quality wood, and regeneration of oak. A pilot project has been launched in the Forest "Friemholz", to regenerate an 85-ha old oak forest stand with respect to the conservation of *Myotis bechsteinii*.
- Conservation and improvement of maternity roosts in attics of churches and public buildings in 22 communes should be mentioned as well.
- Another activity involved tree and hedgerow planting in favour of the only maternity roost of *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* near Bech-Kleinmacher (implementation species action plan).

3. Public Awareness Raising:

- Public awareness and counselling of the public with regard to bats in their houses has continued.
- The International Bat Night was held in 2019 and 2022.

NORTH MACEDONIA:

In the period from 2018-2022, the following activities regarding bat survey, monitoring, and conservation have been conducted in Macedonia:

- An inventory of bat species and seasonal use of four caves in the area of the protected site “Slatinski Izvor”;
- A survey of NATURA 2000 bat species in three identified potential Natura 2000 sites in central and eastern North Macedonia;
- An ongoing project for monitoring and conservation of bats in the Prespa region in southwest of North Macedonia;
- An education kit for bats and caves in the Galichica National Park, prepared by the NGO “Ursus Speleos” and its partners, with the support of national bat expert and MOEPP.

Additionally, opportunistic surveys of bat fauna while working on valorisation and EIA studies have also been realised. Unfortunately, national guidelines (in line with EUROBATS guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects) are still not properly taken into consideration during EIA preparations.

NORWAY:

The Norwegian Red List for Species was updated in 2021. Of the 11 bat species with confirmed occurrences on the Norwegian mainland, four are categorized as threatened and two as near threatened. Notably, the northern bat *Eptesicus nilssonii* has changed status from Least Concern to Vulnerable since the 2015 Red List. The estimated population decline for the northern bat is based on unpublished (in prep.) long-term acoustic data and monitoring of hibernating bats in mines.

The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate and the Norwegian Environment Agency are currently working together to finalise national guidelines on wind turbines and bat populations, based on the EUORBATS Publication Series No.6. The two agencies are also collaborating to implement pre- and post-construction monitoring to assess impact on bats at wind power facilities in Norway, something which has not been done previously. Additionally, the two agencies have jointly developed and published online evidence-based information about the impact of onshore wind energy facilities on bats.

In general, the knowledge about bats in Norway is limited but increasing. In the last few years there has been a revitalisation of bat surveys and monitoring

organized by NGOs. The Norwegian Zoological Society arranged a two-day symposium including a validation workshop in autumn 2021, which gathered most of the people from inside and outside academia who had done some form of bat work in Norway. A group of Norwegian bat ecologists participated in the BatLife Sweden conference in November 2021 and Norwegian researchers aim to increase collaboration with bat ecologists in other Nordic countries.

Bat research in Norway has been strengthened by the recent establishment of bat research groups at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). The NTNU group focuses on bat physiology, including individual responses to environmental change. The NMBU research group carries out general ecological studies to increase the knowledge of bats in Norway, as well as studies of impacts of land use, including wind turbines in forest habitats and forestry. Research activities carried out by independent researchers include spatial prediction modelling of different bat species (based on acoustic surveys) and impact of light pollution in churchyards.

Finally, currently there is no bat rehabilitation centre in Norway, but the Environment Agency is working to put one in place.

POLAND:

At the previous Meeting of the Parties to EUROBATS, Poland had the opportunity to inform about the project dedicated to the protection of the lesser horseshoe bat, carried out continuously since 2004 on over 25 percent of the country's territory.

From 2021, the activities of the project LIFE PODKOWIEC PLUS: back to the forest holistic conservation of bat breeding habitats - LIFE20NAT / PL / 001427 will focus, among other things, on creating new places of reproduction and hibernation for nine bat species. The project also involves foreign partners from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania. In Poland, it is planned to build 10 summer shelters (towers resembling church towers), 100 "bat huts" and 5 underground winter shelters (hibernaculua).

In 2021 another project, called "Active protection of the Western Barbarstelle in selected forest areas in Poland", started. The project will be implemented in selected 12 forest areas located in different regions of the country. For each of these areas, it is planned to build and hang 100 specially constructed slot boxes. The colonisation of boxes by bats and detector monitoring of the activity of this

species will also be carried out. This is a way of sampling the dynamics of the barbican population. The obtained results will be used to extend the undertaken activities to other forest areas. It is hoped that the new project will be as successful and long-term as the lesser horseshoe bat project.

SERBIA:

After the book “Bat fauna of Serbia” was published in early 2021, the Red Book of Mammals of Serbia (which includes bats) is currently in preparation. It will include new data on the distribution of bats in Serbia that was collected during 2020 and 2021 within the project “Obtaining data and other services for establishment of the ecological network of the European Union Natura 2000 as part of the ecological network of the Republic of Serbia”.

Currently, the transboundary project “Transboundary conservation of horseshoe bats in the Romanian-Serbian Iron Gates”, conducted in collaboration with the Centre for Bat Research and Conservation from Romania and funded by Conservation Leadership Programme, is in its final stage. During this project, many new nursery and hibernation roost have been found, not only for horseshoe bats that were the target species of the project, but also for many other bat species. Info boards to be set up at the entrances to the important roost in the Iron Gates area in both countries are being prepared.

In July 2022, the first ever nursery colony of *Barbastella barbastellus* in Serbia was found, located behind window shutters in a peri-urban area some 30km southwest from Belgrade.

Recently, a joint project “Using molecular techniques to develop and inform on the distribution of medium-sized horseshoe bats” funded within EUROBATS Project Initiative has started. Project participants are the Institute for Biological Research “Siniša Stanković” (Serbia), the Centre for Bat Research and Conservation (Romania) and the Vincent Wildlife Trust (UK, project leader Dr Patrick Wright). The aim of the project is to develop molecular markers for identification of medium-sized horseshoe bats from guano, which will hopefully help to confirm the presence of *Rhinolophus mehelyi* (one of the rarest bat species in Serbia) at more localities where mixed medium-sized horseshoe bat colonies are present. Fieldwork in Serbia was conducted in August 2022.

In collaboration with Dr Gábor Kemenesi and Dr Tamás Görföl from Szentágothai Research Center, University of Pécs (Hungary), the monitoring of *Miniopterus schreibersii* populations in Serbia for the presence of lloviu virus has continued.

Work on actively popularising bats by appearing in media and organising talks and presentations has continued. In 2022, the International Bat Night was organised online.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC:

In the Slovak Republic, bats (currently 28 bat species occur in Slovakia) are protected under the Act No. 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection and the new Regulation of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No. 170/2021 Coll. According to the new Regulation of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic No. 170/2021 Coll., among other things, the social value of individuals of bat species has increased.

The Red List categorisation for bat species recorded in Slovakia before 2001 was assessed in 2001 National Red List of Mammals (Žiak & Urban 2001) and no new categorisation has been done during the last years. The draft Red List of Carpathian Mammals (including bats) has been compiled for the Carpathian region in seven countries (coordinated by Slovak specialists) within the BioREGIO Carpathians project (www.cwi.sk/files/zbornik_cervene_zoznamy_final.pdf).

The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic is currently intensively working in cooperation with universities and other experts on the preparation of a new Red List. In 2023, a new Red List of mammals in Slovakia, including bats, will be issued.

An overview of the conservation status of habitats and species is available online to both experts and the general public at the website: www.biomonitoring.sk. Monitoring data represents the basis for the development of reports on the status of species and habitats of European interest according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. The official results of reporting are available in the publication "*Conservation status of habitats and species of Community interest in the period of 2013 – 2018 in the Slovak Republic*" (link at the website: Monografia_reporting_art17_2013_2018.pdf (sopsr.sk).

In the Slovak Republic, the realised monitoring consists of repeated collection of the data in the field, using standardised methods on defined areas, so-called

permanent monitoring localities. For the purpose of collection, processing, evaluation, and publishing of the data from the field monitoring, an IT system has been developed – „Comprehensive Information and Monitoring System“ (CIMS), which is managed by the professional staff of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC SR). Monitoring is performed by the SNC SR (including the Slovak Caves Administration) as well as in cooperation with members of non-governmental organisations (e.g. Slovak Bat Conservation Society, Slovak Speleogical Society).

In 2022, the Nature and Landscape Protection Documentation entitled "*Principles for the Protection of Species and Habitats of European Importance in Natura 2000 Sites*": https://www.minzp.sk/files/sekcia-ochranyprirodyakrajiny/natura2000/zasady-starostlivosti-2022.pdf) was approved by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. The documentation was prepared by State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with experts.

An EU member state is responsible for monitoring species of European interest and their habitats, as well as reporting on their protection status to the European Commission every six years. The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic is working on the process to designate protected areas covering all Natura 2000 sites. In 2017 new protected areas covering Natura 2000 sites with bat species protection were established. Other Natura 2000 sites with bat species protection are already in place, overlapping with existing protected areas (buildings with bat roosts are not included in this network). The total area has increased from 11.9 to 12.6 percent of the territory of the Slovak Republic and the total number of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) has increased to 642 SCIs (76 of them are for bats).

A lot of management activities have been carried out e.g. reconstruction of the entrances of the mines, cleaning of the churchs‘ attics, clearing of guano from the attics of many churches. A lot of activities have been realised in co-operation with members of the speleological groups e.g. cleaning and closing of underground sites, elimination of the activities leading to disturbance of bats in their roosts.

As far as projects are concerned, the implementation of the project „*Raising environmental awareness in local communities by joint conservation of bats in cross border regions of Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine* (2020 – 2022

HUSKROUA/1702_6.1_0021“) should be mentioned. It has focused on the protection of bats in the targeted region by concrete conservation actions such as proper assessment of the endangered bat populations, making alternative shelters for bat colonies (bat boxes, warning chambers). It has also focused on the protection of the cultural value such as protection of the religious objectes in churches (cleaning the churches from bat guano). Public awareness raising actions have been implemented as well, such as a mobile exhibition, common workshops of bat box preparation with locals, a documentary movie dedicated to bats:
https://netopiere.sk/sk/page/aktualne_projekty.html).

The scientific research is performed especially in the Institute of Forest Ecology of the Slovak Republic, Academy of Sciences in the city of Zvolen, NGO Slovak Bat Conservancy Society, SNC SR (specifically the Slovak Caves Administration) and several universities in cooperation with animal rescue centres. In Slovakia, the rehabilitation of handicapped individuals of all species of bats is ensured through a network of rescue facilities.

Chiropterological seminars were organized for example in 2018 and 2022 by the NGO Slovak Bat Conservation Society. The promotion work includes mainly organising International Bat Night events – State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic as well as the NGO Slovak Bat Conservation Society have organised public meetings within the International Bat Night initiative. International Bat Night events are being carried out in August in Slovakia by more and more organisers and are each year more successful in terms of the number of events, number of visitors, and media coverage.

SWEDEN:

In Sweden, the activity to support bat conservation has increased considerably during the last years, due to five important factors:

- The new NGO “BatLife Sweden”, which focuses on education, monitoring, and conservation projects;
- Increased interest from the government in the monitoring programme;
- Increased interest from the authorities in wind-power and infrastructure projects, resulting in several bat research projects;
- Establishment of permanent stations for long-term monitoring;

- A group of experts being formed to validate bat observations reported to the Swedish species observation system (Artportalen). This has improved the knowledge in bat identification.

In Sweden, bats have been systematically monitored for about 20 years. Since 2010, this also includes surveys with automatic registration. The monitoring covers both a large number of short-terms surveys (1-3 nights per site) distributed in many parts of south Sweden, as well as a small number of sites with long-term surveys (the whole year). Of the 19 bat species in Sweden, 12 are red-listed, and of these, six species are considered as threatened. For example, one of the most commonly occurring bat species in Sweden, *Eptesicus nilssonii*, seems to be decreasing and has now been considered near threatened (NT). On the other hand, some other of the very commonly occurring species are considered as increasing. This is especially true for the three species of *Pipistrellus*. Unfortunately, the threatened species are seldomly recorded within the monitoring programme, and there is no data on colonies. Because of this, there is a plan to start special conservation programs for the rarest species, which will include trapping, radio tracking, and bat box surveys.

During the recent years, Swedish bat research has mainly focused on light pollution, virus monitoring – including Lyssa-virus – as well as wind-power and bat populations. One focus is also on the attitude to bats, population trends, and survey methods. Ongoing research projects include mitigation within infrastructure projects and environmental pollution. The Transportation Agency, The Energy Agency and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency mainly support the research.

Currently, there are about 200 Swedish amateurs and about 30 professionals working with bats. Especially, wind-power- and large infrastructure projects result in many bat surveys. The bat work is organised in cooperation between the relatively newly founded NGO BatLife Sweden, the Swedish Species Information Centre, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, and the respective county administrations. So far, this cooperation has resulted in courses in identification based on heterodyne and time-expansion detectors, trapping and handling, morphological differences, survey techniques and several other subjects. There is also a very active open Facebook group “Fladdermöss I Sverige” (Bats in Sweden) with more than 4,200 members.

Last year Bat Life Sweden arranged the first Swedish national bat conference with more than 140 participants on site in Gothenburg in November 2021, with invited keynote speakers from Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and Poland. The second national bat conference will be in Uppsala, in November 2022.

Since 2020, a specialist group validates all bat observations reported to the Swedish Species Observation System (Artportalen). This group consist of 20 of the most skilled professional bat workers. Based on these reports, Sweden will update the distribution map for all bat species every year, and it will be an important tool for the Swedish red-listing work and other conservation projects.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, fewer events on the International Bat Night were organised than is normally the case.

UKRAINE:

As already known, there is an ongoing, full-scale, unprovoked, and unjustified war launched by Russia against Ukraine. It has been repeatedly stated that Russia's ongoing attack on Ukraine is also an attack on the environment and biodiversity. It has been estimated that the territory of about 900 protected sites, with an area of more than 1 million hectares, has been affected by the war, including 200 Emerald Network sites with an area of 2.9 million hectares. A number of those places are important habitats for bats.

There is an ongoing work on assessing the damage to the environment and to biodiversity in particular, as well as on developing relevant methodologies and/or guidelines. It is difficult to fully estimate the damage to biodiversity and its components, including bats, because of the continued military activities and occupation of Ukraine's territories.

However, it should also be considered how to estimate consequences of the war on specific groups of animals, bats in particular, as well as their habitats. Based on such estimation, it is important to develop and further implement an action plan to stabilise and restore the damaged populations of animals and their habitats. In this regard, it will be crucial to have an international expert support and expertise and the Ukrainian delegation is interested in relevant cooperation.

Due to the war, the national funding of any bat research and conservation has significantly decreased or stopped altogether. All over Ukraine, researchers are restricted in travelling; in most regions the night work is not possible. There are

also other restrictions in place. However, during the last four years, a lot of bat projects and activities have been realised at different levels in Ukraine, and they are mostly highlighted in the national report, available also on the EUROBATS website.

Finally, attention should be drawn to today's news on a mass missile attack from Russian invaders on Ukraine, including its capital. It has already been reported on human casualties and destructions of critical infrastructure objects. Ukraine has expressed its appreciation for a continued support that quite a number of the Parties to EUROBATS have provided.

NON-PARTY RANGE STATES:

ARMENIA:

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia recognises the expediency of joining EUROBATS, which is conditioned by the presence of valuable species of bats on the territory of Armenia and the necessity to protect their habitats. In 2019, the question of the expediency of joining the Agreement was presented for discussion at the session of the board adjunct to the Minister of Environment. At this meeting, the board adjunct to the Minister of Environment approved the issue of accession of the Republic of Armenia to EUROBATS.

Unfortunately, the process of joining the Agreement is still being delayed due to some issues (structural changes in the Ministry of Environment, changes in the management system, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Armenian-Azerbaijani war, etc.).

However, during the reporting period, the Ministry of Environment closely cooperated with the scientific experts of Armenia. Within the framework of that cooperation, the Ministry of Environment provided appropriate permits to the scientific experts for the purpose of species composition, biological features, and other scientific studies of bats found on the territory of Armenia.

At present, an agreement has been reached with the scientific focal point, Dr. Ghazaryan, on the translation of the text of the Agreement and the provision of additional justifications for joining the Agreement.

Recently, military conflict had unfortunately revived in the eastern and south-eastern regions of Armenia. Targeted areas are important for biodiversity conservation. These areas are rich in endemic and endangered species, the

significance of which is important not only for Armenia but also within the context of global biodiversity conservation. The mentioned areas are the main and temporary habitats of many species of bats included in both the Red Book of Armenia and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of endangered species and any kind of martial disturbance can cause the change of migratory route, which can pose danger for the entire populations of many species.

Such hazards unequivocally pose threat to the environment, significantly impacting the speed and scope of implementation of the obligations under the international environmental treaties and conventions.

Despite the military situation, Armenia continues to be committed to implementing EUROBATS and other biodiversity-related international treaties.

The scientific report for Armenia was made by Dr. Astghik Ghazaryan, the EUROBATS scientific focal point for Armenia:

The bat specialists' group from the Yerevan State University has continued promoting bat research and conservation activities in Armenia. Several joint projects with the Czech Republic and Germany have been conducted in Armenia in the last two years. Armenian and German PhD students have been actively involved in the bat projects.

In 2021, Armenian-Belorussian governmental joint project was restarted, including studies of genetic variability and phylogeography of widespread species of bats of Armenia and Belarus. Together with German and Georgian specialists, the Caucasus barcoding of life project was conducted, which also included barcoding of Armenian bats as well.

A big nursery colony of *Plecotus macrobularis* has been discovered in the south-eastern part of Armenia, which has been observed over the last three years.

The wind farm and new international road constructions have been developing in Armenia, and, according to EUROBATS guidelines, monitoring of bats has been requested from the companies involved.

Several TV and radio programs about bats have been produced in Armenia during the last two years. Two videos were prepared about bats dwelling in Armenia.

The research on Coronavirus of Armenian bats continues.

The NABU of Armenia has also implemented a project in the southern part of Armenia.

International Bat Night events have been organised together with the Armenian association of Mammalogists. Schoolchildren and students of different faculties (not biologists) participated in mist netting and bat recording done during the events.

BioBlitz was organized in Armenia in May 2022. During the event, over 30 people took part in the bat section.

Bats of Armenia were presented in STARMUS events and other expos organized by the Yerevan State University and other organizations.

AZERBAIJAN:

Due to certain conditions, the ratification of the EUROBATS as well as the CMS Agreements by the Azerbaijani government as a high priority task was not on the agenda in 2022. However, a number of informal discussions and brainstorming around this topic has been conducted between relevant scientists and the representatives of the environmental authority which is the Ministry of Environment and National Resources. Currently, the focus is on the CMS rather than the EUROBATS Agreement and it is being considered as the key step to proceed further.

From the research perspective - in 2022, the ESIA baseline data survey associated with the proposed mining projects was completed. It was the first comprehensive ESIA baseline survey on bats in Azerbaijan linked to the mining activities.

The National Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the MENR continues studying terrestrial vertebrates (including bats) assessments for review and update of the national Red Data Book, which is due every ten years according to the local legislation. The new (third) edition of RDB will include 10 bat species, whereas the first edition had three and the second twelve species (2013).

A number of new hibernation sites as well as summer roosts for 12 bat species was revealed in the period between 2019-2022. The update of cadaster maps on bats localities is on-going, also within the project named “Beyond species” in cooperation with the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde.

One Health Multisectoral Biosurveillance and Biodefense within the GHERI Regional Project (USA) is still ongoing. The goal is to bring together experts from various spheres to improve coordination to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging pathogens (and those associated with bats), as well as validate existing strategies and gaps.

BELARUS:

Since the last Meeting of the Parties, a few bat research projects are ongoing in Belarus:

- Research on species composition and genetic structure of Pipistrellus, Myotis, and Plecotus species complexes is being carried out at the National Academy of Sciences.
- Bat research within the framework of the project “Polesia - Europe's largest wilderness area”, supported by the Frankfurt Zoological Society and partners, was carried out, but this project is now terminated.
- The collaborative Armenian-Belarusian project “Phylogeographic analysis of bat populations of Belarus and Armenia” has been completed, and, as a result, the phylogenetic structure of six bat species from Armenia and Belarus was analysed and the general model of postglacial recolonisation of Eastern Europe was proposed.
- The joint Armenian-Belarusian project “Past and present expansion of model vertebrate species under climate change in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus” is ongoing. This project involved phylogenetic research of *Pipistrellus kuhlii*.
- At the Centre for Bioresources of the National Academy of Sciences a genetic bank of wild fauna has been created, and it continues to replenish. At this moment, there are more than 700 bat tissue samples of 17 species.
- The project “Bats and vaults: search and inventory of underground bat shelters in Belarus” (Belarus-Ukraine), supported by EPI, was completed in 2020.
- The project “Bat fauna inventory in Northern Belarus”, supported by EMF, was completed in 2020.

In addition, the usual popularization activities have been carried out, such as International Bat Night events and popular bat-lectures, interviews in the media,

etc. Most of the IBN events are usually supported by APB-BirdLife Belarus. Unfortunately, during the last year, a lot of problems and difficulties have been faced. In particular, due to the liquidation of the APB-BirdLife, a lot of opportunities have been lost and many projects have been terminated. However, every opportunity to continue with bat conservation activities will be further sought.

JORDAN:

In 2020, the regional assessment of the mammals of Jordan based on the IUCN criteria was published. Of the 26 bat species known in Jordan; one was critically endangered, nine were considered endangered, one vulnerable, three near threatened and 11 are of least concern. The publication can be downloaded at https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49117.

Diversity and conservation of bats in Jordan has been studied extensively in the past two years, with identification of 142 bat caves. Threats affecting the bats of Jordan are highlighted, including the recent introduction of wind farms, local tourism, and other mining activities. In addition, the role of bats in disease transmission is included. This chapter can be downloaded at:
https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/78873 .

MOROCCO:

The bat fauna of Morocco consists of about 30 species. At least 18 species are within the range of European bats such as *Pipistrulls pipistrellus, Eptesicus isabellinus, Rhinolophus ferrumequinum, Rhinolophus hipposideros, Rhinolophus euryale, Myotis capaccinii, Myotis emarginatus.*

All Moroccan bats are protected by the environmental law of wild fauna and flora conservation. All spices are included in the local listings of protected species.

The first Association for the Study and Protection of Mammals in Morocco has been created, where bats retain a major interest in the action program of the NGO.

There is a very fruitful partnership with the association of speleologists of Morocco, which shows a great interest in the protection of bats, and always considers them in their meetings.

Regarding the increased expansion of wind turbine projects in Morocco, it is mandatory to follow EUROBATS guidelines. Monitoring of bats in wind farms during planning, construction, and operational phases of the project is now obligatory.

Current research on Moroccan bats focuses on their ecology and distribution. There are two PhD theses in preparation. Further studies are needed to update Morocco's bat fauna, in addition to the urgent efforts required for public/school and policy makers' awareness raising.

Finally, the Natural History Museum of Gibraltar and other organisations in Spain have been contacted to set up a program on the migratory bats between the two Mediterranean shores.

TUNISIA:

- A new generation of chiropterologists is emerging in Tunisia, with new PhD and Master's theses under preparation at the university of Carthage, University of Bizerte in partnership with le Laboratoire Comportement et Ecologie de la Faune Sauvage du Centre INRAE Occitanie de Toulouse. Another ongoing partnership is with the Algerian universities for the field work. Different papers have been published, including the contribution to the global database for bats in karsts and caves.
- The celebration of the International Bat Night in August 2022 by the Association des Amis de Belvédère, speleologist NGOs, and private sector representatives, was successful, with lectures and workshops taking place in the urban parks and other areas. The reports on these events have been published on the social and local media.
- Renewable energy sector continues to develop in Tunisia with the support of KfW. Several meetings have been held with the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company and other stakeholders to engage in research on the best methods for impact assessment and mitigating bat mortality at turbines for mutual benefit.
- The Ministry of Agriculture through the Direction Générale des Forets is interested to do a national inventory on bats. It will be launched soon. At the same time the forest code is under review to mention the names of red-listed species.
- The ratification of EUROBATS Agreement seems to be in a stand-by mode. All the information was transferred to the Secretariat in 2019, however, no update has been received as to whether there has been any contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affair in Tunisia.

OBSERVERS:

ARMENIAN ASSOCIATION OF MAMMALOGISTS:

During the period between 2018 and 2022, the NGO has organised several meetings, seminars, and fieldwork activities in Armenia.

Projects concerning bat conservation have been conducted in cooperation with the Yerevan State University bat group. Also, one health orientated bat project was conducted together with Caucasian colleagues and the colleagues from the USA.

Several education trainings have been organised in schools and other institutions.

International Bat Night has been celebrated each year after MoP8. Over 20 students and schoolchildren participated in the events. EUROBATS bat stickers and booklets were distributed among the event participants.

CROATIAN BIOSPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY / CBSS:

Since 2020, the Croatian Biospeleological Society has continued to conduct monitoring of activity and abundance of the bat fauna in the complex of the Benedictine monastery and Maximilian's residence on the island of Lokrum, where 11 bat species are present, with *Plecotus kolombatovici*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and *Myotis mystacinus* in focus. This project is being conducted in collaboration with the colleagues from the Vincent Wildlife Trust and Bernwood Ecology. For the purpose of protecting bat fauna, and for the needs of the renovation of the monastery, designated bat rooms and spaces have been designed to preserve bats inside the building even after its renovation. This project is among the first ones in Croatia where bat specialists, together with architects and renovators, help design bat-designated areas during the planning period.

Additionally, from 2019 onwards, CBSS has also conducted monitoring of bats in the Plitvice Lakes National Park in four selected caves and one above-ground facility in various seasons, according to the presence of maternity or migratory colonies and hibernating individuals. With the long-term monitoring of bat species and their population trends within the Plitvice Lakes National Park, a better overview could be gained of their dynamics and potential threats as well as environmental changes that could threaten them.

Bat research in the special forest reserve Motovun Forest has been conducted, with the aim of identifying bat species present in the reserve, the emphasis being

on *Barbastella barbastellus*. CBSS continued the long-term monitoring in Veternica Cave in the Medvednica Nature Park during 2020, sampling in Ćulumova cave for the project Research on the presence of SARS-2 coronavirus in different species of animals in the republic of Croatia, a preliminary survey of the bat fauna in Lokvarka cave as well as research on bat species and sex composition in the National Park Mljet.

CBSS has also been participating in CLIMBAT Cost action through the meetings, as well as recommendation and data sharing from Croatia to help identify species likely to be most responsive to climate change across Europe and habitats that are going to be gained or lost for bats due to the climate crisis.

The Society has published one more scientific and popular book “The Cave Type Localities Atlas of Croatian Fauna”, where bats were also mentioned for caves listed as internationally important underground sites for bats.

FRENCH MAMMAL SOCIETY / SFEPM:

The SFEPM (La Société Française pour l’Etude et la Protection des Mammifères) is a national organisation for the study and protection of mammals uniting 23 local bat groups all over France. In 2022, the 19th edition of the national bat meeting took place in person with the participation of more than 300 persons. The atlas of the mammals of France has been launched by the SFEPM, for which now the part on bats is being prepared. A trans-regional project has been launched to study *Miniopterus schreibersii* populations. Other more traditional activities, such as the International Bat Night and bat rescue, have taken place all over the country.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY / MNHN (FRANCE):

The bat team of the CESCO laboratory at the MNHN (Muséum National d’Historie Naturelle) is specialised in research on bat conservation and the anthropogenic impact on bats. Publications from 2022 are concerned with the impact of light on bat phenology, and the impact of distance to wind turbines on the activity of different bat guilds. The latest paper evaluates the application of EUROBATS guidelines recommending the placement of wind turbines at more than 200 m from woodlands and hedges in the UK, Germany, and France. The MNHN has also continued the coordination of bat capture at the national level by organising the training of professionals and volunteers in collaboration with local tutors.

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION UNION / NABU (GERMANY)

NABU (Naturschutzbund) continues its various activities on communication and education on bats. The homepage offers multiple advice on bats, as well as the so-called “Bat Helpline“, which was established in 2016 and which since then has intensively been used. Because of the great and still increasing success of this helpline (more than 3,100 calls in 2021), it will be maintained in the long-term. More information is available at:
https://www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/saeugetiere/fledermaeuse/18829.html

Additionally, the campaign „Bats welcome“ acknowledges efforts in bat conservation and protection by private house owners and successfully exists since many years in most of the Länder.

After two years of reduced activites due to the pandemic situation, the International Bat Night could be held again in 2022. Altogether 218 local events were organized in Germany by the NABU groups. The main event took place in Mayen (Rhineland-Palatinate), which was attended by about 500 visitors and during which the protected underground mines were visited, being a very important swarming and wintering site for bats.

In accordance with EUROBATS Resolution 9.4 on bat populations and wind turbines, NABU has compiled its own position paper in the recent years. Due to the political situation and the increasing demands for climate protection, an update of this paper, taking into account both bat protection and climate protection, is currently undertaken.

In accordance with EUROBATS Resolution 9.6 on bat conservation and public health, information about COVID-19 and questions about possible transmissions from and to bats are compiled on the homepage. Also information about bat rabies can be found there.

In accordance with EUROBATS Resolution 9.15 on the next quadrennium‘s conservation and management plan, NABU takes the following actions:

- Support of the local and voluntary-based rehabilitation centres and bat helplines. Efforts are being undertaken to coordinate these centres and to improve knowledge on rehabilitation.

- In order to improve the availability of overground roosts, since 2007 NABU has made available more than 1,000 churches to bats: https://www.nabu.de/tiere-und-pflanzen/aktionen-und-projekte/lebensraum-kirchturm/kirchen.html.
- Since 2018, NABU, further partners, and the Federal Agency für Nature Protection (BfN) are collaborating in a national project on ecology and protection of the western barbastelle, *Barbastella barbastellus* and its habitats. The project lasts from 2018 to 2024 and is conducted in 7 Länder. Details are available at: https://www.mopsfledermaus.de.

NATURALIS BIODIVERSITY CENTER / NBC (THE NETHERLANDS)

In the Netherlands, an extensive research project on zoonoses in bats, called "Zoonoses in the Night", is in its final phase and will lead to a series of publications. In the meantime, a paper has been published in which it is reported that European bat lyssavirus can also be detected in the faeces of serotine bats, making active rabies surveillance in bats easier to carry out.

SPANISH BAT ASSOCIATION / SECEMU:

During 2022, SECEMU (Asociación Española Para La Conservación Y El Estudio De Los Murciélagos) devoted much of its energy, in collaboration with other organisations such as BCT or the Spanish Society of Virology, to dismiss and reject all fake news repeatedly appearing in the media during the pandemic and linking the origin of the SARS-CoV2 virus to bats.

Also during 2022 SECEMU's biannual bat conference was held in Murcia, with the presence of colleagues from Portugal and Gibraltar. This was a great opportunity for an exchange of experience about bat conservation at the Iberian level.

With the return of normality, International Bat Night events were organized again in many localities across Spain by local bat groups. The events were attended by hundreds of people.

A SECEMU commission is focusing on presenting allegations about the new wind-farm projects that are being constructed throughout the country without a proper impact assessment on bats.

Another commission is trying to substantiate the upgrade of the Spanish IUCN consideration of *Rhinolophus mehelyi* to 'Critically Endangered', given the present worrisome status of its populations in the country.

Finally, SECEMU is actively collaborating in all the efforts that are taking place to attain the signing of the EUROBATS Agreement by the Spanish government any time soon.

VINCENT WILDLIFE TRUST / VWT (UNITED KINGDOM AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

The core work of the Trust remains the management of nearly 40 reserves in Britain and Ireland for horseshoe bats. The climate resilience work undertaken at the sites in England, in 2021 and in early 2022, has provided the resident colonies with roosting areas that protect them from extreme weather events. Monitoring the efficacy of the modifications will continue and employing of similar interventions at the sites in Wales and Ireland is aspired to. The Trust is preparing to carry out major renovation work over the winter of 2022/23 at its new greater horseshoe bat reserve in south-east England. A paper published in the Conservation Evidence journal details how adapting and managing VWT's horseshoe bat reserves has resulted in increased population size when compared with unmanaged sites. Scientific Publications – The Vincent Wildlife Trust (vwt.org.uk)

VWT is part of a multi-partner project called "Natur am Byth" aimed at addressing declines in rare species in Wales. The Trust is leading a project on the conservation of barbastelle bats through the use of innovative monitoring techniques and woodland management. The Trust's PhD project with the University of Sussex on barbastelle is drawing to a close and the team spent time this summer in verifying the predicted presence of barbastelle maternity colonies in woodlands identified using acoustic survey techniques.

VWT, along with colleagues in Romania and Serbia, gained funding from the EUROBATS Projects Initiative for a pilot project developing a technique for identifying medium-sized horseshoe bats using Environmental DNA analysis. The fieldwork was conducted this summer and the analysis will be undertaken at the University of Sussex.

After a pause due to COVID-19 restrictions, VWT has returned to Lokrum Island (Croatia) to continue its work with the colleagues in the Croatian Biospeleological Society on the development of a compensation and mitigation plan for the bat populations in the island's Benedictine Monastery and associated historical buildings.

In Ireland, the Trust's staff have been involved in producing a Species Action Plan for lesser horseshoe bats with the countries National Parks and Wildlife Service, this was published and launched in the summer gov.ie - Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan 2022-2026 (www.gov.ie). Finally, the construction of a series of small bat towers in County Limerick is underway. These structures are aimed at providing lesser horseshoe bat populations with a wider range of roosting opportunities in areas where there are gaps in the species distribution.

13. Report of the Credentials Committee

The Chair of the Credentials Committee, Mr. Keith Barber from the United Kingdom, thanked the colleagues – Dr. Laurent Schley from Luxembourg and Mr. Oliver Schall from Germany – for their input in compiling the report of the Committee. From 28 Parties represented at MoP9, eight Parties had not presented credential letters and were not eligible to vote, should such a situation arise. The 20 credentials received were acceptable, however, 11 did not fully conform to the requirements of the sample letter or rules of procedure (such as absence of a stamp or a seal, lack of delegation of appropriate authority, etc.). A request was made to the Secretariat to update the sample letter of credentials to provide clarity on the exact legislative requirements. Finland also pointed out that there was a discrepancy between the rules of procedure and the sample letter of credentials which the Secretariat should look into.

14. Draft Resolution 9.1: Financial and Administrative Matters (Budget 2023 - 2026)

Mr. Panis mentioned that there was quite a debate ahead of the Administrative Working Group. He asked the delegates to make their discussion effective but keep it warm and constructive. Before starting deliberation on the future budget, there were still some documents referring to the past that needed to be endorsed. The first one was Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.5, Report on Income and Expenditure for the Financial Year 2018, which was endorsed without any questions.

Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.6 represented the Report on Income and Expenditure for the Financial Years 2019-2021. Mr. Streit mentioned that this document was quite self-explanatory and that it also included the voluntary contributions received. Mr. Streit used the opportunity to thank Monaco for its substantial additional voluntary contributions in the past three years to support EUROBATS budget that was under high pressure from 2019 caused by the deteriorating exchange rate between the

Euro and the US Dollar. Mr. Streit also thanked Germany as well as Luxembourg for their continuing outstanding support. Occasionally, the Secretariat also received voluntary contributions from Switzerland. Together with the contribution from Monaco, the Secretariat received also voluntary contributions from Malta and Croatia that supported the regular budget. Turning to the expenditure reports for all the years, Mr. Streit commented that, despite constraints, the Secretariat managed to make savings since no in-person meetings were organised in the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These savings were important for the development of the trust fund status, which luckily moderately recovered. Going back to the topic of income, Mr. Panis mentioned that some Parties had arrears and that, since this presented an additional burden on the trust fund, this issue should be addressed at a later stage, during the discussion on the next budget.

Referring to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.8, Trust Fund Status Report, Mr. Streit mentioned that this document was very difficult to read. He explained that the very bottom line was significant, which showed the status of the trust fund. This figure, however, for the first time included the mandatory reserve of ca. 80,000 USD, which was normally separately shown. This sum could not easily be withdrawn and provided for the case that unexpected major shortfalls would occur in contributions, to make sure that operations could continue until the contributions were paid. Mr. Streit reminded the delegates that the document was produced in spring and that, since then, the exchange rate got worse. Currently, the Euro was worth less than the US dollar. This would have an impact on the trust fund reserve since a part of it was kept in EUR, though the figures were stated in USD, and at the end of the year, it would need to be revaluated. It was expected that the trust fund reserve would go further down. For this reason, it was necessary to revise the draft budget resolution discussed in the StC earlier this year to reduce the amount that could be withdrawn from the reserve, in anticipation of its revaluation.

Referring to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.9, showing the state of contributions as of 5 October 2022, the Executive Secretary joined Mr. Panis in urging the Parties to pay their arrears. Except for one country, very few of the Parties were in arrears, however, the situation with the payment of the contributions for the current year was indeed much worse than in any of the previous ones. For the current year, one quarter of the total budget had not yet been paid, which meant that, at the time, EUROBATS was operating from the trust fund. Mr. Streit excused Monaco and explained that its invoice was not paid due to the mistake made by the

Secretariat to send the invoice to a wrong addressee. Monaco also apologised for the delay in payment and expressed its hope that the funds would be received within the following three weeks. Monaco also mentioned that the 30,000 EUR listed in the table were actually a voluntary and not a regular contribution and asked for this sum to be removed from Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.9. Mr. Panis supported this proposal and asked the Secretariat to make a revision of Inf.EUROBATS.MoP9.9. France asked if the 30,000 EUR from Monaco were the only voluntary contribution that had not been paid, to which Mr. Streit answered positively, also explaining that the other voluntary contributions were used for other purposes, such as projects, but not for the regular budget.

Proceeding to Draft Resolution 9.1.Rev.1, Mr. Streit stated that the document itself contained the explanation why a revision was necessary. The first reason was the exchange rate development: At the time the draft resolution was prepared, one Euro was worth approximately 0.997 USD, and, currently, it was the other way round. The second reason was the proposition of a new element by the Secretariat to make the budget a bit more flexible depending on changes in the financial situation. It was not possible to predict how long the crisis, mainly caused by the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, would sustain; however, the Euro would most likely not significantly recover as long as the war continued. Once the Euro became stronger again, and the situation improved, the staff costs would also decrease. Since the budget to be adopted now was for the period of four years, and the Parties might be obliged to limit their commitments because of the current situation, the idea was to have a new mechanism where the Parties would give the Standing Committee the mandate to look into the possibility to put other suggested scenarios into force if the financial situation changes (either if the Euro would get stronger or if new parties (e.g. Spain) would join the Agreement). Without touching upon the contributions of the Parties that would be agreed at this meeting, the newly introduced mechanism would give the mandate to the StC to have the option to increase some costs, should there be significant additional income.

The second half of the draft document remained as presented during the joint meeting in May 2022. Originally there were 3 scenarios, to which 2 more variations of Scenario 3 were added, so that there were in total 5 scenarios.

Mr. Panis asked for any questions regarding the background information.

France inquired whether the fluctuation of the exchange rate was supported by the core budget or by the trust fund reserve. Mr. Streit answered that it was affecting every year's budget. France noted that, in the CMS Family, they had the mandate to use the trust fund reserve to balance the exchange rate fluctuation. Mr. Streit answered that EUROBATS was also already doing it, since significant withdrawals from the trust fund were incorporated into the budget, also into the new one. This happened automatically, as soon as the expenditure was bigger than the budget, the difference was covered by the trust fund.

Poland asked if the new financial system UMOJA had an influence on the EUROBATS budget. Mr. Streit explained that the whole of the UN system used UMOJA and that the user licence for each staff member of around 2,000 USD per year had to be paid for it, which was already incorporated in the staff costs.

Mr. Streit then proceeded to explain the 5 proposed scenarios:

Scenario 1 contained no increase in the substance and no new element but just reflected the expected actual expenditure for the P-staff costs due to the bad exchange rate;

Scenario 2 proposed an increase of the P2 post occupancy to the full post, with no change on any other budget line;

Scenario 3, apart from 100 percent P2 post occupancy, foresaw an increase in the post occupancy of one of the Administrative Assistants from 50 to 80 percent. This scenario was requested by the StC for comparison since Scenario 4 proposed an increase in the post occupancy of both assistants, which also addressed the situation that both assistants had ca. 105 days of overtime work per year. Whereas the professional staff was not compensated for their overtime, it was the entitlement of the general services staff to be compensated for the overtime either through time off or through payment. As in reality the Agreement had no funds to compensate them, some of their overtime was not compensated at all. Scenario 4 also proposed another increase, which was 10,000 EUR more for each AC meeting. Scenario 5 was also requested by the StC for comparison purposes and contained an increase in the staff costs of the Scientific Officer and the Administrative Assistants, but no increase on the meetings budget lines. Referring to the organisation of the meetings, Mr. Streit explained that this often depended on the voluntary contributions. He again thanked Germany, whose portion of the regular voluntary contribution went to the organisation of the meetings of the

Advisory Committee and, this year, even an additional contribution was made to help organise MoP9. Mr. Streit concluded that, if there was any margin to improve the budget, that it should be used to increase staff post occupancy.

Mr. Panis asked whether there were any questions about the scenarios presented. France commented that Scenario1 did not represent the status quo, as it was accounting for inflation. Mr. Streit explained that the staff costs were not affected by the inflation but by the exchange rate developments. The presented budget scenarios did not include any compensation for inflation but just reflected the actual expected costs. France asked whether there was any percentage of increase for each year a staff member was in service. Mr. Streit explained that, except for the Scientific Officer, who still had a small increment because he was not so long in his position, all the other staff members had reached the maximum possible seniority on their grades so there were no further increments for them. Germany commented that, since Mr. Streit was to retire in two years, his leaving could mean lower costs in the future for the position of the Executive Secretary. Germany asked if these considerations might also be included in the new budget resolution. Mr. Streit said that this was the risk he would leave to the Parties to decide if they want to take it or not. Normally, he would expect his successor to be younger than him. While this could be taken for granted, it seemed probable his successor would not be German, and this would have an impact on the staff costs. Being a German in a duty station in Germany, Mr. Streit was not entitled to several benefits, such as home leave, etc. Also, his successor might have more children, which would then all be entitled to going to an international school, which was quite expensive. Furthermore, the new staff member would be entitled to the costs for the move to be covered, which amounted to approx. 50,000 USD. There were also additional costs, depending on the family situation of the new staff member that would compensate for the fact that Mr. Streit's successor would be younger. If the costs were kept as they were, some savings could be made and more margin would be there for the next MoP.

Poland asked how it could be checked if the UN could afford a particular person. Mr. Streit explained that this was not checked at all –staff members were selected based on their qualifications. He explained that all the other UN agencies applied much higher staff costs – it was a specifically EUROBATS practice to calculate them on the basis of previous experience. The way other organisations normally

calculated the staff costs would automatically cover all the possible scenarios. It would be against the UN rules to consider staff costs as a criterion in the staff selection process.

Germany requested to have to costs of the P-staff shown also in USD to see the developments in the costs. Mr. Streit answered that the amount would be the same, however, he agreed that in future this should be different. As soon as there was any change, the expenditure would be presented in USD and in EUR.

Mr. Panis then asked the delegates to express their preferences for the scenarios. He further stated, speaking as the representative of Belgium, that his county wanted to see a realistic and comprehensive budget for EUROBATS. All the normal costs should be included in the budget, and it should be based on the actual expenditure. Since MoP8 decided on the return to the UN scale of contributions, any increase in the contributions resulting from this decision was no longer open for debate. Mr. Panis concluded that for Belgium Scenario 4 would be acceptable.

For Sweden all the scenarios presented at the StC meeting were acceptable, but it would be quite happy to go for Scenario 4, as Sweden wanted to see the EUROBATS Agreement grow and was convinced of the importance of the appropriate funding for it being foreseen in the new budget.

Bulgaria could also go for Scenario 4.

Germany stated that it fully understood the situation of the Secretariat, but that new scenarios implied an increase of 60,000 EUR in its contribution. For this reason, for Germany Scenario 1 would be acceptable in 2023, with a possibility to have a slight increase in 2024. Germany would support using the increase to raise the post occupancy of the Administrative Assistants.

As the amount to be paid by Luxembourg would be almost the same in all the scenarios, Luxembourg could accept any of them. It would be good to see the Agreement advance and grow and for Luxembourg raising the post occupancy of the Administrative Assistants would have priority, especially since in the early sessions it was mentioned that much of their overtime amounting to 105 days per year was not compensated at all. Furthermore, Luxembourg would favour any scenario where both assistants would have an equal increase. Potentially the Parties would have to look for decreases elsewhere in order to increase the post occupancy of the Administrative Assistants.

Finland did not have much flexibility. In terms of a doable increase, Scenario 2 was manageable for Finland. Finland also noted that other Parties might have even more problems. One of the solutions could be cutting down on the costs of the meetings, since voluntary contributions for the organisation of the meetings were easier to find. Finland would also like to see that an increase should be made in the direction of the staff costs and especially in the direction of Administrative Assistants.

For France even Scenario 1 was too difficult, and it proposed introducing scenario 1a which did not take into account the exchange rate developments, i.e. considered a bit better exchange rate, since the one proposed by the Secretariat was the worst case prediction. The Executive Secretary explained that Scenario 1 represented the costs as they were based on the current exchange rate developments. France answered that exchange rate developments could not be predicted and that it was not up to the Parties to bear the risk of the exchange rate fluctuations. Mr. Streit answered that this was why there was a proposal to introduce the mechanism to adapt the budget yearly – if the exchange rate would get even worse, some costs, including the staff costs could be reduced, also through reducing the post occupancy. If the situation improved, the Standing Committee would have the possibility to increase some of the budget lines.

Germany explained that for its budget plan it was not normal to have such an increase. It might be because the previous years were less expensive. Germany expected its portion to decrease since there were more Parties to the Agreement, etc. and it did not normally take into consideration the exchange rate developments. Considering a significant increase in the contributions of some Parties, it might be advisable to apply the same approach as AEWA, the so-called pizza approach. This meant that a basic scenario needed to be found that was acceptable to all, and then to look which toppings could be added. Mr. Streit answered that Germany had this big increase not owing to the exchange rate developments but owing to the return to the full application of the UN scale of contributions. For a period of 10 years the contributions did not change, and the funds were taken from the trust fund. This also led to inequalities in contributions. If there were no 20 percent ceiling, the portion for Germany would be even higher.

Croatia, as Luxembourg, was flexible and could go for any of the scenarios as its contribution would remain the same, however, it would support increasing the

budget lines for the Administrative Assistants and checking which budget lines could be decrease for this purpose.

For Poland any of the scenarios represented an increase in its contribution. If there was no other option, it would support Scenario 1, for the creation of a safety budget in case of extremely bad exchange rate.

UK also wanted to give the Agreement the possibility to grow and develop, however, under the circumstances, it could support only Scenario 1, but was in favour of introducing the mechanism for reviewing the contributions on a year-to-year basis.

Luxembourg repeated that the situation of Administrative Assistants having uncompensated overtime was not acceptable and that it needed to be addressed in the budget. The Parties needed to see where they could reduce the costs to compensate for the increase of the administrative staff costs. The post of the Scientific Officer was increased to 80 percent because the financial situation allowed for it, however, it could be reduced as well back to 50 percent should the financial situation not allow to keep it at 80 percent, as stated by the Executive Secretary at the beginning of the meeting. Luxembourg wanted to remind the delegates of the existence of this option. Mr. Streit answered that this was not entirely correct since the current budget already included the P2 post occupancy at the 80 percent level, covered by the trust fund. Since in the regular budget as of 2021 the P2 post was at the 80 percent, the issue at present was if it could go to 100 percent. It was raised to 100 percent in preparation of MoP9 as well as the AC meeting and it would go back to 80 percent as of November 2022. Going back to 50 percent would be difficult for the staff member and would result in a similar unfair treatment that was deplored in the case of Administrative Assistants.

Norway was in favour of the pizza topping approach as it gave a bit of a leeway to start with.

The Secretariat was requested to produce two additional scenarios which would show what the impact on the contributions in the status quo scenario would be if only the posts of the Administrative Assistants would be raised. In Scenario 1a only one Administrative Assistant would work at 80 percent post occupancy; in Scenario 1b, both would be at 80 percent. The financial impact of Scenario 1a showed to amount to 29,000 EUR and of Scenario 1b to 58,000 EUR.

Mr. Panis summarised the discussion on possible compromises for the earlier scenarios, one of which included that in 2023 the Parties would only return to the UN scale of contributions and there would be no raise in the budget, but then it would gently increase from 2024 to address other issues. The floor was opened for discussion on additional scenarios.

Germany again raised the question if the trust fund reserve could be used to smoothen the transition of re-applying the UN scale of contributions. The trust fund seemed to be stable. Mr. Streit explained that a withdrawal of 20,000 EUR per year was already included. It was possible to distribute these withdrawals differently over the four years, but he would not advise going beyond a withdrawal of the total amount of 100,000 USD. France believed it was not acceptable to have the Parties compensate for the exchange rate developments and, since the Parties were under these special circumstances, France would support the use of the trust fund beyond 20,000, not only in 2023 but also in 2024.

Considering that raising the post occupancy of an Administrative Assistant to the 80 percent level required additional 29,000 EUR per person, it was obvious that, in case this was to be done already in 2023, some cuts needed to be made on other budget lines. One proposed possibility was to reduce the budget lines for the meetings – not all of them had to be held in-person. It was further considered what impact this would have on the work of the Advisory Committee. In the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the Advisory Committee suffered dramatically due to its meetings being held only online. However, concerns were expressed (among others by Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden) that it was necessary to adapt to the new normal, that working online now and in the times of the pandemic were not comparable as then people had to put up with even more challenges, that climate aspects of international travelling needed to be considered, that no other agreements had so frequent in-person meetings of their bodies such as EUROBATS, etc. On the other hand, the importance of in-person meetings for the productivity of the AC was stressed several times (for example by Ireland, Poland, Sweden, and Cyprus). Another positive impact of in-person meetings was pointed out by the Executive Secretary: The meetings were held at different locations, thus having a very positive effect on the work of the NGOs in these countries. Light was shed on their engagement, and it drew attention of their governments to the Agreement. The Administrative Working Group, in order to make an informed

decision on the issue, invited the Chair of the Advisory Committee to give his opinion.

Professor Russo stated that, from the scientific point of view, online working was not effective. The participants of the online meetings tended to only listen; they received the information passively but did not work. In his opinion, if such a change to more online meetings would be made, the AC productivity would be immensely affected, and this would have serious implications. He also mentioned that the meetings of the Advisory Committee had more the character of a workshop than of a meeting. When asked to prioritise, which meetings in the quadrennium were most important, Professor Russo said that it was the first and the last meeting in the quadrennium.

It was further debated how many meetings would be considered as necessary to be held in-person. After discussing numerous different options such as shortening the MoP and AC meetings, keeping the excursions to one day or even discarding them all together, moving in person meetings to Bonn, refilling the post of the G4 (Secretary), and rejecting these as not significant or even counterproductive, an agreement was reached that the Standing Committee, due to the more technical nature of its work, would meet only online with the exception of the joint meeting with the Advisory Committee in preparation of the MoP. The Advisory Committee would meet twice in the quadrennium for an in-person meeting and could hold as many online meetings as would be necessary. Finally, it was also proposed that an additional, smaller, in-person meeting could be organised, where only the Convenors of the Working Groups would be present, a kind of a Steering Committee. It was also mentioned that it was much easier to find funds as voluntary contributions to finance an additional face-to-face meeting of the AC than to secure these funds for increasing staff costs.

Luxembourg mentioned that one way of compensating for the loss of in person meetings would be for the Scientific Officer to more rigorously follow-up the work of the IWGs. In 2020, Luxembourg gave additional 10,000 EUR to finance a portion of the P2 costs, but for this to happen in the future, there had to be a clear workplan of what aims the Scientific Officer should pursue and a scientific report had to be submitted at the end of each year. Croatia supported this and mentioned that the role of the Scientific Officer would be crucial in the period of online meetings. Of course, the work of an IWG very much depended on its Convenor and their

engagement, as was mentioned in the discussions previously, however, with the help of the Scientific Officer, the new model could work. France mentioned that it also wanted to see more involvement of the P2 in the times of online meetings. As there had been a request for a survey of what could be improved in the work of the AC and the reasons behind reduced productivity of the AC in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, France was interested to hear about its results. It was explained that there were very few answers but that they were quite unanimous in the expression of their wish to have in-person meetings. The Scientific Officer was also invited to present the results of the survey. He said the main answer was that in person meetings were needed. Since the AC was comprised of experts who were not paid for their involvement within EUROBATS, their main motivation was friendship and an informal exchange of information. Other international agreements were experiencing the same issue and were, therefore, coming back to in-person meetings. Luxembourg commented that, if a survey was done, it would be good to present the answers in a report to be more visually understandable. Under the circumstance of having received only 10 answers, this was maybe exaggerated. However, if the Scientific Officer sent raw data to the Standing Committee without any kind of preparation of that data, it was expected from the Standing Committee to do the work of analysing the answers. Croatia asked why only 10 answers were received. Dr. Gazaryan replied that maybe the AC members did not feel comfortable about answering such a survey and that it was always the case with EUROBATS surveys – since AC members were not officials, there was no possibility to request from them to do so.

The subject of the retirement of the Executive Secretary was also briefly discussed. Mr. Streit wanted to start looking into the provisions in terms of the recruitment to have the interest of the Parties in this matter represented in the best possible way. He mentioned that the annex of Resolution 3.1, which regulated integrating EUROBATS into UNEP, contained the terms of reference for the Secretariat's arrangements – how it should be set up, how recruitment should be organised, etc. Mr. Streit suggested that this resolution could be amended – if the Parties had interest in it – by not touching upon the original resolution but just upon its annex and the practical part. This could ensure that the Parties were involved through the StC-Chair and AC-Chair in the recruitment of the new Executive Secretary, to make sure the interest of Parties were sufficiently reflected.

Norway commented that all recruitment related issues were regulated under the rules and procedures of UNEP. Finland mentioned that more time was needed to check the old resolution and was assured that UNEP would not allow that any recruitment would be run based on an old resolution which did not correspond to the present situation. Germany, Poland, and France could not take any decision with this regard on the spot without prior consultations with their responsible ministries. The WG agreed upon the suggestion of Mr. Panis that the next Standing Committee would be asked to prepare this issue for the next MoP. However, there was a general consensus that the Chairs of the Standing and the Advisory Committees should be involved in the recruitment procedure.

Returning to the matter of savings and the search for them, it was mentioned that the reduction of one of the AC meetings would save funds not only under the AC meeting budget line, but also under Secretariat Staff Travel and possibly under Experts on Mission. It was agreed to ask the Secretariat to produce further scenarios to show what impact the reduction in the number of in-person meetings would have on the budget and if this could make-up for the increase in the post occupancy of one or both of the Administrative Assistants. In the new scenario A (increase of the post occupancy of only one Administrative Assistant, decrease in the meetings), in 2023 the budget would be at the same level as in the original scenario 1, but the new scenario B (post occupancy increased for both assistants, decrease of meetings) was financially not viable. The Parties were asked to express their preferences. As there was no clear opinion and there were Parties that would like to support Scenario B but could not do so due to the circumstances, further possibilities to finance Scenario B were investigated.

One option identified was to withdraw more from the trust fund reserve. France wanted to consider withdrawing more from the reserve not only in Scenario B but also in Scenario A. Mr. Streit explained that the document showing the status of the reserve was produced already for the meeting in May 2022. However, due to the development of the exchange rate between EUR and US Dollar, it was certain that the trust fund would have to be revaluated, also because a significant portion of it was kept in EUR. This would reduce the available amount, which before revaluation was at ca. 153,000 USD. The decision could be made to withdraw 100,000 USD but it bore a certain risk. Further ideas were discussed not to withdraw more from the reserve, but to distribute the withdrawals over the four

years differently, i.e. to withdraw more in the first two years, but to leave the total amount of withdrawals at 80,000 USD. Germany also mentioned that another argument for this could be the fact that the Agreement might make some savings starting from July 2024 when the successor of Mr. Streit would join. The delegates were warned that, since the last year was always very expensive because of the MoP, withdrawing more from the reserve in the first two years would mean a significant jump in the contributions in the MoP year. Mr. Streit mentioned that in case his successor generated saving by less staff costs, these could be counted on starting from 2025. However, in the same year there would also be some recruitment costs, so that one had to be careful with speculations about the savings made by the change of the Executive Secretary. Finland suggested that it would be good to know what the standard salary of P4 at duty station Bonn would be. The other agreements relied on and calculated with standard costs, but since they were bigger, more costs for one staff could be balances out by another one.

Another element discussed to create savings was to decrease the post occupancy of the Scientific Officer back to 50 percent and to wait for Spain's accession to finance another P2 post occupancy increase. Mr. Streit stated that it was a common agreement expressed quite clearly that, in order to maintain the good level of the output of the AC and especially IWGs, significantly more time of P2 needed to be invested in more rigorously following-up on the work of IWGs. Mr. Streit saw here a contradiction and wondered how this could be achieved by putting the Scientific Officer back to 50 percent. Luxembourg commented that although there seemed to be a contradiction, if such a reduction went hand-in-hand with improving the efficiency of P2 work, the contradiction would be less obvious. It was quite important that there should in the future be a clear workplan as to what the P2 post implied, what work had to be done, and that a scientific report should be provided at the end of each year. If the efficiency could be improved, the contradiction would disappear.

France then reiterated that it could accept scenario A if an additional withdrawal of 10,000 EUR would be made in 2025 and 2026 and if the post of the Administrative Assistant would be increased only starting from 2024. Mr. Panis commented that this meant a decrease in the budget.

Germany remarked that, even if it was decided to start later with the increase in the post occupancy of one of the Administrative Assistants, there might be

countries that would pay for the increase by voluntary contributions. Mr. Panis commented that the compromise was somewhere between scenario A and B. Norway suggested that the increase in one post occupancy could be shared between the two assistants. Mr. Panis answered that it was not allowed by the UN administration to have post occupancy of e.g. 65 percent, just 50, 80 or 100. Germany suggested having one administrative post at the level of 80 percent and having the assistants alternate in occupying this post. Mr. Panis suggested keeping the contributions on the level of scenario A and, subject to the availability of funds, increasing the other administrative post to 80 percent as well. France wanted to add a withdrawal of 20,000 EUR for 2026, resulting in the total withdrawal of 100,000 EUR. In that case, it could deal with scenario A. Mr. Panis reminded the delegates of the importance to have scenarios where fluctuations in contributions would be avoided.

Germany also commented that one of the reasons why the assistants had more hours to work could be the vacant G4 position. Currently, more expensive staff were doing work that could be done by less expensive staff. The Executive Secretary explained that Administrative Assistants had special roles in the financial and administrative system, and that sometimes they performed roles that were designated for the P staff. This type of work could by no means shift to a G4 position. The additional work for the Administrative Assistants coming from having the G4 position vacant mainly referred to the procurement of office material and shipment of publications.

The Chair of the Administrative Working Group finally proposed that it was necessary to have a scenario C where the contributions for 2023 in scenario A would be recalculated, whereas the contributions for other years should remain the same, and where, if additional funds became available, these would be used to increase the second Administrative Assistant’s post. Additional 20,000 EUR from the trust fund would be withdrawn but these would be evenly distributed to avoid fluctuations in the contributions. The proposal was supported by most of the Parties.

The other issues that still needed to be addressed were guaranteeing the efficiency of EUROBATS with less AC meetings and using the mechanism introduced with paragraph 7 to also identify the priorities in how to spend eventual additional funds.

After some discussion it was agreed that additional funds should first be used for increasing the post occupancy of the second Administrative Assistant, and, in case more funds were available, these should firstly be used to compensate for the additional withdrawal of 20,000 EUR from the reserve, and then for funding additional AC meetings.

Finally, the role of the Scientific Officer was considered to support the work of the Advisory Committee and ensure its efficiency even if it would have fewer in-person meetings. For this purpose, the Secretariat workplan was considered. The main tasks of the P2 Officer were related to the AC and MoP preparations, EPI projects initiative, and the work of the IWGs. Norway commented, considering the workplan, that in light of the budget constraints, a G4 could be hired to do a lot of the tasks for G6. This would then liberate the time of the G6 staff to take up the more complicated work and in turn liberate the time of the P2 Officer to do more. Mr. Streit commented that the work of P2 could not be taken up by G4, however, the assistants could take up the project administration work from P2. Luxembourg agreed with Norway. It also asked whether, for visibility reasons, it was possible to have all the tasks of the P2 officer listed in one table, with percentages of work time the tasks were consuming. It would also be useful to have more details as to what exactly P2's tasks implied, stating in more detail what his work was and, for example, how many EPI projects he was taking care of. Such a report could be useful for each of the positions not just for the P2 position, to have an overview what kind of tasks could be managed by G4. Croatia supported Luxembourg – it was necessary to see how the output increased due to a raise in the P2 post occupancy from 50 to 80 percent before another raise could be considered.

It was summarised that the Scientific Officer needed to make clear to the Standing Committee in a more detailed report what his activities in relation to EPI and support of the IWG were – to see if this could be supported by voluntary contributions. Mr. Streit asked whether this kind of document was only needed in case P2 post occupancy would be considered to be increased. Luxembourg answered that the priorities regarding the budget were set and clear, however, that independent of the budgetary discussions, the Parties would like to consider the activities and output of the P2. Mr. Panis commented that the time that would eventually become available through considering the workplan and reorganising tasks should go into the support of the IWGs and the AC in general.

A suggestion was made by Germany that also one of the activities could be investing more time into the presence of the Agreement in the social media as was the case with other agreements and conventions. Mr. Streit explained that these other conventions had dedicated staff for managing the presence in the social media – since EUROBATS was trying to deal with 105 days of overtime, it would not be wise to add more to its tasks. There was a lot that could be done but, with this number of staff members, it was impossible. Additionally, the success of online work and presence depended on its continuity, and this EUROBATS could not afford. Belgium asked if the units dealing with similar issues for AEWA or CMS could be used for this purpose. Mr. Streit explained that EUROBATS would need to pay for it. Germany suggested to ask the Scientific Working Group for their position on this. Mr. Panis concluded that there should be a new scenario D, including a bit of money for social media presence.

Another discussion point was how to deal with the Parties in arrears. The general consent was that a mechanism should be introduced to put pressure on the Parties to pay their contributions. One of the mechanisms could be that, if a Party was in arrears for a given number of years, its participation costs at the meetings could not be covered by the Secretariat. Another mechanism was not to allow the Party to vote in case it had more than 5 years of arrears. However, since voting normally did not take place, this had no effect. Norway mentioned that maybe UN had a compilation of possible language to be used. It was proposed to check the wording used by other conventions and to incorporate it into the draft resolution.

Finally, the wording under paragraph 7 was discussed, and Mr. Streit asked the Administrative Working Group to add a sentence to one of the existing paragraphs to give the Secretariat the mandate to shift funds within the available funds and between budget lines. This was necessary as the new stricter UN regulations no longer allowed for this practice which was a standard procedure before. Now the consent of the Standing Committee always had to be obtained.

Monaco proposed also an addition of a new paragraph inviting the Parties to provide staff and/or in-kind contributions to help the work of the Secretariat. Mr. Streit mentioned that it had become significantly difficult to have such secondments, but that the wording could be included in the draft resolution. Should the situation arise, it could still be explored what the UN rules were for such cases.

After Scenario C and D were presented, Germany asked whether the second G6 position could be increased starting from 2023 if the funds were available. Mr. Streit mentioned that this possibility should then be captured in the final draft resolution. Germany asked if the withdrawal from the trust fund of 40,000 EUR could be split between 2024 and 2025 to keep the contributions smooth. Also, standard costs for P4 at duty station in Bonn were still to be found out. Mr. Streit explained that it was difficult to predict what the standard costs would be in 2025. Currently, P4 position cost between 180,000 and 220,000 USD and for 2025 it was expected to cost between 188,000 to 230,000 USD. Finland mentioned that this gave the Committee a reality check and thanked Mr. Streit for the information. There was a general consent for Scenario D, but starting with the increase in the contributions from 2024 and not 2023, however, France would only accept scenario C. It also requested that in the guidance for the priorities to be funded in case additional funds became available, increasing the post should be placed after the trust fund was compensated. Luxembourg reminded the delegates that initially the discussion started with the request to raise the post occupancy of both G6 staff, so for Luxembourg the increase of the second G6 position should remain the first priority. This was supported by Finland, Germany, Sweden, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Cyprus. UK suggested that the situation could be solved by reflecting the funds for the social media as one of the priorities in Scenario C. Mr. Panis commented that this in practice meant there would be no additional funds for the media package as a lot of money first needed to be collected to finance the higher priorities. France was in favor of accepting the proposition of UK. Norway asked if the budget for the social media package could be covered by voluntary contributions. Germany suggested that, since some Parties found it easier to allocate funds under the core budget rather than allocating voluntary contributions, the budget for social media outreach should be listed as a separate budget line with an asterisk mentioning the specific Parties that would finance this portion of the budget. Norway supported this proposal. Mr. Streit reminded the delegates that one of the main goals at the last MoP and for this MoP was returning the UN scale of contributions, and such a provision in the budget would create exactly the opposite. Additionally, some Parties were worried that, though this meant a compromise could be reached, it might set an unfortunate precedent for future budget discussions.

Norway suggested that the media component would be made a separate package that would be funded by voluntary contributions as a kind of project funding. Speaking of voluntary contributions and since online AC meetings generated suboptimal outcomes, Luxembourg was willing to pay additional 5,000 EUR for 2024 and 2025 for organising up to two AC meetings.

To wrap-up the discussion, Mr. Panis explained that for the line 1302, the sum for 2023 should change to have the same sum for all the years, subject upon availability of funds. In the line for the AC meetings, two meetings will come into the regular budget and two would be held upon availability of funds. In the line 5201 Information material, in 2023, the sum should remain at 5,000 EUR to keep the contributions from the Parties at the same level as in Scenario 1. Starting from 2024, additional 5,000 EUR should be added for social media outreach. Finally, the withdrawal of 40,000 EUR should be made from the trust fund in 2023 and the 40,000 EUR from 2024 should be split into 2024 and 2025.

The wording for the paragraph dealing with the Parties in arrears was discussed and agreed upon as in the final draft resolution. Also, the terms of reference for the administration of trust fund were changed to address the issue of the Secretariat having to ask for the permission to move funds from one budget line to the other.

After the discussion on the budget resolution was concluded in the Administrative Working Group, Mr. Panis summarised the results of these discussions for the delegates in the Scientific Working Group. Several issues were considered. The unfavourable exchange rate development between the Euro and the US Dollar had to be looked at as well as the issue of returning to the UN scale of contributions and the significant amount of overtime done by the Administrative Assistants which had to be paid but was not foreseen in the former budgets. With all these things in mind, in an open and respectful discussion, a scenario was found that all the Parties could agree with and that would be put forward for adoption. Another important point discussed was the introduction of a new mechanism which would give the StC the mandate, subject to the availability of funds, to regulate certain expenditures. Priorities had to be laid out in which way eventual additional funds would be spent. Finally, since several Parties had trouble with arrears, the best way to move forward was discussed and a mechanism was put in place to deal with this issue.

Draft Resolution 9.1. was then presented in the plenary by Mr. Panis as well as the rationale behind all the propositions. The delegates were asked for their questions or comments. The Chair of the Advisory Committee had a few remarks on the rationale for reducing the number of in-person AC meetings. He agreed that the carbon footprint should be considered, but it should also be weighed against the positive conservation implications of the AC's work. When comparing EUROBATS to the other agreements and the fact that they had fewer in-person meetings, it should be born in mind that the quantity and quality of the AC output was very high. Finally, he found it surprising other options such as shortening the MoP meetings or organising the meetings in Bonn were not considered. It was also not clear how many live meetings were planned based on the availability of funds. Professor Russo insisted that at least two in-person meetings were needed to keep the productivity of the AC. Mr. Panis responded that all the other mentioned possibilities to save funds were discussed in great depth within the Administrative Working Group, but that none of them proved to be viable. The quality and quantity of the AC output was indeed also considered: The Administrative Working Group tried to make sure that it could strengthen the input of the Science Officer to, at least, keep the quality of the AC output at an as high level as possible. Professor Russo stated that the role of the Scientific Officer was different, and that he could assist the AC, but the committee's core work was done in the Intersessional Working Groups. Live meetings could be complemented by the online meetings, but they could not replace them. Ireland supported the comments made by Professor Russo. Germany was from the technical point of view in accordance with Prof. Russo, however, form the climate change point of view and budgetary point of view, Germany preferred not to have all the AC meetings in person. Professor Fiona Mathews pointed out that many of the experts attending the AC meetings were doing this for free and at their own cost. A lot of added value was brough by in-person meetings and the StC should reflect on this fact. Mr. Panis understood the disappointment of the AC members and explained that the Administrative Working Group was not against live meetings, however, that there were certain financial constraints that had to be dealt with, such as unfavourable EUR-USD exchange rate, inflation, etc. The option of funding additional in-person AC meetings through voluntary contributions was also left open, but the Standing Committee had to operate within its means. There being no further objections or remarks, the draft resolution was adopted.

In continuation, the Chair of the Scientific Working Group, Professor Danilo Russo, opened the discussion on the remaining six draft resolutions. In the preparations of their drafts, most of the deliberations went quite smoothly, while others were debated more lively, but a compromise could have been found. Also, the draft resolution on the Conservation and Management Plan was prepared, which was the roadmap for the next Advisory Committee and was very important.

15. Draft Resolution 9.2: Amendment of the Annex of the Agreement.

Since the Scientific Working Group had made no changes to the online document posted before MoP9, the draft resolution was adopted.

16. Draft Resolution 9.3: Priority Species for Autecological Studies

The Convenor of the IWG on Priority Species for Autecological Studies, Professor Stéphane Aulagnier, explained that no changes had been made in the first part of the draft resolution and that only the part containing the list of priorities was discussed during MoP9. *P. nathusii* and *M. davidii* were added, and a few other species were removed from the list. There being no comments or objections to the draft resolution, it was adopted.

17. Draft Resolution 9.4: Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

Professor Fiona Mathews, the Convenor of the IWG on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations, explained that considerable changes had been made to the draft resolution and that very substantial discussion took place during the plenary sessions to find a compromise for the wording used in the resolution.

Professor Paul Racey made a general point that the resolution which had already been adopted should not be watered down. Croatia expressed its support for Prof. Racey's remark.

Finland express thanks to the Parties for finding a compromise, since for Finland this resolution was even more significant that the finance resolution since it concerned an important energy development. A small proposal for the final tweak in paragraph 7 of the revised draft was suggested, since the governments did not have legal possibility to impose post construction monitoring for every project. There was discussion whether the phrase "regardless of preconstruction monitoring" should be softened. The final solution was proposed by Ireland, that

the wording should be included to stress that preconstruction assessments were not a good predictor for post construction mortality.

Finland also made a general remark that amendments in the operative paragraph to engage with the World Bank and other international donors was positive, but that it would have more impact if EUROBATS would do so in collaboration with CMS and other international agreements. This should not be put into the resolution but just reflected in the record.

The Convenor thanked the delegates from northern Europe for the fruitful discussion. There being no further remarks, the draft resolution was adopted.

18. Draft Resolution 9.5: Support to Authorities dealing with Bat Assessment Reports

Ms. Ruth Petermann, one of the Convenors of the IWG on the Support to Authorities dealing with Bat Assessment Reports, presented the draft resolution. Belgium made a remark that the added value of this resolution to the protection of bats in the field was not clear. However, Belgium hoped the Parties could convince their agencies to use this annex. Ms. Petermann, speaking not as a representative of Germany but as a Co-Convenor of the IWG, mentioned that the recommendations could help the Parties, since in other countries bat assessment reports were not always prepared by bat experts. She further stated that the check list could be changed and adapted by each Party. There being no other comments, the draft resolution was adopted.

19. Draft Resolution 9.6: Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health

The Chair of the AC explained that this draft resolution was intended to better specify the purpose and the work of the IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health. Commenting on the draft resolution, Germany stated that, in agreement with the Convenor and two other members of the IWG, a recommendation had been made to consider the publication Health, the issue “Zoonoses and Public Health”, within this IWG. Since this recommendation was also included in another document, it could be deleted from this draft resolution. The Chair of the AC explained that the request considered the possibility of having another working group for the preparation of that document so it would have been unusual to include it in this draft resolution and it was included in the draft resolution on the Conservation and Management Plan. Belgium wanted to thank

the IWG on the excellent work it had done in response to some dubious information on covid and bats. There being no other comments, the draft resolution was adopted.

20. Draft Resolution 9.7: Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan (2023 – 2026)

The Chair of the AC explained that this draft resolution was a very important document, a steering document for the AC, that either reflected ongoing activities or included new activities that should be addressed in the new quadrennium. The Chair proceeded to present the changes made in the draft resolution. The wind turbine section needed to be changed to reflect the adapted text of the resolution. Additionally, a point on the importance of the use of social media in raising awareness about EUROBATS and bat conservation was included in the draft resolution. Ireland was glad about this development and saw potential for EUROBATS to use the social media to enhance its outreach. The Secretariat should allocate some time in its workplan to promoting bat conservation and the work of EUROBATS in the social media. Sweden agreed that social media was important, however, with the big workload the staff members had, this could be problematic. The Chair of the StC explained that the new finance resolution explicitly foresaw more funds for this activity. It would still have to be considered how this could be done in a cost-effective way, possibly in cooperation with AEWA and CMS, but this provision was made for in the new budget. Germany informed the delegates that it wanted to check a proposal of the Secretariat to dedicate a portion of 5,000 EUR from its next year's voluntary contribution to a timely limited project that would concentrate on these public awareness issues. There being no other comments, the draft resolution was adopted.

21. Other Draft Resolutions Submitted by the Working Groups

There were no other draft resolutions submitted by either of the Working Groups.

22. Election of the Members of the Standing Committee (StC)

The MoP-Chair asked the delegates for nominations to the Standing Committee apart from the permanent members, these being Germany and the United Kingdom. Germany proposed France, Poland proposed Sweden, Bulgaria nominated Croatia, Cyprus supported the nomination of Croatia, Norway supported nomination of Sweden. Belgium nominated Monaco. Sweden proposed

Belgium. Georgia nominated Ukraine. Ms. Domazetović asked the delegates if there were any objections to the nominations. There being no objections, the Standing Committee members were considered as elected.

23. Arrangements for the 10th Session of the Meeting of Parties

The Chair called upon the Parties to express their interest in potentially hosting the next MoP, and this interest was expressed by Malta. The representatives of Malta were thanked for their willingness to host the next MoP session.

24. Any other business

Ms. Ruth Petermann introduced the English version of the film on the joint project "Protecting and Promoting the Barbastelle Bat in Germany".

https://www.eurobats.org/bat_news/protecting_promoting_barbastelle_bat_germany_video_english

She thanked the EUROBATS Secretariat, especially Ms. Meyer-Cords, for the support in producing the English voice over for the film. Ms. Petermann further explained that the project brought together a wide range of partners, the FLEDERMAUS Foundation, the Naturstiftung David, the regional branches of NABU in Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony, and the University of Greifswald, who had joined forces since 2018 to record, protect and promote the barbastelle bat all over Germany. Also, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation was supporting the project as part of the Federal Biological Diversity Programme. The Federal Ministry for Environment and Consumer Protection had contributed 4.3 million Euro to this end. Ms. Petermann emphasised that the key to the success of the project was cooperation with forest owners and stakeholders from forestry, science, and bat protection. More information on the project could be found at: https://www.mopsfledermaus.de/en/the-joint-project.

25. Adoption of the Record of the Meeting

Certain changes having been made to the record upon the request of some Parties, especially with regard to the discussion on the finance resolution, the record was adopted.

26. Close of Meeting

Mr. Streit thanked all the delegates for their valuable work. MoP9 had good outcomes and, though the budget for the following quadrennium could have been

better, the best was made out of a very difficult financial situation. Mr. Streit emphasised that it was very rewarding to see the firm commitment of the Parties and a visible good will to support the Agreement. He concluded by thanking the wonderful hosts for their efforts and amazing hospitality. He also thanked the Secretariat team for their outstanding work.

Ms. Domazetović thanked all the delegates for their hard work. Chairing this session of the Meeting of the Parties was a beautiful experience for her. She also thanked the Secretariat as well as her colleagues from the Ministry and the Brijuni National Park. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:13.

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

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9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.1

Financial and Administrative Matters (Budget 2023 – 2026)

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Having regard to Article V (1) of the Agreement which states that the Meeting of the Parties shall consider and decide upon "financial rules, including the provision of the budget and the scale of contributions for the next financial period";

Recalling Resolution No. 8.1 adopted at its 8th Session (Monte Carlo, Monaco, October 2018) on financial and administrative matters;

Recognising the continuing growth of the Agreement in membership, activities and geographical scope and the resulting need to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat of the Agreement to enable it to fulfil the additional tasks;

Acknowledging with appreciation the substantial contribution of the German Government in providing, and agreeing to continue to provide, the accommodation for the Secretariat on a rent-free basis and its annual voluntary contribution of EUR 25,600 in support of special measures and projects aimed at improving the implementation of the Agreement;

Acknowledging with appreciation that the Government of the Principality of Monaco has made an additional annual contribution of EUR 30,000 to the budget of the Agreement in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, the Government of Luxembourg has contributed EUR 10,000 in 2020 and 2021 for the post of Scientific Officer and Croatia additional EUR 1,000 as well as Malta EUR 2,500 for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee;

Appreciating that also Luxembourg and Switzerland regularly make voluntary contributions for projects, publications and other activities;

Expressing sincere thanks to the Government of Germany for their substantial additional contribution for the organisation of this Session of the Meeting of Parties;

Noting with concern that a number of Parties have not paid their contributions to the core budget, thus affecting adversely the implementation of the Agreement;

Expressing sincere gratitude to the Government of Croatia for hosting this 9th Session of the Meeting of Parties;

1. *Confirms* that all Parties shall contribute to the budget adopted at the scale agreed upon by the Meeting of the Parties in accordance with Article V (1) of the Agreement;

2. *Discharges and approves* the income and expenditure for the year 2018 and the income and expenditure for the years 2019 - 2021 as presented to the Meeting by the Secretariat and UN Environment. The Meeting further agrees that the expenditure for the year 2022 should be discharged and approved by the 10th Session of the Meeting of the Parties;

3. *Approves* the increase of post occupancy of the Administrative Assistants from 50% to 80%[1];

4. *Adopts* the budget for 2023 - 2026 attached as Annex 1 to this resolution;

5. *Agrees* to the scale of contributions of Parties to the Agreement as listed in Annex 2 to this resolution and to the application of that scale *pro rata* to new Parties;

6. *Instructs* the Standing Committee and the Secretariat to review the cost estimates in the budget on an annual basis in view of the USD/EUR exchange rate, potential accessions of new Parties as well as general savings and to redirect the available resources to the priorities identified at this 9th Session of the Meeting of Parties;

7. *Requests* all Parties to pay their annual contributions promptly as far as possible but in any case, not later than the end of June of the year to which they relate;

[1] For one of the two posts effective from 2023-2026, for the second post subject to the availability of funds.

8. *Requests* the Standing Committee, with support of the Secretariat to investigate the reasons that Parties are in arrears; propose possible solutions to address the financial and procedural impacts; and, where appropriate, approach national focal points to facilitate payment of outstanding contributions;

9. *Decides* to exclude countries that are eligible to receive funding of their participation at meetings, but have payments in arrears of more than three years, to receive such funding;

10. *Invites* Contracting Parties to consider the feasibility of providing gratis personnel and/or junior professional officers, in accordance with the United Nations rules and regulations, to strengthen the capacity of the Agreement Secretariat;

11. *Urges* all Parties to make voluntary contributions to support requests from countries with economies in transition to participate in and implement the Agreement throughout the four-year period;

12. *Invites* non-party Range States, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to make voluntary contributions towards special activities for the implementation of the Agreement;

13. *Requests* the Executive Director of UN Environment to extend the duration of the Trust Fund for the administration of the budget to 31 December 2026;

14. *Approves* the Terms of Reference for the Administration of the Trust Fund as set out in Annex 3 to this resolution, for the period 2023 - 2026;

15. *Instructs* the Secretariat to report on its income and expenditure to the Standing Committee at each of its meetings, and to report back to the Meeting of Parties at its next session;

16. *Requests* the Secretariat to monitor exchange rate fluctuations carefully and adjust levels of expenditure where necessary;

17. *Instructs* the Standing Committee, through the Secretariat, to advise the Executive Director of UN Environment, when requested, of its priorities for expenditure to enable the consideration of any need for withdrawing funds from the Trust Fund reserve.

Budget Estimates for 2023 - 2026 (in EURO)

Budget line	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
10 Personnel					
1100 Professional Staff					
1101 Executive Secretary (P4)	184.000	184.000	184.000	184.000	736.000
1102 Assoc. Scientific and Project Officer (P2 part-time 80%)	99.200	100.700	102.200	103.700	405.800
1220 Consultancies	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	6.000
1300 Administrative Support					
1301 Administrative Assistant (G6 part-time 80%)	68.800	68.800	68.800	68.800	275.200
1302 Administrative Assistant (G6 part-time 80%) **	68.800	68.800	68.800	68.800	275.200
1303 Secretary (G4 part-time 50%)	0	0	0	0	0
1600 Travel on official business					
1601 Secretariat staff	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	40.000
1602 Experts on mission	0	0	0	0	0
1999 Personnel Subtotal	**432.300**	**433.800**	**435.300**	**436.800**	**1.738.200**
20 Subcontracts					
2201 Bat Conservation Projects	0	0	0	0	0
2999 Subcontracts Subtotal	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
30 Meetings					
3301 Meeting of Parties	0	0	0	20.000	20.000
3302 Meeting of the Standing Committee	0	0	0	1.000	1.000
3303 Meeting of the Advisory Committee ***	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	80.000
3999 Meetings Subtotal	**20.000**	**20.000**	**20.000**	**41.000**	**101.000**
40 Equipment and Premises					
4100 Expendable equipment					
4101 Miscellaneous office supplies	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	8.000
4200 Non-expendable equipment					
4201 Office equipment	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	8.000
4300 Premises					
4301 Rent and maintenance costs*	0	0	0	0	0
4302 IT Services	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	40.000
4999 Equipment and Premises Subtotal	**14.000**	**14.000**	**14.000**	**14.000**	**56.000**
50 Miscellaneous Costs					
5100 Operation and Maintenance					
5101 Operation/maintenance computers	500	500	500	500	2.000
5102 Operation/maintenance of photocopier/fax	900	900	900	900	3.600
5200 Reporting Costs					
5201 Information material and social media outreach	5.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	35.000
5202 Reference material	200	200	200	200	800
5300 Sundry					
5301 Telephone and Fax	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	8.000
5302 Postage and miscellaneous	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	8.000
5401 Hospitality	400	400	400	400	1.600
5999 Miscellaneous Costs Subtotal	**11.000**	**16.000**	**16.000**	**16.000**	**59.000**
SUBTOTAL	**451.500**	**438.000**	**439.500**	**482.000**	**1.811.000**
6000 UNEP programme support costs (13%)	58.695	56.940	57.135	62.660	235.430
GRAND TOTAL	**510.195**	**494.940**	**496.635**	**544.660**	**2.046.430**
Withdrawal from Reserve	**40.000**	**20.000**	**20.000**	**20.000**	**100.000**
Contributions to be shared by Parties	**470.195**	**474.940**	**476.635**	**524.660**	**1.946.430**

* Paid entirely by the host country (Germany).

** Subject to the availability of funds and to be decided by the Standing Committee.

*** The meetings in 2023 and 2026 are part of the core budget, the meetings in 2024 and 2025 will be considered upon the availability of funds.

Contributions 2023 - 2026

Party	UN Scale	Contributions	Percent	Contributions	Percent	Contributions	Percent	Contributions	Percent	Total	Total	Incr./Decr.	Incr./Decr.
	2023	2023	2023	2024	2024	2025	2025	2026	2026	2023 - 2026	2019 - 2022	2023-2026	Percent
Albania	0,008	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Belgium	0,828	13.355	2,840	13.505	2,843	13.558	2,845	15.075	2,873	55.493	50.644	4.849	9,574
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0,012	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	2.333	5.667	242,906
Bulgaria	0,056	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Croatia	0,091	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Cyprus	0,036	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Czech Republic	0,340	5.484	1,166	5.545	1,168	5.567	1,168	6.190	1,180	22.787	17.282	5.505	31,853
Denmark	0,553	8.919	1,897	9.019	1,899	9.055	1,900	10.068	1,919	37.062	34.161	2.901	8,493
Estonia	0,044	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Finland	0,417	6.726	1,430	6.801	1,432	6.828	1,433	7.592	1,447	27.947	28.152	-205	-0,727
France	4,318	69.644	14,812	70.426	14,828	70.705	14,834	78.618	14,985	289.393	261.419	27.974	10,701
Georgia	0,008	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Germany	6,111	94.039	20,000	94.988	20,000	95.327	20,000	104.932	20,000	389.286	319.387	69.899	21,885
Hungary	0,228	3.677	0,782	3.719	0,783	3.733	0,783	4.151	0,791	15.281	12.290	2.991	24,334
Ireland	0,439	7.081	1,506	7.160	1,508	7.188	1,508	7.993	1,523	29.422	22.533	6.889	30,572
Israel	0,561	9.048	1,924	9.150	1,927	9.186	1,927	10.214	1,947	37.598	22.970	14.628	63,684
Italy	3,189	51.435	10,939	52.012	10,951	52.218	10,956	58.062	11,067	213.727	203.778	9.949	4,882
Latvia	0,050	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Lithuania	0,077	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Luxembourg	0,068	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
North Macedonia	0,007	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Malta	0,019	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Moldova	0,005	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Monaco	0,011	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Montenegro	0,004	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Netherlands	1,377	22.209	4,723	22.459	4,729	22.548	4,731	25.071	4,779	92.287	84.523	7.764	9,185
Norway	0,679	10.951	2,329	11.074	2,332	11.118	2,333	12.363	2,356	45.507	43.468	2.039	4,690
Poland	0,837	13.500	2,871	13.651	2,874	13.705	2,875	15.239	2,905	56.096	41.945	14.151	33,737
Portugal	0,353	5.693	1,211	5.757	1,212	5.780	1,213	6.427	1,225	23.658	23.036	622	2,701
Romania	0,312	5.032	1,070	5.089	1,071	5.109	1,072	5.681	1,083	20.910	9.935	10.975	110,471
San Marino	0,002	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Serbia	0,032	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	5.700	2.300	40,351
Slovakia	0,155	2.500	0,532	2.528	0,532	2.538	0,532	2.822	0,538	10.388	5.568	4.820	86,568
Slovenia	0,079	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
Sweden	0,871	14.048	2,988	14.206	2,991	14.262	2,992	15.858	3,023	58.375	52.874	5.501	10,403
Switzerland	1,134	18.290	3,890	18.495	3,894	18.569	3,896	20.647	3,935	76.001	62.092	13.909	22,400
Ukraine	0,056	2.000	0,425	2.000	0,421	2.000	0,420	2.000	0,381	8.000	6.000	2.000	33,333
United Kingdom	4,375	70.563	15,007	71.356	15,024	71.638	15,030	79.656	15,182	293.213	272.557	20.656	7,579
Sum contrib.	27,742	470.195	100,000	474.940	100,000	476.635	100,000	524.660	100,000				
Shared by Parties		470.195		474.940		476.635		524.660		1.946.430	1.678.647	267.783	15,952
Total Budget		510.195		494.940		496.635		544.660		2.046.430	1.840.657	205.773	11,179
From Reserve		40.000		20.000		20.000		20.000		100.000			

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRUST FUND FOR THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF POPULATIONS OF EUROPEAN BATS

1. The Trust Fund for the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereinafter referred to as the Trust Fund) shall be extended for a period of four years to provide financial support for the aims of the Agreement.

2. The financial period shall be for four calendar years beginning 1 January 2023 and ending 31 December 2026.

3. The Trust Fund shall be administered by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), subject to the approval of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the consent of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

4. The administration of the Trust Fund shall be governed by the financial regulations and rules of the United Nations, the staff regulations and rules of the United Nations, and other administrative policies or procedures, promulgated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

5. In accordance with United Nations rules, UN Environment shall deduct from the income of the Trust Fund an administrative charge equal to 13 per cent of the expenditure charged to the Trust Fund in respect of activities financed under the Trust Fund.

6. In the event that the Parties wish the Trust Fund to be extended beyond 31 December 2026, the Executive Director of UN Environment shall be so advised in writing immediately after the 10th Session of the Meeting of Parties. It is understood that such extension of the Trust Fund shall be decided at the discretion of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

7. The financial resources of the Trust Fund for 2023 - 2026 shall be derived from:

   (a) The contributions made by the Parties by reference to Annex 2, including contributions from any new Parties;

   (b) Further contributions from Parties and contributions from States not Parties to the Agreement, other governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and other sources.

8. All contributions to the Trust Fund shall be paid in EURO. For contributions from States that become Parties after the beginning of the financial period, the initial contribution (from the thirtieth day after deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession till the end of the financial period) shall be determined *pro rata* based on the contribution of other States Parties on the same level on the United Nations scale of assessment, as it applies from time to time. However, if the contribution of a new Party determined on this basis would be more than 20 per cent

of the budget, the contribution of that Party shall be 20 per cent of the budget for the financial year of joining (or pro rata for a part-year).
Contributions shall be paid to the bank account of the United Nations based on the invoice provided by the United Nations Environment Programme.

9. For the convenience of the Parties, for each of the years of the financial period the Executive Director of UN Environment shall as soon as possible notify the Parties to the Agreement of their assessed contributions.

10. Contributions received into the Trust Fund that are not immediately required to finance activities shall be invested at the discretion of the United Nations, and any income shall be credited to the Trust Fund.

11. The Trust Fund shall be subject to audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors.

12. The budget estimates covering the income and expenditure for each of the four calendar years constituting the financial period to which they relate, prepared in EURO, shall be submitted to the ordinary session of the Meeting of Parties to the Agreement.

13. The estimates of each of the calendar years covered by the financial period shall be divided into sections and objects of expenditures, shall be specified according to budget lines, shall include references to the programmes of work to which they relate, and shall be accompanied by such information as may be required by or on behalf of the contributors, and such further information as the Executive Director of UN Environment may deem useful and advisable. In particular estimates shall also be prepared for each programme of work for each of the calendar years, with expenditure itemised for each programme so as to correspond to the sections, objects of expenditure, and budget lines described in the first sentence of this paragraph.

14. The proposed budget, including all the necessary information, shall be dispatched by the Secretariat to all Parties at least ninety days before the date fixed for the opening of the ordinary session of the Meeting of Parties.

15. The budget shall be adopted by a three-quarters majority of the Parties present and voting at the ordinary session.

16. In the event that the Executive Director of UN Environment anticipates that there might be a shortfall in resources over the financial period as a whole, the Executive Director shall consult with the Secretariat, who shall seek the advice of the Standing Committee as to its priorities for expenditure.

17. Commitments against the resources of the Trust Fund may be made only if they are covered by the necessary income of the Agreement.

18. Upon the request of the Secretariat of the Agreement, the Executive Director of UN Environment should, to the extent consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, make transfers from one budget line to another. At the end of any calendar year within the financial period, the Executive Director of UN Environment may transfer any uncommitted balance of appropriations to the

following calendar year, provided that the total budget approved by the Parties is not exceeded, unless this is specifically sanctioned in writing by the Standing Committee.

19. At the end of each calendar year within the financial period[2], the Executive Director of UN Environment shall submit to the Parties, through the EUROBATS Secretariat, the accounts for the year. The Executive Director shall also submit, as soon as practicable, the audited accounts for the financial period. These shall include full details of actual expenditure compared to the original provisions for each budget line.

20. Those financial reports required to be submitted to the Executive Director of UN Environment shall be transmitted simultaneously by the Secretariat of the Agreement to the members of the Standing Committee.

21. The Secretariat of the Agreement shall provide the Standing Committee with an estimate of proposed expenditures over the coming year simultaneously with, or as soon as possible after, distribution of the accounts and reports referred to in the preceding paragraphs.

22. The present terms of reference shall be effective from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2026.

[2] The calendar year 1 January to 31 December is the accounting and financial year, but the accounts official closure date is 31 March of the following year. Thus, on 31 March the accounts of the previous year have to be closed, and it is only then that the Executive Director can submit the accounts of the previous calendar year.

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.2:

Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Recalling Resolution 7 Amendment of the Agreement adopted at its third Session (Bristol, July 2000), which amends the Agreement and incorporates an Annex of bat species occurring in Europe to which the Agreement applies;

Recalling also that 'Europe' for the purposes of the Agreement is as defined in Doc. EUROBATS.MoP2.8.AnnexAFin (Resolution 2.5);

Recognising that there will be the need to amend the Annex from time to time in the light of recent research results;

Further recognising that the names of bat species included in the Annex should conform to the rules of nomenclature laid down by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature;

Acknowledges the establishment of an Advisory Panel of specialists to consider potential changes to the Annex;

Agrees to adopt the following changes to the Annex, on the recommendation of the Advisory Panel; and

Notes other potential changes to the Annex, but which are rejected or deferred pending the availability of further information;

and

Decides to:

1. Add the species *Myotis crypticus* Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille, 2019 to the Annex to the Agreement;
2. Add the species *Myotis tschuliensis* Kuzyakin, 1935 and *Myotis hoveli* Harrison, 1964 to the Annex to the Agreement;

3. Add the species *Plecotus gaisleri* Benda, Kiefer, Hanák & Veith, 2004 to the Annex to the Agreement;
4. Change the authorship of *Rhinolophus hipposideros* from (Borkhausen, 1797) to (André, 1797);
5. Amend the author name Keyserling to von Keyserling in the species *Eptesicus nilssonii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839);
6. Amend the author name Bobrinskii to Bobrinskoj in the species *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskoj, 1918;

and accordingly

Adopts the revised list of species for the Annex to the Agreement as attached to this Resolution in Annex I, with evidence for these revisions presented in Annex II.

Bat species occurring in Europe to which the Agreement applies:

Pteropodidae

Rousettus aegyptiacus (Geoffroy, 1810)

Emballonuridae

Taphozous nudiventris Cretzschmar, 1830

Rhinolophidae

Rhinolophus blasii Peters, 1866

Rhinolophus euryale Blasius, 1853

Rhinolophus ferrumequinum (Schreber, 1774)

Rhinolophus hipposideros (André, 1797)

Rhinolophus mehelyi Matschie, 1901

Vespertilionidae

Barbastella barbastellus (Schreber, 1774)

Barbastella caspica Satunin, 1908

Eptesicus anatolicus Felten, 1971

Eptesicus isabellinus (Temminck, 1840)

Eptesicus nilssonii (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839)

Eptesicus ognevi Bobrinskoj, 1918

Eptesicus serotinus (Schreber, 1774)

Hypsugo savii (Bonaparte, 1837)

Myotis alcathoe von Helversen & Heller, 2001

Myotis bechsteinii (Kuhl, 1817)

Myotis blythii (Tomes, 1857)

Myotis brandtii (Eversmann, 1845)

Myotis capaccinii (Bonaparte, 1837)

Myotis crypticus Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille, 2019

Myotis dasycneme (Boie, 1825)

Myotis daubentonii (Kuhl, 1817)

Myotis davidii (Peters, 1869)

Myotis emarginatus (Geoffroy, 1806)

Myotis escalerai Cabrera, 1904

Myotis hoveli Harrison, 1964

Myotis myotis (Borkhausen, 1797)

Myotis mystacinus (Kuhl, 1817)

Myotis nattereri (Kuhl, 1817)

Myotis punicus Felten, 1977

Myotis schaubi Kormos, 1934

Myotis tschuliensis Kuzyakin, 1935

Nyctalus azoreum (Thomas, 1901)

Nyctalus lasiopterus (Schreber, 1780)

Nyctalus leisleri (Kuhl, 1817)

Nyctalus noctula (Schreber, 1774)

Otonycteris hemprichii Peters, 1859

Pipistrellus hanaki Hulva & Benda, 2004

Pipistrellus kuhlii (Kuhl, 1817)

Pipistrellus maderensis (Dobson, 1878)

Pipistrellus nathusii (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839)

Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Schreber, 1774)

Pipistrellus pygmaeus (Leach, 1825)

Plecotus auritus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Plecotus austriacus (Fischer, 1829)

Plecotus gaisleri Benda, Kiefer, Hanák & Veith, 2004

Plecotus kolombatovici Dulic, 1980

Plecotus macrobullaris Kuzyakin, 1965

Plecotus sardus Mucedda, Kiefer, Pidinchedda & Veith, 2002

Plecotus teneriffae Barrett-Hamilton, 1907

Vespertilio murinus Linnaeus, 1758

Miniopteridae

Miniopterus pallidus Thomas, 1907

Miniopterus schreibersii (Kuhl, 1817)

Molossidae

Tadarida teniotis (Rafinesque, 1814)

Review of Species to be listed on the Annex to the Agreement

With reference to Resolution 3.7 (Doc.EUROBATS.MoP3.12.Rev.4), the attention of the Advisory Committee is drawn to the following matters, which may affect the Annex of bat species occurring in Europe and to which the Agreement applies. The Advisory Committee may wish to propose amendments to the Annex at the next MoP.

This updates similar documents produced for MoP5 (Doc.EUROBATS.MoP5.9, Inf.EUROBATS.MoP5.9, EUROBATS.MoP5.Record.Annex6), MoP6 (Doc.EUROBATS.MoP6.10, Inf.EUROBATS.MoP6.45, EUROBATS.MoP6.Record.Annex5) and MoP7 (Inf.EUROBATS.MoP7.48, EUROBATS.MoP7.Record.Annex5), and MoP8 (EUROBATS.MoP8.Resolution 8.2, Inf.EUROBATS.MoP8.9).

EUROBATS.MoP8.Resolution8.2 presents a list of species revised in accordance with amendments adopted at MoP8 (Monte Carlo, 2018). The report presented here includes recommendations for further changes to the Annex of species to which the Agreement applies. This report represents the opinions of members of an 'Advisory Panel' established for the purpose of assessing potential changes to the Annex of species. The panel comprises Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Petr Benda (Czech Republic), Gabor Csorba (Hungary), Javier Juste (Spain), Sergei Kruskop (Russian Federation), Peter Lina (Netherlands) and Friederike Spitzenberger (Austria) and co-ordinated by Tony Hutson (UK). This panel has no 'official' nomenclatural status. As 'ex-officio', Danilo Russo (chairman of EUROBATS Advisory Committee) and Suren Gazaryan (Secretariat to EUROBATS) are also circulated for information and comment.

Mammal Species of the World has been regarded by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and CMS as the standard list of mammals (see UNEP/CMS/Recommendation 9.4). A revised (3rd) edition (with the bats compiled by Nancy Simmons of the American Museum of Natural History) was published in early 2006 (Simmons, 2005). It has been recommended that unless there is over-riding reason, the Agreement should (in line with the policy of IUCN, CMS and others) adopt at least the generic (and higher) classification proposed in this work but may adopt changes to the species list as appropriate. However, Simmons (op. cit.) recognised that the higher classification of bats is in a state of flux and refrained from presenting a new higher-level classification. Further, it should be noted that this list is now 17 years old. It is, therefore, considered that well-supported revision of higher classification should be considered in maintaining the Annex of species. The *Handbook of the Mammals of the World, Vol 9*

Bats (Wilson & Mittermeier, 2019) provides an updated list and classification and can act as a benchmark. The report presented here may contribute to maintaining the online constantly up-dated *Bat Species of the World – A taxonomic and geographical database* (Simmons & Cirranello [2022]; http://batnames.org.) and the American Society of Mammalogists' Mammal Diversity Database (http://mammaldiversity.org/).

As far as is possible, the Annex to the Agreement will agree with the species list for the forthcoming revised Atlas of European Mammals (expected 2024).

Nomenclature should conform to the rules proposed by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN, 1999).

Potential amendments to the Annex at MoP9

1. *Myotis nattereri*-group: *Myotis crypticus* Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille 2019

Following Ibáñez et al. 2006, *Myotis escalerai* Cabrera 1904 was recognised as distinct from *M. nattereri* by García-Mudarra et al. (2009). At the same time, these authors suggested that further taxa might be separable within the *Myotis nattereri*–species group complex and identified *Myotis* sp A and *Myotis* sp B. These two taxa have been referred to as such widely in subsequent literature until 2019, when two papers almost simultaneously gave formal names to these species.

Myotis sp A was described as *Myotis crypticus* Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille 2019 (in Juste et al. 2019; type locality La Rioja, Spain; distribution central and northern Spain, southern France, Italy and probably adjacent south-western parts of Austria) and as *M. nattereri helverseni* Çoraman, Mayer & Dietz 2019 (in Çoraman et al. 2019).

Myotis sp B was described as *M. zenatius* Ibáñez, Juste, Salicini, Puechmaille & Ruedi 2019 (in Juste et al. 2019; type locality Tetouan, Morocco; distribution Morocco & Algeria) and as *M. escalerai cabrerae* Çoraman, Mayer & Dietz, 2019 (in Çoraman et al. 2019).

Although electronic publication of the paper by Çoraman et al. appears to have been published very shortly before the paper by Juste et al., the descriptions are considered to fail to meet the requirements of the ICZN for the recognition of a new species by electronic publication for the reasons given in Ruedi et al. (2019) and the names *helverseni* and *cabrerae* for these taxa are considered as *nomina nud*a. They may also fail to meet the requirements of the ICZN for the subsequent printed version (in which case the names would remain available).

Recommendation: the species *Myotis crypticus* Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille 2019, type locality Spain, should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.

2. *Myotis nattereri*-group: *M. tschuliensis* Kuzyakin, 1935, *M. araxenus* Dahl, 1947, *M. hoveli* Harrison, 1964

Çoraman et al. (2019) also recognised *M. tschuliensis* Kuzyakin, 1935, *M. araxenus* Dahl, 1947, *M. hoveli* Harrison, 1964 as separate species. They are discussed as 'sp. nov.', but should be 'stat. rev.' or 'stat. nov.'.

M. tschuliensis Kuzyakin, 1935 (type locality Turkmenistan) was described as a subspecies of *M. nattereri* (*Bulletin de la* Société *des Naturalistes de Moscou* 44: 434,447).

M. araxenus Dahl, 1947 (type locality Armenia) was described as a subspecies of *M. nattereri* (*Doklady Akademii Nauk Armyanskoi SSR* 7: 173-178) and later regarded as a synonym of *M schaubi* Kormos, 1934.

M. hoveli Harrison, 1964 (type locality Israel) was described as a subspecies of *M. nattereri* (*Zeitschrift fur Säugetierkunde* 29: 179-181).

The Handbook of Mammals of the World recognises *araxenus* as a synonym of *schaubi*, and recognises *tschuliensis* and *hoveli* as subspecies of *M. nattereri* pending further investigation. However, a recent paper by Uvizl & Benda (2021) does recognise *tschuliensis* and *hoveli* as distinct species based on morphology and molecular genetic analysis. Smirnov et al. (2020) had also recognised '*M.* cf *tschuliensis'* as a species, but had been unsure about the application of this species name. *M. tschuliensis* is recorded from Ukraine, Russian Federation, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Türkiye (as well as Iran and Turkmenistan), and *hoveli* from Cyprus, Türkiye (as well as Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel). *M. hoveli* is also accepted as a species by the AMNH Bat List (Simmons & Cirranello [2022]).

Recommendation: *M. araxenus* Dahl should continue to be regarded as a synonym (or subspecies) of *M. schaubi*; the species *M. tschuliensis* Kuzyakin, 1935 (type locality: Turkmenistan) and *M. hoveli* Harrison, 1964 (type locality: Israel) should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.

3. *Myotis nattereri*-group: *Myotis* sp C

A further species of the *M. nattereri*-group, *M*. sp. C (type locality Corsica, France) has been recognised by Puechmaille et al. (2012) and is awaiting formal description.

Recommendation: no action until formal publication of the species.

4. *Plecotus gaisleri* Benda, Kiefer, Hanák & Veith, 2004

This taxon is recorded in North-west Africa from North-west Libya (type locality) to Morocco. The status and distribution (including Europe) of this taxon was discussed for MoP8 (see Inf.EUROBATS.MoP8.9) but was left unresolved. Further research suggests that there seems general agreement that the taxon is distinct and that it occurs on Malta and Pantelleria (Italy), but that there is disagreement as to whether it should be regarded as a species or subspecies. Mifsud & Vella (2019), Batsleer et al. (2019), and Ancillotto et al. (2020) regard it as a species, whereas Spitzenberger (2020) gives a reasoned argument for retaining it as a subspecies. Razgour (2020) summarises the history of the nomenclature of this taxon. It is regarded as a full species in Wilson & Mittermeier (2019) and Simmons & Cirranello.

For the purposes of the Annex, a majority of those consulted recommend regarding this as a species and hence to be added to the Annex, but there is widespread opinion that this matter may not be settled and further research may recommend that on taxonomic grounds this taxon again be relegated to subspecies.

Recommendation: The species *Plecotus gaisleri* Benda, Kiefer, Hanák & Veith, 2004 should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.

5. *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (André, 1797)

The last MoP (MoP8) adopted a change of authorship for *Rhinolophus hipposideros* from Bechstein 1800 to Borkhausen 1797 (see Inf.EUROBATS.MoP8.9). Benda & Mlikovsky (2022) have further investigated this and find that the earliest valid binomial description of the species is by André (1797), where the species is described under the binomen *Noctilio hipposideros*; they show that André's work was published by 19 April 1797, whereas Borkhausen's work (1797) was not published by March and probably not in April, but certainly by 30 September 1797. Thus, although both works were published in the same year, André's work has priority over that of Borkhausen.

Recommendation: Amend *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Borkhausen, 1797) to *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (André, 1797) in the Annex to the Agreement.

6. *Eptesicus nilssonii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839), *Pipistrellus nathusii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839)

It has been suggested that if we accept the prefix "von" for von Helversen (as in the co-author of *Myotis alcathoe* von Helversen & Heller, 2001), we should also accept such a prefix for von Keyserling (co-author of *Eptesicus nilssonii* (von Keyserling & Blasius,

1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839); both these authors published the bat names under their family names including that prefix.

Recommendation: Amend *Eptesicus nilssonii* (Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) to *Eptesicus nilssonii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) in the Annex to the Agreement.

7. *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskoj, 1918

It has been pointed out that the author of the species *Eptesicus ognevi* should be Bobrinskoj (Бобринской) and not Bobrinskii or Bobrinskij. Although this zoologist himself later changed his name in accordance with a new (post-revolution) Russian grammar to Bobrinskij (Бобринский) and published many papers and books under this version of his name, the species *E. ognevi* was described before this change of the grammar and of the name; equally, for the famous Russian writer nobody uses the name Tolstyj (meaning fat, obese) in accordance with the current grammar, but rather the traditional version of the name, Tolstoj or Tolstoi; this is an identical case to that of Bobrinskoj/Bobrinskij.

Recommendation: Amend *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskii, 1918 to *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskoj, 1918 in the Annex to the Agreement.

Summary

The following changes are recommended for the Annex of species to which the Agreement applies:

1. The species *Myotis crypticus* Ruedi, Ibáñez, Salicini, Juste & Puechmaille, 2019 should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.
2. The species *Myotis tschuliensis* Kuzyakin, 1935 and *Myotis hoveli* Harrison, 1964 should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.
3. The species *Plecotus gaisleri* Benda, Kiefer, Hanák & Veith, 2004 should be added to the Annex to the Agreement.
4. *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (André, 1797) should replace *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Borkhausen, 1797) in the Annex to the Agreement.
5. *Eptesicus nilssonii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (von Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) should replace *Eptesicus nilssonii* (Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) and *Pipistrellus nathusii* (Keyserling & Blasius, 1839) in the Annex to the Agreement.
6. *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskoj, 1918 should replace *Eptesicus ognevi* Bobrinskii, 1918 in the Annex to the Agreement.

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9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.3:

Priority Species for Autecological Studies

The Meeting of Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Recalling the importance of scientific knowledge of bats in order to identify the best conservation action and the need for international co-operation in some of that research;

Recalling that in accordance to the Agreement's Conservation and Management Plan, MoP7 identified a list of Priority Species and the principal areas of autecological research that were required to assist in their conservation;

Recognizing the advances in the knowledge of the species previously adopted as Priority Species for autecological studies;

Noting that the Advisory Committee has identified a new list of Priority Species and areas of autecological research particularly required;

Decides to:

1. Instruct the Secretariat, with advice from the Advisory Committee, to encourage projects to be developed in detail on the Priority Species listed in the Annex, and to support the seeking for external funding as appropriate;
2. Instruct the Advisory Committee to update the Annex as required;
3. Additionally encourage researchers to consider the topics identified in the Annex as priorities to assist in the conservation of species with unfavourable conservation status.

Repeal Resolution 7.12.

EUROBATS.MoP9.Record.Annex4b

EUROBATS Action 8: Autecological Research on Priority Species

Topics of Autecological studies

- Roosts (winter, summer, swarming)
- Migration
- Habitat and spatial use
- Foraging behavior and diet

List of Priority Species for the next quadrennium

-*Rhinolophus blasii*

-*Plecotus kolombatovici*

-*Plecotus sardus*

-*Plecotus teneriffae*

-*Nyctalus lasiopterus*

-*Pipistrellus hanaki*

-*Pipistrellus maderensis*

-*Pipistrellus nathusii*

-*Myotis davidii*

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.4:

Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

The Meeting of Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Noting the importance that wind energy has in the implementation of the Paris Agreement to reduce CO_2 emissions in the context of combating climate change, and thereby contributing to the protection of species from its potentially negative impacts;

Recalling Resolution 2.2 on Consistent Monitoring Methodologies, which recommends the adoption of consistent monitoring methods for bats across Europe;

Recalling Resolution 8.11 on Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, which recognises the importance of international information exchange and cooperation in developing monitoring strategies for bats;

Conscious of the significant degree of commonality of membership and synergies in mandates of EUROBATS and other relevant multilateral biodiversity processes with respect to wind energy development (e.g. CMS, AEWA, Raptors MoU, ASCOBANS, Bern Convention, HELCOM, OSPAR and the European Union) and the need for stronger synergies across taxonomic groups in order to mainstream biodiversity concerns into the energy sector;

Recalling CMS Resolution 11.27 (Rev.COP13) on Wind Turbines and Migratory Species, which calls upon the Parties of the Convention to implement proper impact assessments of wind turbines on migratory species, to assess the cumulative environmental impacts of installed wind turbines on these species and to take full account of the precautionary principle in the development of wind turbine plants;

Welcoming the work of the CMS Energy Task Force (Task Force on Reconciling Selected Energy Sector Developments with Migratory Species Conservation) towards reconciling renewable energy developments with the conservation of migratory species;

Recalling the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which encourages co-operative and cross-boundary research;

Recalling the Directive No. 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, both of which state that the scope of information required for the purposes of impact assessments should be consistent with the current state of knowledge and methods of such assessments;

Recalling the EU guidance document on Wind Energy development and Natura 2000 (2010);

Noting the growing scientific evidence of bat fatalities at wind turbines and the predicted negative consequences for populations of resident and migratory bat species;

Recalling the European Commission's Notice Guidance Document on Wind Energy Developments and EU Nature Legislation C (2020) 7730 final which provides guidance on how best to ensure that wind energy developments are compatible with the Birds and Habitats Directives;

Recalling the UN Biodiversity Strategy Plan which acknowledges the need to resolve trade-offs between sustainable development goals (particularly Goal 7 'Affordable and Clean Energy', Goal 13 'Climate Action', and Goal 15 'Life on Land') through Action Target 8: '*Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, contributing at least 10 $GtCO_2e$ per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity*.';

Recalling Resolution 8.10 on required experience and skills of experts with regard to quality of assessments;

Recalling the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), in particular Article 5 1(b) which states that parties must ensure that mandatory systems are established so that there is an adequate flow of information to public authorities about proposed and existing activities which may significantly affect the environment;

Recalling Council Directive 90/313/EEC on the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment which states that information is to be made available and disseminated, shall be updated as appropriate, and shall include at least data or summaries of data derived from the monitoring;

Noting the increase in wind energy production across Europe as a consequence of the green transition as well as current uncertainties in traditional energy supplies;

Recognising that several bat species forage and migrate offshore and that as a result offshore wind farms may negatively impact bat populations;

Noting the rapid development of offshore wind energy facilities;

Recognising that offshore bat surveys are much more complex than onshore assessments, with it being difficult to assess casualty rates directly;

Taking into account the cumulative environmental impact of the renewable energy sector through the increasing number and size of wind turbines;

Noting the work of the Advisory Committee in continuous updating of the information included in EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6;

Recognising the importance of harmonised and standardised recording and analysis methods in order to produce consistent estimates of risk and to facilitate future pooling of data;

Recognising the importance of standardised methods with narrow uncertainty intervals to facilitate the development of effective avoidance and mitigation measures, as well as statistically robust ways to evaluate mortality rates and their impact on bat populations;

Recognising also the necessity of implementing research and monitoring both within countries and across national boundaries;

Noting the delay in a number of countries with the implementation of previous Resolutions (regarding the provision information on casualty rates; implementing appropriate monitoring; ensuring that proper mitigation measures are prescribed during the approval procedure and are being implemented and are effective; and making data on prescribed mitigation publicly available);

Noting that the use of blade feathering below the cut in speed[1], elevating turbine cut-in wind speeds[2] and shutting down turbines are the only mitigation measures which so far have proved to be effective in reducing bat mortality at wind turbines;

Calls on Parties, non-Party Range States and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, to:

1. Take into account the impacts that onshore and offshore wind turbines have on bat populations on different geographical scales;
2. Raise awareness and take into account that some habitats and areas, where a negative impact on bats is predicted, may not be suitable for the operation of wind turbines;
3. Avoid wind energy developments in areas with a special focus on bat protection;
4. Encourage all stakeholders to engage in research on the best methods for impact assessment and mitigating bat mortality at turbines for mutual benefit;
5. Promote continued dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders in the search for best practice to avoid or minimise the adverse impact of wind energy generation on bat populations;
6. Promote research in the offshore environment in order to enhance monitoring techniques, improve understanding of impacts, and identify potential solutions, also in collaboration with research conducted on other taxa;
7. For repowering proposals as well as for entirely new developments, ensure that appropriate impact assessments are undertaken pre- and post-construction, including mortality rate assessments, bearing in mind that pre-construction assessments are not a good predictor for post-construction mortality;
8. For existing wind turbines, given the crucial importance of collecting mortality data, promote post-construction assessments, including mortality rate assessments, regardless of the results of the pre-construction assessment;
9. Promote the continuation of post-construction monitoring and mitigation measures for as long as needed to guarantee effectiveness;

[1] Adjusting the angle of the rotor blade parallel to the wind, or turning the whole unit out of the wind, to slow or stop blade rotation.
[2] Minimum wind speed at which the wind turbine will generate usable power.

10. Encourage stakeholders, including policy advisors and wind energy operators, to reconsider the operation scheme of existing wind turbines when they were commissioned without proper impact assessments and post-construction monitoring;

11. Urge stakeholders, including policy advisors and wind energy operators, considering repowering schemes, to collect data on bat activity and fatality rates at existing operational turbines at the site, and to take account of this evidence when designing and permitting the repowering (*e.g*., by altering height, rotor area, or habitat);

12. Develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6;

13. Ensure that measures to avoid and mitigate impacts on bats are supervised by authorities;

14. Ensure that impact assessment procedures and post-construction monitoring are undertaken by appropriately experienced experts as described in the Annex of Resolution 8.10;

15. Ensure that impact assessment procedures and post-construction monitoring follows either EUROBATS guidelines, or where they are more stringent, national guidelines;

16. Ensure that developers of wind energy projects and responsible authorities make raw data from impact assessment and post-construction monitoring available for independent analysis and cumulative impact assessments;

17. Ensure that developers of wind energy projects and responsible authorities make reports from impact assessments and post-construction monitoring publicly available;

18. Ensure that bat mortality is reduced or avoided using the most effective available approaches and technology, including measures such as blade feathering, higher turbine cut-in wind speeds and/or shutting down turbines temporarily during periods of peak risk;

19. Ensure that proper mitigation measures are prescribed during the approval procedure and are being implemented and are effective;

20. Ensure that criteria are established for mitigation schemes in offshore wind energy developments to minimise impacts on bats, noting that greater uncertainties apply in this environment. If this is not possible then the precautionary principle (*e.g.,* proactive curtailment) should be applied;

21. Ensure that information about prescribed mitigation measures are made publicly available.

Requests the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee to:

1. Continue to compile relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations.

2. Update the generic guidelines, now available as EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6, by MOP 10.

3. Work with the international funders, including the World Bank, the UNDP, the EBRD, and others to develop strategies for ensuring that funding for wind energy developments is in line with the adoption of these resolutions.

4. Publish the update, following circulation to all Parties through the written procedure.

This Resolution replaces Resolution 8.4.

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.5:
Support to Authorities Dealing with Bat Assessment Reports

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement)",

Recalling Article III of the Agreement;

Recalling the Council Directive No. 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council No. 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, both of which state that the scope of information required for impact assessments should be consistent with the current state of knowledge and methods of such assessments;

Referring to Resolution 8.4 on Wind Turbines and Bat Populations and Resolution 8.6 on Bats and Light Pollution which recommend that appropriate assessments are undertaken;

Taking into account the increasing number of plans and projects with possible impact on populations of European Bats that require assessments;

Recognising the importance of consistently high-quality assessments on bats under the above-mentioned Directives;

Referring to Resolution 8.10 on Recommended Experience and Skills of Experts about Quality of Assessments;

Noting that the relevant authorities dealing with these assessments often have only limited capacity and expertise compared to the increasing number of assessments*;*

Being aware that the quality of assessment studies is crucial for the consideration of the conservation of bats*;*

1. Urges Parties and Non-Party Range States to ensure that relevant authorities dealing with these assessment reports possess the appropriate resources and capacities to be able to assess and evaluate the results of those studies;

2. Recommends Parties and Non-Party Range States to develop a checklist for the authorities which enables the authorities to examine the assessment reports at hand in terms of completeness and soundness;

3. Encourages Parties and Non-Party Range States to use the provided checklist in the annex as a template or develop their checklist to reach this goal.

Assessment checklist for authorities to check for completeness and soundness of bat reports

Report number:				
Site name / Geographic location				
Author of bat report				
Checklist filled in by				
Date				
Item to check	*Not applicable*	*present*	*not present*	*reference page/ comments section*
An executive summary (e.g., 300 words) is available				
Task				
General information given				
Project description, including clear identification of aims and objectives				
Description of construction/ development plan				
Map of construction / development plan				
Potential conservation conflicts described				
Legal basis of evaluation/ assessment given				
Description of local conditions				
Valid geolocation provided				
Date of visit recorded				
Map of area provided				
Description of geographic features and landscape provided				
Land use and habitat types described				
Grid reference of survey points mapped or presented as table				
Photos provided				
Survey program				
Permits to carry out the study provided				
Survey programme established after consulting relevant authorities				
The survey programme follows official guidelines (e.g., Eurobats, EU or national guidelines) - if discrepancies exist, these are justified				
Already existing data on bats are provided				
Local bat workers have been contacted				
Roost surveys				
Description of roost survey plan provided				

Continuous automated acoustic recording				
Detector description				
Producer				
Type				
Set-up parameters described				
Microphone description				
Producer				
Type				
Description of recording points				
Microphone height and aspect				
Recording points shown on the map				
Recording schedule				
Period recordings were made (e.g., March 1 – Nov 1)				
Number of hours of recording				
Dates of device/battery failure				
Reason for failure				
Manual detector surveys				
Description of the detector used				
Producer				
Type				
Set-up parameters described				
Survey description				
Transects or recording points shown on map				
Surveyors' names included				
Date of recordings				
Number of sampling replicates (transects or sampling points)				
Period recordings were made (e.g., March 1 – Nov 1)				
Number of hours of recording				
Mist netting				
Description of nets				
Placement description/ location				
Number of nets				
Length and height of nets				
Net material and mesh size				
Date and duration of netting				
Net operators' names included				
Radiotracking				
General description				
Goals of radiotracking (roost finding, use of space, habitat use)				
Method used (triangulation vs homing in)				

Radiotracking operators' names included				
Date, time, and duration of radiotracking sessions				
Transmitter used				
Type and weight / main frequency				
Producer				
Glue				
Tag/bat weight				
Receiver device				
Type				
Producer				
Antenna				
Weather data				
Measurements/ recordings at location (temperature, wind speed, precipitation)				
Height above ground, device type, period of recording, data collection, evaluation described				
In case of use of data collected at a different station, station name, height above ground, period of recording, station operator's name				
Results				
Summary of results available				
Evaluation and results of automated acoustic recordings				
Analysis software used				
Criteria/approaches used to identify bat calls				
Reliability of identification evaluated				
Presentation of results				
Definition of calls, call types or activity described				
Summary for each species of bat/ call types presented				
Temporal pattern of activity per night (overall and by species)				
Temporal pattern of activity throughout the year / recording season (overall and by species)				
Temporal pattern of weather data (temperature, wind speed, and precipitation) presented				
Raw data, including bat call identity, date, time, and location provided				
Recording files provided				
Evaluation and results of manual detector or survey visits				
Analysis software used				
Criteria/approaches used to identify bat calls				
Reliability of identification evaluated				

Presentation of results				
Definition of calls, call types or activity described				
Summary for every species of bat/ call types presented				
Temporal pattern of activity per night described (overall and by species)				
Results mapped				
Mist netting results				
Date and time of netting at every location				
Number of captured individuals per species per night and location				
Individual sex, forearm length, body weight and reproduction status				
Age class of captured animals (juvenile or adult)				
Roost survey results				
Locations of surveyed roosts shown on map				
Roosts classified into categories (e.g. caves, trees, building structures)				
Date and time of each survey per roost				
Number of detected bats per species for each roost and survey				
Results of radiotracking to find roost sites				
Number of tracking days (e.g. to find different daily roosts of tree-dwelling species)				
Dates, time and duration of radiotracking				
Description and location (shown on map) of identified roosts provided				
Results of emergence counts				
Results of radiotracking to establish use of space / habitat use				
Dates, time, and duration of radiotracking				
Data (n fixes/night, total nr fixes/bat, foraging sites) shown on map				
If home range established, description of methods used (e.g., MCP, kernel analysis, etc.)				
Presentation of weather data				
Data for detector survey dates (temperature, wind speed, precipitation)				
Data for mist netting sessions				
Data for radiotracking sessions				

Summarized account of bat occurrences from all sources				
Number of species				
Short description of life history / ecology / conservation status provided for recorded species				
Activity				
Evaluation of collected data				
Bat community richness / diversity evaluated				
Bat activity evaluated				
Description of impacts before, during and after activity				
Assessment of the conservation conflict				
Measures for avoidance, mitigation or compensation of the expected impacts caused by the planned project				
Concerning planned locations				
Concerning construction-related impacts				
Concerning operation-related impacts				
Methods of compensation described				
Strategies to monitor effectiveness of mitigation/compensation measures				
Overall evaluation of the bat assessment report				
Missing or insufficiently covered points				

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.6:

Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Recalling Article III, Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Agreement;

Recalling Resolution 5.2 Bats and Rabies in Europe;

Noting the health of humans, animals and the environment are inextricably linked and the importance to take the "One Health" approach for addressing current and emerging crises;

Noting Resolution 9.8 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of wild Animals: "Responding to the challenge of emerging and re-emerging diseases in migratory species, including Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1";

Further noting concerns expressed at the 18th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to EUROBATS (see AC14 Record, p. 39);

Recalling the joint notification of CMS, EUROBATS and AEWA on Bats and COVID-19 (April, 2020);

Deeply concerned that disinformation or improper coverage in the media already led to unjustifiable culling of bats in some countries in Africa, Asia, and South America;

Noting that there is a need to improve communications between the bat conservation community, the media and the public on issues relating to public health;

Requests the Advisory Committee to:

1. Monitor and react to the erroneous coverage of zoonotic diseases in scientific publications as well as in the media and associated commentaries as far as bats are concerned
2. Provide sound scientific response to such publications if they contain erroneous or misleading information

Instructs the Secretariat to make this response publicly available on its website.

9th Session of the Meeting of the Parties

Brijuni, Croatia, 10 – 13 October 2022

Resolution 9.7:
Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan (2023 – 2026)

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Referring to the commitments by the Parties to the conservation of bats in accordance with the Agreement, especially the fundamental obligations placed upon the Parties in Article III;

Recognising the value to the conservation of bats of the Action Plan for 2019 – 2022, established by Resolution 8.11 on the Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, and agreed at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties;

Noting the efforts of the Parties, as outlined in their National Implementation Reports, and of the Advisory Committee as well as the Secretariat to the Agreement to carry out the above plans and the progress achieved;

Noting the obligations for the Parties identified in the EUROBATS *Guide to the Implementation of the Agreement*;

Recognising the continuous need to prioritise actions;

Acknowledging the work being carried out in the framework of the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EC), in particular the establishment of the Natura 2000 Network, and in the framework of the Bern Convention, in particular the establishment of the Emerald Network;

Acknowledging the existence of the Action Plan for the Conservation of All Bat Species in the European Union (2018 – 2024)

Decides to establish the Action Plan for 2023 – 2026 as appended at Annex 1 and notes that this Action Plan supersedes the Action Plan made under Resolution 8.11 at the 8th Session of the Meeting of the Parties.

PRIORITIES FOR BAT CONSERVATION FOR THE PERIOD 2023 – 2026

The Parties to the Agreement should consider taking forward the following actions to enhance the conservation status of bats. The Secretariat shall prepare a plan of action based on the implementation priorities identified by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall review the success that each Party or Range State has in achieving each goal and will seek to disseminate examples of good practice between the Parties and the Range States.

1. Legal Requirements

With reference to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP2.14fin, Resolution No. 8, Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, Annex A, 1:

- The Parties should continue to take measures to fully implement Article III (1) of the Agreement. Section 3 of the EUROBATS Guide to Implementation (Hutson, Marnell & Petermann, 2019) provides help and guidance on this.

2. Population Survey and Monitoring

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.10 Recommended Experience and Skills of Experts with regard to Quality of Assessments:

- The Parties should ensure that experts/groups of experts carrying out assessment of projects, plans, and programmes on populations of European bats meet the minimum standard of skills, knowledge, and experience as described in the Annex to Resolution 8.10.

(b) With reference to Resolution 9.5 Support to Authorities dealing with Bat Assessment Reports:

- The Parties should develop a checklist for the authorities which enables the authorities to examine the assessment reports at hand in terms of completeness and soundness.
- The Parties should use the annex to Resolution 9.5 as a template to develop a checklist to support their authorities dealing with bat assessment reports.

(c) With reference to Resolution 2.2 Consistent Monitoring Methodologies and EUROBATS Publication Series No. 5 on Monitoring of Bats:

- The Parties should collate and provide all bat populations monitoring data with

special reference to species prioritised by the Range States and review the methods used and the species covered.

- The Parties should share information on experience gained in using the methods outlined in the published Guidelines, with the intention of keeping those up- to-date and building a comprehensive dataset to be reviewed in detail in due course.
- The Advisory Committee should promote the use of standardised monitoring methods as well as review and update the monitoring guidelines with the new technological and methodological advances.
- The Advisory Committee should work towards the development of standardised pan-European monitoring and capacity building for monitoring. The importance of long-term monitoring at a pan-European level to build up good datasets on species distribution and population trends should be recognised and emphasised.
- The Advisory Committee should establish an online database of monitoring activities and results throughout the Agreement area.
- The Advisory Committee should promote investigation into the causes of population declines in some bat species.

(d) With reference to Resolution 4.9 Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan (2003 - 2006):

- The Parties should adopt consistent monitoring methods in either national or regional specific bat monitoring programmes across Europe, emphasizing the importance of long-term monitoring programmes, to build up good datasets on species distribution and population trends.

(e) With reference to Resolution 5.4 Monitoring Bats across Europe:

- The Advisory Committee should support the development of appropriate data storage platform and analysis mechanisms to facilitate the production of Europe-wide trends for bat species.

(f) With reference to Resolution 8.3 Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats:

- The Parties should prioritize studies to identify areas for breeding and hibernation, migration routes, stopover sites and population parameters (population sizes and trends) with the use of classical and novel methods, such as banding, radio-tagging, acoustic, genetic and isotope analyses.
- The Parties should stimulate cross-boundary efforts in research and conservation

of migratory species.

- The Parties should report results of studies in behaviour and population sizes of migratory bats, including references to published articles.
- The Parties should increase the cooperation with bird banding centres.
- The Advisory Committee should collate information on the above-mentioned research topics.

(g) With reference to Resolution 9.3 Priority Species for Autecological Studies:

- The Secretariat, with advice from the Advisory Committee, should encourage projects on the Priority Species listed in the Annex and seek for external funding as appropriate.
- The Advisory Committee should update the Annex to Resolution 9.3 as required.

(h) With reference to Resolution 7.7 Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management:

- The Parties should develop their own national guidance appropriate to their bat communities, forest ecosystems and forest management practices based on the principles in the EUROBATS Bats and Forestry leaflet.
- The Parties should share best practice forestry guidance via the EUROBATS website.

(i) With reference to Resolution 9.4 Wind Turbines and Bat Populations:

- The Parties should avoid wind energy developments in areas with a special focus on bat protection.
- The Parties should encourage all stakeholders to engage in research on the best methods for impact assessment and mitigating bat mortality at turbines for mutual benefit.
- The Parties should promote continued dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders in the search for best practice to avoid or minimise the adverse impact of wind energy generation on bat populations.
- The Parties should promote research in the offshore environment in order to enhance monitoring techniques, improve understanding of impacts, and identify potential solutions, also in collaboration with research conducted on other taxa.
- For repowering proposals as well as for entirely new developments, the Parties

should ensure that appropriate impact assessments are undertaken pre- and post-construction, including mortality rate assessments, bearing in mind that pre-construction assessments are not a good predictor for post-construction mortality.

- For existing wind turbines, given the crucial importance of collecting mortality data, the Parties should promote post-construction assessments, including mortality rate assessments, regardless of the results of the pre-construction assessment.
- The Parties should promote the continuation of post-construction monitoring and mitigation measures for as long as needed to guarantee effectiveness.
- The Parties should encourage stakeholders, including policy advisors and wind energy operators, to reconsider the operation scheme of existing wind turbines when they were commissioned without proper impact assessments and post-construction monitoring.
- The Parties should urge stakeholders, including policy advisors and wind energy operators, considering repowering schemes, to collect data on bat activity and fatality rates at existing operational turbines at the site, and to take account of this evidence when designing and permitting the repowering (*e.g.*, by altering height, rotor area, or habitat).
- The Parties should develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6.
- The Parties ensure that measures to avoid and mitigate impacts on bats are supervised by authorities.
- The Parties ensure that impact assessment procedures and post-construction monitoring are undertaken by appropriately experienced experts as described in the Annex of Resolution 8.10.
- The Parties ensure that impact assessment procedures and post-construction monitoring follows either EUROBATS guidelines, or where they are more stringent, national guidelines.
- The Parties ensure that developers of wind energy projects and responsible authorities make raw data from impact assessment and post-construction monitoring available for independent analysis and cumulative impact assessments.
- The Parties ensure that developers of wind energy projects and responsible authorities make reports from impact assessments and post-construction

monitoring publicly available.

- The Advisory Committee should continue to compile relevant information, including methods to assess the impact of wind power generation on bat populations.
- The Advisory Committee should update the generic guidelines, now available as EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6, by MOP 10.
- The Secretariat should work with the international funders, including the World Bank, the UNDP, the EBRD, and others to develop strategies for ensuring that funding for wind energy developments is in line with the adoption of these resolutions.

(j) With reference to the progress made on Resolution 6.13 Bats as Indicators for Biodiversity and the publication of a prototype indicator of trends in European bat populations at hibernation sites (EEA Technical Report 19/2013):

- The Advisory Committee should continue to expand and update this prototype to incorporate data for further countries and species and other technical improvements to assist the development of bats as indicators of ecosystem health.
- The Parties shall promote and support the development of bats as indicators more widely.

(k) With reference to Resolutions 7.10 Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation and 8.8 Guidelines for Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation:

- The Parties should set up networks of animal rehabilitation centres and exchange the data on bats for scientific purposes.
- The Advisory Committee should finalise the draft Guidelines for Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation.
- The Parties should develop and implement national guidance following EUROBATS Advisory Committee generic guidelines on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation.

3. Roosts

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.12 Purpose-built Man-made Roosts:

- The Secretariat should publish the review document.
- The Parties should consider examples provided by the review document,

developed by the Advisory Committee, whenever new roosting structures are planned, or existingstructures are renovated for bats.

- The Parties should monitor existing purpose-built bat roosts and promote further studies on their effectiveness.
- The Advisory Committee should continue to gather information on the design of artificial, purpose-built bat roosts and keep the review document updated if required.

(b) With reference to Resolution 7.6 Conservation and Management of Important Underground Sites for Bats:

- The Parties and Non-Party Range States should continue to collate and update information on important underground sites with a view to submitting this to the Secretariat every 8 years, using the revised guidance on site selection [Doc.Eurobats.MoP7.22];
- The Parties should ensure that the important underground habitats they have identified are fully protected by law and, where appropriate, are physically protected against unauthorised entry.

(c) With reference to Resolutions 5.7 Guidelines for the Protection of Overground Roosts, with particular reference to roosts in buildings of cultural heritage importance and 8.5 Conservation and Management of Important Overground Sites for Bats:

- The Parties should submit information on their most important overground roosts considering the guidance on site selection developed by the Advisory Committee and using the national databases according to an 8-year cycle.
- The Secretariat should provide a standardised electronic form for the Parties to submit this information.
- The Secretariat should record and follow up cases of loss or damage to listed sites that are brought to its attention, initially by correspondence with the Party or non-Party range States involved. Such cases should be reported by the Secretariat at each MoP.

(d) With reference to Resolution 8.9 Bats, Insulation and Lining Materials:

- The Parties should develop and ensure implementation of national guidance following the generic guidelines developed by the Advisory Committee.
- The Parties should include bats in the impact assessment of insulation programs

at a strategic level.

- The Parties should ensure that insulation projects are undertaken in compliance with national legislation regarding bat protection and conservation by implementing appropriate pre-insulation survey and assessment, mitigation and compensation to avoid roost loss and bat mortality.

4. Habitats

(a) With reference to Resolution 7.8 Conservation and Management of critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes:

- The Parties should develop appropriate national guidelines drawing on EUROBATS Publication No. 9 (Conservation and Management of critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes) and ensure their implementation.
- The Advisory Committee should promote investigations into the potential impacts of solar power plants on bats

(b) With reference to Resolution 7.9 Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats:

- The Advisory Committee should finalise and publish guidelines highlighting the effects of roads and other infrastructure on bats and providing advice on how to minimise their impact.
- The Parties should develop appropriate national guidelines drawing on these generic guidelines when available.

(c) With reference to Resolution 8.6 Bats and Light Pollution:

- The Parties should develop and promote implementation of national guidance taking due account of the EUROBATS Publication Series No. 8 on Bats and Light Pollution.
- The Advisory Committee should continue to compile relevant information, including efficacy of mitigation measures and methods to assess the impact of artificial light on individual bats and bat populations.
- The Advisory Committee should update the generic guidelines, if necessary.

(d) The Advisory Committee should review the information available on the restoration of bat populations to their former geographical ranges.

5. Promoting Public Awareness of Bats and their Conservation and Providing Advice

(a) With reference to Inf.EUROBATS.MoP2.14fin, Annex A, 19:

- The Parties should continue to promote International Bat Night and continue efforts to raise public awareness and improve education in relation to bats.
- The Advisory Committee should continue to develop guidelines and training material for education programmes.
- The Secretariat should develop a plan, and use social and other media, to raise awareness about EUROBATS and bat conservation

(b) With reference to Resolution 8.13 Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe:

- The Parties should promote awareness of the multiple ecological services provided by bats, especially for the agricultural sector, and raise awareness regarding the concerns mentioned above with land managers and other stakeholders.

6. Insect declines

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.13 Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe:

- The Parties should encourage and support scientific research on the impact of the insect decline on bat populations.
- The Parties should avoid the use of pesticides, particularly those problematic for bats and their food resources, in and around important areas for bat conservation.
- The Parties should ensure that bats are being considered in pesticide risk assessments.
- The Advisory Committee should collate relevant information on insect decline to help establish its causes, assess its potential effects on bat populations in Europe.
- The Advisory Committee should consider developing guidelines or recommendations for the most urgent or prioritised actions identified.

7. International co-operation

(a) With reference to Resolution 7.10 Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation, Resolution 7.12 Priority Species for Autecological Studies, Resolution 8.3 Monitoring of Daily and

Seasonal Movements of Bats, Resolution 8.7 Bats and Climate Change:

- The Parties and non-Party Range States should work co-operatively towards increasing bat expertise and knowledge in their countries and internationally, particularly with the aim of implementing the recommendations of above-mentioned Resolutions.

(b) With reference to Resolution 6.10 Synergies between the Agreement and Other European Treaties for Nature Conservation:

- The Secretariat and, if appropriate Parties and non-Party Range States, shall raise awareness for the potential synergies of the Agreement and other European treaties for nature conservation.
- The Secretariat should support further exchange and cooperation between bodies of the Agreement and those of other international treaties for nature conservation, in particular the Advisory Committee and the European Commission.

8. Diseases

(a) With reference to Resolution 5.2 Bat Rabies in Europe and Resolution 6.6 Guidelines for the Prevention, Detection and Control of Lethal Fungal Infections in Bats:

- The Advisory Committee should continue to monitor the occurrence of emerging infectious diseases of bats and advise the Parties on appropriate action.
- The Parties are encouraged to ensure that up to date information on emerging diseases is readily available.
- The Parties are encouraged to continue or introduce surveillance for rabies and other lethal infections.

(b) With reference to Resolution 9.6 Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health:

- The Advisory Committee should monitor and react to the erroneous coverage of zoonotic diseases in scientific publications as well as in the media and associated commentaries as far as bats are concerned.
- The Secretariat should make the response of the Advisory Committee to such publications available on its website.

(c) The Advisory Committee should investigate bat health and immunological fitness issues and their consequences for bat conservation.

(d) The Advisory Committee should explore the possibility of elaboration of a publication

on Bats, Zoonoses and Health issues within the Eurobats Publication Series.

9. EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)

With reference to Resolution 6.4 Guidelines for the Implementation of the EUROBATS Projects Initiative and Resolution 7.15 Guidelines for the Implementation of the EUROBATS Projects Initiative:

- The Advisory Committee should continue to implement the EPI.
- The Advisory Committee should ensure that funds allocated by the EUROBATS budget support projects that will provide wider benefits for EUROBATS range states.
- The Parties are encouraged to continue to support the EPI through voluntary contributions.

10. Climate change

(a) With reference to Resolution 8.7 Bats and Climate Change:

- The Parties should cooperate on assessments of bat vulnerability to climate change at the EUROBATS range level.
- The Parties should monitor changes in species migration, hibernation, reproductive and range- shift patterns and consequent species interactions.
- The Advisory Committee should collate relevant scientific evidence of climate change's influence on bats and, if appropriate, develop guidelines for the most urgent actions identified.
- The Advisory Committee should cooperate with IUCN SSC Climate Change Specialist Group, if needed.
- The Advisory Committee should identify knowledge gaps and research priorities relating to the impacts of climate change on bats.

(b) With reference to Resolution 8.7 Bats and Climate Change, referring also to the Resolutions 7.10 Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation, 8.3 Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats and 8.8 Guidelines for Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation:

- The Parties should monitor changes in species migration, hibernation, reproductive and range- shift patterns and consequent species interactions, as well as increasing mortality and injury rates due to extreme weather events.