

## 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 18 May 2016

### Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee



The 21st meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Zandvoort, Netherlands, from 18 – 20 April 2016. Approximately 60 delegates, representing 40 countries and a range of NGOs, participated in the meeting.

Although we have gained no new Parties since the last AC, the national reports from all Parties and non-Parties provided encouraging news of ongoing progress in the implementation of the Agreement across the Agreement area.

The bulk of the AC meeting was devoted to Working Groups. The Advisory Committee currently has 16 working groups. 14 of these met, in 7 parallel sessions, during the AC. [With regard to the other two IWGs: The IWG on Autoecological studies has no need for ongoing meetings but will convene again in advance of the next MoP. The IWG on Underground Roosts effectively completed its work some years ago but retains a maintenance brief for the underground roosts database.]

One of the IWGs – Format of National Reports – completed its work at AC21 and has now been disbanded. We extend our thanks to Dr Stéphane Aulagnier for his role in convening this group and overseeing the efficient completion of their tasks. Most of the remaining IWGs are making good progress and several have agreed detailed work plans and time schedules that should ensure that the tasks allocated to them are completed in time for reporting to the next MoP. A number of these IWGs (e.g. Bat and Roads; Critical feeding areas, Light pollution) are planning to produce guidance documents within this timeframe and the conveners of these groups, together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AC will work with the Secretariat to ensure that these documents are delivered in a timely and sequential fashion to avoid any bottle-necks in publication.

A small number of IWGs have taken on large bodies of work which may take several years to fully address; it can be anticipated that these IWGs may need to work beyond the next MoP. Nonetheless they have been encouraged and supported in the production of timelines and targets for interim actions. It is hoped in this way that these IWGs will continue to make steady headway and be in a position to report back significant progress at the next MoP.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the contribution of all the IWG conveners. The implementation of the Eurobats work programme is reliant on the effective running of the IWGs and the voluntary role played by the conveners in this regard is essential and commendable.

There are a number of additional items of note:

1. There was an ad hoc meeting during the AC to discuss the potential feasibility and value of collating national data on overground roosts and incorporating this data into the existing database on underground roosts. It was agreed that a discussion paper on this proposal will be prepared for the next AC meeting.
2. The Conveners of the very topical IWG on Light Pollution and Bats have suggested a workshop at the end of 2016 to develop a first draft of their guideline document. It was suggested that a small seminar could be organised around this meeting, with invited speakers asked to provide a review on the state of knowledge related to light pollution and bats. The Secretariat was asked to examine the potential to support the organisation of this seminar, which could be held in Bonn.
3. Significant progress has been made towards the provision of online reporting for Eurobats. The previous IWG on the Implementation of the Agreement, together with the IWG on the Format of National Reports identified the necessary elements for the new report format, but great credit must go to the Secretariat and in particular to Suren for his role in designing and finalising the online reporting structure. The new system will greatly facilitate the analyses and cross-checking of national reporting going forward. Testing of the system has already begun and we are confident that all will be ready in time for the reporting required for the next MoP.
4. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the support and advice provided to the AC by the “Senior Advisors”. The active role that these highly regarded international experts play in our meetings and in particular their constructive and leading involvement in numerous working groups is of great benefit to the effective running of the AC and to the completion of our Work Programme.
5. During the final plenary session of the AC meeting I asked all the delegates to consider ways of improving the AC meetings. I look forward to receiving this feedback in due course and to implementing changes as required.
6. Finally, I'd like to thank the Vice-Chair, Dr Danilo Russo, for his assistance throughout the AC meeting. I further commend the ongoing support of the Secretariat. The smooth

planning, organisation and running of the Advisory Committee meetings is itself a testament to their excellent work. However, Andreas and each member of his team is unfailingly helpful at all times; they demonstrate great competence in all aspects of their work and since taking over the role of Chair of the AC I have been delighted to find them open and proactive in matters of innovation, change and improvement.

Ferdia Marnell  
Chair of the Advisory Committee  
29 April 2016