

## 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Videoconference, 29 June 2023

(14:00 – 17:00 h CET)

Record



### 1. Attendance

This is listed in Annex 1 to the Record.

### 2. Opening remarks

The Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr. Jeroen Panis, opened the meeting and greeted the participants. He mentioned that this was the first meeting without the participation of Mr. Oliver Schall from Germany, whose contribution to EUROBATS and the work of the Standing Committee Mr. Panis wanted to acknowledge and whom he wished a relaxed and nice retirement. Mr. Panis also expressed on behalf of the Standing Committee the mourning on the passing of one of the EUROBATS éminence grise, Mr. Tony Hutson, and offered his condolences to Mr. Hutson's family and friends. Mr. Panis further reminded the Committee of the difficult debates that took place during MoP9, when a balanced deal on the budget was achieved, which now needed to be preserved and safeguarded through a careful review of cost estimates on an annual basis in view of the USD/EUR exchange rate, potential accessions of new Parties, as well as general savings. Available resources achieved through savings should be redirected to the priorities identified at MoP9. Mr. Panis then gave the floor to Mr. Streit, EUROBATS Executive Secretary.

Mr. Streit expressed his pleasure at seeing all the members of the Standing Committee and he welcomed the new members to the Committee – Ms. Caroline Kohzer from Germany, Ms. Céline Impagliazzo from Monaco, Ms. Helene Lindahl from Sweden who would replace Ms. Marie Nedinge after her retirement, and Ms. Zrinka Domazetović from Croatia, the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee. He also greeted Ms. Ruth Petermann from Germany, who was the newly elected Chair of the Advisory Committee, and the present observers, Ms. Libuše Vlasáková from the Czech Republic, and Ms. Ingrid Regina Reinkind from Norway. He expected the meeting to be quite straight forward,

there were no bad news to expect, but the details would follow later. Ms. Streit concluded by wishing everybody a successful meeting.

### **3. Adoption of the agenda (Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.1.Rev.1)**

Mr. Panis explained that an amended agenda was circulated shortly before the meeting per email, with the only difference being that it contained document numbers of the relevant documents for each agenda item. Since there were no remarks about the agenda, it was adopted.

### **4. Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee**

Ms. Petermann reported to the Standing Committee that the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC27) took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from March 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

40 delegates from 28 Parties and 7 Non-Party Range States as well as about 25 observers from several NGOs took part in the meeting. It was the first in-person meeting after three years and, in Ms. Petermann's opinion, the motivation and commitment of the participants was clearly noticeable during the meeting.

She further stated that, during AC27, firstly a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee were elected. Professor Danilo Russo had announced that he would not continue as Chair and Ms. Petermann had the honour to be elected. She was very pleased to have Ms. Eeva-Maria Tidenberg from Finland as Vice-Chair by her side. She also expressed her sincere gratitude for the excellent work of Professor Russo as Chair.

With regard to the activities of the Advisory Committee in the previous year, new publications in the pipeline should be mentioned, two of which had already been sent to the Focal Points for their comments and endorsement. These two publications were the Guidelines on consideration of bats in traffic infrastructure projects and the Guidelines on bats, insulation, and lining materials. Further, under the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI), several projects continued to be implemented.

Professor Stéphane Aulagnier from France was confirmed as Chair of the EPI Evaluation group, and other members included Professor Zuhair Amr from Jordan, Dr. Lena Godlevska from Ukraine, Ms. Daniela Hamidović from Croatia, Mr. Peter Lina from the Netherlands, Professor Branko Micevski from North Macedonia, Mr. Ioseb Natradze from Georgia, Dr. Noam Leader from Israel, and Ms. Eeva-Maria Tidenberg from Finland. To speed up the process, the group decided that the deadline for proposals' submission should be moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> of September each year. All group members should send the

evaluations to the convenor by the 1<sup>st</sup> of October the latest, so that the final evaluation could be compiled and sent to the EUROBATS Secretariat by the end of October.

As usual, much of the meeting focused on the activities of the Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs). After reporting on what the IWGs achieved over the past quadrennium, the following Intersessional Working Groups were identified as needed to address the work plan priorities from the Conservation and Management Plan:

1. IWG on Bats and Climate Change
2. IWG on Monitoring and Indicators
3. IWG on Bats and Light Pollution
4. IWG on Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats
5. IWG on Bats and Wind Turbines
6. IWG on Bats, Insulation, and Lining Materials
7. IWG on Purpose-Built Bat Roosts
8. IWG on Insect Decline as a Threat to Bat Populations in Europe
9. IWG on Communication, Bat Conservation and Public Health
10. IWG on Autecological Studies
11. IWG on Bats Rescue and Rehabilitation
12. IWG on Education
13. IWG on Bats and One Health
14. Ad hoc Working Group on Improving Methodologies of Assessment of Favourable Conservation Status in Bats was renamed in IWG on Improving Methodologies of Assessment of Favourable Conservation Status in Bats.
15. Ad hoc EPI Evaluation Group
16. Ad hoc Working Group on Amendment of the Annex to the Agreement
17. Ad hoc Working Group on the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Agreement
18. The IWG on Conservation and Management of Important Underground Sites for Bats was re-established.
19. IWG on Anthropogenic Deadly Traps for Bats
20. IWG on Potential Impact of Solar Power Plants

21. IWG on the Protection of Overground Roosts (with Particular Reference to Roosts in Buildings of Cultural Heritage Importance)
22. IWG on Strategic Planning for the Restoration of Species Across Their Former European Range.

Of these many working groups, four should be highlighted:

- The IWG on Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation, which was making good progress on the guidelines that were to be finalised and published.
- The issue of wind turbines remained virulent. One task for the IWG was to update the generic guidelines, now available as EUROBATS Publication Series No. 6, by MoP10. In Ms. Petermann's opinion, this update was urgently needed, not only because the guidelines, to a large extent, no longer applied, but also because political developments continued, and other stakeholders doubted the validity of the recommendations due to the date of their production. An update could confirm the recommendations and/or make them more precise in the light of new technical developments and the new state of knowledge.
- The IWG on Bats and One Health would not only focus on pathogens in bats, but also wanted to develop recommendations on how to handle bats to reduce the potential for pathogen transmission among bats and bat colonies. Thus, it contributed to general education in the field of bats and health. It was also planned to look e.g., into mass mortality events among bats, etc.
- The new IWG on Strategic Planning for the Restoration of Species Across Their Former European Range addressed the issue of restoration of native ecosystems, not least with regard to facilitating range shifts in the context of climate change. One aim was also to provide information on the restoration of bat populations in their former geographical ranges.

From the large number of working groups set up, the high level of motivation and commitment of the participants was easily noticeable. This was certainly also because the meeting took place in-person after a long time. There was the impression that the participants were trying to make up some of the ground lost during the pandemic. Overall, the meeting and the discussions were very objective, constructive, and solution oriented. To take up this momentum and carry it forward, on the one hand, and to be able to achieve the ambitious goals that have been set, on the other, Ms. Petermann wished to

emphasise the special importance of in-person meetings and to strongly advocate that, if funds were available, these meetings should not take place online, but in-person.

After Ms. Petermann's report, there being no questions with regard to it, the agenda item was concluded.

## **5. Secretariat report (Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.7)**

Mr. Streit proceeded to give the Secretariat report. He mentioned that, because of the extensive written report given during MoP9, as well as the fact that the quadrennium had only begun, the report for this meeting would remain short. A few things needed to be highlighted. In terms of the Secretariat staff, since the meeting participants were all present during MoP9, they could remember that one of the major discussion points were the posts of Administrative Assistants. Due to their accumulating significant amount of overtime, the Parties were unanimous in their decision to increase the post occupancy of one of the Assistants from 50 to 80 percent. Owing to the budget restrictions, only one post could be increased, and it was agreed that, when funds became available, the second post occupancy should also be increased. Another request of the Parties was an equal treatment of both Assistants. Thus, there was no other option but for the Assistants to take turns and switch in post occupancy between 50 and 80 percent. This was not an ideal solution as it involved a lot of administration work. In addition, a formal request had been made to deviate in the post occupancy scheme and to have both Assistants at 65 percent post occupancy. This request needed to be cleared in New York, but the Executive Secretary remained optimistic that the deviation would be authorised. The Scientific Officer would remain at 80 percent post occupancy. Before MoP9, the Scientific Officer was working at 100 percent, however, as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2022, he was back at 80 percent.

Regarding Agreement membership, Mr. Streit, in anticipation of the question concerning the accession of Spain, explained that this process had not yet been completed. In early May 2023, the Spanish government and the cabinet of ministers approved the accession, and this decision was carried to the parliament, where it was approved by the first chamber. The remaining step was the approval of the second chambre, but, unfortunately, before this decision could be put on the agenda, the parliament was dissolved for elections to take place end of July 2023. Mr. Streit hoped that the ratification by the second chamber would be only a formality, however, this would not happen before September 2023. Mr. Streit concluded that the likelihood of Spain becoming a Party before the end of the year remained.

Considering outreach and special projects, Mr. Streit emphasised that the publication series remained very successful. Additionally, the information material was as well in high demand, not only because of the organisation of the International Bat Night.

Though not mentioned in the written report, Mr. Streit wished to emphasise that MoP9 was extremely successful. He once again thanked the Croatian hosts for all their efforts and hospitality. Additionally, as AC Chair had already stated, AC27 was also a big success. It was an impressive meeting in terms of the participation as well as the output and the motivation of the participants.

Mr. Charles-Henri de Barsac asked the Secretariat whether the employment of both of the Assistants at 65 percent was in line with the MoP9 decision. Mr. Streit answered that, since the Parties believed both should be at 80 percent, which was not possible due to the budget restraints, there was nothing speaking against an equal treatment of both staff members. The Parties wanted to ensure their equal treatment. Mr. Panis further commented that, both Assistants being at 65 percent post occupancy was the same as one Assistant being at 80 percent and the other at 50 percent.

Finally, speaking about the projects conducted in the reporting cycles, Mr. Streit said that these had already been mentioned by Ms. Petermann. Additionally, in the document Inf.EUROBATS.StC21.2, there was an overview and the summary of all the projects conducted so that the Parties could get the information about the results of the projects. Full reports were available on the website. Germany, Luxembourg, and occasionally Switzerland made voluntary contributions available for projects, and Mr. Streit wished to thank the donor countries once again for their support, especially since there were no funds foreseen by the regular budget for the financing of bat conservation projects.

Ms. Domazetović wanted to remind the Secretariat that, when collecting samples or data from the Parties, that it should also contact administrative Focal Points to ensure that information was gathered from the relevant stakeholders from different countries.

## **6. Administrative matters**

- a) Report on income and expenditure in the financial year 2022 as well as Trust Fund status as of 31 December 2022 (Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.4.Rev.1 and Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.6)
- b) Projection of the financial situation in 2023 including voluntary contributions (Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.5)
- c) Staffing situation in the Secretariat

d) Secretariat work plan (Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.8)

The Executive Secretary was given the floor to present the documents relevant to this agenda item. The administrative matters were always the most complex ones because of the budgetary constraints. This situation aggravated a lot in the years of the pandemic because the value of the Euro declined and because of the unpeaceful situation in Europe. However, during the previous year the Euro had stabilised – at a slightly higher level than before – and there were no big fluctuations. So far, it seemed that the figures adopted at MoP9 continued to be sustainable, and they allowed the trust fund to recover.

Mr. Streit proceeded to explain the income and expenditure report. Most of the Parties had paid their contributions, except for a few, which resulted in the arrears of about 23,000 EUR in total. This was not a big amount, but for a small budget such as that of EUROBATS, it was significant since it represented for e.g., a portion of funds bigger than those needed to organise an AC meeting, or two thirds of the funds needed for an increase of the post occupancy of the second Administrative Assistant.

On the expenditure side, the situation was getting better. The shortfalls on budget lines of staff costs were exclusively related to the unfavourable exchange rate between EUR and USD and the fact that the staff costs for professional staff members were computed in USD. Though certain shortfalls were likely, the savings expected to be generated on other budget lines would compensate for that. Mr. Streit wished to emphasise the importance of the additional 30,000 EUR of the voluntary contribution from Monaco, which presented a very strong support to the budget through the difficult period. And, due to the limitations caused by the pandemic and the fact that both the 25<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee and the joint 26<sup>th</sup> Advisory and 19<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee Meeting took place online, savings of more than 50,000 EUR were generated. This was a significant help, also concerning the discussion that would follow under the next agenda items.

Mr. Panis, coming back to the topic of income, reminded the delegates that during MoP9 there was a discussion as to what could be done to solve the problem of arrears. Mr. Streit confirmed that a decision was made not to finance the meeting participation of the representatives of those countries which had not paid their regular contribution for more than three years. For AC27 it concerned only one country, but the Secretariat did practice this decision – the Party was not represented at the meeting, but there was an NGO observer. The responsible ministry of the country in question did request its participation, however, it was informed about the MoP9 decision. For the Secretariat it was an embarrassing situation, but it did share the view of the Standing Committee, especially if

it concerned so many years, in this case since 2016. Ms. Domazetović explained that, in case of other conventions, there was no such polite treatment of the Parties with arrears – all the Parties received information when a country did not pay, and their voting rights were taken away. This all happened after not as many years of arrears as was the case with EUROBATS. The Party would be notified formally, not only on the level of meeting participants. Party representatives participating in the meetings changed and there might be a problem with the information flow. Therefore, it was important to notify the Party formally. Ms. Nedinge from Sweden supported the proposal of Ms. Domazetović – there had to be consequences for the Parties not paying their contributions. It would not be fair towards the representatives of other Parties to support the meeting participation of the delegates from those Parties that had significant arrears. Mr. Panis inquired about the formal steps taken by the Secretariat. Mr. Streit responded that there was email contact with the responsible ministry in relation to AC27 participation. Also, in response to Ms. Domazetović's comment, formal letters had been sent to the Party in question. Some progress had been achieved and a portion of arrears paid, but then it stopped again. There had been continuing contact with the responsible ministry. Since UNEP was about to start the second cycle of invoicing and send invoices to all the Parties that had not paid this or the last year's contributions, Mr. Streit planned to take that opportunity and add formal letters to those countries that were in arrears for more than two or three years. That was what the Secretariat could do – always bring the issue back to light. If necessary, the Executive Secretary would also approach the Chair and Vice Chair for signing these letters that would be sent to the top level of the responsible ministries of these countries. Mr. Panis inquired about the reasons why these countries were in arrears. Mr. Streit explained that for Slovenia and Ukraine it was the matter of just one year and both of those countries were willing to pay and had requested new invoices. This was, thus, not an issue for further discussion. More difficult was the case of Albania and Moldova where Mr. Streit was not aware of the reasons for the delay in payment. In case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Executive Secretary mentioned that one possible explanation could be that the Ministry of Environment did not have its own budget. All payments had to be authorised and initiated at a different level of the government, and that could be part of the explanation of the problem. Ms. Domazetović explained that, since the country was divided in entities, it was the Ministry of Foreign Trade that was taking care of such payments, and she offered to help with establishing contact to the relevant authorities. There being no further questions with regard to the income and expenditure report, the Executive Secretary was asked to proceed with the Trust Fund Status Report.



Mr. Streit explained that the Trust Fund Status Report was traditionally the most difficult document to read. The bottom line, being the net assets, was showing 242,172 USD, which meant that the Trust Fund had slightly recovered against all expectations. In the MoP9 year, a withdrawal should have taken place, however, since this was not necessary, the Trust Fund was at a slightly higher level. Mr. Panis reminded the delegates that a withdrawal of 100,000 EUR was planned throughout the current cycle, and commented, that even so the situation seemed good. Mr. Streit answered that he believed the withdrawal would be smaller. He explained that one of the priorities, as decided at MoP9, was to compensate for the additional 20,000 EUR withdrawal for the 2023 budget, which had not originally been planned for in the budget scenarios but had to be included due to financial constraints. This had already been accomplished by the fact that there were no withdrawals in 2022 and due to the savings. What remained on the agenda were the other two priorities as set up by MoP9.

Giving a projection of the financial situation, Mr. Streit said that, in 2022, in addition to the voluntary contribution of 10,000 EUR from Luxembourg to support the financing of the Scientific Officer post, and 30,000 EUR from Monaco, which were special contributions of the Parties for the regular budget, all the other voluntary contributions were intended for projects.

For 2023, voluntary contributions were received from Germany – for the organisation of the AC meeting as well as for projects, and Luxembourg – exclusively for projects. As a wonderful surprise before the summer break the news came that Monaco could make another voluntary contribution to the regular budget for 2023 of 10,000 EUR, which would help the Agreement a lot. It was not excluded that some additional contributions might follow.

The question was raised as to how much would be needed to be withdrawn from the Trust Fund for 2023. The Executive Secretary responded that this was difficult to predict right now but, judging by the expenditure from the last 5 months, it was obvious that not the entire sum of 20,000 EUR would be needed. There might be no withdrawal at all, however, not more than 20,000 EUR and not all 40,000 EUR as planned by the MoP would be withdrawn. This information was important to be born in mind for the discussions under the next agenda item.

Finally, Mr. Streit presented the Secretariat workplan, which was available on the EUROBATS website as Doc.EUROBATS.StC21.8 and which was updated every year according to the staffing situation and the tasks for the year. There were little changes

regarding the post of the Executive Secretary. The Scientific Officer was back to 80 percent post occupancy and the two Administrative Assistants took turns in having an increased post occupancy. At the bottom line, the post occupancy for both was 65 percent. As there was nothing important to highlight, the floor was opened for questions. Ms. Kohzer from Germany pointed out that the G-Staff still had about 50 days of overtime according to the work plan and asked for an explanation how this occurred. Mr. Streit explained that 50 days of overtime remained as only one of the Assistants was working at 80 percent.

#### **7. Implementation of budget priorities as decided at MoP9 in view of a possible meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2024**

Mr. Streit explained that, in view of available funds, the priorities that could be implemented referred either to the staffing situation or to the next AC meeting. It was a rather difficult situation, and it remained the decision of the Standing Committee as to which priority would be implemented. However, within the Secretariat team the unanimous wish was to prioritise the organisation of the AC meeting in 2024, and the team was optimistic that this could be achieved. Of course, the other priority could not be neglected – for the increase of the second post ca. 25,000 EUR would be needed, but the Secretariat had seen the tremendous success of in person AC meetings. Since the budget predictions looked promising, and no shortfalls were to be expected as had been the case in the past due to an unfavourable exchange rate, the budget figures seemed sustainable. Certain savings could be expected, and some had already been made. Additionally, there was hope that Spain might join the Agreement in the meantime. For all these reasons, Mr. Streit suggested that the Standing Committee held another short meeting in October, since at that point it might be possible to conclude that both priorities would be possible. Mr. de Barsac commented that, for the increase of the post occupancy of the second Assistant additional funds would be needed not only for the current year but until 2026. Mr. Streit answered that the additional 10,000 EUR were secured for this but not for the coming years, and that he remained optimistic that the financial situation would be good. Mr. de Barsac concluded that he would rather postpone the decision. Ms. Impagliazzo explained that, at this point, there was no insurance that Monaco could make voluntary contributions every year and her general recommendation would be to finance the staff salaries by the regular budget and not by voluntary contributions. Further, she asked how much the last AC meeting cost and if there were any countries willing to host the next AC meeting, considering that no in-person AC meeting had been planned for

2024. Mr. Streit answered that, though in the budget 20,000 EUR were foreseen for the organisation of the AC meeting, the actual costs for the last meeting were about 31,000 EUR, which again proved what the Parties had been warned of, also at MoP9, that the AC budget line was traditionally underbudgeted. Regarding the possible host country for the next AC meeting, this issue was not discussed at AC27, however, Mr. Streit was aware of one or two countries that were looking into the prospect of hosting the meeting should this become possible. In the worst-case scenario, the meeting could be held in Bonn, however, this would be a more expensive option.

Ms. Nedinge commented that she knew the budget was lean and insufficient. She would equally dislike seeing the Secretariat overworked as she would dislike cancelling an in-person AC meeting. Not knowing what the budget situation would be, she suggested that the decision as to which of the priorities should be financed should be postponed until autumn. Mr. Panis commented that there seemed to be a general agreement to have another meeting in October to re-address the issue and look into the state of expenditure.

Ms. Kohzer asked, since increasing the second post of the Administrative Assistants to 80 percent was the first priority identified by the MoP, if by any chance this increase could be done already before October. Mr. Streit responded that the issue had been discussed within the team in detail, and that both Assistants' preference was to maintain the current arrangement of working at the 65 percent basis. Considering that the summer months were usually a calmer period, it might be better to wait until autumn to see what the financial situation would be. If the second post would be increased immediately, it would not be certain that the necessary funds for this increase would also be secured for the future. In October, the Committee would have a better view of the budget performance and what could be expected in the following years. Mr. Streit then invited the Assistants to give their opinion and they both confirmed their preference was as already mentioned by the Executive Secretary. Ms. Kohzer concluded that, though it was kind of the Assistants to prioritise the organisation of the AC meeting, the priorities had been agreed by all the Parties after intensive discussions and there were also additional reasons why Germany would like to keep the priorities as they were defined at MoP9. These reasons included equal treatment of all conventions, restriction of travel, also due to climate change reasons, etc.

Ms. Domazetović supported the argument of Ms. Kohzer and asked, since the priorities had already been identified, and since based on the Secretariat workplan the Assistants were expected to accumulate 50 days of overtime, why it could not be agreed immediately

to increase the second post to 80 percent. Mr. Streit explained that a significant portion of the over time was not related to the routine work but to the organisation of the meetings. These two topics were related to each other; thus, he proposed the postponing of the decision. At a later stage the situation might be such that both priorities could become possible, but this could not be predicted at the moment.

Referring to the comment of Ms. Kohzer regarding equal treatment of all conventions, Ms. Petermann said that she was aware of the importance of having properly paid Secretariat staff members and that she acknowledged the conclusion of the Administrative Working Group about the priorities, but that when speaking about equal treatment of all conventions, it should be considered that EUROBATS worked differently than other agreements. In case of EUROBATS, it was really only the Advisory Committee that worked on the guidelines and resolutions. Mr. Streit also reassured Ms. Kohzer that, throughout the UN and UNEP, big efforts were being made to reduce carbon foot-print, to reduce travel, to reduce huge meetings to the extent possible, but there were always exceptions and good reasons for in-person meetings. Additionally, EUROBATS meetings were by far the smallest. Especially, since the EUROBATS Advisory Committee had proven how efficient it could be if it had the opportunity to meet in person.

Ms. Impagliazzo recalled the interventions of Ms. Domazetović and Ms. Kohzer. A compromise was reached at MoP9 after intense discussions. This compromise was not the best for the countries that wanted to increase the contributions, and also not the best for the Advisory Committee that wanted to have more in-person meetings. However, it was a compromise, also since the number of in-person meetings was increased from one to two per cycle. Monaco did not see it as reasonable to have a face-to-face meeting every year. Though virtual meetings were difficult, the priorities as decided at MoP9 should be observed.

Further, the possibility to finance the meetings through voluntary contributions was discussed. Mr. Streit mentioned that there would be a call for voluntary contributions to support a possible AC meeting, but that it was important to first have the AC27 meeting take place and finalise the record of the meeting, to demonstrate how useful this meeting was. Additionally, later in the year the Parties might have a better overview on the availability of additional funds.

Mr. de Barsac reiterated that it would be best to postpone the decision until more information on how to finance the second administrative post till 2026 was available. He

asked that the Secretariat for this purpose prepared a document on the possible amounts involved for the proposed solutions.

Ms. Nedinge recalled the intervention of Ms. Impagliazzo – In the discussions at MoP9 it was decided that the staff should be prioritised. It was unfair to ask the staff to decide between an increase in their post occupancy and the organisation of another AC meeting. They could have an opinion and the Standing Committee was certainly interested in what they saw best for EUROBATS, but the Parties had made their decision. And if the Parties did not want to increase their contributions, then one of the consequences was that there would be no additional meetings and the priorities had to be respected. Mr. Panis commented that, in his opinion, the debate was not about the priorities. The second post occupancy of the Administrative Assistants was the first priority, and only if there were additional funds available, an AC meeting could be organised in 2024. In response to Ms. Nedinge, Mr. Streit stated that currently there were no sufficient funds for both of the priorities, since the second staff position could not be increased on a longer term.

The Chair of the Standing Committee then concluded the discussion on this agenda item summarising that a decision what could be done based on the priorities would be postponed until October. In the meantime, the Secretariat would send letters to the Parties asking for additional voluntary contributions.

#### **8. Terms of Reference for the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary in 2024**

Mr. Streit explained that, since the remaining time until his retirement was ca. 13 months, and in order to have his replacement available immediately afterwards, he was requested to start preparing the recruitment process for his successor. The first step was to draft a new job description, since the previous one was more than 20 years old and no longer useable. The drafted job description then had to be approved in Nairobi, after which a job opening would be announced. The job opening was extremely important as it set out the criteria for long- and short listing of candidates. More than a hundred of applications could be expected, that was why these criteria needed to be well defined. Though this whole process was determined by the clearly set UN rules, which were not for the Standing Committee to discuss, it was common and important to make sure that at least the Chairs of the relevant bodies of the Agreement were consulted in this process and informed. This could also be achieved by means of the Secretariat preparing a short document in which the terms of reference for the recruitment of a new Executive Secretary would be laid out, which would describe how the recruitment process would go and what the consultation of the Chairs of the Standing and the Advisory Committees could be in the

final stage of the selection. There was also Resolution 3.1 with Terms of Reference for Secretariat arrangements, but this resolution could only be amended at the next MoP. Therefore, the question was posed whether a separate document was needed to clarify the involvement of the Chairs of the governing bodies of the Agreement in the recruitment process. After some discussion, it was agreed that no separate document would be needed for this purpose, but the Committee wanted to have reflected in the record of the meeting that both the Standing and the Advisory Committee represented through their respective Chairs should be properly consulted throughout the recruitment process to make sure that the interest of the EUROBATS Parties would be well represented and respected.

#### **9. Any other business**

There was no other business to be discussed.

#### **10. Date and venue of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

It had been agreed during this meeting that another StC meeting would be held online in October 2023. Mr. Streit confirmed that the Secretariat was aware of the CMS CoP14 and that it would also check for other important international meetings and then inform the Standing Committee of the possible dates.

#### **11. Close of meeting**

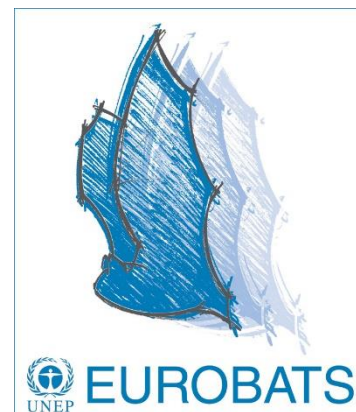
There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Panis thanked all the participants for the efficient meeting and was looking forward to seeing the record of the meeting. Mr. Streit thanked all the members of the Standing Committee for their continuous support. He was glad that at this meeting all the members were represented, which was excellent and not always the case. The record of the meeting would be sent to the meeting participants as soon as possible for their feedback and comments. The meeting ended at 17:00.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Videoconference, 29 June 2023

(14:00 – 17:00 h CET)

### List of Participants



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