

2nd Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 6 May 2008

Record



1. Attendance

This is listed at **Annex 1** to this Record.

2. Opening remarks

The Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr. Michel Perret (France), opened the Meeting and transmitted apologies from the Czech Republic and Italy for not being able to be present.

The representative of Germany, Mr. Oliver Schall, welcomed the participants on behalf of the host government. He referred to the upcoming CBD CoP 9 and its importance for all biodiversity related Conventions and Agreements.

The Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS, Mr. Robert Hepworth, invited the participants to a side event of CMS during the CBD CoP and mentioned EUROBATS as a successful example for dealing with the 2010 goals. He also expressed his best wishes for this Meeting.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee, Mr. Peter Lina (The Netherlands), praised once again the new structure of the Agreement bodies, making the work on both the scientific and administrative sides much more efficient. He would report back to the Advisory Committee about this Meeting.

The Executive Secretary of EUROBATS also welcomed the participants and promised interesting reports on implementation of Resolutions and progress in the work programme.

The Chair thanked Germany for hosting the Meeting and thanked the Chair of the Advisory Committee, Mr. Peter Lina, the UNEP/CMS Executive Secretary, Mr. Robert Hepworth and the Secretariat for their opening statements.

3. Adoption of the Agenda (Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.1.Rev.1)

The Agenda was adopted by consensus.

4. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure (Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.4)

The Rules of Procedure were unanimously adopted.

5. Secretariat report (Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.8.Rev.1)

The Executive Secretary referred to the relating document. In addition he was happy to report that thanks to the excellent outputs of the Advisory Committee, the Agreement's work was increasingly focussing on concrete implementation. The guidelines on protecting and managing important underground sites had been published (Publication Series No. 2) and met a very good response. The guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects (Publication Series No. 3) were close to be published and the guidelines on overground roosts as well as forest management were in the process of being finalised.

The Executive Secretary also reported that there had been no recent accessions to the Agreement but that a number of countries were in the process of joining. The Secretariat would continue its efforts to attract new Parties.

The Chair highlighted that the implementation activities of EUROBATS could serve as example for others and that it would be useful to learn more about action taken within the Parties, in particular how the networks between nature conservation authorities and bat workers were organised. He also reported that the newly established French national action plan would be translated into English and shared within EUROBATS.

Germany reported about activities in attracting Russia as Party to CMS and the relevant Agreements and a recent project concerning the possible need to extend the EUROBATS Agreement area as a result of new genetic research possibilities.

6. Administrative matters:

a) Report on income and expenditure as well as Trust Fund status (Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.6.Rev.1 and Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.7)

The Executive Secretary reported that with the exception of one small amount all contributions for 2007 had been received and that for 2008 more than two thirds of the contributions were already received by the end of April. He thanked the Parties for their continuing commitment and reliability. He furthermore explained that the significant positive balance in 2007 expenditure from the regular budget was partly related to the retroactive payment of activities from voluntary contributions.

The members of the Committee enquired about the in their view considerable unspent balance on staff costs. The Executive Secretary explained that allotments for staff costs always needed to contain some margin for contingency but that a large part of the savings was resulting from an unexpected freeze of the local UN salary scale in Germany. Overall the figures confirmed solid planning.

The Executive Secretary was happy to report that for the first time voluntary contributions were no longer needed to finance core activities (e.g. meetings and participation costs for countries with economies in transition) but could be fully used for projects, publications and activities to raise public awareness. The Committee suggested to the Secretariat to prepare a list of possible projects that could be considered by Parties for funding through voluntary contributions. The Secretariat took up this proposal with gratitude.

b) Projection of the financial situation in 2008 including voluntary contributions

The Executive Secretary reported that the financial situation for 2008 was excellent thanks to the prompt payments of contributions by Parties, savings from previous years and the meanwhile proven reliability of the annual budget figures presented to and adopted by MoP 5 (see also a) above).

c) Staffing situation in the Secretariat

The Executive Secretary introduced Tine Meyer-Cords, who had entered on duty in October 2007 in the Secretariat as part-time Administrative Assistant and explained that she was also a bat expert, which was clearly an asset for EUROBATS.

In view of the constantly increasing workload of the Secretariat (e.g. the very successful EUROBATS Publication Series) the Executive Secretary had decided after consultation with and approval of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee to increase the post occupancy of the Secretary, Ayhan Polat, from 50 to 80% since March until the end of the year for the time being and expressed his hope that this arrangement could continue beyond 2008. The Committee endorsed this for the current year but decided that an extension should be subject to a thorough evaluation of the Secretariat's needs and the availability of funds.

**d) Establishment of a formalised Operational Trust Fund Reserve
(Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.10)**

The Executive Secretary introduced the relating document and explained that the UNEP Corporate Services Section within the Executive Office (UNEP/EO/CSS), which is responsible for the budget and fund management for all UNEP administered Conventions and Agreements, had just before this Meeting of the Standing Committee encouraged the Secretariat to make this proposal to the Committee. UNEP/EUROBATS had over the years managed to establish a healthy and stable trust fund reserve that amounted to approximately 170,000 EUR as of 31 December 2007 allowing for the establishment of a formal minimum reserve. For EUROBATS the suggested minimum amount was three months of staff costs, equalling to a rounded amount of EUR 60,000. The Committee welcomed the proposal and approved it by consensus.

7. Report on the preparations for the 13th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

The Executive Secretary recalled the decision of MoP5 to hold the 13th Meeting of the Advisory Committee back to back with the XIth European Bat Research Symposium in Cluj, Romania, August 2008, for reasons of cost efficiency. An exploratory mission earlier in the year had however revealed that it would not be possible to hold AC13 at the same venue and therefore only some economies on travel costs were to be expected. Thanks to significant savings from the previous year on that budget line, financing AC13 nevertheless was ensured and a suitable venue at acceptable rates had been identified.

**8. The Future Shape of CMS: Collaboration between EUROBATS and CMS
(Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.9.Rev.1)**

The Executive Secretary of CMS introduced the relating document and explained that the suggested establishment of a joint CMS Family Information, Central Capacity Building and Fundraising Unit was relevant for EUROBATS and potentially would lead to increased synergies, higher impact as well as cost-effectiveness for the co-located Secretariats.

Germany, while recognising the Convention's need for a vision on future development, considered it being premature to discuss this document for which the discussion had only just started in the CMS Standing Committee with diverging views.

The Chair pointed out that only the common information unit was intended to be discussed at this stage. After some more discussion the Committee agreed to establish

a small working group (members: France, Germany, Ukraine and United Kingdom to be confirmed) that would follow the further discussion among CMS Parties and contribute from the EUROBATS perspective as appropriate. In particular, the working group would discuss the costs and benefits of creating a common unit for information, capacity building, fundraising, media and publication in accordance with the outcome of the debate on this issue at COP 9 CMS.

9. Implementation of Resolutions adopted at MoP5

The Chair of the Advisory Committee gave a comprehensive overview of progress achieved in the 13 Intersessional Working Groups. While some had successfully completed their work or were close to that, the majority would need to continue in their ambitious and extensive work programme. They would also hold meetings during the AC13 in August. He highlighted the development of the European bat monitoring programme that was managed by the Bat Conservation Trust (UK) and would hopefully lead to the establishment of “Bat Life Europe”.

The Chair of the Standing Committee expressed his gratitude to the Advisory Committee for the impressive progress achieved. He intended to send a message to the next AC Meeting in this regard. The Chair also recalled that overground roosts were one of the priorities identified by the Standing Committee and inquired whether a conclusion was reached concerning cultural heritage buildings. The Secretariat informed that according to recent news from the Working Group, ordinary buildings and houses as well as buildings with cultural heritage importance would be covered by the guidelines under preparation.

10. 2011 - Year of the Bat

The convenor of the Intersessional Working Group on the “Year of the Bat”, Oliver Schall (Germany), reported about initial ideas that included a particular focus on the co-existence of bats and humans, public awareness raising through posters and postcards, special activities for children and the involvement of Natural History Museums. The Secretariat was requested to assist in the further collection of proposals. The working group would hold its next meeting during AC13 in August.

11. Upcoming international events and developments in Nature Conservation relevant for bats and the Agreement

The Executive Secretary reported that EUROBATS would be represented together with the whole CMS Family at the upcoming CBD Conference of Parties in a tent with a

common exhibition and publications in a side-event. Other important events in the year were the XIth European Bat Research Symposium in Romania, a European Speleological Symposium in France and the CMS Conference of Parties in Italy to which the Secretariat planned active contributions.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee informed that in 2010 beside the EUROBATs MoP6, also the International Bat Research Conference would take place in Prague, Czech Republic.

Germany expressed interest to host the Advisory Committee in 2010.

12. Any other business

The Executive Secretary gave a brief summary of the UNEP Executive Management Retreat in which he had participated and encouraging progress in the ongoing UNEP reform. He furthermore informed the Committee about work undertaken on streamlining administrative procedures within the CMS Family and in relation to UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi. He also mentioned recent visits of the UNEP Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Angela Cropper, as well as the Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner and that relations with UNEP were lively and positive.

13. Date and venue of the 3rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

The Chair underlined the need for meeting once per year and suggested to hold the 3rd Meeting of the Standing Committee at the end of May 2009 in Bonn. The Secretariat would identify the date of the 2009 Meeting of the Advisory Committee as soon as possible and liaise with the Chair concerning the precise date for the Standing Committee. This was agreed.

14. Adoption of the Record of the Meeting

The Record was adopted by consensus.

15. Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its good management and all staff for their work in preparing the Meeting. He also thanked the Chair of the Advisory Committee and requested to pass on the congratulations of the Standing Committee to the AC for its excellent work and achievements. The Chair furthermore thanked the members of the Standing Committee for their participation and valuable contributions.

There being no further business, the Meeting was closed at 16.25 h.

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List of Participants



MEMBERS

FINLAND

Mr. Matti Osara
Ministry of the Environment
Land Use Department
P.O. Box 35
00023 Government of Finland
Tel: +358 9 160 393 34
Fax: +358 9 160 393 64
E-mail: matti.osara@ymparisto.fi

FRANCE

Dr. Michel Perret
Ministère de l'Écologie, de l'Énergie, du
Développement Durable et de
l'Aménagement du Territoire
Direction de la Nature et des Paysages
20 avenue de Ségur
75302 Paris 07 SP
Tel: +33 1 42 19 18 69
Fax: +33 1 42 19 19 79
E-mail: michel-m.perret@
developpement-durable.gouv.fr

Mr. Paul Delduc
Ministère de l'Écologie, de l'Énergie, du
Développement Durable et de
l'Aménagement du Territoire
Direction de la Nature et des Paysages
20 avenue de Ségur
75302 Paris 07 SP
Tel: +33 1 42 19 19 74
Fax: +33 1 42 19 19 77
E-mail: paul.delduc@
developpement-durable.gouv.fr

Ms. Marianne Courouble
Ministère de l'Écologie, de l'Énergie, du
Développement Durable et de
l'Aménagement du Territoire
Direction de la Nature et des Paysages
20 avenue de Ségur
75302 Paris 07 SP
Tel: +33 1 42 19 10 81
Fax: +33 1 42 19 19 79
E-mail: marianne.courouble@
developpement-durable.gouv.fr

GERMANY

Mr. Oliver Schall
Federal Ministry for the Environment
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
International Nature Conservation
Activities
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn
Tel: +49 228 305 2632
Fax: +49 228 305 2684
E-mail: oliver.schall@bmu.bund.de

Mr. Edward Ragusch
Federal Ministry for the Environment
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
International Nature Conservation
Activities
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn
Tel: +49 228 305 2663
Fax: +49 228 305 2684
E-mail: edward.ragusch@bmu.bund.de

UKRAINE

Dr. Volodymyr Domashlinets
Ministry of the Environmental Protection
Urytskogo str. 35
03035 Kiev
Tel: +380 44 206 31 27
Fax: +380 44 206 31 27 / 34
E-mail: domashlinets@menr.gov.ua
vdomashlinets@yahoo.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Ms. Jean Smyth
Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
European Wildlife Division
Zone 1/08a, Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol BS3 6EB
Tel: +44 117 372 8817
Fax: +44 117 372 8688
E-mail: jean.smyth@defra.gsi.gov.uk

OBSERVER PARTIES

LUXEMBOURG

Mr. Laurent Biraschi
Direction des Eaux et Forêts
16 rue Eugène Ruppert
2453 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 402 201 1
Fax: +352 402 201 250
E-mail: laurent.biraschi@ef.etat.lu
bat@ef.etat.lu

CHAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Peter H.C. Lina
Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality
c/o Reference Centre for Bat Studies
and Conservation (RCBSC)
P.O. Box 835
2300 AV Leiden
Tel: +31 71 531 49 79
Fax: +31 71 576 62 68
E-mail: phclina@telfort.nl

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

UNEP/CMS

Mr. Robert Hepworth
UNEP/CMS
United Nations Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn
Tel: +49 228 815 24 02
Fax: +49 228 815 24 49
E-mail: rhepworth@cms.int

UNEP/AEWA

Mr. Bert Lenten
UNEP/AEWA
United Nations Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn
Tel: +49 228 815 24 14
Fax: +49 228 815 24 50
E-mail: blenten@unep.de

EUROBATS SECRETARIAT

Mr. Andreas Streit
Ms. Ayhan Polat
Ms. Christine Boye
Ms. Tine Meyer-Cords
UNEP/EUROBATS Secretariat
United Nations Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 228 815 2420 / 21 / 31 / 32
Fax: +49 228 815 2445
E-mail: eurobats@eurobats.org