

3rd Meeting of the Standing Committee

Bonn, Germany, 31 March 2009

Secretariat Report



Staff

As of January 2009, Ms. Ayhan Polat (part-time Secretary/Personal Assistant) has taken up a full-time post in the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As of February 2009, Ms. Kate Horn was recruited as new Secretary/Personal Assistant.

Due to the significantly grown workload for the Secretariat, that has further increased after the launch of the EUROBATS Projects Initiative and to cover the vacancy/transition period reported above, the post occupancy of one of the Administrative Assistant (Ms. Tine-Meyer Cords) has been increased from 50% to 80% from January to May 2009.

The Secretariat will present concrete data to the Standing Committee, demonstrating the continuing and constantly growing pressures and constraints resulting from the situation of being under-staffed.

National Implementation Reports

In 2008 and until March 2009 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and the UK have submitted voluntary updates to their National Implementation Reports. The Secretariat will prepare an updated Synthesis for the AC14 Meeting.

Agreement Membership

The Secretariat was informed in March 2009 that San Marino had ratified the accession to the Agreement, which will enter into force after the deposit of the relating instrument. The growth in membership is hoped to continue with the accession of several more countries. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Serbia as well as Montenegro are in the process of acceding. The Secretariat continues to give a particular focus to the Mediterranean Region in its efforts to attract new Parties.

The Secretariat would like to reiterate its call upon Parties to assist in the recruitment of new Parties within their possibilities.

Special Projects

In August 2008 the EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI) was launched at the XIth European Bat Research Symposium and the 13th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in Cluj, Romania. Until March 2009 a total of 25 project proposals were received and the Secretariat was able to raise additional 25.400 EUR in voluntary contributions on top of the usual yearly 30.600 EUR.

In 2008 the Secretariat financed and co-ordinated the following projects:

1. Project Romania with the aim of strengthening the bat NGOs, local branches, working groups and experts in Romania (finalised).
2. Project Ukraine: Key sites for cave-dwelling bats of the continental south of Ukraine (finalised March 2009).
3. Project Russia: Providing expertise and developing mitigation measures for bats during planning and construction of infrastructure for Winter Olympic Games 2014 in Sochi, Russia (ongoing).
4. Project Cyprus: Raising Awareness of bats and the necessity for their protection in Cyprus (ongoing).
5. Project Bulgaria: Bat Survey and Public Relation Project in Strandja Nature Park / Bulgaria (ongoing).

See Doc.EUROBATS.StC2.10 concerning expected voluntary contributions for EPI and other activities in 2009.

Publicity

The EUROBATS Publication Series No. 2 on “Protecting and managing underground sites for bats” (released in September 2007) met such a demand, that already in 2008 a second edition had to be printed. No. 3 on “Guidelines for consideration of bats in wind farm projects” was launched in August 2008 and meets an even bigger demand. A second edition might become necessary in the course of 2009 already. Publication Series No. 4 dealing with “Guidelines on the protection and management of important overground roosts” is now in the stage of layout and translation and will be launched in summer 2009. The same applies for a leaflet on “Bats and Forestry”. In the expectation that the guidelines on “Surveillance and Monitoring Methods for European Bats” will be finalised at the upcoming AC14 Meeting, they will be published as No. 5 of the EUROBATS Publication Series as soon as possible thereafter.

The Secretariat will continue to promote the European Bat Night which is a continuing and still growing success.

Further publications and information material will depend on the availability of voluntary contributions and staff resources.

The EUROBATS website has been updated on a regular basis in order to provide useful information. The Secretariat will make continuing efforts for further development.

The EUROBATS Advent Calendar 2008 was a particular success in terms of outreach. The feedback received by the Secretariat was overwhelming.

The Secretariat can also report that the Agreement excites continuing public interest resulting in requests for TV, radio as well as newspaper reports and interviews.