

17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Dublin, Ireland, 15 – 17 May 2012

Record of the Meeting



1. Attendance

This is listed at Annex 1 to the Record.

2. Opening remarks:

Mr. Peter Lina (Chair) opened the session by welcoming the participants to the 17th Advisory Committee Meeting held for the first time in Dublin, Ireland. He expressed his gratitude to the Irish government for hosting the meeting and subsequently invited the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, His Excellency Mr. Jimmy Deenihan, to lead the opening remarks.

The Minister, Mr. Jimmy Deenihan, expressed his delight at the presence of 78 delegates representing 42 different countries, a record attendance for EUROBATS. He welcomed the delegates to Dublin Castle and commended them on their work, which generates some of the most important discussions and debates on bat conservation and management. His Excellency further referred to EUROBATS important role in bat conservation and awareness raising activities not only across Europe but also in the Middle East and North Africa.

In addition, Mr. Deenihan addressed the growing awareness in Ireland, among both the farming and urban communities, of the importance of ecosystem services. On a final note, the Minister highlighted the work being done in Ireland by Bat Conservation Ireland, who together with the National Parks and Wildlife Service has developed a comprehensive and robust national monitoring programme for Irish bats. Mr. Deenihan concluded by wishing the delegates a fruitful meeting and a pleasant stay in Ireland.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee thanked his Excellency for his kind words, warm hospitality and excellent excursion that introduced the delegates to Howth and Newgrange.

Dr. Ferdia Marnell, Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee, welcomed all delegates to Dublin and expressed his pleasure at being able to reciprocate the hospitality received

during other meetings. He concluded by reflecting on the pleasant excursion and wishing all present a productive meeting.

The Executive Secretary of UNEP/EUROBATS, Mr. Andreas Streit, expressed his gratitude to the host country for the warm welcome and the best conference facilities to date. He was delighted to welcome the representatives of 42 countries, in particular the delegates from Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, who were participating for the first time. Mr. Streit reflected on the presence of excellent bat experts and the emergence of new networks, which he hoped would lead to more cooperation opportunities. The Executive Secretary thanked Dr. Ferdia Marnell and all his colleagues for their efforts and assured them that the wonderful excursion, the beauty of the country and the Irish welcoming mentality would not be forgotten.

On a sad note, Mr. Streit informed that colleagues Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation) and Dr. Zoltán Bihari (Hungary) unfortunately could not be present.

The Chair proceeded with a tribute to the late colleague, Prof. Irina Rakhmatulina, who passed away on March 8th at the age of 74. A member of the EUROBATS family since 2000, Prof. Rakhmatulina had worked at the Institute of Zoology (National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan) for more than 50 years, was the author of more than 100 publications and one of the main executive authors of the 3rd volume of "Animals of Azerbaijan - Vertebrate". Mr. Lina expressed his sadness over the loss of a friend so active and dedicated to science, whose last contribution was a publication – a complete list of bat names in Azerbaijani. A moment of silence was observed to remember Prof. Irina Rakhmatulina.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted by consensus.

3. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

The Chair drew attention to Doc.EUROBATS.AC17.3, in particular rule 2, paragraph 3 and rule 8, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

The Executive Secretary informed that the Rules of Procedure remained unchanged since the last meeting.

The Rules of Procedure were thus adopted by consensus.

4. Summary reports by Parties, Non-Party Range States and NGOs

Activities on bats and the protection of bats, running up to the “Year of the Bat”, were numerous in all three regions of **Belgium**. Nature authorities continued their efforts to safeguard the legal protection and to raise awareness on the importance of bats and their importance for balanced ecosystems. In addition, NGOs Natagora and Natuurpunt also organised a wide range of activities covering scientific research and monitoring, as well as raising the awareness of the general public

The European Bat Night was a great success, with 3,000 participants from the wider audience attending events in more than 60 localities.

It was reported that winter census counts in over several hundred larger and smaller hibernacula were carried out and that both Natagora and Natuurpunt have collaborated with biodiversity data storage sites, such as ‘waarnemingen.nl’. Monitoring is on-going all over Belgium. Data on monitoring activities for wind farm permits is, however, not always available for future reporting. During the 2011 summer the first discovery of *Myotis alcathoe* was made near the city of Rochefort.

Regional guidelines on wind turbines were reviewed in the Walloon region. Until recently, wind turbines were not allowed in or near forests due to the probability of causing increased bat mortality. Future projects near or in forests can be permitted in southern Belgium under the condition that blades run above 6 m/s wind speed, or above 9 m/s wind speed, should migrating species be observed. This may occur in the period April - October, between sundown and sunrise, with dry weather.

In all Belgian regions, favourable state of conservation plans for NATURA 2000 sites (EU Habitat Directive) were completed. Many of these sites include bat nurseries and hibernation objects.

Currently, two research projects on the impact of antiparasitic drugs on potential prey of bats are on-going. Several projects on the possible importance of swarming were funded. A poster on the importance and cases of *Geomyces destructans* in Belgium was produced and it was awarded by the Belgian Wildlife Disease Society. Also, a research paper on the diet of the *Myotis emarginatus* in southern Belgium was produced.

Not all signals are positive for the future. It was reported that tree dwelling bats remain under considerable pressure due to often fast and unrestrained removal of softwood trees. Furthermore, cave dwelling species are under pressure due to the disturbance of several larger hibernacula. All bat species face additional pressure with the expansion and installation of wind turbines in unsuitable areas. Further guidance by the EUROBATS Agreement on this topic was requested.

An accidental mortality incident in an underground site in the Belgian Ardennes resulted in the loss of several *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *Myotis myotis*, both very rare species in Belgium. Measures were taken by the authority to avoid a similar incident at the same site. Lastly, accidental mortalities of *Nyctalus* and *Myotis daubentonii* are fairly common when removing trees in winter. In this respect, even known bat colonies in trees have no particular protection in the case of tree removal.

Croatia reported that since the new Act on the Organisation and Scope of Work of Ministries and Other Central State Administration Bodies (Official Gazette No. 150/11, December 2011), the Nature Protection Directorate is under the jurisdiction of the new Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MENP).

The projects and research below have been concluded:

- Mazija M. & Domazetović Z. (2011): Research of forest bat species in the Nature Park Medvednica, Association for Bat Conservation Tragus, 43 pp.
- BIUS (2011): Bat research on the Island of Hvar. In print.
- Dina Kovač, Diploma Thesis, 2011: Echolocation and wing morphology in *Nyctalus noctula* (Schreber, 1774) and *Nyctalus leisleri* (Kuhl, 1817) (Mammalia, Chiroptera), University of Zagreb, Faculty of Natural Sciences.
- Norma Fressel, Diploma Thesis, 2011: Echolocation in the Schreiber's Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) (Kuhl, 1817) (Mammalia, Chiroptera).

The following are on-going projects and research:

- EU NATURA 2000 Integration Project – NIP (<http://www.zastita-prirode.hr/eng/Projects-International-Cooperation/Projects/EU-NATURA-2000-Integration-Project-NIP>) Bats are to be covered in the following goal: Biological inventory, habitat mapping, upgrading of data systems to fulfil EU reporting requirements and harmonizing data systems with the EU INSPIRE Directive

requirements to improve whole Ecological Network Data Systems and future NATURA 2000 network.

- IPA project “Development of faunistic and speleological databases (CRO fauna and CRO speleo)”, as part of the NPIS (Nature Protection Information System). All relevant data on bats should be entered and stored in this database from 2012 onwards. It is being coordinated and prepared by SINP (State Institute for Nature Protection, www.dzzp.hr).
- Strengthening the Support and Scientific Evidence for Conservation of ‘Europe’s Amazon’ through Monitoring of Bats as Bio-indicators and Involvement of Community Bechstein’s bat; project leader Marina Kipson; Rufford Small Grant Scheme (http://www.ruffordsmallgrants.org/rsg/projects/marina_kipson)
- Investigating habitat utilization, roosting requirements and recent range shift in lithophilic bat species, *Hypsugo savii*, in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot and Central Europe. Marina Kipson PhD Thesis, supervisor: Prof. I. Horáček, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Bat ectoparasites in the Republic of Croatia, Diploma Thesis, Vida Zrnčić, supervisor: A. Marinculić, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Natural Sciences.
- Monitoring of bats in the Veternica Cave, project leader Petra Žvorc, Croatian Biospeleological Society (CBSS).
- Inventory of *Barbastella barbastellus* in the Alpine and Mediterranean biogeographical region in Croatia for the NATURA 2000 proposal, coordinated and researched by SINP and external bat experts.
- Inventory of bats in Hrvatsko Zagorje, Dinara Mountain and the island of Krk – coordinated and surveyed by SINP and external bat experts and NGOs.

It was also announced that during a regular winter monitoring at the Veternica Cave, Petra Žvorc from CBSS discovered a bat with a white nose. Confirmation that the white nose was caused by *Geomyces destructans* is awaiting Dr. Sébastien Puechmaille’s DNA analysis. Based on this, a Protocol for Survey of lethal fungal infections in bats was developed and needs to be finalized; in addition, a Quick Survey was also organized. The coordinator of the Protocol is SINP and bat experts and NGOs from Croatia, Croatian Veterinary Institute, and Speleological Societies and Clubs are

involved. More than ten caves were surveyed and in two caves bats with white noses were found and samples were taken.

The Protocol on inventory and conservation of bats in overground roosts with particular reference to roosts in buildings of cultural heritage importance has been under development since 2011. Since then, 17 surveys were carried out by D. Hamidović (SINP) and V. Lindić (senior inspector for nature protection, MENP); two of them were recorded in attics – one of the largest nurseries of *Rhinolophus hipposideros* in an elementary school and a *Myotis emarginatus* nursery in a business building. Both sites are being monitored and bats remained.

Despite the existence of National Guidelines for EIA regarding bats and wind-turbines, it was stressed that more specific measures or clarification of guidelines is necessary. The number of wind power plants continues to grow and in the sub-Mediterranean region of the Dinaric Arc, several wind turbines are planned, posing a serious threat to bats, particularly during the migratory season. It was also emphasized that most of the large bat nurseries (on the List of Internationally Important Underground Sites, UNEP/EUROBATS) are located in that region.

Concerning rehabilitation, the Zagreb Zoo (rehabilitators being bat experts and BIUS members) took in a total of twenty bats for rehabilitation. The concerned species were *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. kuhlii*, *P. pygmaeus*, *P. nathusii* and *Nyctalus noctula*. From the 20 bat individuals, 3 *P. kuhlii* and 1 *N. noctula* did not survive. A *Nyctalus noctula* female gave birth to mixed-sex twins during rehabilitation in March 2012. The juvenile male died, while the juvenile and adult females will be released once the former is able to fly. Help and advice were provided by Suzel Hurstel (France), Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Danilo Russo (Italy), Amanda Lollar (Bat World Sanctuary), Ingeborg Bata (Zagreb Zoo chief veterinarian), Croatian Veterinary Institute employees and 3 Private Veterinarian Ambulances. The rehabber – B. Krstinić – is a member of CBSS and expert help was provided by D. Hamidović. A Protocol on Bat Rehabilitation and Procedures on Keeping Bats in Captivity is planned.

A new Nature Protection Act is under preparation and it is clear that bat conservation issues and threats to bats could be dealt in a better way.

With regard to the “Year of the Bat”, an acknowledgment for Bat Conservation was presented to the elementary school Milan Lang, Grdanjci Section by the SINP Director.

By hosting a *Rhinolophus hipposideros* nursery, Milan Lang elementary became School – the Friend of Bats (<http://www.dzpp.hr/novosti/k/priznanje-skoli---prijatelju-sismisa---podrucnom-razrednom-odjelu-grdanjci-za-doprinos-u-zastiti-sismisa-1027.html>).

Lastly, the yearly European Bat Night and other bat-related lectures were conducted by the Zagreb ZOO, Krka National Park, Brijuni National Park, in cooperation with SINP, BIUS, TRAGUS and CBSS. Each activity was covered by the media, through radio, TV and newspapers on both national and regional levels, as well as social networking sites.

Facebook Open Community Page: Bats in Croatia -

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/%C5%A0i%C5%A1mi%C5%A1i-u-Hrvatskoj-Bats-in-Croatia/188082514629005>

Facebook Open Group: Bats in Croatia

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/244790558935444/>

State Institute Facebook Community Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Drzavni-Zavod-za-Zastitu-Prirode/118004114905844>

A total of 27 bat species have been recorded in the **Czech Republic**. The latest, *Miniopterus schreibersii*, was discovered in a cave in Moravia in 2011. Also, the records of *Hypsugo savii* increased from 4 to 14.

Monitoring programmes include long-term monitoring of hibernacula in over 600 sites, of maternity colonies with special emphasis of NATURA 2000 species at 120 localities and bat population in biotopes in 10 localities in PLA. Additionally, monitoring at swarming sites has been undertaken at 9 localities, as well as monitoring of bat populations in blocks of flats. Moreover, monitoring for the presence of *Geomyces destructans* at hibernacula across the country was conducted and coordinated by CBCT and universities. Lastly, the insulation of blocks of flats is occurring on a large scale, which is having a serious deleterious effect on several species, mainly noctule, parti-coloured and pipistrelle bats.

It was also reported that the national guidelines on wind turbines were finalised.

The web pages of CBCT (www.ceson.org) were updated and “Year of the Bat” activities, public events and a database of blocks of flats with bat colonies are now available online. The consulting centre of CBCT, which deals with bat problems, expanded its activity and a new project focussing on the reconstruction and insulation of

buildings was established (www.sousednetopyr.cz); these activities were shared on Facebook.

Activities devoted to the “Year of Bat” are to continue with a bat research series broadcast on scientific radio, the preparation of colouring books and fairy tales for children, new information material, a travelling exhibition, lectures and workshops for public, as well as administrative staff and construction firms.

European Bat Nights continue to be an important public awareness event in the Czech Republic, and the number of active localities increased to 46 in 2012, involving more than 4,500 participants.

Similarly, international cooperation improved, mainly with South Eastern Europe and Asia Minor regions.

The need for the protection of the Astangu tunnels, an important bat site on the outskirts of Tallinn, was one of the main concerns for bat protection in **Estonia** in 2011. A presentation on Astangu bat tunnels and the progress of the establishment of a nature reserve was delivered at the Tallinn Environment Conference and at the Autumn Meeting of Estonian Theriological Society. Estonia informed this is an on-going issue and that bat experts hope for a favourable outcome.

New information signs indicating bat hibernation sites and protective law in the tunnels have been erected in bat hibernation sites around Tallinn. Also, reconstruction work in hibernation sites has been done. Moreover, bats are now included in the new park management plan guidelines and a new publication concerning urban wildlife diversity.

For the “Year of the Bat” celebrations, bat walks and talks took place, as well as some bat box building workshops. For 2012 more events are planned and a new bat conservation plan will be issued for the next six years.

In **Finland** “Year of the Bat 2011” activities were co-ordinated by two NGOs - Finnish Nature Conservation Association and Finnish Chiropterological Society; both organisations formed a working group, which prepared an action plan and schedule of press releases for the year. The bat night organised in co-operation with local nature conservation NGOs was very successful: several bat walks and lectures took place in late August and early September gathering around 2,000 people. A themed exhibition on bats will be inaugurated in the Finnish Museum of Natural History in late 2012 and is expected to be circulated and displayed by other museums after six months.

It was also reported that a bat monitoring scheme for the country was drafted. Most of the scheme will be based on detector surveys (transects and point counts), while other parts will centre on winter counts in hibernacula and mark-recapture studies by ringing bats at certain sites. Detector transects were tested last summer and hibernacula counts have been carried out at some sites for 6 years now.

In a study on EBLV prevalence, over 700 bats in Southern, South-western and South-eastern Finland were sampled. Saliva samples were tested but antibody testing is still on-going. The results of the study will be published in due course.

Lastly, General Wind Turbine guidelines are being prepared by the Ministry of the Environment. Despite referencing the EUROBATS guidelines, this new guidance approaches bats on a very general level.

Georgia informed of its involvement in a regional project currently being implemented by several countries including Germany, Russia and Bulgaria. The aim of the project is to study the spatiotemporal genetic population structure of a social host and its two ectoparasites throughout the host's range in Europe and the Caucasus. In the framework of this project two new maternity colonies of *R. euryale* were found in Georgia.

As a contribution to the "Year of the Bat", **Germany** issued a publication featuring the translated resolutions of the last two EUROBATS MoPs and details of the national reports of the German federal states. This publication has been in great demand from the German bat conservationists.

The preparation of a publication of the results and papers presented at the national bat conservation meeting organised by the German NGO NABU (with the support of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation BfN and BMU) that took place in 2011 is on-going. These proceedings will also contain a summary of the analysed data of the monitoring of the greater mouse-eared bat, as well as an experts' report on the problems of building wind turbines in forests that both were financed by the BfN.

The BfN composed a position paper "Windkraft über Wald" addressing the dangers for nature and species conservation associated with the construction of wind turbines in forests; the paper revealed further need for research.

It was further highlighted that the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) financed research projects aiming at reducing the risk of collisions between bats and wind

turbines. The first project has been completed and the follow up began in 2011 to make the results more relevant.

In addition, two Research and Development Projects are currently being prepared by the BfN, which will contribute to knowledge of

- the migration routes of long distance migrating bat species, and
- space use patterns/daily movements of bat species endangered by wind turbines especially over forests.

Moreover, a report was prepared to compare forest management in several federal states. A special focus was placed on bat conservation needs and included also examples of best practice.

Numerous initiatives took place in **Italy**, mostly promoted by NGOs to celebrate the “Year of the Bat” all over the country. The campaign drew significant attention from the media and many articles on the topic and bat conservation were published.

It was also reported that the Italian Chiroptera Research Group is currently finalising guidelines for the consideration of bats in wind farm assessment. The Association’s steering board was informed by the Environment Ministry that after careful examination of the document, it will consider endorsing the guidelines and putting them on its website.

The same NGO recently signed a cooperation agreement with Spanish Bat Association SECEMU to develop research and conservation initiatives on issues of common interest.

Ireland informed that its Bat Monitoring Programme continues to expand each year. In 2011 over 200 waterways were surveyed for Daubenton’s bats; over 250 lesser horseshoe bat roosts were monitored; over 1,000 km were surveyed under the car transect monitoring scheme; and more than 50 roosts were monitored for the brown long-eared bat.

A new three-year contract for brown long-eared bat monitoring has been awarded by the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) to Bat Conservation Ireland. Two further three-year contracts – to run the car transect scheme and the waterways bat monitoring project - will be placed shortly.

The Centre for Irish Bat Research has recently completed its three year contract to NPWS. An extensive body of information on the ecology, feeding patterns, habitats and genetics of *Myotis nattereri* and *M. mystacinus* has been accumulated. Several papers have been published from this work and more will follow.

For more on bat related activities in Ireland in the last year see report below by Bat Conservation Ireland.

Luxembourg reported on four categories:

- Research:
 - 85th meeting of the German Society of Mammalogy, Luxembourg, 13 - 17 September 2011; attending 100 scientists from 30 countries with 5 contributions on bats.
 - The discovery of two new species for Luxembourg, *Myotis dasycneme* and *Myotis alcathoe*. A short note on these discoveries will be published in a scientific journal soon.
- Monitoring:
 - Monitoring of bats is on-going within a large monitoring program of species of the habitats directive, and also through some other more specific projects.
- Implementation of protection measures:
 - Acquisition by the Luxembourg government of the house and annex holding the most important maternity colony of Luxembourg, in Bech-Kleinmacher, consisting of 150 *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and 850 *Myotis emarginatus*, for 500,000 EUR. Currently work is being done to develop strategies to further improve the roost for the bats.
 - Species Action Plan *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* was concluded and identification of corridors and feeding habitats completed. Practical implementation of the SAP started, mainly focusing on the improvement of corridors from the village holding the colony to the foraging habitats.

- Public awareness:

- Bat night event organised in Bech-Kleinmacher to raise the awareness of local people to the most important colony of the country, which is also important at the European scale. Several hundred people attended.

In order to implement the provisions of the EUROBATS Agreement in the Republic of **Moldova**, the National Program for the creation of the National Ecological Network for 2011 – 2018 was approved through the Government Decision nr 593 (August 1, 2011). The Program established the activities related to the integrated management of the National Ecological Network, through the conservation of the biodiversity of all organisms involved in the natural ecosystems and complexes, and to ensure optimal life conditions and sustainable development of the territories adjacent to the ecological network. The protection of bat fauna features highly in this report.

A Regulation on Forest Biodiversity Conservation has been drafted by the Moldsilva Forest Agency.

It was also mentioned that a guide on Management Planning in the Core Areas of National Ecological Network was elaborated by BIOTICA Ecological Society. It includes major rules on bat conservation in natural areas and will be published in 2012.

In addition, the conservation of bat species is considered in the draft of the Management Plan of the Ramsar Site 1500 “Unguri-Holosnita” and Ramsar Site 1316 “Lower Dniester”.

In the context of the “Year of the Bat” celebrations, the Ministry of Environment performed a series of activities, among which

- The promotion of the event on the MOE website, electronic and paper based media and radio broadcasting, and
- The organisation of a drawing and poetry contest „Bats in my house and garden”. More than 500 students from the country and abroad participated in the contest.

For the past several years, hibernating bats have been monitored in approximately 1,000 underground sites in the **Netherlands**. The results obtained every winter are elaborated by the Netherlands Statistics Authority and in several species a positive population trend is visible.

It was reported that from 1984 until the end of 2011, nearly 5,000 bats were tested for bat rabies. So far, rabies was found in 5 pond bats and over 300 serotine bats. The data revealed that 1 out of 5 grounded serotine bats, or 20%, is affected with European Bat Lyssavirus 1. Tests were conducted by the Central Veterinary Institute and all results were inserted in a database. So far, rabies was not found in Daubenton's bats although rabies-positive Daubenton's bats are known in some other European countries.

Since 2005 active surveillance on bat rabies has also been carried out, mainly on pond bats and Daubenton's bats, but no positive rabies cases were recorded.

Further active surveillance was performed on the occurrence of corona viruses, and for this purpose faeces samples were collected in Ukraine, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. So far, the results show that each bat species appears to have its own specific corona virus. The RNA isolation and sequencing have been carried out by the National Institute of Public Health and Environment (RIVM).

The Netherlands also shares a project with Ukraine. In 2009 a new bat species, *Eptesicus lobatus*, was described for the Ukraine. The described taxonomic characteristics were, however, considered to be too vague to be accepted as a newly proposed species for the Annex to the Agreement. After the last MoP a large number of skin samples were collected from serotine bats in different sites in Ukraine and the Netherlands for DNA-sequencing. This is a common project of the Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology in Kiev, the Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity "Naturalis" and the Netherlands Central Veterinary Institute. The first results show that two types of serotine bats seem to occur in Ukraine.

Norway reported that a wide range of activities on bats are on-going, many of which are on a volunteer basis. These include, for example, counts in selected underground wintering sites, summer monitoring transects with bat detectors, various bat box projects, operation of a bat rescue centre, and bat walks and talks aimed at the public. Apart from these, a few new developments were mentioned:

- Despite the omission of bats in any EIA concerning the growing wind turbine industry in Norway, the National Energy Authority (NVE), following a demand from the BatLife-Europe partner NZF (Norwegian Zoological Society), has now requested that a supplementary investigation be undertaken prior to any decisions on applications

for such a project in Rogaland county, SW Norway; this is an area likely to be of importance for migration of both bats and birds.

- Members of the NZF bat group have worked with local constructors to provide roost facilities for *Vespertilio murinus* in multi-storey building blocks in a residential area in Oslo. The return of the bats, which use the area for courtship display, mating and possibly hibernation, is eagerly awaited by all members.
- *Eptesicus serotinus* was added as the 13th bat species on the Norwegian list. It was presumably a stray animal, and the unexpected locality (coast southwest of Trondheim) may even indicate that it was possibly a ship-assisted record.
- A single *Barbastella barbastellus* is still holding its ground in the one known hibernation site for the species. Searches for its summer feeding grounds and possibly a population is on-going, but have not yet met with success.

Poland was happy to report that based on the results of bat monitoring, 9 of the 21 Polish species have a favorable conservation status.

As in previous years, National Parks, State Forests, local authorities of different levels and NGOs were very active of bat conservation activities, such as adopting winter and summer shelters, research projects, raising the public awareness by putting bat-related information on websites, newspapers, and organizing campaigns and lectures.

A detailed list of the Polish NGO activities is presented in the PTOPI Salamandra report.

The latest initiative in Poland relates to the construction of three “bridges” (gateways) for bats on the express road “S 3” in northern Poland which seek to protect them against collisions with cars. The bridges 50, 60 and 70 meters long should encourage bats to cross the road high enough to avoid collisions. The bridges were built in a “Y” shape and covered by nets with 5 cm by 5 cm meshes. So far, no dead bats were found around the bridges.

A very detailed written report was submitted by **Portugal**. Due to the revision of the geographic scope of EUROBATS, the archipelagos of Madeira and Azores are now included in the area covered by the Agreement and their activities have been presented in the report.

It was mentioned that the Institute for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity was designated as the body responsible for the provision of advice on bat conservation and

management, but new regional bodies for the archipelagos of Madeira and Azores are to be designated.

The first year of the Portuguese “Year of the Bat” campaign was a great success. During 2011 more than 30 people and entities organized dozens of activities, attended by more than 2,500 participants. To support the campaign, a very informative website was created (<http://www.wix.com/anodomorcego/icnb>); in December 2011 the website received more than 9,500 hits, and dozens of questions were answered.

Several projects, MSc and PhD theses are in progress.

It was reported that the “Atlas of Bats (Mainland Portugal)” is currently being prepared. To support this project two identification keys were produced (one on calls and another on external characters). To train volunteers, nine courses on morphological identification (129 participants) and four courses on acoustic identification (41 participants) were organized.

San Marino reported on its plans to perform educational, awareness raising activities and scientific research in the framework of the “Year of the Bat” campaign. The completion of the first National Atlas publication is planned for 2012. However, problems remain regarding the conservation of wintering and reproductive groups in old tunnels and buildings due to the pressure from touristic developments.

The **Slovak Republic** informed that problems arising from the insulation of buildings have been generating much attention; the insulation has contributed toward the loss of bat roosts and the deaths of animals – mostly common noctules and common swifts. Three organizations have initiated a successful LIFE+ project on the Protection of common swift (*Apus apus*) and bats in buildings in Slovakia. Started in January 2012, the project is supported by the European Commission and has the following partners: Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, Slovak bat conservation society and Slovak ornithological society/Birdlife.

NGOs involved in bat conservation in Slovakia have also organized public awareness activities related to the “Year of the Bat” campaign.

The guidelines for the protection of swifts and bats in buildings were prepared by the Ministry of Environment and NGOs and an update is now available. In addition, the general guidelines for the positioning of wind turbines were reviewed so as to include

the requirement for bat monitoring and conservation and have been approved by the Ministry. National monitoring for NATURA 2000 habitats and species - including bats is also under development.

In **Slovenia** monitoring results have been compiled in a report. For some species population trends were calculated and it appears that the *R. hipposideros* and *M. myotis* populations are increasing or stable. However, mainly due to the destruction or severe degradation of maternity roosts in buildings *R. ferrumequinum*, *R. hipposideros*, *R. euryale*, *M. myotis* (including *M. blythii oxygnathus*), *M. emarginatus* and *E. serotinus* were proposed to be treated as species with unfavorable conservation status. Mitigation measures are being implemented to restore some of the former roosts.

Active and passive monitoring programmes in 2012 did not reveal the presence of EBLV in Slovenian bat populations. An information leaflet on bats and lyssaviruses was published by the veterinary administration and regional lectures were held to raise awareness among veterinary concessionaires. The LIFE+ project "Life at night" is in the second year of its programme and partly deals with potential problems arising from the illumination of bat roosts in buildings. Four short bat field research technique training workshops were held in cooperation with colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Successful events related to the European bat night were also mentioned. One of the events included a guano cleaning action in a church (photo on the cover of EUROBATS publication no. 4). This action and the EUROBATS Agreement itself were also presented in a prime time national TV report. Finally, due to the government reorganization, the Department for Environment is now integrated in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment.

In **Sweden** a new review on the effects of wind power plants on bats and birds was published in January 2012 (<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/sv/Start/Om-Naturvardsverket/Vara-publikationer/ISBN1/6400/978-91-620-6467-9/>). The report deals with how research and planning on the location of wind power plants can be useful in minimizing adverse effects on bats and birds.

The first Bat Information Centre in Sweden, Fladdermuscentrum Taberg (<http://www.fladdermuscentrum.se/>) has been established in the small town of Taberg, almost on the doorstep of a very important bat hibernation site, the Taberg mine.

Furthermore, guidance reports on hibernating bats and the monitoring of bats have been published by the Swedish Environmental Protection Board. Species fact sheets have also been published on the website of Artdatabanken, the Swedish Species Information Centre which works on biodiversity.

The nineteenth bats species of Sweden, *Myotis alcathoe*, has been confirmed to be present in several places in the southern Sweden, although probably still a fairly rare species.

Some years ago, the existence of anti-bodies of bat rabies in some populations of *Myotis daubentonii* was confirmed in southern Sweden. Now, due to lack of funding following the lack of interest in the matter from the authorities and the general public, most of the active monitoring of bat rabies has been put on hold. On the other hand, the passive monitoring of collected dead bats that has been carried out for more than twenty years, continues.

With regard to the “Year of the Bat”, the campaign was celebrated with bat talks and walks all over Sweden and the European Bat Night events were once again well attended and popular. There were also several programs on bats on both radio and television, regional as well as national.

The **United Kingdom** referred to the thorough national report submitted prior to the meeting and available on the EUROBATS website.

In its first participation at a EUROBATS meeting, **Algeria** reported that a total of twenty six bat species belonging to six families were recorded in the country. Currently, new acts and by-laws are in progress to address bat conservation. Further research is required to establish a complete inventory of the bats of Algeria. At present, a study on the ectoparasites and blood parasites of the bats of Algeria is in its final stages.

Armenia reported that in recent years the country made much progress in environmental policy. It ratified the CMS Convention in 2011, though not yet EUROBATS. Since 2007, 2 national parks, 4 state sanctuaries and 230 natural monuments were established. Some monuments are caves, which also contribute to the conservation of bats. In 2010, the government approved new animal and plant red data books; in this field, many valuable scientific works were published by Science-research organizations. However, it is now necessary to combine the results of all these activities and contribute to biodiversity conservation. With EUROBATS in the agenda of

ecological policy of Armenia, some progress on this sphere will be attained in the coming years.

Azerbaijan informed that bat research and investigation is currently being conducted by the Institute of Zoology under ANAS (National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan). However, after Prof. Irina Rakhmatulina's death, a gap in the undertaking of scientific research in this area has emerged. It was mentioned that lack of resources (financial and human) is a key issue and an area in need of improvement.

In 2011 a 3-year research report (2008-2010) on "The current situation of bat fauna of the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus" was finalized and appropriate recommendations were provided to the Institute of Zoology. Particular attention was drawn to the inhabitants of the caves in ancient mountains – "bozdags" (grey hills). Nine bat species were found there and it was established that *Eptesicus bottae* predominated. In anthropogenic and natural landscapes, from 17 recorded species, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. kuhlii* and *E. bottae* dominated the bat population (approx. 5-10 specimens per hectare): *M. mystacinus* and *E. serotinus* were present at 1 specimen per ha, while *R. hipposideros*, *R. ferrumequinum*, *M. blythii* and *M. emarginatus* occurred at less than 1 specimen per ha. The remaining species were rare.

2011 was also the second and final year of the 2010-2011 research programme (of the Zoological Institute), which is investigating bat populations in the northern territories along the Caspian Plain. The final written report should be available at the beginning of 2013.

In addition, the full list of bats suggested to the 2nd Review of Red Data Book of Azerbaijan has been finalized. The 1st edition included only 3 protected bat species - *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Miniopterus schreibersii* and *Tadarida teniotis*. Nine more species - *R. hipposideros*, *R. mehelyi*, *R. ferrumequinum*, *M. bechsteinii*, *M. emarginatus*, *M. blythii*, *B. barbastellus*, *B. leucomelas* (= *darjelingensis*) and *E. bottae* - were suggested for inclusion in the 2nd edition of the Red Data Book.

It was reported that the EUROBATS Agreement had not yet been signed by Azerbaijan but that it is currently under review by the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan; it is expected to be sent to the Parliament for ratification soon.

The state of bat conservation/protection of the 27 bat species in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** did not change significantly since 2011. As a result of speleological

research, the number of known colonies increased. Since speleologists were not consulted during their preparation, bat related data in the NATURA 2000 documents are incorrect to a great extent. As far as the Agreement is concerned, the formation of the new state government has further delayed accession. The intensification of regional cooperation in research and protection of bats continues as a result of contacts made at the AC.

During 2011, Nature Conservation **Egypt** (NCE) continued the “Year of the Bat” celebrations by spreading the word on bat conservation through “Chiroptera” groups on both Facebook and Flickr social networking websites:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/Chiroptera.Bats> and <http://www.flickr.com/groups/bats>

In general however, bat conservation activities in Egypt are very limited, so NCE appreciated the fruitful cooperation with colleagues from the Czech Republic. In the cooperation framework, Egypt contributed to bat research activities and publications on Egyptian Fruit bats in the Palaearctic region. Also, posters containing information on Egyptian Fruit bats and their important role in ecosystems both in English and Arabic were distributed at archaeological sites that host bat colonies in Al-Qasr of Dakhla Oasis in the western Desert of Egypt.

For 2012 NCE shared its plans to celebrate “Year of the Bat” in July by continuing to spread the word on bat conservation and raising public awareness. Finally, hope was expressed that with the support of EUROBATs more activities could be organised in the near future in order to promote the very limited capacity for bat research and conservation in Egypt.

Greece reported on two particular points:

- For the “Year of the bat”, a press release was sent to several newspapers on Crete and in Athens. Additionally, an article was uploaded onto the webpage of the Natural History Museum of Crete (<http://www.nhmc.uoc.gr/news>) and was advertised on Facebook. A second article will be published in a Greek ecological review journal during 2012 and a presentation open to the public is programmed for the conference hall of the Natural History Museum of Crete on June 14th, 2012.
- Research & conservation - Two scientific articles, one on the impact of wind turbines to bats of North-eastern Greece and one on the social calls of *Pipistrellus hanaki* were submitted for publication. Research on the distribution, ecology and

conservation of bats in Peloponnese, Aegean islands, NW Greece and Crete continued during the last 12 months. Also, an article about the impact of wind turbines on bats was published in a Cretan newspaper in 2011. Finally, recommendations on the proper design of cave gates were made to the relevant authorities of the Greek government and the Region of Crete.

Iran informed that a conservation plan is required for the 44 species of bats in the country and that there is no specific NGO for bats, although one is planned after advice from international organisations such as IUCN and EUROBATS is received. This would enable projects on monitoring, migration and movement and in underground ecosystems to be established, as well as educational programmes for school children.

It is also important that some genera, such as *Rousettus*, *Myotis* and *Pipistrellus* are documented and classified.

Israel highlighted activities in the following areas:

▪ Education

- Joint program with the Israeli Defence Army on conversion of old army bunkers on the Jordan valley to artificial bat roosts.
- Lectures for the public including teachers, school students, prisoners and soldier all around Israel
- Training guides from the Israel Nature and Parks Protection Authority and the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel to explain bats and their ecological services.
- Four public events throughout the year and all over Israel on bats. In three of them an audience of over 2,000 participated.
- Guidance and lecturing in Arabic schools in the northern part of Israel on bats and their importance
- Online installation of cameras in army bunkers located in the Jordan valley.

▪ Conservation

- Modification of army bunkers (20) in the Jordan valley for insectivorous bats (12 species) and the declaration of all of them as natural reserves.

- Embedding of results of research projects in management plans for bats by the Israel Nature and National Parks Protection Authority.
- Monitoring
 - Developing of long-term monitoring program for insectivorous bats in roosts and foraging areas over Israel in cooperation with the Israel Nature and Parks Protection Authority.
 - Summer monitoring of roosts and foraging areas in the Northern part of Israel.
 - Monitoring of bat population in the army bunkers on the Jordan valley.
 - Monitoring of potential areas for wind turbines farms, road and railways construction.

Since the last report, several activities on bat research and other related matters were undertaken in **Jordan**. First, a monograph on Jordanian bats was published with data on distribution, echolocation, parasites and conservation. A book on the mammals of Jordan was drafted and is currently in the final stage before printing; to be published in June, it will include data on 26 species of bats. A regional Red Data Book is in progress covering mammals of Jordan.

At present, regulations for wind mill constructions are being drafted and bats have been included as part of any environmental impact assessment. Through the EUROBATS Project Initiative, scientists will be trained in the use of bat detectors; this workshop will take place in Jordan and include participants from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority.

In **Lebanon** bat monitoring continued since 2011 however, it was not fully completed due to lack of funding. The occurrence of two incidents was reported. The first was the near loss of one of the largest colonies of Egyptian fruit bats due to improper practices (which include fire and shooting). The second occurrence concerned the only colony of Schreiber's bat, which could not be found this year. These incidents were covered by both the national and international media. In addition, funding from Bat Conservation International (BCI) to train speleologist club members on monitoring and conservation of bats was awarded. Forty-seven members of four speleological clubs attended this training. The First Lebanese Bat Night was celebrated with the participation of over 400

people with many other activities related to the importance of bats and their conservation.

Morocco informed that its bat fauna consists of approximately 30 species, at least 18 of which (60%) are within the range of European bats. Research was conducted on hot caves to establish an inventory and to identify how bats are affected by human impact and other threats, e.g. exploration of caves for tourism purposes.

It was mentioned that currently, bats are not protected by environmental law in Morocco. However, by including them in the local CITES listings it will be possible to provide some protection; government texts and actions will be considered in this regard.

Overall, efforts have been made to raise public awareness. An article addressing Moroccan bats, their benefits to humans and introducing EUROBATS and “Year of the Bat” activities was published in one of the main Moroccan newspapers.

Lastly, further research was said to be essential to update the bat fauna of Morocco, and more efforts are urgently required for public awareness, particularly in schools.

The **Republic of Serbia** referred to „Bats and environmental impact assessment (EIA): tools for the implementation of the European Habitats Directive and EUROBATS agreement in Serbia“, as a very important project for bat conservation. Coordinated by the Wildlife Conservation Society, Mustela and Dutch Mammal Society, financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and supported by the Serbian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and Natural History Museum of Belgrade, it has been completed very successfully. The guidelines for EIA and strategic environmental impact assessment for environmental experts, consultancies, planning authorities and developers were prepared, printed and presented on June 24th, 2011. This was one of the most important events of the “Year of the Bat” to occur in Serbia. The guidelines were legally approved by the Serbian Ministry of Environment at the end of August 2011 and are available on Ministry’s website, in both Serbian and English: (http://www.ekoplan.gov.rs/en/download-1227/upload-centar/dokumenti/razno/bats_and_environmental_impact_assessment_web_lq.pdf)

The guidelines can also be found on the website of the Natural History Museum: (http://www.nhmbeo.rs/upload/images/ove_godine/Promocije2011/bats_and_environmental_impact_assessment_web_lq.pdf)

During the “Year of the Bat”, Bat Nights were held not only in Belgrade but also in several other larger cities during summer and autumn. Events included a series of presentations, lectures and interactions between the public and bats.

In addition, it was reported that although bats with obvious signs of the fungal infections were not observed during previous years, more systematic research related to White Nose Syndrome has been conducted during February and March 2012. More than 60 samples were taken from 12 caves, known hibernacula – mostly from hibernating bats (*Myotis myotis*, *Myotis blythii*, *Myotis capaccinii* and *Miniopterus schreibersii*), but also from cave walls and guano deposits. All of the swaps tested negative for *Geomyces destructans*.

Lastly, since no changes in the Serbian bat fauna were observed, the number of recorded species remains 29.

In its first participation at a EUROBATS meeting, **Saudi Arabia** reported that approximately 30 bat species were recorded in the country. The bats of Saudi Arabia represent a diverse assemblage of several origins (Palaeartic, African and oriental), thus making Arabia a rich habitat for bat’s biodiversity. Current research on bats at King Saud University aims to update the Saudi Arabian mammals and their distribution, employ molecular techniques for classification, and raise public awareness towards the importance of bats (articles in newspapers and production of posters). It was also mentioned that it is expected the Wildlife Law will include acts for bat protection.

Spain acknowledged the kind invitation to participate in the AC17 meeting, and the support on the general interest of the Spanish bat research and bat conservation communities. Both the number of species and the size of the bat populations under the responsibility of such communities supported the inclusion.

It was reported that at a scientific level, several research groups are currently carrying out projects relating to the ecology, conservation and evolution of bats. Particular areas of focus are the origin of cryptic lineages, trophic aspects and their relation with economic revenues as pest control, as well as research on bat hosted viruses and their possible relation with emerging diseases for humans.

The Spanish Bat Conservation Society (SECEMU, www.secemu.org) is a state-wide NGO acting as a leading organization, coordinating several conservation efforts at Spanish and regional level, monitoring main hibernating and breeding roosting sites and

coordinating the activities in relation to the “Year of the Bat”.

The following achievements were highlighted:

- The increase in the Spanish bat list, now reaching 34 species, with the confirmed presence of *Vespertilio murinus* and *Pipistrellus nathusii*.
- The confirmed absence of *Myotis nattereri* in Spain but instead the presence of the endemic *M. escalerai* and another new cryptic species (*M. cf. nattereri*) still to be described.

Lastly, it was reported that interest in bat conservation has increased on the part of the Spanish authorities. This could be a turning point for bat conservation in Spain as information could now be shared and coordinated on a European level.

Since the last report, new caves were added to the list of known roosting sites in **Syria**. The most important find was a new small colony of *Rhinopoma hardwickii*, recorded in the southern part of the country. Also, a new study was initiated to update the distribution of bat species; this is to be done through the use of large amounts of cranial and skeletal material recovered from owl pellets, which were collected during the last 17 years from different places representing all habitats of the country. Research, monitoring and conservation efforts were also reported to continue.

Attending its first EUROBATS meeting, **Tunisia** informed that at present, 19 species belonging to six families were recorded. It was reported that bats are considered threatened species in Tunisia and that they are protected by Act No. 209 and 210 (Chap. 2) of the Forest Code. Also, many important caves with considerable bat populations are within the boundaries of protected areas. The need of further studies and identification of threats to the bats of Tunisia was highlighted. At present, an inventory of bats in protected areas has been proposed, and a field study on the behaviour of horseshoe bats is being carried out at the Hawaria cave.

In 2011, a project aiming to identify and protect important underground habitats in **Turkey** was carried out and during the study more than 30 sites were investigated. One of the important findings was the discovery of a hibernation colony, which had more than 30,000 bats representing four species. For the assessment of legal conservation statuses, important sites were reported to the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs. It was also mentioned that a new bat conservation project, funded by WWF Turkey is to

begin in 2012. The project aims to initiate a conservation programme for the Egyptian Fruit Bat in Turkey by establishing collaboration between the NGOs, governmental agencies, and the local population. Also, the Bosphorus International Speleological Society applied to join BatLife Europe.

It was further mentioned that the Cave Conservation Unit, which was operating under the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) is now a department and operates under the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs (MoFWA) (MoEF is now split into two; MoFWA and Ministry of Environment and City Planning). One of the primary goals of the department is to prepare regulation for the protection of cave habitats, which will also include the conservation of cave-dwelling bats. Currently, the department is collaborating with the Turkish Caving Federation and academics on this regulation. Lastly, the regulation for guano mining was recently drafted and is currently awaiting the approval of the Ministry.

The **IUCN** highlighted two points. Firstly, it reported that the Old World Fruit Bat Action Plan was first published in 1992 by IUCN with Tony Hutson as lead author. Since it is out of date and there are plans for its revision, experts on *Rousettus aegyptiacus* are currently being contacted, including some attending the AC17. Secondly, IUCN referred to the Secretariat's report on initiatives in Africa. In this context, the organisation reported that BCI is planning a capacity-building workshop in Nairobi in February 2013. This was originally conceived for Sub-Saharan Africa but if fund-raising exceeds expectations, it will be extended to North Africa and the islands of the Western Indian Ocean and will involve some colleagues from the meeting.

BatLife Europe was set up as a new European NGO for bat conservation in August 2011 at the European Bat Research Symposium in Vilnius, Lithuania. An excellent response was received and 28 NGOs from 26 countries joined as members (partner organisations). A call was made for new members from national NGOs promoting bat conservation in countries in and close to Europe. It was mentioned that 14 trustees were elected in Vilnius and that they meet regularly by conference call, to plan the NGOs work. So far, a work plan for the first 3 years was developed.

BatLife Europe was recently awarded a grant from the Rufford Foundation to capacity build the work of bat conservation NGOs in Europe and develop BatLife's work as a European voice for bat conservation. The NGO informed of its plans to contact partners over the next 8 months to find out about their current activities, what support they would

like to receive, what experience and knowledge they can offer to support other NGOs in the BatLife Europe network and to consult on regional and European priorities for bat conservation. Attention will also be given to gaps in the network such as countries with no NGO for bat conservation and solutions on how to fill these gaps.

BatLife shared its plans of joining the European Habitats Forum this autumn to influence European policy, by working closely with other European biodiversity NGOs. It signed up to an NGO campaign to influence changes to Life+ funding, and expressed concerns about proposals not to fund part time staff (particularly concerned how this could affect projects with seasonal field staff) and about VAT costs not being included.

Information on BatLife Europe's work is available in regular e-bulletins. To sign up for these contact batlifeeurope@bats.org.uk or visit www.batlife-europe.info.

Attending the AC17 were 7 trustees – Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France/SPEFM), Dr. Jasja Dekker (NL, Dutch Mammal Society), Ms. Julia Hanmer (UK, BCT), Dr. Christine Harbusch (Germany, NABU), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Henry Schofield (UK, VWT)

The **Bat Conservation Trust** contributed to the UK report and highlighted 3 points:

- BCT's Count Bat community education project completed in 2012 and a total of 20,000 people were involved in events over 4 years. As a legacy from the project we have produced a "Bats for All" resource pack available here: <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/inspire.html>
- Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition was published, as a guide for professional bat work and for those assessing surveys. <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html>
- BCT is collaborating with Bristol University on 2 new research projects on bats and churches, both of which started last year, one studying *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, the other *Myotis nattereri*. One of these collaborations is also looking at what happens to *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bat colonies when they are excluded from maternity roosts in houses – do they find an alternative roost. <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/research.html>

SFEPM reported that for the “Year of the Bat” and European Bat Night celebrations 480 organisations set up 204 events, which in turn were attended by 8,400 people. For more information, visit <http://www.sfepm.org/annechauvesouris.htm> and <http://www.sfepm.org/NuitChauveSouris/index.htm>

It was stated that SFEPM members are involved in the implementation of the 21 regional action plans for bats, derived from the National Action Plan - monitoring of major roosts, of priority species etc.

With regard to bats and forests, the number of regional bat groups studying woodland bats continues to increase; the main goal of the action is to manage recommendations to private owners of woodlands. For state owned or managed forests, the forestry commission (ONF) is in charge of the action.

The SFEPM launched a national operation called “Refuge for bats”, inviting the general public and the local authorities to give shelter to bats in their buildings, gardens and woodlands. This action is based on a signed agreement between the SFEPM and the owner of the premises. Surveillance of the major sites will be implemented by local bat groups on a voluntary basis. More information is available on <http://www.sfepm.org/refugepourleschauvessouris.htm>

Active surveillance of bat rabies was carried out and the first evidence of EBLV 2 antibodies in a Daubenton’s bat was registered in France.

The SFEPM mentioned its current collaboration with the National Museum of Natural History to set up a stricter system of qualification for bat handling. Instructors will be selected to provide theoretical and field training to candidates, who will receive a logbook with more than 20 modules to validate. Once the logbook is completed the candidate will have to take a final exam.

In every region SFEPM volunteers have continued to answer calls for help regarding bats (injured individuals, cohabitation problems). Such calls helped the discovery of new roosts and to persuade the owners of such roosts to keep their bats.

The SFEPM also reported the existence of two new undescribed species in Southern France. Two new *Myotis* from the complex *nattereri* have been identified: *Myotis* sp. A in the mainland and *Myotis* sp. C. on Corsica (Puechmaille *et al.*). This brings the French total number of bats to 35.

Lastly, SFEPM informed of the publication of two new regional atlases in Corsica and Midi-Pyrénées. The latter is based on data collected before 2000 and over the last 10 years and offers conservation advice for each species.

As performed every year, local **NABU** groups organized Bat Nights all over Germany and special attention was given to increase awareness of the public during the “Year of the Bat”. Several thousand people could be reached by those events and knowledge on the need for bat conservation was spread.

It was reported that bat protection in settlements was further enhanced by the action “Welcome Bats“, currently established in all 16 *Länder*. This action mainly deals with the acknowledgement and encouragement of actions in favour of bat roosts in private houses, such as tolerating roosts or making access to houses possible (e.g. advice is provided to roost owners).

On a European scale, NABU is a founding member of BatLife Europe and represented on the board of trustees. Since the official launch of BatLife, NABU attended several internet conferences.

Lastly, it was reported that the use of wind energy remains a major problem for bats in Germany, especially against the increasing demands of renewable energies. The regional governments started the installation of wind farms in forests, which in previous years was mostly not allowed. NABU members are often involved in improving regional guidelines for the installation of wind turbines. In order to point out the possible dangers for bats when installing wind turbines in forests, NABU organised a meeting of national bat experts in February 2012 where a position paper on this topic was drafted. It will be published and made available to the national and regional competent authorities, as well as to wind turbine companies within the next few weeks.

Bat Conservation Ireland reported on the dissemination of bat conservation awareness information, the support provided to affiliated local bat groups and on the organisation of an annual mid-summer bat count to encourage roost owners to take an interest in their own bats. In 2011, 69 bat walks/talks were attended by over 4,000 members of the public.

Bat Conservation Ireland informed of its island-wide summer monitoring of five bat species under contract from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (species monitored are: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P.*

pygmaeus, *Nyctalus leisleri*, *Myotis daubentonii* and *Plecotus auritus*). From 2003-2011 the car-based bat monitoring scheme showed a significant increase in *P. pygmaeus* and *N. leisleri*. However, trend data for *M. daubentonii* and *P. auritus* are not yet available. These monitoring schemes include survey work by up to 500 volunteers annually.

Among the additional projects carried out in 2011, BCIreland resurveyed previously recorded Leisler's bat maternity roosts in buildings and provided funding for essential remedial work at one of these. Research was carried out and *Myotis* swarming behaviour was confirmed at several caves in the North West in the autumn of 2011. *Myotis* bats are rarely observed hibernating in caves in Ireland. BCI cooperated with the Centre for Irish Bat Research (CIBR) on a publication; the paper concluded that there is no confirmed evidence that *Barbastella barbastellus* or *N. noctula* are present in Ireland and these species should not be considered part of the Irish bat fauna.

In 2011 BCIreland commissioned CIBR at Queens University Belfast to carry out Maximum Entropy modelling to predict landscape suitability for the Irish species, based on bat records from the organisation's database and various factors including land cover. BCIreland is in the process of compiling a book on the state and distribution of Irish bats (2000-2009) based on bat records, monitoring trend data and the CIBR results. In 2012 a project on Irish bat biometrics will be run, whereby morphological measurements will be taken from live specimens to form the basis of the first key to Irish bats. Guidelines for bat surveys at wind farms in Ireland are nearing finalisation.

It was also mentioned that the 7th Irish Bat Conference, which will be held from September 21st to 23rd 2012 in Sligo, will focus on the themes of artificial night lighting and landscape conservation of bats. AC17 participants were cordially invited to attend. www.batconservationireland.org

The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation's "Nature Carrying Capacity Fund" (RDN) made it possible for the **Dutch Mammal Society** (DMS) to organise a number of activities in the first year of the "Year of the Bat" campaign. The activities included a bat seminar with presentation of the Dutch translation of the "Handbuch der Fledermäuse Europas" by Dietz, von Helversen & Nill by Peter Lina, sunrise surveys all over the Netherlands, the publication of a brochure on making gardens bat-friendly, the promotion of bat boxes and many excursions during the Bat Night. Especially notable was the placement of cameras in a roost of *Myotis dasycneme*. Highlights can be viewed on www.natuurmonumenten.nl/batcam.

The DMS distributed the logos and information on the "Year of the Bat" to the State forestry and local natural history and nature conservation groups, which have organised additional activities.

Furthermore, DMS was a partner in the project of constructing a prototype pan European Bat Indicator, which was commissioned by the European Environment Agency and led by BCT. Also initiated were two studies on LED streetlights with adapted spectrum that should cause fewer disturbances to bats. In 2011 a start was made in the adaptation of a landscape scale model of the risk of collisions of wind turbines and bats, in cooperation with consultancy Waardenburg. DMS organised a course in bat friendly tree lane management. Also, a brochure on bat friendly building construction was published. Lastly, the national bat monitoring programmes are on-going, and a new monitoring scheme focussing on *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. nathusii*, *Nyctalus noctula* and *Eptesicus serotinus* is currently being implemented.

PTOP Salamandra reported on a number of bat conservation and educational initiatives held in Poland by NGOs:

- Examples of projects by PTOp Salamandra:
 - 3 national media campaigns concerning bats.
 - Internet Blog 'Night Hunter' written from the point of view of a bat; describes current nature and nature conservation issues in Poland.
 - Organisation of national art competition on bats for primary and secondary schools, with a competition exhibition to be held in June 2012. Thousands of project applications were submitted.
 - Campaign launch against the use of dead stuffed bats by natural history museums, as display specimens; animals are chosen due to their usually very repulsive looks. Extension of the campaign to other countries is planned and partner organisations interested to join the initiative are sought.
 - Mailing of posters promoting bats and the "Year of the Bat" campaign were sent out to all 22 thousand schools in Poland; posters included a letter attached to teachers, explaining the objectives of the "Year of the Bat", recommending an Internet site on bats and encouraging the dissemination of information to pupils.

- Art events to be held in the last week of May 2012 in the main Polish cities. Five performers wearing realistic costumes of different species of bats will explain the need for bat conservation. Events to be followed by an extensive media campaign.
- NGOs to submit an official proposal for the inclusion of at least 4 new NATURA 2000 areas to the Ministry of Environment in May 2012. Proposal suggests the modification of borders and conservation objections of several other NATURA 2000 areas designated for bats.
- Examples of projects by the PTPP “pro Natura”:
 - Project ‘The Horseshoe Bat Trail’ promoting “bat-watching”. Emerging bats can be observed and counted by interested people in 10 sites.
 - TV film “Szczaownica – the City of Bats”, on horseshoe bat protection was made and presented both on TV and online.
 - Publication of the latest issue of “Nietoperze”, a scientific bat journal, in cooperation with other NGOs.
 - Renovation of 9 important summer roosts of lesser horseshoe bats and greater mouse-eared bats.
 - Installation of new grilles or renovation of older grilles in 19 bat winter roosts..

PTOP Salamandra highlighted that above-mentioned projects are examples of activities organised by two NGOs, and that many other activities on regional and local level have been organised by other NGOs.

The **Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT)** informed the meeting that its core bat work continues to focus on the needs of greater and lesser horseshoe bats. The Trust protects significant proportions of the national populations of these species in its bat reserves in England Wales and Ireland. These colonies continue to thrive. In addition to its reserve based activities, the VWT seeks to conserve these species by:

- Promoting good practice in mitigation measures for lesser horseshoe bats through it *Lesser Horseshoes Conservation Handbook* and running training workshops for ecological consultants, local authority staff and farm advisors.
- Providing advice in designing roosts for horseshoe bats.

- The publication of a leaflet on lesser horseshoe bats for farmers in Ireland.
- The publication of a report on the summer surveys for lesser horseshoe bat roosts throughout its range in the west of Ireland.
- Running the *Our Beacon for Bats* project, a community based initiative seeking to enhance habitat for and raise awareness of lesser horseshoe bats in Wales around five of its reserves.

Horseshoe bats are key species in a new government-funded research project the Trust is undertaking with the University of Exeter. This project is investigating the landscape scale effects of artificial lighting on vertebrates.

In addition to its work on horseshoe bats the Trust reported on its continuous work on rare woodland bats. A long-term ringing project on Bechstein's bat is now in its fourteenth year and the data acquired to date is currently being analysed by a Masters student. Long-term monitoring of the use of a variety of bat box designs by a colony of *Barbastelles* is now entering its tenth year. A review of this project is underway and new designs will be tested later this year.

Under this agenda item, the Chair mentioned the EUROBATS publication, which will feature the names of species under the Agreement in all languages, including Arabic and Hebrew. The publication will also include short biographies of scientists who described one or more European bat species or to whom the scientific bat species name were dedicated and a glossary; the publication is expected to be published next year. The Chair also indicated that he would be approaching several delegates for input.

5. Secretariat report:

The Executive Secretary drew attention to the written report and highlighted the newest developments.

Mr. Streit informed that Ms. Ana Ferreira da Silva was recruited on a provisional basis and that her temporary appointment has no possibility of extension. For this reason, the post of Administrative Assistant, shared with Ms. Christine Meyer-Cords, will be advertised towards autumn.

The Standing Committee decided the recruitment of a P-2 post of Scientific and Project Officer on 50% occupancy is to begin as soon as possible. Should a suitable candidate

not be found by the next StC meeting, the members agreed to review the occupancy percentage. Mr. Streit added that the role of the new officer would be to support the intersessional working groups by producing documents and analysing data and surveys.

a) Agreement membership (recruitment of new Parties)

A slight delay in the accession of Switzerland was reported and the Executive Secretary clarified that he expected the deposit of the instrument of accession to take place in the near future.

b) EUROBATS Projects Initiative (EPI)

Mr. Streit informed the delegates that the Secretariat was able to finance and co-ordinate four projects through EPI funding and that the number of project applications continues to increase.

He reported that some funds had already been secured for some projects and that other projects would be dependent on the reception of funds.

Lastly, the Executive Secretary thanked the EPI Selection Sub-Committee for the assessments and development of priority lists that were submitted to the Secretariat.

c) Year of the Bat and other publicity

The Executive Secretary confirmed that the Publication Series continues to be very successful and in high demand.

In addition to Prof. Racey's reference to the "Bats in Africa" initiative, the Executive Secretary reported that cooperation with FAO on capacity building started in previous years but it is not yet clear how this would continue. Although no workshops are yet scheduled, FAO expressed interest to organise and take EUROBATS on-board. Mr. Streit informed that EUROBATS would be interested in supporting BCI in the organising of the upcoming workshop.

Mr. Streit stressed the tremendous success of the "Year of the Bat" campaign in 2011, which continues to be promoted under CMS coordination in 2012. He also mentioned the European Bat Night, which continues to attract much attention, and announced that this year's posters will be re-arranged in order to include all the flags and languages of the extended Agreement area.

Finally, the convenor of the EPI Selection Sub-Committee requested that EPI applications should be received in two sessions – July and December of each year; this arrangement would be more suitable for a speedier evaluation.

The Secretariat agreed to organise the submission of applications for evaluation accordingly.

6. Reports from Intersessional Working Groups (IWG) established at AC16:

a) Conservation of Key Underground Sites

A completed list of important underground bat sites in 23 countries together with background information and analysis was published on the EUROBATS website in February 2012.

As planned, Mr. Primož Presetnik reviewed the list and proposed improvements. These suggestions and corrections will feed into the future work of the group.

The convenor informed that the group would meet and continue revising the criteria for the selection of underground sites for inclusion in the list.

b) Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management

The convenor reported that a questionnaire was circulated. This survey requested details on new information or studies on bats since the 2005 review of bats and forest management, and of case studies of good practice examples. Responses were received from 35 countries and the results would be discussed at the working group meeting during the AC17.

c) Monitoring and Indicators

The convenors referred to Doc.EUROBATS.AC17.7 and informed the group would be meeting during the AC.

d) Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats

The convenor informed that the group would be looking at the new enlarged agreement area and preparing new questionnaires, according to new information on species. The members would be taking into account the daily movement of bats, not only with regard to long-distance migration. These topics would be discussed during the AC.

e) Autecological Studies for Priority Species

The convenor informed that this year he had very little time to work on the topic. However, a provisional list of priority species will be prepared for discussion at AC18.

f) Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

The convenor referred to Doc.EUROBATS.AC17.6 and reported that it would not yet be possible to review the guidelines, as more information for monitoring programmes is needed. The group would be discussing further progress during the meeting.

g) Light Pollution

The convenor expressed some doubts on the appropriate way forward and requested that the group meet during the AC to discuss whether or not a MoP resolution could be produced.

h) Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes

Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen informed that the guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes are still being prepared. Accounts and texts on most species were received and progress in the more general guidance section achieved. The group requested to meet during the AC17 to further discuss the issue.

i) Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts

The convenor reported that questionnaires had been sent out and that the group would continue processing the data. The group informed it would continue its work during the session.

j) Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats

The convenor informed that the outline of the proposed publication was drafted and chapters allocated to authors. Mr. Primož Presetnik kindly updated the literature review. Other documents were received for circulation including: Bats and EIA (Serbia) and Review of Bat Mitigation in Relation to Highway Severance (UK).

k) Lethal Fungal Infections

The convenor updated the AC during a plenary with recent developments.

- In North America, White Nose Syndrome (WNS) has now been reported in 20 American states and in four Canadian provinces. It has affected nine bat species and resulted in an estimated six million deaths.
- In Europe, Puechmaille *et al.*, confirmed the occurrence of *Geomyces destructans* on bats in eight European countries with strong photographic evidence in a further four countries. Reports from delegates attending the AC meeting indicated the presence of *G. destructans* on bats in a further two countries (PLoS ONE, 2011, 6:1-11).
- The research priorities in the Action Plan circulated at a previous AC meeting have now been published and the relevant paper is available on the EUROBATs website (Puechmaille *et al.*, 2011 Trends in Ecology and Evolution, 26:570-576).
- Koch's postulates have now been established and have confirmed that *Geomyces destructans* is responsible for WNS (Lorch *et al.*, 2011, Nature, 480:373-378).
- The European origin of WNS is strongly supported after groups of North American little brown bats *Myotis lucifugus* were inoculated with *Geomyces destructans* isolated from bats in Europe and in North America and both developed WNS (Warnecke *et al.*, PLoS ONE, 2012doi/10.1073pnas.1200374109).

DEFRA, the UK government ministry responsible, is finalising a contingency plan for the occurrence of WNS in the UK. No substantive points were raised in relation to lethal fungal infections but there was discussion about the importance of collaboration between veterinarians, public health officials and bat biologists and conservationists in all matters concerning diseases in bats.

The group asked to meet during the AC17 to continue its work.

I) Implementation of the Agreement

The working group was established at the AC16 and its aims can be found in the record of that meeting (p. 36). As the first step, the Secretariat provided an annotated list of all Resolutions relevant to the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP). The group started to review the obligations to the Parties, to the AC and to the Secretariat, arising from these Resolutions, and will produce a simple checklist of obligations for incorporation into the national reports.

With a view to produce a “Handbook” or “Guide” to the Agreement, the relevant parts of the CMP and each of the relevant Resolutions are being related to the basic aims of the Agreement, as expressed in its Preamble and Article 1 and particularly in the Fundamental Obligations of Article 3. A summary of the background to each resolution and reference to any relevant supporting documents, history or other references are being included. It is intended that this will provide clear and helpful guidance on the activities relating to the conservation of bats that are currently expected of Parties to meet the Articles of the Agreement. This will also assist in decisions about information to be included in National Implementation Reports.

The convenor confirmed that the group would meet during the AC17 to discuss progress on this part of the group’s aims and how to progress in other aims.

m) Review of the Format of National Reports

Set up during the last AC meeting, the group should work in close cooperation with the IWG on the Implementation of the Agreement. The convenor reported on the two tasks to be completed. The first is to analyse the content of paragraph 7 of the Report, as there are different interpretations among the delegates. However, the second task can only be continued once the checklist developed by the IWG on the Implementation of the Agreement is created. The group requested to meet during the AC17 to further discuss the issue.

After the IWG status reports, the following presentations were given:

- Poland – Videos on Bridges over Highways by Ms. Monika Lesz.
- “Prototype European Bat Indicator” by Dr. Karen Haysom and Dr. Jasja Dekker.
- Greece – “Study and Conservation of Cypriot bats” by Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis.
- Czech Republic – “Bats in heaters” by Dr. Helena Jahelková.
- Belarus – “Bats of Belarus” by Mr. Aliaksei Shpak.
- Slovakia – “Apus & Nyctalus - Protection of Common Swift (*Apus apus*) and bats in buildings in Slovakia” by Dr. Martin Cel’uch.
- Ukraine – Proposal for the establishment of a new IWG on Bat Rehabilitation, with the goal to develop a publication featuring guidelines/manual for successful rehabilitation of bats by Dr. Lena Godlevska.

The above-mentioned proposal for the establishment of the IWG was supported by Croatia, Republic of Serbia, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Portugal, Slovakia and Czech Republic.

7. Reports from working groups convened during the Meeting

a). Conservation of Key Underground Sites

Members: Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine)*, Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK)*, Mr. Serghei Andreev (Moldova), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Luísa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

Not-permanent members: Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Julien Astoul-Delseny (France), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Prof. Zihad Bouslama (Algeria), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Prof. El Ayachi Sehhar (Morocco), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The convenor summarised the achievements of the IWG and recent activities and then invited Tony Mitchell-Jones, the former convenor, to resume co-ordination of the IWG. A discussion was then held about the current situation of the key sites lists and the way in which these should be improved.

It was recognised that a balance should be struck between setting strict criteria for the selection of key sites and ensuring that important sites could be added to the list without excessive data requirements. The important conservation role of site listing to Parties and Range States, particularly those in the extended EUROBATS area, was also emphasised and examples were given of where the lists had been used to help defend sites from significant threats. Range States in the recently-extended EUROBATS area are encouraged to begin data collection and the identification of important sites. It was agreed that work towards revised site selection criteria and a revision of the lists should begin by collecting information about the way in which sites are selected for protection at the national level and that biogeographic regions, as used for the selection of NATURA

2000 sites, could be a good way of stratifying the criteria. Red Lists, either regional (European) or national could also be helpful in setting the criteria. Attention should also be paid to the way in which sites were categorised within the lists. A small sub-group, led by the Convenor, was tasked with preparing a draft proposal and options for presentation to the next meeting of the IWG.

b). Bat Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management

Members (present): Ms. Jean Matthews (UK)*, Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Mr. Johnny de Jong (Sweden), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy).

To be informed: Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Niamh Roche (BCIreland), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

Since the last AC meeting, a questionnaire has been circulated to request details of any new information or studies on bats and forestry and also to ask for examples of good practice for publication on the EUROBATS website. Responses have been received from 35 countries. 8 countries have national guidance on bats and forest management, but others have bat guidance included in general publications. Any countries that have not yet replied are encouraged to send in their responses when they can.

It was agreed that there was no need to undertake a complete update of the 2005 review. Although there is new information since that review, it would not necessarily change the forest management recommendations. The Group wishes to make the information available via a specific page for this IWG on the EUROBATS website and requests that the Secretariat advises the group how this may be taken forward.

It was re-iterated that the purpose of the review was to produce general guidance on which each country can base its national or regional guidance, taking into account the species and habitats present. The website will also provide links to published guidance to help countries produce their own.

Actions for the Group

A summary table has been started which lists the forest habitat features of importance to different bat species, taking into account regional variations. This will be developed and circulated for additional information to be added.

Some countries have offered to provide case studies. These will be followed up for publication on the website.

A review of literature review since the last questionnaire will be undertaken and made available to the group and published on the website.

A list of research themes will be produced to identify areas where information is lacking, e.g. composition of bat communities in different habitats; how much habitat (tree holes) are required to sustain bat populations in an area; agri-environment schemes and guidance.

c) Monitoring and Indicators

Members (present): Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT)*, Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS)*, Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (Ukraine), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEMP), Ms. Marina Đurovic (Montenegro), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Serbia), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Dr. Martiros Nalbanbyan (Armenia), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Niamh Roche (BCI), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT, UK), Prof. El Ayachi Sehhar (Morocco), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt).

To be informed of IWG activities:

Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Mr. Serghei Andreev (Moldova), Prof. Zihad Bouzlama (Algeria), Dr. Zoltán Bihari (Hungary), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Viktor Dzimianchyk (Belarus), Mr. Abdellah El Mastour (Morocco), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakarkis (Greece), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Andro Kandaurov (Georgia), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ms. Marie Nedinge

(Sweden), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Mr. Per Ole Sylvertsen (Norway), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Dr. Folchert van Dijken (Netherlands), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

Dr. Karen Haysom introduced the issues that would be addressed during the session:

- Feedback on the work undertaken on the pan-European indicator and options for future refinement.
- National monitoring schemes that should be incorporated into the next revision of the indicator.
- Frameworks for raising the profile of the indicator.
- Potential funding sources for extending the indicator.
- Potential funding sources for capacity building.
- Potential funding sources for the development of a data sharing structure for census data.

The IWG reviewed its goals and briefly reflected on the achievements of the past year. It then confirmed the need to continue the work on indicators, and the need for such indicators in Europe, especially in the EU. Several delegates congratulated the team on the work achieved so far.

Feedback on the draft report of the prototype hibernacula indicator to the EEA included the need to be careful to avoid reporting false population increases, due to biases such as increased experience of the observers, a suggestion to use widespread common species to make the index relatively robust, let species contribute to the indicator based on (estimated) abundance. Make sure that the indicator is not oversensitive to changes in rare species.

Also discussed was the frequency of update and the possibility of incorporating a subsidiary index based on coarser data (e.g. changes in occurrence) to be able to incorporate more sources of information from countries which do not measure population change. Various participants in indicator development and the IWG stressed the need to market the current indicator as a prototype or developing indicator that is being improved and expanded in the next few years.

One of the data providers encouraged others to participate in future revisions, recommending the training in use of the statistical package (Birdstats) as a powerful subsequent tool for analysing other data.

National monitoring schemes that should be incorporated into the next revision of the indicator.

To expand the index, the next data sets incorporated should be stored in a database, should be representative of the area covered (but this could be national or sub-national such as a large region), and ideally would have a time series of 10 or more years. There is a particular need to incorporate participation from more Mediterranean, Atlantic and boreal regions. Several delegates expressed willingness to be approached for the next round of indicator development including Bat Conservation Ireland, Israel, San Marino and Italy, Serbia, Spain, and southwest France, pending discussions with other data holders. The possible expansion will be greater if maternity roost data can also be included in the next revision since some countries have a focus on counting at summer roosts.

Capacity building - The need for capacity building includes:

- training in statistics (this can be addressed through the training at indicator development workshops and potentially this should be opened to some countries where training would be of benefit even if data do not allow full incorporation to the indicator at this stage)
- Support in the development of centrally coordinated monitoring schemes (Lebanon and Turkey expressed particular interest here).
- A general need for channelling resources towards countries which have the capacity but little resource to carry out surveillance.

Profile raising

Summary information describing the project work and the indicator methodology and rationale would be useful both to raise awareness of the work to policy makers, and for individual countries to encourage multiple data owners to share data within nations and join the international indicator. Action: convenors to draft short information summary suitable for BatLife Europe or Eurobats websites (detailed information will also be available on EEA website in time).

Action: all delegates with information on strategic European stakeholder contacts for whom indicators are relevant to inform convenors or assist with introductions.

General actions – Dr. Jasja Dekker and Dr. Karen Haysom to check and resend questionnaire on current monitoring and needs for capacity building support to those countries who had not been able to respond to the recent exercise. Continue to seek an opportunity and funding for early revision and expansion of the indicator.

d) Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats

Members present: Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino)*, Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Mr. Serghei Andreev (Moldova), Prof. Zihad Bouzlama (Algeria), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Nijat Hasanov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Martiros Nalbandyan (Armenia), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Mr. Faig Sadigov (Azerbaijan), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Prof. El Ayachi Sehhar (Morocco), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

To be informed: Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Dr. Julien Astoul-Delseny (France), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Kate McAney (VWT, Ireland), Dr. Jasminko Mulaomerović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway).

The group referred to Resolution 6.8 of MoP6 on “Monitoring of Daily and Seasonal Movements of Bats”, and stressed the need to better understand how bats can move through the range states and territories, in order to focus on appropriate study methodologies and conservation needs to protect and help cross-boundary groups of bats.

New evidence, mostly related to the use of modern genetic techniques, revealed the existence of movements between European populations and Near East localities, thus opening new perspectives. Moreover, the use of isotopes is considered very promising. As migration and transboundary movements are fundamentals of the Agreement, it was stated that these aspects should be taken into account when assessing EPI projects.

The IWG seeks to provide a draft resolution to the next MoP on the priority and advances related to the topic. In order to draft this, the IWG is called to:

- re-organize available information on movements and techniques considered by area, species and methodologies;
- ask advice from scientific focal points on new references or information; in particular, a short abstract and species/ habitat/ kind of movement data should be provided. Data available in languages other than English are also welcome.
- prepare a new questionnaire, with few questions on all species and types of movement recorded in the country; this should be submitted to scientific focal points to collect existing literature and potential existence of movement according to species ecology.

Additionally, the group recognized that data collected from centralized bandings and information exchange on conservation routes, roosts and stop-overs can prove to be of great importance.

The analysis of possible results can derive from different approaches and techniques. Cooperation efforts in bat movement studies should also be performed.

It is estimated that the first milestone of the work plan (questionnaire and letter for focal points) will be ready within 6 months. A first draft of the questionnaire will be circulated by email as soon as possible.

e) Autecological Studies for Priority Species

Although the group did not convene, progress was achieved in the margins of the meeting.

f) Wind Turbines and Bat Populations

Present in the meeting: Dr. Luísa Rodrigues (Portugal)*, Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Dr. Emma Boston (CIBR, Ireland), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Jasja Dekker (DMS, BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Mr. Brian Keeley (BCIreland), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Ms. Ùna

Nealon (CIBR, Ireland), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Folchert R. van Dijken (Netherlands), Katherine Walsh (UK).

Members of IWG (°: Interest in IWG participation to be confirmed after AC17)

Dr. Luísa Rodrigues (Portugal)*, Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Lothar Bach (Germany), Mr. Laurent Biraschi (Luxembourg), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Eleftherios Hadjisterkotis (Cyprus)°, Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria)°, Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Pascal Moeschler (Switzerland)°, Ms. Kirsty Park (UK), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (San Marino), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Katherine Walsh (UK).

To be informed (°: Interest in IWG participation to be confirmed after 17AC):

Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS, BatLife Europe), Mr. Boyan Petrov (Bulgaria)°, Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT, UK), Mr. Anthony M. Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Mr. Lauri Lutsar (Estonian Fund for Nature)°, Ms. Úna Nealon (Ireland), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Mr. Jacques Pir (Luxembourg)°, Ms. Elvana Ramaj (Albania)°, Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Folchert R. van Dijken (Netherlands), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The group revised the work plan by adding 3 new items. Current work plan:

| Sub-group | Coordinator (c) and members |
|--|---|
| Update/reorganize the list of references | Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c) Laurent Biraschi |
| Compilation of data on bat mortality per country | Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c) Lothar Bach |
| Updating of tables on monitoring studies done in Europe and on bats' behaviour in relation to wind farms | Anna Nele Herdina (c) Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage Laurent Biraschi Christine Harbusch |
| Mitigation and compensation measures | Luisa Rodrigues (c) Lothar Bach Martin Cel'uch Dino Scaravelli |
| Estimation of mortality rate taking into consideration predation, efficiency and controlled area; choose best estimator for Europe | Lothar Bach (c) Luisa Rodrigues Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen Martin Cel'uch Eleftherios Hadjisterkotis |
| Impact of mortality rate on populations | Martin Cel'uch (c) Lothar Bach Luisa Rodrigues Christine Harbusch Eleftherios Hadjisterkotis |
| Deterrents | Lothar Bach (c) Luisa Rodrigues Dino Scaravelli |
| Table on maximum foraging distances of species | Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (c) Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen |
| Collect national guidelines (including information on feathering/stopping WTs) | Andrzej Kepel (c) Branko Micevski |
| Use of dogs vs humans during carcass searches | Martin Cel'uch |
| Update of guidelines** | Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage Luisa Rodrigues Lothar Bach Martin Cel'uch Andrzej Kepel Branko Micevski Christine Harbusch |
| Measurement of activity at ground level and rotor height (NEW) | Lothar Bach (c) Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage |
| Guidance on Small Wind Turbines (NEW) | Kirsty Park (c) Lothar Bach |
| Offshore wind farms (NEW) | Lothar Bach (c) |

***: Other members who would like to participate in the revision of the guidelines should inform the IWG about their interest before end of July 2012.*

A discussion on the revision of the guidelines was carried out, and it was agreed to present a draft revision of the guidelines at the next AC Meeting. A final draft will be presented to AC19, for approval in the next MoP.

g) Light Pollution

Permanent members: Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium)*, Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino) *, Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Zoltán Bihari (Hungary), Ms. Marianne Courouble (France) Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS, BatLife Europe), Dr. Aurora Dibra (Albania), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Ms. Marina Đurović (Montenegro) Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT) for Ms. Kelly Gunnell (BCT), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Mr. Pascal Hirsch (BAFF) Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland) Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

To be informed: Dr. Tina Aughney (BCIreland), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Brian Keeley (BCIreland), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Úna Nealon (CIBR, Ireland), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Niamh Roche (BCIreland), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The IWG on light pollution convened at the AC17. After a period of low activity, the working group reflected on the strategy to follow concerning bats and light pollution issues, and which would be the possible end points for the IWG activities. The IWG discussed the possibilities with a view to

- a) a MOP resolution with policy relevance on acute disturbance of bat colonies, roosts, important feeding grounds (e.g. over water) and known commuting routes by acute light pollution (e.g. spotlights) and
- b) on the possibility of drafting guidelines for good practice for both acute and diffuse light pollution, including fragmentation of the night landscape by road lights or how to avoid a significant disturbance on sites in multiple use.

Even with no proven negative impact on all bat species, for numerous reasons related to human and environmental health, the IWG favours all efforts to darken the night landscape in and outside cities.

At any moment, a clear distinction must be made between acute/direct impacts on e.g. colonies and diffuse/all around light pollution.

Objective 1. With respect to a possible MOP resolution on acute light pollution, or disturbance of bat colonies, roost and hibernation quarters in general, the EU Habitats Directive in principle offers all instruments for full protection against all forms of bat disturbance within the EU. This protection might be enlarged to commuting routes and foraging grounds when proven crucial for a good state of conservation of the populations involved (EU Habitat Directive). Guidance/protocols might be needed to decide which level of disturbance has to be considered 'relevant' or 'significant'.

Non-EU countries may offer active protection against capturing or killing of bats, but might not offer similar protection against colony disturbance.

The IWG will list the degree of protection of bats in Party and Non-Party states to the EUROBATS agreement. When not in place, given the importance of bats and the related ecosystem services offered, and given the text of the EUROBATS Agreement, the next MOP might ask the Parties to align their legislation to include avoidance of significant disturbance of, at the least, bat colonies. Doing so, this does not only cover acute light pollution, but also noise and other forms of colony disturbance.

The IWG would like to point out that, in practice, when bird protection measures are considered for different kinds of activities. This is usually not possible for bats, despite their equally high protection status.

Objective B. Despite the fact that a lot of information is available, and that much of what we call good practice is common sense, the IWG concluded it to be useful to list in a guidance document the current state of what is considered good practice with regard to light pollution and bats. For both acute and diffuse light pollution events, the guidance on what is needed to avoid disturbance under the EU Habitats Directive or other relevant legislations for non-EU countries can be used by the relevant authorities to redirect and mitigate projects in the process of delivering permissions or a permit in the frame of Environmental Impact Assessments. The compiled information on good practice can be equally used by stakeholders, target professional groups (e.g. lighting engineers, physical and urban planners and built heritage) and NGOs to negotiate on mitigation measures, again backed by what is legally prescribed for under the EU Habitats Directive.

The guidance document and leaflet produced will equally cover examples of what is possible when all stakeholders are willing to make a concerted effort in terms of bat protection. This includes mitigating measures on commuting routes, important foraging places, or how bat roosts can be lit without long-term disturbance.

The document produced will highlight the possible impact of diffuse light pollution on a list of sensitive species (e.g. *Rhinolophus*, *Plecotus*) where special attention is required, in the first place around known colonies, but also with regard to commuting routes and foraging areas.

The IWG will connect to all on-going programmes and legislative efforts concerning bats and light pollution. The time frame is the next MOP for objective A, and the next AC meeting for a draft of the guidance document for objective B.

h) Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas and Commuting Routes

Members (present): Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland)*, Prof. Zuhair Amr (Jordan), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Zoltán Bihari (Hungary), Dr. Jasja Dekker (DMS/BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Dr. Suren Gazaryan (Russian Federation), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Dr. Anthony Mitchell-Jones (UK), Ms. Ruth Petermann (Germany), Dr. Danilo Russo (Italy), Dr. Laurent Schley (Luxembourg), Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT, UK), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Ms. Katherine Walsh (UK).

To be informed (present): Dr. Awatef Abiadh (Tunisia), Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Tina Aughney (BCIreland), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Clare Heardman (Ireland), Dr. Ludo Holsbeek (Belgium), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Rep. Serbia), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Dr. Kate McAney (VWT, Ireland), Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The group started off by recalling the Resolution 6.7. ‘Conservation and Management of Critical Feeding Areas, Core Areas around Colonies and Commuting Routes’ and discussing progress being made with the guidance document. All but one species accounts are ready as well as some parts of the general chapters of the guidelines. The group discussed the index of the guidance and made some refinements. The group then agreed on writing the parts by the end of 2012 and preparing final draft guidance document well in time for the next AC meeting. The work plan to be implemented is as follows:

| Guidance chapter / other task | Who |
|--|--|
| summary table of habitats | Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen |
| 4.1. Forests, forestry practices | Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen |
| 4.2. Water bodies, wetlands, river valleys - Marshlands as feeding areas? | Per Ole Syvertsen Helena Jahelková |
| 4.3. Bats in agricultural landscape | Jasja Dekker, Karen Haysom |
| 4.4. Urban areas, parks | Jasja Dekker, BCT? |
| 4.5. Linear elements and routes to roost + protection of commuting routes | Jasja Dekker, Henry Schofield |
| 4.7. How to protect feeding areas that lie across national boundaries | Christine Harbusch |
| 4.9. examples of Life projects and agrienvironmental practices | All |
| 4.10. Summarizing: actions favouring and harming bats | Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen |
| 5. Species accounts - check esp. own texts, all relevant references included? | All |
| 5. Species accounts - <i>Rhinolophus blasii</i> | Henry Schofield |
| 6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> | Tony Mitchell-Jones, Henry Schofield |
| 6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> | Henry Schofield |
| 6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - <i>Myotis cappacini</i> | Stéphane Aulagnier, Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage |
| 6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - <i>Myotis dasycneme?</i> | Jasja Dekker |
| 6. Examples of successful habitat management cases - Green bridges | - Ruth Petermann asks Hartmut Geiger and others - Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen asks Geoffrey Billington and/or Natural England |
| Maximum foraging distances table (IWG on WT) – cross-check | Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage |

i) Man-made Purpose-built Bat Roosts

Members as revised in AC17: Dr. Henry Schofield (VWT, UK)*, Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Dr Jasja Dekker (DMS/ BatLife Europe), Ms. Marie-Jo Dubourg-Savage (SFPEM), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Dr. Karen Haysom (BCT), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Thierry Kervyn (Belgium), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal).

To be informed: Dr. Tina Aughney (BCIreland), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Ms. Kelly Gunnell (BCT), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Clare Heardman (Ireland), Mr. Anthony M Hutson (UK), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Mr. Andro Kandaurov (Georgia), Dr. Carmi Korine (Israel), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Dr. Kate McAney (VWT, Ireland), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Wael M. Shohdi (Egypt), Mr. Aliaksei Shpak (Belarus), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway), Ms. Katherine Walsh (UK), Dr. Hossein Zohoori (Iran).

The IWG discussed the terms of reference of the working group particularly with regard to whether structures added to existing buildings should fall within the remit of the group. It was decided not to add these structures to the original terms of reference. Dr. Karen Haysom asked if integrated bat boxes fell within the remit as there was interest in the UK and also within the Netherlands on their application and success. The group agreed that this would not be a focus at this time but that Kelly Gunnell from BCT could correspond with group members independently for the time being.

The IWG received 38 questionnaire responses to its request for information on the building of man-made purpose-built bat roosts in Party and Non-Party Range States. Of these 16 indicated that this type of roost had being constructed in 13 different countries. These were reviewed individually by the group with input, where possible, from the appropriate national representative. Some of the returned questionnaires detailed the adaptation of existing structures and were therefore outside the terms of reference of the group.

IWG members were tasked with getting more detail of case studies described in the questionnaires. The 'positive' questionnaires and any additional data are to be circulated to the permanent members of the group along with a breakdown of the responses from all questionnaires.

j) Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats

Members (present): Ms. Jean Matthews (UK)*, Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Stéphane Aulagnier (France), Dr. Andriy-Taras Bashta (Ukraine), Dr. Raşit Bilgin (Turkey), Dr. Martin Cel'uch (Slovak Republic), Dr. Aurora Dibra (Albania), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Dr. Christine Harbusch (NABU), Ms. Anna Nele Herdina (Austria), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Mark Kalashyan (Armenia), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Eeva-Maria Kyheröinen (Finland), Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland), Prof. Branko Micevski (FYR Macedonia), Mr. Primož Presetnik (Slovenia), Dr. Luísa Rodrigues (Portugal), Ms. Abigel Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Mr. Farkas Szodoray-Paradi (Romania), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia), Dr. Davit Yavruyan (Armenia), Ms. Katherine Walsh (UK).

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The group met to discuss the outline of the proposed publication, which will then be circulated. Some chapters have been allocated to countries that were not present so they will be contacted to confirm if they will be able to provide text.

Since the last AC, Serbia drafted one chapter and Slovenia updated the literature review. These will be circulated for comment and addition. The questionnaire will also be circulated again as there will be new information since the original questionnaire was produced in 2008 and some countries have joined EUROBATS since then. The IWG will ask for any additional information on research, for case studies and also if there is information available on impacts of railways on bats.

k) Lethal Fungal Infections

Members present at the meeting: Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN)*, Dr. Julien Astoul-Delseny (France), Prof. Zihad Bouzlama (Algeria), Mr. Emrah Çoraman (Turkey), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Mr. Ioseb Natradze (Georgia), Dr. Vasil Popov (Bulgaria).

To be informed: Dr. Javier Juste (Spain), Ms. Marie Nedinge (Sweden).

See Agenda Item 6, paragraph k). No further additions.

l) Implementation of the Agreement

Members: Mr. Anthony Hutson (IUCN)*, Dr. Ferdia Marnell (Ireland)*, Dr. Julien Astoul-Delseny (France), Dr. Panagiotis Georgiakakis (Greece), Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Ms. Monika Lesz (Poland), Ms. Jean Matthews (UK), Mr. Oliver Schall (Germany), Ms. Triinu Tõrv (Estonia).

The IWG was established at AC16 to address Paragraph 1b of Resolution 6.16 which states:

“The Advisory Committee should establish an Intersessional Working Group to review the implementation of the Agreement and relevant resolutions and assess setting up a system to review requests for advice concerning the implementation addressed to the Secretariat.”

The group’s first objective was to review all resolutions adopted by the Agreement and as a first step the Secretariat has provided a table of all the resolutions relevant to the Conservation and Management Plan. At AC17 the working group discussed this table and examined how best to take it forward to complete our next aim which is to “review the obligations to Parties, to the Advisory Committee and to the Secretariat.” The next step will then be to produce a checklist of Party Obligations for incorporation into national reports. When this is complete, and we aim to have it finished by the end of 2012, we will pass this to the Intersessional Working Group on National Reports. We have already started work on the 5th aim of the group which is to produce an information handbook on the Agreement. We hope this handbook will facilitate all parties, old and new, to fully implement the Agreement. Some division of labour took place between working group members to ensure that this guidance document will have progressed

further before the next AC meeting and we fully intend to have the handbook completed before the next Meeting of the Parties.

The group has one further objective: “to discuss with the Chairmen of the AC and StC the possibilities to develop a system to assess performance by Parties to meet their obligations and to establish an Implementations Committee to address special needs or cases e.g. clear breaches of obligations, where these cannot be settled through the relevant Focal Points.” This was briefly discussed by the group and it was decided that this point might best be addressed once the Handbook has been completed and made available to all Parties.

m) Bat Rehabilitation

Members: Dr. Helena Jahelková (Czech Republic)*, Dr. Mounir Abi-Said (Lebanon), Dr. Martin Ceľuch (Slovak Republic), Dr. Lena Godlevska (Ukraine), Ms. Daniela Hamidović (Croatia), Ms. Julia Hanmer (BCT), Mr. Peter Lina (Netherlands), Prof. Paul Racey (IUCN), Dr. Luisa Rodrigues (Portugal), Dr. Dino Scaravelli (Republic San Marino).

To be informed: Dr. Abdulaziz Alagaili (Saudi Arabia), Ms. Marie-José Dubourg-Savage (SFEPM), Mr. Branko Karapandža (Republic of Serbia), Mr. Brian Keely (BCIreland), Dr. Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra), Dr. Adwan Shehab (Syria), Mr. Per Ole Syvertsen (Norway).

A new group established at the 17th AC meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

Due to public events focused on bats (e.g. European Bat Night) interest in bats has increased and this is reflected in the high number of calls by the public to bat specialists on bats found. The work done on bat rehabilitation by EUROBATS Parties and Range States is very variable, from highly developed rescue-centers with databases of specimens found, to hardly any experience.

The goals of the IWG are as follows:

- Creation of a contact list across EUROBATS parties and range states, who deal with bat rehabilitation (*name, mail, phone, address, skype, national manual for bat rehabilitation (Y/N), advice center available (Y/N), language ability, range of area, compliance to share data for evaluation purposes*).

- Creation of a publication list on the effectiveness and value of rehabilitation for population conservation (whole-world studies) and a list of handbooks and papers on bat rehabilitation and care in captivity.
- List of FAQ concerning solutions to problems arising from the discovery of large colonies and case examples.
- Development of guidelines for protocols for accepting animals into captivity. These can provide considerable information supporting conservation and bat care, e.g. change in roosting strategies, dynamics, distribution at the local level, and risk of transmission of diseases (esp. rabies). Protocols should contain: *name, address of finding, contact to finder, species, sex, date, place of finding (specified), history of bat (specifies), condition of bat (specified), treatment (specified), fate (specified), disease test (Y/N), name of recipient of bat.*

During public events devoted to bats, many organizations use wild or handicapped bats for their presentations. Considering the huge potential stress caused by multiple and incorrect handling, as well as possible health risk for public when handling bats, there is a need for:

- Guidelines for the correct handling and care of bats during presentation to the public.

Bats in the wild use a variety of roosts and also have different food requirements. In captivity, food of insectivorous bat species is restricted to only several invertebrate species, which are enriched with a vitamin mixture. Providing incorrect care can lead to the suffering or even death of certain species. So far, no summary of studies on particular European bat species is available, and therefore there is a need to:

- Share concrete information on dietary and other needs of particular species in captivity. Eventually, results will be published for bat carers to reduce the negative impact on handicapped bats used in public events.

8. Date and venue of the 18th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Bulgaria offered to host the AC18 Meeting in 2013. The invitation was unanimously welcomed and accepted with much appreciation.

9. Any other business

The Executive Secretary informed the delegates of the need to reprint the European Bat Night posters and to adapt these in order to include the Agreement's newly-extended area. For this reason, Mr. Streit invited the participants to consider renaming the European Bat Night to International Bat Night. This suggestion was supported by Bat Conservation Trust, France and Lebanon and accepted by all.

10. Adoption of the record of the Meeting

The record was adopted by consensus.

11. Close of Meeting

The Executive Secretary thanked both the Chair and Vice-Chair for conducting the session in an excellent manner and the participants for their strong commitment and fruitful contributions. Mr. Streit also expressed his gratitude to the Irish hosts for their excellent support.

The Vice-Chair, Dr Ferdia Marnell, showed his appreciation for the substantial input provided by all participants and hoped they had enjoyed their stay in Ireland.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee once again expressed his thanks to the Irish Government for hosting the meeting and their wonderful hospitality. He also thanked the Executive Secretary, Mr. Andreas Streit, and his staff members, Ms. Tine Meyer-Cords and Ms. Ana Ferreira da Silva, for all their support and wished them much success with the post-meeting work. Lastly, Mr. Lina thanked the conveners of the IWGs and the participants for their continuous involvement in the AC work.

The Meeting was closed at 13:24.

17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Dublin, Ireland, 15 – 17 May 2012

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