

4th Session of the Meeting of Parties

Sofia, Bulgaria, 22 – 24 September 2003

Resolution No. 4.3

Guidelines for the Protection and Management of Important Underground Habitats for Bats



The Meeting of Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (hereafter "the Agreement"),

Recalling Resolution No. 2.4, Element 2: Bat Habitats, Underground Habitats agreed at its Second Session (Bonn, July 1998);

Further recalling Resolution No. 3.8: Implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan agreed at its Third Session (Bristol, July 2000);

Recognising the importance of underground habitats to many species of bats, both for hibernation and breeding in different parts of their ranges;

Recognising that underground habitats, including man-made habitats, are threatened by a wide variety of anthropogenic factors and that active management of such sites is often required;

Recalling Resolution No. 2.4: Transboundary Programme, Habitat Proposals;

Noting further the work being carried out in the framework of the EU Habitats Directive, in particular the establishment of the Natura 2000 network, and in the framework of the Bern Convention, in particular the establishment of the Emerald network;

Decides that:

1. Parties who have not yet done so, should identify important underground habitats for bats, as required by Resolution No. 2.4, and should transmit this information to the Secretariat;

2. Parties should ensure that the important underground habitats they have identified are fully protected by law and, where appropriate, are physically protected against unauthorised entry;

3. Parties should ensure that such habitats are managed in accordance with generic advice provided by the Advisory Committee; and

Directs the Advisory Committee to complete, agree and publish *Guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Underground Habitats for Bats*, currently available as a draft.