

4th Session of the Meeting of Parties

Sofia, Bulgaria, 22 – 24 September 2003

Resolution No. 4.7

Wind Turbines and Bat Populations



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

Recalling Article III, Paragraph 6 of the Agreement, which stipulates that "Each Party shall take such additional action as it considers necessary to safeguard populations of bats which it identifies as being subject to threat and shall report under Article VI on the action taken.";

Appreciating Resolution 7.5 adopted by the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) concerning Wind Turbines and Migratory Species;

Recognising that the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee give it the task to recommend solutions to the Meeting of Parties to problems relating to the scientific aspects of the implementation of the Agreement;

Further recognising the environmental benefits of wind energy especially for addressing climate change and the significance of reducing climate change for the long-term survival of bat populations;

Noting the potential of large scale development of wind turbines as a new technique of energy production for which the actual effects on bats are not fully assessed or predicted at present;

Noting also that there is existing evidence of mortalities of bats from wind turbines;

Concerned about the possible negative impacts of wind turbines on bat populations as well as their prey and habitats e.g.:

- destruction and disturbance of habitats and commuting corridors,
- destruction or disturbance of roosts,

- increased collision risk for bats in flight,
- through emission of ultrasound noise.

Recognising the need for a thorough environmental impact assessment prior to selecting appropriate construction sites in order to avoid areas of particular value to bat populations;

Aware of the need to regularly monitor and assess the actual impact of wind turbines by international exchange of information and by monitoring programmes at existing wind turbine plants;

Recognising the need for adequate relevant research on such effects on bats and the limited data available on bat populations potentially affected;

Noting especially the potential risk to bat populations that such installations may present; and

Wishing to minimise possible adverse effects on bat populations;

Decides to:

Request the Advisory Committee to assess the evidence of the impacts of wind turbines on bat populations and, if appropriate, to develop guidelines for assessing potential impacts on bats and for the establishment of wind turbines in accordance with the ecological requirements of bat populations;

Emphasise that until this task is completed, the Parties and Range States should take full account of the precautionary principle in the development of wind turbine plants and to take account of bats in planning processes relating to the siting of wind turbines, especially along migration routes and in areas of particular value to bat populations;

Encourage the Parties and Non-Party Range States to initiate and support further investigations and research on the impact of wind turbines on bats.