

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
OF THE MIDDLE - EUROPEAN POPULATION OF THE GREAT BUSTARD**

**ROMANIAN NATIONAL REPORT**

This reporting format is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support exchange of information throughout the range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatory States. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

<p><b>Agency or institution responsible for the preparation of this report</b> <b>Ministry of Environment</b></p>
<p><b>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input</b></p> <p>Environmental Protection Agency Bihor Romanian Ornithological Society Association for bird and nature protection Milvus Group</p>
<p><b>Reports submitted to date:</b></p> <p>2004 (2001-2003) 2008 (2004-2007) 2013 (2008-2012) 2018 (2013-2017)</p>
<p><b>Period covered by this report:</b> 01.01. 2013 - 31.12.2017</p>
<p><b>Memorandum in effect in country since:</b> June, 2001</p>
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## PART I. GENERAL

This questionnaire follows the structure and numbering of the Action Plan annexed to the Memorandum of Understanding to make it easier to read the relevant action points before the form is filled in. In some cases, however, sub-actions were not listed separately for the sake of simplicity and to avoid duplications. They should however be taken into consideration when answering the questions.

### 0. National work programme

Is there a national work programme or action plan already in place in your country for the Great Bustard pursuant to Paragraph 4(g) of the Memorandum of Understanding?

Yes  No

### 1. Habitat protection

#### **1.1 Designation of protected areas.**

To what extent are the display, breeding, stop-over and wintering sites covered by protected areas?

Designation of protected areas under national law	Classification of Special Protection Areas according to the requirements of Art.4.1 of the EC Birds Directive
<input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Low</b> (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully</b> (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <sup>1</sup>

What measures were taken to ensure the adequate protection of the species and its habitat at these sites?

In Romania a legislative framework for the regulation of any plans, programs or projects that could harm national natural capital was created and developed.

There are legislative procedures on environmental assessment for plans and programs (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The management Plan of the most important Special Protected Area ROSPA0097 Pescaria Cefa – Rădvani Forest for Great Bustard was elaborated, including specific conservation measures for the protection of this species.

Management Plans of the Special Protected Areas are included conservation measures for species of community interest.

Where are the remaining gaps?

Telemetry study to improving the understanding of seasonal movements into the migration routes.

<sup>1</sup> The species occurs only irregularly, no regular stop-over or wintering sites identified.

Are currently unoccupied, but potential breeding habitats identified in your country?

**Yes**       No       Not applicable<sup>2</sup>

If yes, please explain how these areas are protected or managed to enable the re-establishment of Great Bustard.

A project proposal was submitted to the Romania - Hungary Programme (Investment Priority 6/c – conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage) by the Municipality of Salonta (Bihar County) and the Milvus Group.

One of the objectives of this project is the transformation of 6 km medium voltage power lines into underground cables in the Salonta area, in order to remove the barrier effect of it for the Great Bustard population.

The implementation of the conservation measures which are included in the management plans of the Special Protected Areas is a priority in Romania.

### **1.2 Measures taken to ensure the maintenance of Great Bustard habitats outside of protected areas.**

Please describe what measures have been taken to maintain land-use practices beneficial for Great Bustard outside of protected areas (e.g., set-aside and extensification schemes, cultivation of alfalfa and oilseed rape for winter, maintenance of rotational grazing, etc.).

Maintenance of rotational grazing, cultivation of oilseed rape and alfalfa, avoiding the construction of wind turbines in the Great Bustard and raptors habitats, buffer zones for species protection.

To what extent do these measures, combined with site protection, cover the national population?

- Fully (>75%)  
 Most (50-75%)  
 Some (10-49%)  
 Little (<10%)  
 Not at all

**Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

Are recently (over the last 20 years) abandoned Great Bustard breeding habitats mapped in your country?

Yes       **No**       Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

What habitat management measures have been taken to encourage the return of Great Bustard?

Restrict grazing and promotion of the best agricultural practices in key areas for species.

If there were any measures taken, please provide information on their impact.

### **1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.**

Are new projects potentially causing fragmentation of the species' habitat (such as construction of highways and railways, irrigation, planting of shelterbelts, afforestation, power lines, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country?

**Yes**       No       Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Countries *outside* of the historic (beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century) breeding range of the species.

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats?  Yes  **No**  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>  
If yes, please provide details.

Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?  **Yes**  No  Not applicable<sup>1</sup>

Forest Directorate Bihor implemented an afforestation project in Baia Veche – Izvoare and Salonta areas for ecological restoration.

Please, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

Occasional records of Great Bustard were observed in the field.

## **2. Prevention of hunting, disturbance and other threats**

### **2.1 Hunting.**

Is Great Bustard afforded strict legal protection in your country?

**Yes**

No

Please, give details of any hunting restrictions imposed for the benefit of Great Bustard including those on timing of hunting and game management activities.

- ✓ Law No. 13/1998 for ratification of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention);
- ✓ Emergency Governmental Ordinance No. 57/2007 on the regime of natural protected areas, conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, modified and approved by Law No. 49/2011 with subsequent amendments;
- ✓ Law No. 13/1993 for ratification of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wild and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention);
- ✓ Law No. 407/2006 hunting and protection of hunting fund with subsequent amendments.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures ensure the protection of the national Great Bustard population? The national population is covered by restrictions on hunting to prevent hunting-related disturbance:

Fully (>75%)

Most (50-75%)

Some (10-49%)

Little (<10%)

Not at all

**Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.2 Prevention of disturbance.**

What measures have been taken to prevent disturbance of Great Bustard in your country, including both breeding birds and single individuals or small flocks on migration?

Control in the Special Protected Areas by the commissioners of the National Environmental Guard, administrators and custodians of the Special Protected Areas.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures have ensured the protection of the national population.

In Romania, a few individuals were observed in the last time.

Promotion of ecotourism and bird-watching in the Special Protected Area.

The national population is covered by restrictions on other activities causing disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all

**X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.3.1 Prevention of predation.**

What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country?

Generally speaking, the predators decrease the number of prey.

The significance of predation of a few individuals of Great Bustard observed in Romania, was not evaluated.

What are the main predator species?

The main predator species of Great Bustard is the Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and the raptors in the potential breeding areas.

What measures have been taken to control predators in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly?

It is not applicable due to insufficient data about the Great Bustard in Romania.

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (predation reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (predation reduced by 10–49%)
- Less effective (predation reduced by less than 10%)

**X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.**

What is the significance of collision with power lines in your country?

Electrocution is one of the most important risk factors for Great Bustard, storks and birds of prey.

Collision with power lines could decrease the Great Bustard population size (it's not the case in Romania).

A database is needed to prioritizing the Special Protected Areas where measures need to be taken to decrease the drop in the bird populations due to the electrocution or collision with power lines.

For reducing the mortality of wild birds, several short sections of power lines were isolated in different regions.

Certain parts of the medium voltage network, dangerous for species, have been isolated.

This work is important for the targeted species in the areas of intervention.

What proactive and corrective measures have been taken to reduce the mortality caused by existing power lines in your country?

- ✓ Convince the Electricity Companies to do the mitigation work for identifying “the hot spots” in matter of collision and electrocution with the medium and high voltage power lines.
- ✓ Isolating medium voltage pylons by the Electricity Companies in a few Special Protected Areas.

What is the size of the populations affected by these corrective measures?

**Not applicable.**

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (collision with power lines reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (collision with power lines reduced by 10–49%)
- Ineffective (collision with power lines reduced by less than 10%)

**X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **2.3.3 Compensatory measures.**

What is the size (in hectares) of Great Bustard habitat lost or degraded for any reasons since the Memorandum of Understanding entered into effect (1 June 2001)?

**Unknown.**

What is the size of the populations affected?

**Not applicable.**

Were these habitat losses compensated?       Yes     Partially     No    **X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**  
If yes, please explain how.

Were these measures effective?                       Yes     Partially     No    **X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, give details on the effectiveness or explain why they were not effective if that is the case.

### **3. Possession and trade**

Is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs prohibited in your country?

**Yes**                       No

How are these restrictions enforced? What are the remaining shortcomings, if any?

- ✓ Emergency Ordinance No. 195/2005 on the protection of the environment, as amended and supplemented;
- ✓ Emergency Governmental Ordinance No. 57/2007 on the regime of natural protected areas, conservation of natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, modified and approved by Law No. 49/2011 with subsequent amendments;
- ✓ Law No. 69/1994 regarding ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Please indicate if any exemption is granted or not all of these activities are prohibited.

**Not the case.**

#### **4. Recovery measures**

##### **4.1 Captive breeding\* in emergency situations.**

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country?

Yes      **X No**

Please, describe the measures, staff and facilities involved and how these operations comply with the IUCN criteria on reintroductions.

**Not applicable.**

##### **4.2 Reintroduction.**

Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country?

Yes      **X No**

If yes, please describe the progress. If there was any feasibility study carried out, please summarize its conclusions.

##### **4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.**

Are captive reared birds released in your country?

Yes      **X No**

If yes, please summarize the experience with release programmes in your country. What is the survival rate of released birds? What is the breeding performance of released birds?

What is the overall assessment of release programmes based on the survival of released birds one year after release?

- Effective (the survival is about the same as of the wild ones)
- Partially effective (the survival rate is lower than 75% of the wild birds)
- Ineffective (the survival is less than 25% of wild birds)

**X Not applicable<sup>3</sup>**

#### **5. Cross-border conservation measure**

Has your country undertaken any cross-border conservation measures with neighbouring countries?

**X Yes**     No     Not applicable<sup>4</sup>

Please, give details of your country's collaboration with neighbouring countries on national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities for Great Bustard. Especially, list any measures taken to harmonise legal instruments protecting Great Bustard and its habitats, as well as funding you have provided to Great Bustard for particular conservation actions in other Range States.

In the field of monitoring and conservation, the Milvus Group is collaborating with the Koros-Maros National Park Directorate from Hungary.

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\* In effect, "captive breeding" should be read as "captive rearing" according to current practices.

<sup>3</sup> No release is taking place in the country.

<sup>4</sup> For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

## **6. Monitoring and research**

### **6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.**

Are the breeding, migratory or wintering Great Bustard populations monitored in your country?

**Yes**       **No**

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None

**Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

What is the size and trend in the national population?<sup>5</sup>

Breeding/resident population

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males:

No. of adult males: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of females: No. immature males: -

No. of females: \_\_\_\_\_

No. immature males: \_\_\_\_\_

Trend:  Declined by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years  
 Stable  
 Increased by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years

Trend:  Declined by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years  
 Stable  
 Increased by \_\_\_% over the last 10 years

**Not applicable** because there is not a national population of Great Bustards in Romania.

For countries where the species occurs only occasionally, please give the details of known observations within the reporting period:

No of adult males: 11

No of adult females: 22

Trend: **Unknown**

In the eastern part of Romania, a female was observed on 26 February 2016, in Braila county.

In this area there is not a breeding/resident population.

<http://pasaridinromania.sor.ro/ornitodata?s%5B%5D=51&go=1&f=5&d1=&d2=&nmin=&nmax=&jud=0&c-public=1&c-platit=1&rar%5B%5D=comuna&rar%5B%5D=relativ-comuna&rar%5B%5D=rara&rar%5B%5D=foarte-rara&int=0&raza=100&data-desen=%5B%5D&data-desen-tip=&data-desen-reset=0&data-extra-reset=0>

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<sup>5</sup> Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

### 6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.

Is the effect of habitat conservation measures monitored in your country?

Yes  Partially  No **X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

**Not applicable**

What can be learned from these studies?

**Not applicable**

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

**Not applicable**

### 6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.

Have there been any comparative studies carried out on the population dynamics, habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes and causes of decline in your country in collaboration with other Range States?

Yes  No **X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

What can be learned from these studies?

**Not applicable**

What are the remaining gaps where the Memorandum of Understanding could assist?

**Not applicable**

### 6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.

Are the causes of Great Bustard mortality understood in your country?

Yes  Partially  No **X Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

**Not applicable**

What can be learned from these studies?

**Not applicable**

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

**Not applicable**

### 6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.

Are the factors limiting breeding success in core populations understood in your country?

Yes  Partially  No  **Not applicable**<sup>6</sup>

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

What can be learned from these studies?

**Not applicable**

What are the remaining gaps and what measures are you going to take to address these gaps?

#### **6.2.4 Studies on migration.**

Were there any studies on migration routes and wintering places carried out in your country?

Yes  Partially  No  **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

Where are the key sites and what is the size of the population they support?

A few individuals of the Great Bustards were observed by the Milvus Group in 2017, in the Special Protected Areas ROSPA0097 Pescăria Cefa – Rădvani Forest, Salonta

Do you have any knowledge about the origin of these birds supported by ringing or other marking methods?

Great Bustard has been migrated from Hungary in Romania.

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

**Not applicable**

### **7. Training of staff working in conservation bodies**

Is there any mechanism in place in your country to share information on biological characteristics and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices to personnel working regularly with the species?

Yes  No  **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please describe it.

Have personnel dealing with Great Bustard participated in any exchange programme in other Range States?

Yes  No  **Not applicable**<sup>1</sup>

If yes, please give details on number of staff involved, country visited and how the lessons were applied in your country.

Milvus Group - Bird and Nature Protection Association has been collaborated with Hungarian experts for Great Bustard monitoring.

### **8. Increasing awareness of the need to protect Great Bustards and their habitat**

What measures have been taken to increase the awareness about the protection needs of

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<sup>6</sup> Only for breeding countries.

the species and its habitat in your country since signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

- ✓ Awareness campaigns, leaflets disseminated;
- ✓ Meetings with the land users, local government authorities, administrators/custodians of the natural protected areas, the Electricity Companies and NGOs.

Do farmers, shepherds, political decision makers and local and regional authorities support Great Bustard conservation?

Yes     **Partially**     No

What are the remaining gaps or problems and how are you going to address them?

- ✓ Introducing the agri-environmental schemes to promote farming techniques compatible with the birds species' requirements;
- ✓ Providing farmers' compensations for the birds' protection.

### **9. Economic measures**

Have there been any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country?

Yes                                     Partially     No                     **Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

What percentage of the population is covered in total by these measures?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None

**Not applicable**

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (more than 50% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Partially effective (10–49% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Ineffective (less than 10% according to the species' needs)

**Not applicable<sup>1</sup>**

### **10. Threats**

Please, fill in the table below on main threats to the species in your country. Use the threat scores categories below to quantify their significance at national level. Please, provide an explanation on what basis you have assigned the threat score and preferably provide reference.

Add additional lines, if necessary.

**Threat scores:**

Critical: a factor causing or likely to cause **very rapid declines** (>30% over 10 years).

High: a factor causing or likely to cause **rapid declines** (20-30% over 10 years).

Medium: a factor causing or likely to cause relatively **slow, but significant, declines** (10-20% over 10 years).

Low: a factor causing or likely to cause **fluctuations**.

Local: a factor causing local declines but likely to cause **negligible declines at population level**.

Unknown: a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

Threat name	Threat score	Explanation and reference
Habitat loss	Medium	The loss of natural grasslands is one of the main threats for wildlife. Afforestation can lead to the habitat loss.
Losses of eggs and chicks	Unknown	This is one of the key factors in all agricultural habitats due to direct damage by harvesting machinery, irrigation works, use of pesticides and fertilizers.
Predation	Unknown	Eggs and chicks could be predated by red foxes with impact on the Great Bustard. In Romania there is not any evidence of eggs/chicks predation.
Collision with powerlines	Unknown	Great Bustards are reluctant to fly in poor weather. Their poor manoeuvrability in flight renders them unable to evade poorly marked powerlines. Collision with overhead cables is a significant cause of death. There is no evidence of any collision of Great Bustards with powerlines.
Human disturbance	Low	The problem is relevant in areas of high human population. Disturbance causes stress, desertion of clutches, escape flights during unfavourable weather, Human disturbance can be associated with the risk of injuries (e.g. collision with power lines). In case of young birds, human disturbance can reduce the time spent feeding. Disturbance at the display sites disrupts social behaviour and usually alters or aborts copulation.
Pesticides	Unknown	Application of pesticides adversely affects Great Bustard population by lowering the reproduction rate. Massive applications of pesticides can have a direct impact locally.
Illegal hunting	Unknown	The poaching could decrease the population size but the hunting of Great Bustards is not allow in Romania.
Habitat fragmentation	Medium	The roads, fences, ditches, highways can lead to the further fragmentation and habitat loss.

## **PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

**Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if that is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on Great Bustard or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.**