



Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean

(Valencia and Online 7 to 9 June 2022)

UNEP/CMS/MIKT5/Meeting Report

MEETING REPORT



The European Union was recognized as Champion Plus for their generous support and commitment towards addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean for the period 2018 - 2023. This activity has been funded with the contribution granted by the European Commission under the Migratory Species Champion Programme and through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC Programme) Cooperation Agreements with UNEP.



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List of Acronyms

AAO	Association “Les Amis Des Oiseaux”
AEML WG	African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group
AEWA	African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement
CABS	Committee against Bird Slaughter
CAT	Community Action Team
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
COP	Conference of the Parties
CUFAA	Carabinieri Command of Units for Forestry Environmental and Agrifood Protection
DGF	Direction Générale des Forêts, Tunisia
EC	European Commission
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
ENPE	European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment
EU	European Union
EUFJE	EU Network of Judges for the Environment
FACE	European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
IAF	International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey
ICCWC	International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime
IKB	Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Wild Birds
IMPEL	EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law
INPA	Israel Nature and Park Authority
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
ISPRA	Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research
ITTEA	Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the East Asian Australasian Flyway
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LIFE	EU funding instrument for the environment and climate action
LIPU	Italian League for Bird Protection, BirdLife partner in Italy
MIKT	CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean
MITECO	Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Spain
MME	Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society, BirdLife partner in Hungary
NABU	Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, Germany
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCE	Nature Conservation Egypt
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWCU	National Wildlife Crime Unit, UK
PA	Protected Area

PECBMS	Pan European Common Bird Monitoring System
RSP	Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030: Eradicating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade in Wild Birds in Europe and the Mediterranean region
SBAA	Sovereign Base Area Administration, UK
SC	Standing Committee
SEO	Spanish Ornithological Society, BirdLife partner in Spain
SEPRONA	Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza de la Guardia Civil (Nature Protection Service of the Civil Guard)
SFPs	Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points on Eradication of Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds
TAC	Tactical Coordination Group
TAP	Tunis Action Plan
TIFIES	Action Plan Against Illegal Trafficking and Poaching of Wild Species
UK	United Kingdom
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VCF	Vulture Conservation Foundation
WRC	Wildlife Recovery Centres
WCA	Wildlife Crime Academy

Main meeting outcomes

1. The 4th Joint Meeting of Bern Convention Network of Special Focal Points (SFPs) on Eradication of the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (IKB) and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on IKB in the Mediterranean (MIKT) took place from 7 to 9 June 2022, in Valencia, Spain and online.
2. The main meeting outcomes were:
 - The meeting was attended by 120 people, of which 50 attended online.
 - Progress and successes against IKB over the period 2021/2022 were shared by members and observers of the MIKT and the Bern Convention Network of SFPs. Notable examples on the implementation of National Action Plans against IKB (NAPs) were given by Italy, the Sovereign Base Area Administration (SBAA) in Cyprus and Spain. Similarly, the use of technology to enhance law enforcement was shared by Israel. Positive reports were also provided by Croatia, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Tunisia, Türkiye and the UK.
 - Participants were informed about the work undertaken against IKB in Spain at national level and in the Region of Valencia.
 - Work on legislative guidance and model law provisions contracted by the CMS Secretariat was presented and, following vigorous discussion, a further period of comments was agreed for consultation over the summer.
 - The Bern Convention Network of SFPs supported the submission of the final version of legislative guidance and model law provisions that will follow the written consultation to the Standing Committee at its 42nd meeting (SC42).
 - Work on a draft outline of a suggested methodology, guidance and a common format which may be used by Governments for surveying the motivations, drivers and modus operandi behind IKB, was presented and participants were invited to provide further comments and feedback before finalisation of the guidance in the autumn of 2022.
 - The Bern Convention SFPs supported the submission of the final version of the suggested methodology, guidance and a common format for surveying the motivations, drivers and modus operandi behind IKB that will follow the written consultation to SC42.
 - Participants were informed about the work undertaken in Spain in order to establish a system of monitoring IKB through proxies and had the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of different approaches. The importance of monitoring IKB and having a baseline against which to measure progress were stressed.
 - Participants discussed draft considerations on developing an international database on IKB, especially considering issues of data availability, data fields, users, coordination, hosting, and cost.
 - Participants learnt and discussed about important training opportunities for enforcers offered by the Wildlife Crime Academy (WCA) in Andalusia, Spain, coordinated by the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF).
 - Participants discussed in groups ideas on capacity building and training needs as well as fundraising and communications.

- A document including examples of good practices for preventing IKB was presented by the European Commission (EC), and further comments invited before finalisation of the document in the summer 2022.
- MIKT members endorsed the insertion of additional instructions in the Scoreboard comment boxes to encourage additional narrative texts from countries when completing the Scoreboard.
- The Bern Convention Network of SFPs supported the submission of the document on additional instructions in the Scoreboard to SC42.
- Participants were informed of the ongoing work to develop Recommendations for the development and implementation of NAPs and that the document would be circulated for comments to the MIKT and SFPs before its finalisation in the summer 2022.
- The Bern Convention Network of SFPs supported the submission of the final version of the Recommendations for the development and implementation of NAPs that will follow the written consultation to SC42.
- Participants learnt about the new Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas using EURING bird ringing data and MOVEBANK data, produced by the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) in Italy and analysing millions of data points related to recoveries of ringed birds over more than 100 years.
- Participants were informed about ongoing plans to expand work on IKB under CMS in other parts of the world.
- Participants were invited to consider the funding needs of the Bern Convention and the CMS MIKT and were encouraged to consider how they could support the work to address IKB in the best possible way.

Day 1 Tuesday 07 June 2022**1. Opening of the meeting and welcoming remarks**

3. Iván Ramírez Paredes (Head of Avian Species Team, CMS Secretariat) welcomed 120 participants to the 5th meeting of the MIKT/4th Joint Meeting of the Bern Convention SFPs. The CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats, with the support of the Spanish Government and Generalitat de Valencia were hosting the meeting in hybrid mode, with around 50 of the participants attending online, enabling a wider participation. There was a busy and interesting agenda, taking stock and discussing progress as IKB was one of the top threats affecting migratory birds worldwide and it was essential to keep working together.
4. Ursula Sticker (Secretary of the Bern Convention, Council of Europe) welcomed the meeting participants and thanked the Spanish host authorities, and the CMS Secretariat. The meeting came at a crucial moment, in the 2nd year of the Rome Strategic Plan 2020-2030: Eradicating IKB in Europe and the Mediterranean region (RSP) and it was time to focus and coordinate synergies to implement the RSP in the eight remaining years.
5. Amy Fraenkel (CMS Executive Secretary) addressed the meeting online. She welcomed everyone to the 4th Joint Meeting, thanked MITECO and the Generalitat de Valencia for hosting the meeting and welcomed the excellent collaboration with the Bern Convention. She urged participants to work together in addressing IKB, recalling that overexploitation, which includes IKB, ranked as the second biggest threat to migratory species globally. As she had just returned from the 50th anniversary of the 1972 UN Meeting on the Human Environment (Stockholm Meeting), she noted that the Stockholm Principles were embedded in CMS activities, providing an effective means for Parties to work together at the transboundary, regional and international levels to address the threats to species protected by CMS.
6. Ms Fraenkel welcomed the Joint Meeting's focus on ensuring national legislation was effective in prosecuting and penalising IKB, noting CMS was working with UNEP to support countries in this regard. She also welcomed the focus on monitoring, setting a baseline, and analysing the motivations driving IKB as, as with any problem, there was a need to know why it was happening. One of her priorities as CMS Executive Secretary was to support the CMS Parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention, many of which had been incorporated into the 8th replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, notably a new integrated programme on wildlife conservation for development, including for the first time a focus on over-exploitation of wildlife for domestic reasons. She stressed the importance for GEF-assisted countries of making sure this funding was used. While a great deal of progress had been made by the MIKT, an estimated tens of millions of birds were still being taken as a result of IKB in the Mediterranean which made the focus on monitoring and enforcing IKB so important. She thanked the EU for funding the work of the MIKT and the travel of many delegates at the meeting and wished everyone a fruitful meeting.
7. Paula Tuzon Marco (Generalitat de Valencia, Spain) welcomed everyone to Valencia. Even with limited resources, she was proud that Spain had one of the most important networks for the protection of wildlife and habitats in Europe. While the NATURA 2000 network covered 18-27 per cent of territory in Europe, in Valencia 37 per cent of land was protected. The Generalitat de Valencia carried out activities to recover species and had attended to more than 100,000 birds in the past 30 years, with many being

part of breeding projects. She highlighted the upcoming field visit to one of the wildlife recovery centres (WRC) in Saler to see projects for the recovery of raptors and waterbirds. In the past the Valencia region had been notorious for traditional hunting and it had been hard to reconcile cultural activities with action towards conservation. In 2022, however, there had been a significant reduction in poaching and the killing of raptors and death by electrocution. She thanked the Bern Convention and CMS for their support and welcomed the opportunity to show participants their progress.

8. Fernando Magdeleno (MITECO) joined in welcoming participants and thanking the hosts. He recognised the need for an integrated view to seek synergies in addressing the problem of IKB which was the second highest threat in Europe for migratory species. He highlighted the importance of habitat conservation which Spain was also committed to and noted that cultural issues were important to maintain these habitats.
9. He referred to the BirdLife International 2015 assessment of the number of birds illegally killed in the Mediterranean with details about species of grave concern and hotspots. BirdLife International had estimated that on average 25 million birds per year were killed or illegally taken in the region, mostly during migration, affecting 375 species. He stressed the need to adopt specific measures for management, to harmonise methodology for monitoring IKB and for generating robust data and the development of a more coordinated approach across the region. Close collaboration was essential, in particular with sectors which had been traditionally closed to the topic, such as the energy sector, who should be part of the solution.
10. Spain played an important role in the protection and study of migratory birds in the EU due to its cultural identity and geographic location. The authorities and NGOs had published case studies to demonstrate the value of using cooperation and committing to changing peoples' mindset. There had been a change in reality in Spain, for example, in relation to the tradition of capturing birds to be kept in captivity to teach them to sing which was no longer permitted following the 2016 EU infringement proceedings against Spain. There had been no legal proceedings linked to the authorisation of trapping of wild birds since 2018 which indicated a change in culture and mindset, with a reduction from 1 million captures in 2018 to practically zero captures in 2022. Song and beauty contests for birds now only used captive-bred birds. There was also increased monitoring and surveillance. Regarding electrocution by powerlines, approaches such as putting powerlines underground or modifying them to reduce the instances of electrocution were being undertaken.
11. Mr Ramírez again thanked the Spanish hosts and officially opened the meeting.

2. Election of officers: Appointment of Chair and vice-Chair of the meeting

12. Mr Ramírez introduced this agenda item. Ms Sticker introduced the Bern Convention team and thanked them for all their work in preparation for the meeting. Mr Ramírez then introduced the CMS team, outlined housekeeping issues, reminded participants that this was a hybrid no-paper meeting and referred them to the documents on the Meeting [website](#), including the [COVID19 Guidelines](#) and [Online Meeting Protocol](#).
13. Saying the meeting needed to elect a Chair and vice-Chair, he recalled that it was customary for the Chair to be nominated by the host country and for the Secretariats to make a proposal to that effect. He therefore introduced both Borja Heredia, Senior Advisor at MITECO, Spain, who had been proposed as Chair of the meeting and Salome Nozadze (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia) who had been proposed as vice-Chair. The vice-Chair would focus especially on supporting

the participants attending online. The meeting elected by consensus Mr Heredia and Ms Nozadze respectively to the positions of Chair and vice-Chair.

14. The newly elected Chair made brief opening remarks, noting the meeting had been postponed due to the pandemic in 2020 so it was a celebration to have people together and online and good conditions for a good and productive meeting.

3. Adoption of the agenda and schedule

3.1 Provisional agenda and documents

15. The Chair introduced the [Provisional Agenda and List of Meeting Documents](#), noting it was a busy agenda. The meeting would be mostly conducted in plenary mode but on Day 2 there would be breakout groups under Agenda items 9 and 10 on cross-cutting issues: capacity building and training; and fundraising and communications.

3.2 Annotated agenda and meeting schedule

16. The Chair referred the meeting to the [Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule](#), highlighting the topics of legislation, methodology, establishment of a baseline on IKB, communication, capacity building, training and financial issues. The Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule were adopted without change.
17. All documents, including presentations, can be found on the [meeting's dedicated website](#). A list of the participants can be found in the Annex to this report.

4. Setting the context of the meeting and reporting

4.1 IKB in the Mediterranean and Europe: History and framework of action

18. The Chair introduced this agenda item.
19. Foteini (Claire) Papazoglou (MIKT Coordinator) [presented](#) on the history and framework of action for IKB in the Mediterranean and Europe.
20. She recalled that one of the first initiatives on IKB was the European Conference on IKB, in Larnaca, Cyprus in 2011 which agreed the [Larnaca Declaration on the Eradication of IKB](#). In 2012, the EU produced the [Roadmap Towards Eliminating the Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Birds 2012-2017](#) the work of which had now been integrated in the MIKT. In 2013, the [Plan of Action to Address Bird Trapping along the Mediterranean coasts of Egypt and Libya](#) which was developed under CMS and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Waterbirds (AEWA) with the support of BirdLife International and BirdLife Europe, the Working Group (WG) on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds (AEML WG), and the Governments of Egypt, Libya and Germany and nowadays is also integrated in MIKT. In the same year, the Bern Convention adopted the [Tunis Action Plan 2013-2020](#) for the eradication of IKB. BirdLife published a study in 2015, followed by papers by *Brochet et al* (2016 and 2017) firstly on the Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean, and then in northern Europe and the Caucasus, which included shocking numbers of approximately 26 million birds being killed per year.

21. The Parties to CMS had already taken action at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Quito, 2014 (COP11) which adopted [Resolution 11.16 The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds](#)¹. This Resolution mandated the Secretariat to convene MIKT which in 2022 had 22 members, and observers from government of CMS Parties not on the Mediterranean coast, Non-CMS Parties and representatives of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), the EU Forum for Judges, the Environmental Prosecutors Network (EPN) and NGOs. Ms Papazoglou stressed the crucial role of observers and that the EU had been very supportive of the work of MIKT from the outset and had been recognised as Champion Plus for its support.
22. The first meeting of MIKT ([MIKT1](#)) took place in July 2016 in Cairo, where the [Cairo Declaration for the Eradication of IKB](#) was adopted as well as the [MIKT Programme of Work 2016-2020](#) which supplemented and went in parallel to the Tunis Action Plan, as the Tunis Action Plan applied to Bern Convention countries only. The [Modus Operandi for MIKT](#) was also adopted in MIKT1. At the second meeting of MIKT (MIKT2) in June 2017 in Malta, the CMS MIKT members and observers started working jointly with the Bern Convention and, by doing so, expanded the geographic scope of the meetings. The [Scoreboard to assess the progress in combating IKB](#) was adopted at MIKT2 and as an Annex to CMS Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13). The Scoreboard was also adopted by SC37 later in the year as a tool for measuring progress at national level in combatting IKB.
23. She highlighted that the Scoreboard had been filled in twice by many members and was an important tool. The MIKT Workplan 2021-2025 was adopted in 2021.
24. The [RSP](#) was developed at [MIKT3](#) (2nd Joint Meeting of CMS MIKT and the Bern Convention SFPs) in May 2019 in Rome and adopted at the Bern Convention SC in 2019 and by MIKT through online consultation in 2020. The RSP's Vision was to achieve a reduction of at least 50 per cent in the scale and scope of IKB by 2030, within the geographic extent of the Plan (Europe and particularly the Mediterranean region), compared to a 2020 baseline, aiming ultimately at the eradication of IKB.
25. [MIKT4](#) (3rd Joint Meeting of MIKT and the Bern Convention SFPs) took place in June 2021 online and discussed papers on baseline and methodology, the MIKT Workplan 2021-2025, periodic assessment and the frequency of meetings.
26. In closing, Ms Papazoglou reminded participants that the objectives of the RSP were to: understand the scale and scope of IKB and the motivations behind IKB; prevent IKB; ensure IKB is incorporated effectively and efficiently into legislation; ensure that effective and efficient enforcement of relevant legislation is undertaken; and ensure effective and efficient justice for IKB-related offences.
27. The Chair thanked her, highlighting the take-away message of the importance of cooperation and that it was interesting to see how the Bern and CMS Conventions had converged to tackle this problem which was a big success.

¹ Revised by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, held in Gandhinagar, India, in 2020.

4.2 IKB in Spain and Valencia: History and action

28. The Chair introduced this topic and its two speakers.

Managing IKB in Spain: Planning and main activities to reduce its impact

29. Rubén Moreno-Opo Díaz-Meco (Deputy Directorate on Biodiversity of MITECO, Spain) welcomed everyone and presented on the situation in Spain on IKB. He worked in the Unit for Conservation in MITECO and one of their remits was to evaluate the situation and measures to be adopted around IKB. Bird trapping, killing and trade had been a traditional practice in Spain for centuries, with three main motivations: for food; for leisure; and to control what were perceived as pest species. There were many different trapping techniques used.
30. Historically there had been a lack of legislation in Spain. A key milestone, however, was joining the EU in 1986 and the adoption of EU's nature protection regulations (1986), with the entry into force of the EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC through Act 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity being a turning point. The Act's main provisions included general prohibition of capture/killing/possession of wild animals; exceptions for species subject to hunting regulations (game species); other derogations only for justified reasons and through administrative permits infractions and administrative sanctions; and establishment of penalties in the Penal Code for killing protected species.
31. There was not one National IKB Action Plan, as proposed in the RSP, but rather different plans for different sectors, including the National Strategy Against the Illegal Use of Poison Baits in the Wild (2004); Technical Guidelines to adapt trapping of finches in the wild to the Birds Directive (2011); and a Plan against illegal trafficking and international poaching of wildlife (TIFIES 2018).
32. The 17 Comunidad Autónoma (autonomous regions) managed biodiversity in the regions including, in relation to IKB: adapting national regulations to the regional situation; approval of legally-binding action plans such as for powerlines; management of Wildlife Recovery Centres (WRCs); and administrative and legal actions against infringements. There were a number of enforcement measures in place, including: environmental rangers of Comunidades Autónomas and the Ministry (approximately 6,000 agents) carrying out wildlife monitoring with specialised teams such as canine patrols; the formation of SEPRONA (Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza de la Guardia Civil) in 1988 as the police body specialised in environmental protection which had carried out more than 150,000 interventions with 7,433 administrative infringements and 332 criminal infringements; and the establishment of the General Prosecutor Office, Unit on Environment in 2019. 953 legal proceedings had been initiated with 290 convictions and 54 acquittals.
33. He also highlighted: action plans against poisoning which had been approved at the regional level in 13 out of the 17 autonomous regions in Spain; investment in monitoring/investigation/toxicology analyses; approval of a number of new sectoral plans; training events and information/education activities in most authorities including a collaboration between the Ministry and SEPRONA with more than 30 courses on identification of illegal practices, operating procedures for investigation and traceability of samples, and preparation of files. He also flagged international courses in collaboration with environmental police from Latin America, Africa and Europe and the development of the Andalucía WCA (which would be discussed under agenda item 9.1).

34. Mr Moreno-Opo also stressed the key role of NGOs in: awareness raising (through media campaigns); conservation initiatives (such as the ANTIDOTO programme); bringing offenders to court; lobbying administrations about poisoning cases and approval of regional plans; LIFE+ projects (VENONO, Guardians, SWIPE, Balkan Detox); and providing reports and statistics.
35. Turning to trends, he noted that, while it was hard to estimate trends of IKB as there were no long data sets to establish the effect of the threats, there was evidence suggesting positive developments in combating IKB in Spain. The Scoreboard was an important tool, encouraging national authorities to gather data and measure the progress. In the last report presented by Spain, an estimated 8,522 birds illegally trapped in 2019 were reported (Scoreboard 2020). While the 2015 BirdLife International report had shown a range of 300-400,000 birds killed, it had included Finch trapping which was no longer authorised in Spain. Also, the number of cases of poisoning events had been reduced and, in the past 10-15 years, Spain had banned certain traditional trapping/killing activities and certain song contests.
36. However, there was still room for improvement at the judiciary level. He highlighted the worrying scale of bird trafficking and sales, in particular through the internet. Spain was an important node for marketing of these birds, with trade in at least 750 species of birds in online and physical shops. They were experiencing difficulties in control/deterrence/enforcement and were working on the necessary training, monitoring and measures to tackle this situation. A number of isolated activities also still remained in some regions, including: poaching of song thrushes and other passerines in southern Spain; shooting protected wildfowl affecting endangered species in Southern and Eastern Spain; and poaching of finches for song and beauty contests.
37. The Chair thanked him for his presentation, highlighting the positive message that IKB trends in Spain were going in the right direction and the need to continue on this path. He mentioned the work done by the rangers and wardens and the work of SEPRONA which was playing a key role in this success.
38. Jovan Andevski (VCF) was interested in the discrepancy between the BirdLife International study and the Spanish Scoreboard which he suggested was a key topic for the meeting, in examining the baseline data, the accuracy of the figures and the methodologies used. He found it hard to believe that only 9,000 birds had been killed in Spain. Mr Moreno-Opo had discussed the estimates with BirdLife International and reiterated that the killing and trapping of Finches had not been illegal in 2015 and so should not have been included. He explained that there would be more details about reported numbers in the presentation under agenda item 7.1 on using the number of birds admitted to WRCs due to IKB for reporting. He agreed there was a need to clarify the numbers and establish the trend.
39. João Loureiro (Portugal) queried whether it was really necessary to have a specific National IKB Action Plan and Mr Moreno-Opo explained this had also been discussed with the CMS Secretariat, as for Spain it could be challenging to have a new National IKB Action Plan overlapping with pre-existing regional action plans, but this could vary from country-to-country.

40. Ayman Hamada (Egypt) suggested it was not possible to rely on the figures in the BirdLife International report as they depended solely on expert opinions. While he agreed there was a problem with IKB in Egypt, the range of the figures was too large (the report provided a figure of 300,000 – 3 million birds in Egypt), the methodology was not scientifically based and there was a need to do fieldwork on the ground to get more precise data. He asked for clarification on the Spanish Scoreboard figures of 8,000-9,000 birds. Mr Moreno-Opo said the figures served only to know the trend of birds admitted to WRCs and enabled them to assess the effectiveness of activities, but that IKB had certainly reduced due to the banning of Finch trapping. However, they were still seeing a lot of trade on the internet, with 750 species traded just in open channels of trade and not in black market trade, so they were seeking to fully understand the number of species and volume of birds being traded. There was a need to address a big gap in this legislation in this area.
41. On Mr Moreno-Opo's comment about National IKB Action Plans, Fernando Spina (CMS COP-appointed Councillor on Connectivity) asked how technical documents being produced by the Ministry were translated at the regional level. Mr Moreno-Opo explained that the national strategy against poisoning had been applied at the regional level. The question of illegal trade was more of a question of national competence as it related to birds arriving from other countries.
42. Mr Spina also commented that quantifying illegal activities was extremely difficult and commented on Mr Hamada's questioning of the BirdLife International figures on IKB along the coasts of Egypt and Libya, noting that while the figures were not entirely clear, it was clear that the nets were set there to catch birds. He stressed the need to act together with urgency on this issue as the Egyptian Government knew that illegal activities were going on regardless of the challenges in coming to the estimates of numbers of birds being killed. He supported the Spanish approach of using the number of birds being admitted at WRCs as a proxy which could be used to estimate the trend in understanding the number of birds affected by IKB.

Reduction in the persecution of birds in Spain is reflected in the changes in causes of admission in wildlife recovery centres

43. The Chair introduced Juan Jimenez (Head of the Wildlife Service of Generalitat Valenciana, Spain).
44. Mr Jimenez explained that for some time he had been gathering data from WRCs in Valencia as part of a study (currently undergoing scientific review) on the question of whether WRC records in Valencia showed any trend about IKB. He outlined that the causes of death could be investigated through interviews, official statistics, banding recovery records and admission causes in WRCs and highlighted that there could be bias with the data as dead birds were only recorded where there was a judicial case and it was difficult to ascertain who was responsible for the death.
45. In the Valencian region there were three WRCs in Castellón (established 1990), Valencia (established 1984) and Alicante (established 1998). Between 1991-2020, 165,399 animals were treated in WRCs, of which 111,314 were birds. The causes of admission included: natural death (neither direct nor indirect human action seemed to be involved); accidental; deliberate; intoxication; captive bred; transferred; and undetermined. Only the first three causes were considered in his presentation.

46. Natural causes (mostly orphan birds) were increasing significantly, by approximately 3,000 per year. Accidental deaths were also increasing, through infrastructure works, windmills, car impact etc. Deliberate deaths, such as from gunshots, were much reduced and for raptors, in the past 30 years, the percentage of admissions had plummeted. Mr Jimenez compared the findings of a paper by *Martinez et al 2001, Biota 2, 163 – 169*, using data from WRCs from 1984-1993, where almost one third of the raptors' admissions to the WRC were from gunshots, indicating a 90 per cent reduction in the killing of raptors by gunshot since then. He also indicated statistics from other WRCs around the world indicating a global reduction and suggested there was a geographical pattern, with the Mediterranean being one of the worst places for deliberate shooting of wild birds, especially Greece and Italy.
47. The shift in WRC admissions reflected changes in societal attitudes towards wildlife: in the 1990s the key impact was persecution (rural population); from 1990-2000 the phase was indifference (accidents with infrastructure); and from 2000 onwards, there was a phase of active protection (urban population).
48. He concluded his presentation by welcoming the work of MIKT. He proposed the biggest problem would be to have good figures and believed that the relationship with nature was improving.
49. The Chair thanked and welcomed the important role that data from WRCs could have in informing MIKT.
50. Cy Griffin (European Hunters Federation, (FACE)) asked whether the coverage of where people were finding the birds was changing, and if there were more birds being found closer to the urban environment due to collisions with buildings for example. Mr Jimenez said that raptors were still mainly found in rural areas but for other species he agreed that more were being found nearer urban environments. Hunters in Valencia had changed significantly and nowadays killing a raptor was considered a bad thing.

4.3 CMS Secretariat Report

51. The Chair introduced the reporting session aimed to inform participants about the progress achieved by the CMS Secretariat, the Bern Convention Secretariat and MIKT members and Bern Convention SFPs in combating IKB.
52. Ms Papazoglou presented on activities since [MIKT4](#) (3rd Joint Meeting of MIKT and the Bern Convention SFPs). The RSP Objectives had been the guiding principles for MIKT for the past year. She referred participants to the written [CMS Secretariat Report](#) on the meeting website.
53. She highlighted that the Secretariat had commissioned translations of some documents noting the importance of providing documents in different languages, including: the RSP into French and Spanish; the [Italian Action Plan against IKB](#) into English and French; and the Spanish Anti-trafficking Action Plan into French. The Secretariat had uploaded the [English version of the Spanish Anti-trafficking Action Plan](#) to the website which had been prepared by the Spanish Ministry and would discuss the uploading of the French version with the Ministry. She encouraged participants to refer to these documents.

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54. The Bern Convention and CMS Secretariats had worked on the Scoreboard revision to include suggestions and instructions to bringing the Scoreboard narrative closer to the RSP. This would be further discussed under agenda item 8 as Contracting Parties to the MIKT and the Bern Convention would soon be invited to complete the Scoreboard for 2023. In June 2021, the Secretariats invited countries to agree to have their Scoreboard data published online and more countries had agreed and been added since 2021, bringing the total to 24 out of 35 countries who submitted the Scoreboard.
 55. The CMS Secretariat had contracted the Global Law Alliance for Animals and the Environment to produce Legislative Guidance relating to IKB, and Model Law Provisions on IKB and had offered some countries the opportunity to have their legislation assessed. The documents were uploaded to the website and would be discussed under agenda item 5. In addition, the consultants had analysed some examples of national legislation in order to provide examples of approaches and legislation, and these would soon be uploaded to the website, too.
 56. The CMS Secretariat had also contracted BirdLife International to produce a draft methodology on socio-economic research into the motivations driving IKB, to help with scope, scale and motivations (RSP Objective 1.2). The first piece of work on motivation had been produced and would be discussed under agenda item 7.2 and they hoped to trigger some discussion and get some feedback as this was a key issue in tackling IKB.
 57. The RSP has a process-oriented objective on National IKB Action Plans. This was discussed during MIKT4. The CMS Secretariat had started some work on Recommendations for the development and implementation of National Action Plans against the Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Birds but did not yet have a paper to present and would provide a further update under agenda item 11.1. The document would have been shared further via email after the meeting for input and comments.
 58. Ms Papazoglou noted that the CMS Secretariat had shared the MIKT experience with other initiatives, including at a Workshop on A Road Map to tackle IKB in the Middle East, 24-29 October 2021, in the Dead Sea Jordan; and by participating in the 4th Adriatic Flyway Conference in April 2022. She concluded by mentioning that having the MIKT Coordinator had been in post most of the past year.

4.4 Bern Convention Secretariat report

59. Ursula Sticker (Secretary of the Bern Convention) summarised the main achievements of the Convention since 2021. An important occasion in 2021 was the adoption by the Bern Convention SC of a Vision for the Convention to 2030 – led by the slogan “Healthy nature for healthy people” stating that by 2030, declines in biodiversity would be halted leading to recovery of wildlife and habitats, improving the lives of people and contributing to the health of the planet.
60. IKB remained a priority for the Bern Convention and the text of the Vision highlighted the mission of the Bern Convention, its continuing relevance and added value to the Bern Convention as a regional leader in species and habitat conservation, and its four overarching goals. A Group of Experts of the Bern Convention on the conservation of birds would meet on 10 June 2022, following the present Joint Meeting, to provide an update. The Vision was adopted following a participatory consultation with members

and observers and it would be supplemented by a Strategic Plan, which would contain targets, monitoring indicators and further guidelines.

61. The Case File System under the Bern Convention continued to provide a monitoring mechanism for IKB. Under this, citizens and NGOs could bring possible breaches of the Convention to the attention of the Bureau of the SC and to the SC itself. The number of files had increased, as the 200th case file had been received in 2021. This could indicate increased participation but also could be an increase in actual cases.
62. Ms Sticker concluded by highlighting that, in 2021, the Council of Europe held a free online course on Environment and Human Rights for legal professionals, judges and prosecutors, also interesting for civil servants, the public and others on environmental issues and their impact. It was currently available in English, Macedonian and Serbian and was expected to be available in other languages. She invited participants to look at this on the [Council of Europe website](#).
63. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for this report, welcoming in particular the training opportunity on legal issues.

4.5 Reports from MIKT Members and Bern Convention SFPs

64. The Chair led a session on highlights of progress and successes across Europe and the Mediterranean in eradicating IKB. Representatives of countries that are members of either the Bern Convention SFPs Network or MIKT were invited to report on: the key achievements in combating IKB; obstacles encountered; and priorities for the future.
65. **Maja Polic (Croatia)** reported that Croatia had not made great progress since the 3rd Joint Meeting in 2021. In 2019 they had formed a group consisting of experts and NGOs and state officials tasked with developing an action plan on IKB. The challenge they faced was that they could not make formal appointments to the group, which meant that they had made little progress since 2019. The NGOs had sent an appeal one year ago and nothing had happened as yet. The Chair offered support and it was agreed that they would discuss this bilaterally.
66. **Charles Henri de Barsac (France)** reported that France had a new National Strategy for Biodiversity containing several provisions, including: an offer of services from the State; a measure strengthening collaboration between the law enforcement agencies; and combined training for the Environmental police and Education department to better understand the challenges related to biodiversity. In 2020, the French Office for Biodiversity was created in collaboration with the National Office for Hunting with various objectives, including to create an operational partnership with other environmental actors and law enforcement agencies. This reinforcement of the role of environmental actors and the public prosecutor enabled them to start investigations and impose sanctions without the involvement of a law enforcement agent which made things much easier. He highlighted a knowledge exchange programme with RESSOURCE aimed at understanding conservation of waterbirds mainly in sub-Saharan areas. The future focus was on recovery and compensation of ecological damage with the introduction into the Civil Code of the duty to repair the damage caused to the environment and to the common goods that the environment provides to society. There was now a specialised unit dealing with this. The Chair congratulated France on this initiative.

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67. **Salome Nozadze (Georgia)** reported that the draft Biodiversity law was in the final stage of development in Georgia and would be the main legislative mechanism for nature conservation. The draft law contained special articles on wild birds and introduced a new distinction of “protected” and “strictly protected” species, based on the CMS Appendices, the IUCN Red List, the Bern Convention and the [EU Birds Directive](#), as well as economic value of species. She also highlighted the development of special protected areas for birds which had been identified and mapped, and the requirement that when new PAs were developed, those special protected areas for birds would be key criteria.
68. She spoke on the activities of the Environmental Information and Education Centre, with NGOs being active in filling in knowledge gaps and improving knowledge. Reporting on IKB was done annually by an Environmental Supervision Department which was responsible for monitoring and patrolling. The data was mainly derived from NGOs, local people, social media and patrols. There was no National IKB Action Plan for the implementation of the RSP in force as yet in Georgia, although after the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework was endorsed, they would be working on their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the RSP priorities would be incorporated into this.
69. The Chair thanked her for her presentation and said it was encouraging that the RSP would be integrated into the NBSAP.
70. **András Schmidt (Hungary)** [presented](#) his country update, noting that the number of cases of intentional poisoning had slightly decreased in Hungary, while acknowledging that the number of individuals found was much larger because of improved detection rates thanks to use of dogs for example.
71. He highlighted that especially in the last year there had been a major social outrage at illegal poisoning events and a campaign against these events by BirdLife Hungary because of the scale of the number of birds of prey killed. As a result, the Parliament had amended the Criminal code to enable even more stringent penalties against poisoning incidents. A National Environmental Security Task Force had been established, led by the National Bureau of Investigation and the Deputy Prime Minister, who had publicly condemned the illegal poisonings and urged the authorities to act. There were now awareness raising activities at trainings for professional hunters throughout Hungary.
72. Investigation of poisoning cases was slow due to a lack of capacity and had not resulted in a prosecution in the last few years. Verdicts were too lenient even in those cases that made it to court. Hungary planned to train prosecutors and possibly judges through the framework of the National Environmental Security Task Force and reach at least one exemplary penalty in a poisoning case. They were also investigating if food security measures could be introduced for game meat where a poisoning incident had occurred, noting the successful measure in Spain in this regard.
73. The Chair noted that things could go backwards and that it was relevant to hear about this issue of poisoning coming back in Hungary. He stressed the importance of working as a group to support Hungary and proposed that MIKT members and Bern Convention SFPs could share experience about poisoning, such as protocols, noting Spain would be happy to do this.

74. Joseph Van der Stegen (EC) asked whether the poisoning cases resulted from the legal or illegal use of poison. Legal being use of poison to control rodents, and illegal being poison targeting raptors. András Schmidt responded that most cases were intentional, and some were unintentional poisoning by farmers.
75. In his [presentation](#), **Claudio Marrucci (Italy)** explained that in Italy the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Department was composed of two central units: the Central Unit (investigations, certification and illegal logging) and the Antipoaching Unit (illegal killing of priority species, illegal fishing, abuse of animals) and 46 CITES local units. The CITES Department had a strong collaboration with other European countries, such as Hungary, as Italy was on the migration corridor to many other countries.
76. His department was involved in the development of the National IKB Action Plan. He cited Operation Robin conducted in the Alps, concerning the use of live decoys and trading such as for the traditional dish 'Polenta with birds.' The main traps used were nets, bow-traps and spring traps and there were several sanctions regarding this as part of the National Action Plan as well as measures to improve awareness and address the cultural aspects.
77. He also cited Operation Adorno in Southern Italy, an important area for raptors migrating from Africa. Under this operation, one person had been arrested and six people reported. They had seized 42 protected birds, three rifles, four illegal traps and 77 bullets. This was in collaboration with the Ministry and international law enforcement agencies.
78. **Jessica Fenech (Malta)** reported that IKB had been an enforcement priority in Malta for nearly three decades and throughout this period efforts had been made to establish an effective regulation regime together with the designation of specialist enforcement bodies. In 2021, the Wild Birds Regulation Unit relaunched the Conservation of Wild Birds Fund which offered more than €83,000 in financial support to three NGOs for projects including satellite tracking, the tracking and release of European turtle doves, habitat and species measures and educational programmes. She also highlighted: improvements to the telephonic game reporting system which hunters used to report legally caught game by making all calls to the system free of charge and the engagement of a new component which gauged daily hunting effects. She also reported specialist training for enforcement personnel who deal with IKB; joint inspections by enforcement officers from the Environmental Protection Unit in the Malta Police, the Wild Birds Regulation Unit and the CITES Compliance Office of the Environment and Resources Authority leading to the prosecution of cases of IKB; and veterinarian back-up in cases with necropsies.
79. The main challenges in RSP implementation in Malta were linked to human resources and expertise and so Malta had increased investment in compliance and enforcement and would continue to do so. Finally, the MIKT 2021-2025 Workplan had been approved at the political level and a NAP was expected to be drafted in the near future. Malta intended to continue to promote zero tolerance and to contribute to the international goal to eradicate IKB along the flyways.
80. The Chair welcomed the news about the National Action Plan and the successful prosecutions.

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81. **Mr João Loureiro (Portugal)** reported on the ongoing awareness-raising activities work in Portugal for stakeholders including prosecutors and legislators. All offences of IKB were now treated as a criminal offence, meaning there were more effective prosecutions and higher fines and the level of IKB seemed to be decreasing. They had help from BirdLife Portugal on, for example, how to value wildlife as this was tricky to assess. He also highlighted that the government had funded the network of WRCs in Portugal. More than 60 per cent of admitted birds were rehabilitated and released back to the wild.
82. Portugal did, however, have one of the most historical traditions of keeping wildlife. Now, to keep a bird in Portugal, a legal proof of origin was required. Internet trade including through social networks was a big challenge in Portugal. This trade was difficult to tackle as, as others had reported, it was difficult to assess the level of the trade. However, it was encouraging that people were becoming more aware about animal welfare. He concluded by saying that Portugal did not have a National IKB Action Plan but they had an Enforcement Group with plans which were evaluated every two years as well as existing legislation and so the government was taking advice on whether a new national plan was necessary.
83. The Chair welcomed the progress on licensing and agreed there was need for discussion on national action plans which would happen under agenda item 11.
84. **Jamel Tahri (Tunisia)** [reported](#) that, in order to preserve biodiversity and the environment, Tunisia had a network of PAs, with 17 national parks, 26 natural reserves, 46 areas of special interest for birds and 42 wetlands. There were also several flyways according to different species.
85. Following the recommendations of MIKT1, Tunisia had reinforced its efforts to respond to the objectives of the TAP and to implement the RSP by creating a Follow-up and Control Platform, revising the laws on hunting (mainly for migratory birds), and carrying out research to develop a series of training and awareness-raising activities. The government was gathering data from: annual hunting reports; the Platform; and specific intervention data. The annual hunting reports addressed wildlife in general and it was not possible to distinguish breaches relating specifically to migratory birds.
86. The Direction Générale des Forêts (DGF) and Association “Les Amis Des Oiseaux” (AAO)/BirdLife Tunisia were collaborating with agents on activities in tourist areas, animal markets and in customs areas. The seizures resulting from these activities included 48 per cent for raptors, 28 per cent for sparrows and 19 per cent for water birds. He also highlighted the adoption of the Law of the Forest Order no 88-20 (13 April 1988), Article 10, protecting birds, including raptors, water birds and migratory birds and referred to the Ministerial Order on Hunting, Article 7 which defined birds which could be hunted or were protected from hunting. The DGF had reinforced its laws with protection quotas for bird species and these quotas were set during the Consultative Meetings on Hunting and the Protection of Birds in 2019 and 2020. There had also been an increase in the number of interventions in IKB hotspots. Finally, he informed meeting participants that the National Red List was under preparation in Tunisia.

87. Mr. Tahri highlighted that many offences were not being registered because it was currently necessary to register on the Platform in order to report, whereas many citizens wished to be able to do this anonymously. He also noted the need for training for judges on IKB issues. There were currently no WRCs and there were many conflicts of interest between hunters and conservation organisations.
88. He concluded by saying that a current priority for Tunisia was the elaboration of a National IKB Action Plan and they were keen to have a model to build from.
89. The Chair welcomed the progress outlined in his presentation and said it was also helpful to understand the challenges Tunisia was facing.
90. Claudia Feltrup-Azafzaf (AAO/BirLife Tunisia) asked whether the Tunisian authorities were considering banning hunting of all species classified as critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable, in particular during migration. Mr Tahir explained that the Red List was under development by the Environment Ministry and there would be a discussion during the meeting of the Higher Council for Hunting as to whether there was a need to create a ban for certain species or to have a specific law regarding IKB.
91. Hichem Azafzaf (AAO/BirdLife Tunisia) asked about the use of nets for selective trapping of Sparrowhawks, where thousands of nets were placed along the flyway during day and night for two months capturing large numbers of birds. These raptors were being used for a national festival in Tunisia but he wondered why this practice was being authorised as this was a non-selective means of capture. Mr Tahir explained that this was considered to be traditional capturing not hunting and was just a two-month practice. He acknowledged there were other species captured in these nets and the law required the hunters to register the species found and release them after a report by the forest guards. The DGF was aware of this topic and were working to find a solution to capture raptors without damaging other migratory species.
92. Mr Spina reflected on the traditional capture of migrating Sparrowhawks, noting it was a question of timing as the birds want to reach breeding grounds as soon as possible. This was a question of bird return migration which was an important period for the birds
93. **Kate Brickett (UK)** presented her update, highlighting that the UK remained convinced of the need for continued collaboration in tackling IKB and that tackling raptor persecution continued as a wildlife crime priority for the UK. The Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group brought together NGOs, government and police to raise awareness and facilitate intelligence and incident reporting leading to increased prevention and enforcement activity. Key successes for Priority Delivery Groups across the UK included: Operation Easter, in its 25th year, helping to protect nests from egg collectors; raising community trust and awareness such as Operation Wingspan, led by Police Scotland, which in 2021 focussed on raptors particularly incorporating interventions, preventions and enforcement as well as development of a social media toolkit, with a reach of approximately 2.6 million. There had been increased enforcement and prevention in the UK and activities like Operation Wingspan indicated the importance of collaboration with NGOs.
94. Ms Brickett also provided an update on the SBAA in Cyprus, highlighting the zero tolerance approach on IKB being taken there. In 2014 the SBAA published its policy instructions setting out strategic objectives and targets for tackling the problem in the territory which included a policy and partnership approach led by the SBA police fundamental to the success of the current campaign to eradicate IKB. The policy and

partnership approach had led to a 94 per cent trapping reduction in 2021 compared to the levels in 2016-2017. Future focus for the SBAA would be on legacy issues including the management of planted Acacia as removing and controlling alien invasive species would also reduce the ability to trap birds.

95. Within the past year a team from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had conducted an assessment of the UK's response to wildlife and forest crime, based on the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime's (ICWC) Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit. The report was published in December 2021, highlighting strengths and recommendations for improvements, including on raptor persecution and the UK government was reviewing the recommendations. The UK had also published a Nature Recovery Green Paper in March 2022 aimed at NGOs and citizens and included policy proposals on protected CITES species as well as enforcements and penalties.
96. The UK had increased its funding by approximately £1 million per annum to the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). Despite instances of raptor persecution, populations of many species in the UK such as peregrines, buzzards and red kites had increased and 2021 was the best breeding year for hen harriers since the 1960s.
97. Finally, she reported that the UK was in the analysis stage of the RSP, looking at existing strategies to decide their approach.
98. The Chair thanked her for the progress report on the UK and on the SBA in Cyprus and highlighted that the social media toolkit was innovative and could be a very good idea to follow.
99. **Latifa Sikli (Morocco)** reported that Morocco had two laws protecting wildlife against crimes: one regulating hunting procedures/activities (i.e. where, when and the hunting take (quota) for each species) which was updated annually depending on the conservation status of each species; and the second relating to the conservation of flora and fauna and control of trade. In the past year they had tried to implement these laws by elaborating and communicating an action plan aiming to reach the general public by doing a publicity spot on national television regarding these laws and organising several workshops for NGOs and Hunting associations, customs, judges, prosecutors and the police department.
100. She highlighted that three years ago they had set up 12 special units specialising in conservation and surveillance of wildlife and now there were 24 units which were set up to support local agents in their patrols in the field. In 2021, they had started the first WRC for raptors in collaboration with a national NGO. Approximately 45 per cent of the birds that were in this centre were successfully reintroduced back to the wild which was one of their biggest achievements. Morocco's current priorities were to focus on their communication plan for awareness-raising and on a capacity building programme for wildlife department staff.
101. **Ayman Hamada (Egypt)** highlighted the challenges of lack of human and financial resources leading to weak law enforcement and ineffective monitoring of compliance in Egypt. In seeking to address these issues, Egypt had been forging partnerships with NGOs and others and were now working closely with Nature Conservation Egypt (NCE, a BirdLife affiliate) to carry out a comprehensive nationwide waterbird census seeking to understand the conservation status. Egypt's laws were in line with the guidance provided by CMS on addressing IKB but there were still issues with monitoring and enforcement. They had also started a partnership with Abu Dhabi

Environment Authority and the International Fund for the Houbara Bustard to reintroduce the species, and on 18 June 2022 they would launch the release of 3,000 Houbara Bustard. Egypt was also establishing a captive breeding facility for falcons.

102. Egypt was initiating a review of legislation to develop a new chapter for biodiversity in the existing Environmental Law and ultimately were seeking to introduce a new standalone law for biodiversity. He welcomed the guidance on this. It had also started to work with a newly established hunters syndicate in raising awareness and trust building, were establishing a WRC and hoped it would be operational by 2023 and were continuing work on adaptive plan management to control wind turbines along the migratory soaring birds flyway. He concluded by reporting that they had prepared a national bird conservation programme in cooperation with NCE.
103. **Snezana Prokic (Serbia)** reported that, since the 3rd Joint Meeting in 2021, implementation of the RSP had started in the Republic of Serbia. The Ministries of Environment, Forests, Trade, Justice and the Interior were taking measures and activities to address IKB. Efforts were being made to organise an action plan for the implementation of the RSP and the new government was expected to continue these activities soon.
104. The Ministry of the Interior had developed an action plan integrating environmental crime and IKB. She highlighted also the Ministry of Agriculture activities regarding the avian influenza virus since October 2021. The Veterinary Division had issued a decision regarding the measures to be taken in the endangered area to suppress the spread of this disease. They had had incidences of bird poisoning using illegal chemicals in spite of the EU Birds Directive. She concluded by highlighting that the Ministry of the Interior had established a division for combatting illegal crime including the recruitment of 99 police officers to work on cases related with environmental crime across the whole country.
105. The Chair welcomed this good news at the end of the message.
106. **Oliver Schall (Germany)** spoke about Project Edgar targeting IKB. Germany first realised they had a problem with the poaching of raptors when participating in the European Conference on IKB in Cyprus when new evidence was presented by NGOs. They held initial talks with NGOs, such as NABU and the Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) and then started a joint project with CABS called Project Edgar (creation of monitoring of raptor poaching and dealing with criminality against species). This was a three-year project, tasked with: nationwide monitoring of all cases of illegal raptor trapping and killing since 2005; gathering an overview of the distribution and extent of this phenomenon; education and awareness-raising through lectures, consultation etc; compilation of evidence for the police and prosecutors; giving advice and networking; documentation of reporting of violations; and recommendations to the Ministry of Environment for further actions. Noting the project's success, he strongly recommended to other countries the practice of working with an NGO with experience in field of poaching of birds. One project recommendation was the need for specialists within the Ministry. They were hoping to introduce a draft revision to the German Hunting Law to take into account three recommendations from Project Edgar: to look for the raptor traps and forbid Goshawk traps; to double the fines; and to provide better education to hunters and lengthen the period of education. He hoped this would also catalyse similar projects.

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107. **Burak Tatar (Republic of Türkiye)** reported that hunting was regulated according to the annual game quotas calculated for each species, using a web-based information system called Hunting Ground Management Information System (AVBIS) developed for the sustainable management and conservation of game and biological diversity for the past five years. AVBIS was developed to make hunters use their own quotas by internet and allowed the authorities to manage their quotas electronically. Each fine was recorded on AVBIS by officials, and they could screen the types of crime, which article of law had been breached, the date and place of the crime, the name of the offender and so on. They had produced a new App for wardens and hunters which was very similar to computer-based systems and allowed users to use it in the field.
108. He presented further details on activities, including: registration of 300,000 hunters and 2,000 hunting grounds; ranger teams carrying out 24-hour inspections across the country, following those showing illegal hunting images on social media accounts and taking the necessary actions; approximately 16,000 fines administered each year, the average administrative fine being 12 million Turkish Lira; and approximately 1,500 personnel contracted to combat poaching. Most illegal activities included hunting outside legal hunting time, hunting with boats and motor vehicles, or hunting with poison. Implementation of the Hunting Law was supported by the decisions of the Central Hunting Commission constituted of 25 members from the Forestry Commission, NGOs, universities, private hunting ground owners and organisations of hunters. He reported very limited progress in the appointment of national focal points to assist investigators and prosecutors in compiling a list of expert knowledge and providing sentencing guidelines for the judiciary.
109. One of the main priorities for IKB was to decrease or stop poaching, shooting in closed periods, shooting in areas with restriction, non-respect of bag limits of particular species such as waterfowl, especially ducks, Woodcock, Turtle Dove and Quail and to decrease or stop the trapping and illegal trade of raptors.
110. **Rastislav Rybanič (Slovakia)** presented his update, first highlighting that on 1 February 2022 Slovakia had established a new police force dedicated solely to environmental crime including wildlife crime, with 200 police officers distributed across the regions. The headquarters was in Bratislava and there were 700 officers dealing with investigation and other duties. This was a significant increase and he hoped this would help with investigations as the lack of capacity was very obvious before.
111. Poisoning in Slovakia still prevailed among other wildlife crimes, there were cases of mass poisoning, in particular of raptors. There had been the first judgement against the person who possessed carbofuran illegally who was displaying poison baits. There had been some cases of trafficking with the northern Slovak police and customs active in this regard and in cooperating with other police forces in Europe and there was a growing network of people in law enforcement agencies across Europe active in environmental crime including wildlife crime. He urged other countries to enhance their environmental cooperation, especially between environmental agencies and NGOs as this cross-sector collaboration was vital.
112. The Chair concluded by paying tribute to Mohammed Hadjeloum, Algeria, who had passed away, expressing his esteem for his work with the Goldfinch and other birds in Algeria and conveying condolences to his family and friends.

5. Towards an effective legislative approach for tackling IKB

113. The Chair introduced this agenda item intended to inform participants about best practices and legislative guidance on ensuring that national legislation is effective and efficient for dealing with IKB and provide country examples.
114. Nick Fromherz (Global Law Alliance for Animals and the Environment, Lewis & Clark Law School team) briefly presented the Legislative Guidance and Model Law Documents that had been prepared. The [Legislative Guidance Materials relating to IKB](#) was meant to provide countries with concrete legislative ideas and options, informed by best practices, that could be deployed to combat IKB, allowing countries to pick *à la carte*.
115. The second document, [Model Law Provisions on IKB](#), was a companion document, where the consultants had tried to transpose the ideas and options for a legal structure to provisions that might be found in a national law on IKB. The consultants had drawn upon several different sources including the CMS Treaty itself, the EU Birds Directive, the IKB Scoreboard, the RSP and national legislation. The two documents went hand-in-hand.
116. He encouraged MIKT members and Bern Convention SFPs to review, comment on and endorse the documents.
117. He provided an overview of the structure:
- **Definitions:** the approach taken to “Trade” was consistent with the outcomes of MIKT2 to include international trade as part of IKB but also “[a]ctivities which are illegal under national or regional law/regulations and....” This was a much broader definition than CITES, for example, and applicable even if the specimen had never crossed international borders. They had also included “possession” which made enforcement and prosecution much easier.
 - **White-list approach:** the idea was that “hunnable birds” would be set forth in a schedule or annex to the law and if a species was not affirmatively on the list it would be protected as “not subject to lawful take and trade.” This is a more precautionary approach. The Legislative Guidelines and Model Law included suggested criteria for competent national authorities to list species on the White List, such as species being on the country’s red data book list, and requiring that huntable species need to have a favourable conservation status. If it was not on the list, it would be “non-hunnable.” This could be helpful for enforcement agents.
 - **Prohibitions: huntable birds/Schedule I birds:** huntable birds/ Schedule I species would be subject to controls – license, gear and method restrictions, bag limits, seasonal restrictions etc.
 - **Prohibitions: non-hunnable birds/non-Schedule I birds:** those species not on the White List would not be subject to take or trade.
 - **Exceptions: huntable birds/Schedule I birds and non-hunnable birds/non-Schedule I birds.** This had borrowed from the CMS Art III.5 exceptions approach. Some countries might want to identify as non-hunnable, species that were not CMS Appendix I species or as warranted by national circumstances. The default for huntable birds would be that if the person had a hunting license, they were huntable, provided they kept within the other applicable controls. However, there might be exceptions granted within this framework, such as when a competent authority decided to suspend bag limits in case of overpopulation causing harm to other species.

- **Enforcement powers and Penalties:** he emphasised the need for legal structures providing administrative and criminal penalties, and that gravity factors (or aggravating circumstances) should be included such as recidivism, stronger penalties for actual or potential financial gain, the scale of the offence, prevalence of the offence in a particular community might lead to the need for deterrence measures.
 - **Penalties:** he highlighted the use of rebuttable evidentiary presumptions, such as that possession of more than a certain number of specimens was presumption of intent to sell (similarly to for drug possession), or that a person carrying certain gear in protected areas was presumed to be intending to engage in illegal hunting. He also emphasised the need to include forfeiture provisions extending to specimens, instruments and proceeds. In certain cases there might be ecosystem damage and it might be appropriate to allow for restitution and/or restoration orders so the competent authority could require environmental restoration action.
118. The Chair led the discussion and question-and-answer session. Participants welcomed the documents and congratulated the consultants on their work. Several participants said they would provide comments in writing.
119. The ensuing discussion focused on: how to assess whether national legislation was in line with the RSP, with Mr Fromherz suggesting that it was important to review the existing legislation from a functional point of view to see if it does something similar to what is in the Model Law and Guidelines; how to deal with situations where the conservation status of a species was unknown; with Mr Fromherz confirming that where a species did not have a favourable conservation status it should go on the non-hunttable list; the need to include the quantity of species taken in the permit system for exceptions; including a reference to a taxonomic list of species in the legislation as otherwise there could be a taxonomic change whereby the species to which the legislation applied could become unclear; restricting the list of exceptions to a limited list of species; and the review process for the White List, with Mr Fromherz outlining several options for the trigger for review: allowing the competent authority to do a review whenever it wanted to in its capacity; allowing petitions to be made to amend the List by making a case with scientific or commercial information; and building in required annual or bi-annual review periods. He said it would be possible to include something in the Guide to this effect, but it was likely to depend on administrative approaches in different countries.
120. Mr Rybanič highlighted the challenge of establishing the value of the damage in legal proceedings, both in deciding whether this is a criminal offence and in establishing the fine or damage reparation. Mr Fromherz noted this varied from country-to-country and hinged on legal cultures and ways of determining fines and criminal penalties. The consultants had tried to set out a flexible high-level framework. Some countries had very mathematical sentencing guidelines which forced criminal judges to do the maths and come up with an appropriate penalty within a range. Ms Papazoglou pointed out that they had not gone into detail on restitution, but there would be an opportunity to talk about this under agenda item 6 in relation to the Bioval project.
121. Ms Jones (BirdLife), congratulated them the consultants on this document which she felt was a step forward to the implementation of the Rome Strategic Plan. BirdLife had a number comments on the Model Law provisions which we would be sent to the Secretariats. She outlined the comments in the meeting.

122. Mr Griffin noted the measures for regulating hunting in the documents were, in some cases, more strict than in the EU Birds Directive and from FACE's perspective, could be seen as punishing those acting legally. He also called for a definition of commercial and non-commercial trade in the trade regulations, finding some of the provisions to be too burdensome. The Chair asked Mr Griffin to submit these comments in writing to the Secretariats.
123. Bart Van Vossel (European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment; ENPE) proposed including a list assigning a certain monetary value to certain species (as was done in Finland) as a compensation for ecological damage. He asked whether the value of a species should be the same in the whole of Europe or whether it should differ according to the rarity in each country. Mr Fromherz said his initial reaction was that, while he saw the value of harmonised approaches, for valuation he would be concerned about having universal values for specimens or species across borders.
124. Alex Ngari (BirdLife Africa) asked how often the White List should be reviewed and what the triggers would be for the review. Mr Fromherz said there were several options that could trigger a review of the white-list and that it could be possible to include something in the Guidance to this effect but it was likely to depend on administrative approaches in different countries.
125. Ms Papazoglou explained that, once the Secretariats had received all the comments, they would conclude with the next steps.
126. The Chair noted that the Guidance had generated an important debate. He proposed opening a period for focused comments to be submitted to the Secretariats. It was agreed to allow two weeks (24 June 2022 deadline) for written reactions to the document to the Secretariats. A second draft of the documents would be submitted to SC42.

6. Reports from Observers of MIKT and Bern Convention

127. The Chair led a session on highlights of progress and successes across Europe and the Mediterranean in eradicating IKB by Observers. He introduced the agenda item by noting that the Observers did much more than observing and their participation was one of the pillars of the MIKT and Bern Convention process on combating IKB.

BIOVAL project: a non-binding, practical instrument to value ecological damages in court proceedings.

128. Farah Bouquelle (EU Forum of Judges for the Environment (EUFJE)) and Jomme Desair (Research Institute for Nature and Forests in Flanders) [presented](#) on the BIOVAL project. Ms Bouquelle explained that EUFJE was a network of more than 150 judges based in Brussels and strove for better enforcement of environmental law. She presented a Belgian case study on a Marsh Harrier poisoning case in 2018 showing how courts struggled to order compensation for ecological damage. In most legal systems they could order such restitution but they did not know how to calculate the amount of compensation.
129. Therefore, EUFJE, in collaboration with the EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), started the BIOVAL project in 2019, as a practical tool to value these type of ecological damages in court. The project focused on compensation not punishment. In many legal systems it was possible for judges, in civil and criminal cases, to order restoration for damage and, if restoration was not

possible, to order financial compensation. However, this opportunity was not currently being taken as the judges did not know how to calculate the amount of compensation, did not have the time or finances to appoint an expert, and no-one claimed for the protected species concerned. BIOVAL attempted to provide a list of values or at least criteria to value.

130. BIOVAL was a work-in-progress. In 2020 they had organised an online survey of EUFJE members asking for data on existing price lists and legislation. In 2021 they contracted the Research Institute for Nature and Forests in Flanders to draw up a first idea of criteria or methodology to be discussed with experts such as MIKT.
131. Mr Desair presented the Proposal for a practical framework to determine financial compensations for ecological and societal losses. They had started by pondering the meaning of 'value' and 'damage,' the latter being 'the loss of value.' When thinking about compensation of damage they suggested that it was necessary to assess all the values that nature had. They had referred to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Conceptual Framework which provided that in considering the contribution of nature to people, it was necessary not to just look at the instrumental value but also other values, such as the relational (how people feel about the tree being cut down for example) and intrinsic value (this tree having the right to live). They then carried out a literature review to look for existing formulas calculate compensation for biodiversity, found a number of criteria and categorised the criteria.
132. They had found three unique methodologies from six different sources, from: Finland; the Russian Federation; and SEO/BirdLife ([Naves et al 2020](#)). None of the methodologies were exhaustive, mostly left out the societal value of nature, and did not regard fully the ecological value of a species for the ecological functioning of an ecosystem but used proxies. They also suffered from a lack of baseline costs but they did acknowledge that the most effective indicators were lacking for most species. All methodologies use multiplications which made it necessary to have a baseline cost and had some other implications which were outlined in the proposal.
133. They had then selected three criteria which they considered the most important and that also covered the multiple aspects of the value of nature: conservation status; cultural value; and ecological significance. They also included the remediation cost. These criteria formed the building blocks of their proposed formula. The criteria were sub-divided into different levels to make the formula more robust. This produced the total amount for compensation. They chose to have an additive formula as the criteria had nothing to do with each other and which also had the advantage of being able to assign a zero value to any criteria. It was also possible to adjust the importance for each criteria. For example, the conservation status could be assigned as twice as important as one of the other criteria.
134. He then outlined how they had defined the different criteria:
 - Conservation status - they adhered to the EU Birds and the EU Habitats Directives which had three levels of conservation status (favourable, unfavourable – inadequate, unfavourable – bad). They then considered the IUCN Red List which has seven status categories of which only five were relevant (least concern, near threatened, vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered, extinct and extinct in the wild);

- Cultural value – the first level of assessment was whether the species was regarded as important part of the local culture, and secondly, whether this specimen or species attracted a lot of interest both locally and further away (tourism) – if both of these were answered as yes then the full value would be paid for;
 - Ecological significance – they defined three levels – 1) this species has no special ecological function in this ecosystem; 2) this species has a certain ecological role in this ecosystem; 3) this species is a keystone species of the ecosystem – which means the species is crucial. The compensation would be adjusted depending on which criteria apply;
 - Remediation costs – this was based on the cost for reintroduction of a specimen with the same characteristics. The cost of this could be assessed through consultation with a local WRC, nature conservation agency or NGO (e.g. this had been calculated for Spain in the *Naves et al 2020 report of [SEO/BirdLife Report on The Economic Valuation of Crimes Against Protected Animal Species](#)*).
135. He outlined an example using a total theoretical amount of €50,000 and indicating how the different criteria could be adjusted according to the different levels of the building blocks. The market value should be the minimal value of the compensation and the fine.
136. He concluded by noting that the formula suffered from the same weakness as other methodologies, namely that it used randomly-assigned values. The strengths were that the formula acknowledged the multiple values of nature by including the different categories which was an improvement. The addition approach left the possibility for specimens that had a smaller ecological role and no cultural value to be compensated with the primary remediation. This resulted in more realistic and acceptable compensation amounts. The formula was also flexible and the methodology could easily be transferred and adopted to other regions and countries as most of the data was available on at least the European scale.
137. The Chair thanked the presenters and said it was a timely discussion given this issue had been raised earlier that day.
138. Umberto Gallo Orsi (CMS Raptors MOU) wondered why the economic/trade value of species had not been considered. Mr Desair explained they proposed that the market value, which would be the economic value, should be at least the minimum value of the compensation plus the fine. They had chosen not to use the market value within the formula as it did not reflect the ecological significance of the species. They therefore considered it separately from the formula.
139. Mr de Barsac noted that complex discussions had been held already on this question, so he recommended including some of this within the proposal. Ms Bouquelle said BIOVAL wanted to offer an informal practical tool created in a multidisciplinary way and did not want to wait for guidance from the international level. They planned to obtain an independent review of the methods proposed by the Flanders Research Institute for Nature and Forests to then start developing an online tool.
140. Mr Spina welcomed the presentation and reflected that the cultural and ecological value of an illegally killed bird was calculated from the perspective of the country where the illegal act takes place. He emphasised the migratory connectivity for migratory birds and imagined that a migratory bird might not have a specific cultural value where it is captured and killed, but might have one in the country of origin. Mr Desair welcomed input on this issue.

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141. Mr Rybanič stressed the importance of the market value as it was relevant to consider the benefit to the perpetrator which was part of the complex monetary aspect of the illegal act which should be fully reflected on by the court. He cited an example from Slovakia where they had a bylaw listing the social value of species, plants and habitats for each of the protected taxa, so that, while this value was artificially constructed, it provided a basic value on which the law enforcement agencies could base their decision as to whether an act was a civil offence or criminal act. Ms Bouquelle responded that the level of the compensation was separate from the intention of the offender or the benefits. She asserted that there was still a need to establish a methodology which was objective and had been thought about in a multidisciplinary way.
142. The Chair looked forward to seeing this methodology evolve.

Updates on Committee Against Bird Slaughter (CABS) work on IKB

143. Stefania Travaglia (CABS) [presented](#) on IKB experience from the field. She acknowledged there had been progress but said they were seeing some worrying signs of an increase in IKB as some governments seemed to be taking measures to protect IKB and not tackle it. She suggested that this was due to new laws being used as a smokescreen to protect illegal killings, weakening of enforcement and non-deterrent judicial systems.
144. She provided a number of examples. In Cyprus in 2019, the anti-poaching unit of police was dismantled, just as it was achieving good results. Also in Cyprus, when CABS increased its focus on illegal hunting of protected species and recorded significant levels of illegalities, calling for the proper implementation of the law, the law was amended. For example, previously the fine for killing a bee-eater or a Golden Oriole was €2,000 and currently it was just €200 for shooting up to 50 bee-eaters or orioles. The pro-hunting lobby was also pushing for a new law to prevent the disturbance of hunting activity, in fact to impede law enforcement.
145. In Italy, despite the 2017 National Action Plan, little had changed on the ground. The sanctions for IKB had not been updated since 1992 and there was no political will to change this. The sanctions were no threat to the offenders. IKB was only considered a minor crime, with cases being closed only with a small payment. There were continuous attempts to limit enforcement, for example in the poaching hotspot of Brescia Province, the pro-hunting lobby had tried to limit the control of the rings on birds used as live decoys by not allowing the controllers to handle the birds. This would have made it impossible to tackle the illegal trade of live birds wearing fake rings and which can only be controlled if handled.
146. She also referred to hunting being opened in Spring for Quails and Turtle Doves in Malta with bag limits only being effective on paper. Enforcement was limited as good officers had been systematically removed from the dedicated unit and, since the digital enforcement system had been launched in 2016, there was a decrease of more than 90 per cent of kills being reported. She asserted that hunting in Malta was being used as a smokescreen for IKB. Another example from Malta was that Finch trapping was allowed for scientific research but there were no controls and no scientific research was done, which meant it was a smokescreen for illegal trapping of Finches. The judicial system of Malta was failing to impose deterrent sanctions.

147. She asserted that the huge political and economic power that the hunting lobby had in Europe and on regional and national administrations was undermining efforts to reduce IKB and effectively protect wildlife. CABS proposed that the fight to make progress against IKB could not succeed without the minimum requirement of having binding tools which effectively combat poaching and prevent states retracting measures. These were a functioning anti-poaching unit dedicated specifically to IKB, and deterrent criminal sanction systems calibrated on national problems, such as local criminal phenomena and gravity factors.
148. The Chair thanked her for her provocative presentation.
149. Mr Marrucci countered the assertion that enforcement in Italy was limited. He said that the authorities were making efforts through national and international operations (such as EUROPOL) to uncover criminal groups in different provinces. He emphasised collaboration with various actors, including CABS, underlined that it was not true that they could not efficiently combat IKB and that sanctions were effective. He also underlined that in Brescia Province they welcomed the collaboration with CABS and he was happy to share further information with her.

Police investigation manual of offences against Biodiversity.

150. David de la Bodega Zugasti (Head of the Legal Programme, SEO/BirdLife) gave a presentation about a [police investigation manual of offences against Biodiversity](http://www.guardianes.seo.org/en/) prepared by Nature Guardians (<http://www.guardianes.seo.org/en/>) together with SEO/BirdLife and other partners. The aim was to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of actions to combat environmental crime in Spain and Portugal, in particular those against wildlife. Their key focus was increasing knowledge, improving enforcement and raising awareness about wildlife crime.
151. The manual was developed by experts from the Andalucian Government with experience in combatting wildlife crimes. It was based on two basic reference texts that made up the technical training programme for law enforcement officers in Andalusia, mainly environmental rangers and to a certain extent SEPRONA. These texts were also a reference for other environmental police in Spain and focused on investigation of wildlife crimes with a Spanish perspective, using the Spanish legal framework and circumstances. From the beginning of the project, SEO/BirdLife had felt that this knowledge should be extended to other countries and other kinds of wildlife crimes and had convinced the Andalucian Government to develop an international version of the manual.
152. The main goals of the manual were to: provide law enforcement officers and others with essential criteria to identify when a bird crime has been committed by understanding the cause of death and methods used explain the fundamental steps in addressing the investigation of the most common crimes against biodiversity, including those aimed especially at wildlife and their habitats, focusing on forest fires; and analyse the tools for cooperation between the different entities involved in a criminal investigation, both at national and international level, as well as between public and private entities.
153. The manual was available digitally and on paper, in Spanish, English, Portuguese and maybe shortly in Greek.
154. He concluded by outlining the structure of the manual.

155. Mr Spina found it interesting that in Spain electrocution was now considered a wildlife crime, asking whether the electricity companies were considered responsible if they had not carried out retrofitting. Mr de la Bodega Zugasti confirmed that environmental rangers, especially in Catalonia and Andalusia with the support of the Environmental Prosecutors Office, were asking the companies to correct the powerlines that had caused deaths. They were required to correct the powerlines under the Spanish implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive, and if they were aware of the electrocution and had done nothing to correct the issue, they would be held responsible. In Catalonia there were three penal processes underway against electricity companies in Spain.
156. Mr Jimenez suggested the procedure was more complex than this. For example, in Catalonia, some decisions had found that the companies were not responsible because the central government had drawn a Royal Decree many years before saying that the Ministry had to pay the company a fee to retrofit, but the Ministry had not paid this money. In Valencia the electricity companies had to do the retrofitting themselves. For example, in 2021, Iberdrola, the main electricity provider in Valencia, retrofitted 5,000 posts with their own funds. He stressed that the Royal Decree needed to change. Mr de la Bodega Zugasti argued that the pressure being put on electricity companies by the Environmental Prosecutor's Office had pushed the energy companies to move forward, as in the past five years there had been more retrofitting of power lines than ever before.

Updates on efforts to combat IKB by European Hunters

157. Cy Griffin (FACE) [presented](#) an update on efforts to combat IKB by European hunters and outlined FACE's thinking on IKB. He said that FACE maintained a zero tolerance towards all wildlife crime including IKB. The role of the hunting community was to create peer pressure within local clubs.
158. There had been unanimous support within the FACE membership for MIKT and the Bern Convention from the outset. Several members were seeking stronger partnerships with national enforcement authorities and local police to tackle wildlife crime. However, there was now much public condemnation of illegal acts and other positive actions by hunters were not being well received. As a result of this, interest within the hunting community in publicising action was decreasing and he hoped to resolve this during the 4th Joint Meeting. He hoped to gain some understanding of the trends from the meeting, and also to look for opportunities for collaborative work on IKB. He said that the COVID19 pandemic had increased polarisation between hunters and conservationists.
159. He gave a number of examples of collaboration, including: between the FACE member in Denmark and BirdLife, working together on communicating the ecological role of raptors to the membership; joint FACE/BirdLife patrols under a LIFE project in Bulgaria and Romania; representation of all Italian hunting associations in the steering committee of the Italian National Action Plan for combating offences against wild birds which had resulted in progress as recognised in the 4th year implementation report (2021); and continued efforts in Greece with the Game Guards. FACE had also been working on improving the hunter training manual, both the legislation and what was considered good ethics by hunters.
160. He referred to FACE's new website with projects on biodiversity and conservation: www.biodiversitymanifesto.com

161. Mr Ramírez referred to his initial comment on how to improve the relationship with the hunting community and suggested addressing this gap in the breakout sessions on communications on Day 2 of the meeting to reach out to the responsible hunters to make sure they felt motivated.

Updates on BirdLife International work on IKB

162. Willem Van Den Bossche (BirdLife International) [presented](#) on BirdLife partnership contributions in tackling IKB. He thanked the meeting organisers and stressed the importance of these meetings and welcomed the in-person and online active participation.
163. BirdLife was celebrating 100 years of bird conservation, including the fight against the killing of birds. It considered IKB a high priority and tried to approach IKB on all levels possible, at the local level working with volunteers on the ground, in blackspots, trying to change things at the local, national and regional levels. On the European level, in particular the Mediterranean, in the past 10 years BirdLife had raised around €11 million for activities against IKB.
164. Outside of the Mediterranean, he highlighted the importance of the African-Eurasian Flyway region for migratory birds, and referred to the illegal killing review of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq carried out in 2019 which led to the drafting of a Strategy and Action Plan to tackle IKB in the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq (2021) with the participation of BirdLife, CMS and country representatives. BirdLife had also done a desk based IKB review in sub-saharan Africa in 2021. These were all available on the [BirdLife website](#).
165. Mr Van Den Bossche then highlighted several successes, including: the biggest black market was closed down in Egypt; initiatives promoting ethical hunting and responsible hunting areas in Lebanon; confiscations of illegally trapped birds in Italy; new legislation on the banning of bird traps in Portugal; work going on in removing illegal poaching hides in Croatia; and stricter legislation had been implemented in Hungary.
166. He then focused on the impact of the intensity of bird trapping in Cyprus. He showed a graph indicating a first decline in 2013 when Cyprus joined the EU with a lot of activity to tackle IKB. Intensity slowed down, but from 2017 onwards there was a strong decline due to the SBAA's efforts and as legal measures to tackle IKB were gaining ground. In Italy over the years there had been a decline in the use of electronic lures due to the continuous effort of enforcement. The opposite was true when enforcement was stopped, or the intensity was lowered. He highlighted some setbacks, including: the increase in the number of illegalities in Malta and the 'game' with the EC of continuously introducing new derogations such as the Spring hunting of Turtle Doves and the so-called scientific study of Finch trapping; the Cyprus law relaxation which had a negative effect; widespread illegal shooting in Lebanon; and mass vulture and raptor poisonings throughout Europe.
167. Business as usual would not deliver the RSP ambition of zero tolerance for IKB and the 50 per cent reduction by 2030. Instead, there was a need to concentrate more efforts in ensuring that progress was made in implementing all elements of the RSP implementation. He welcomed the EC funding for IMPEL, ENPE and EUFJE as they were crucial networks to support anti-ICKB work and urged governments to collaborate more, giving the Andalusian WCA as a great example and urged improving communication between meetings.

168. The Chair thanked him and invited questions.
169. Mr Hamada was not aware of the assessment referred to in Sub-Saharan Africa. He was concerned about the methodology and sources used to provide the figures in Mr Van Den Bossche's presentation as they seemed to have been based on a desk-based study and not in collaboration with the Ministry in Egypt. Mr Van Den Bossche responded that the BirdLife partner worked closely with the government in 2015 and that all the CMS and Bern Convention Focal Points had been given the opportunity to give feedback. For some of the countries BirdLife had good data and for others the datasource was specified. He proposed discussing monitoring over the next days of the meeting.
170. Gary Timbrell (International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF)) referred back to Mr Jimenez's intervention about the change in attitude to illegal killing and poaching, saying that peer pressure had changed attitudes over the last 30 years or so and was a powerful tool that could be used more instead of potentially alienating communities. IAF encouraged communication amongst communities in the 90 countries it represented, with a huge translation capacity in 34 languages, with more than 100 translators, with the aim of reaching indigenous people in their own languages. They ran an internet portal for the Saker Falcon, gathering information and communicating with communities across its whole range in their own languages. They had a European conservation portal for the Great Partridge and they had found these multi-language portals engaged with stakeholders at the core level. He offered the services of this team to the CMS and Bern Conventions, for example for translating the RSP into more languages.
171. Mr Ramírez closed the session, thanking the interpreters for going beyond the time and acknowledged those participants online. He finally reminded participants of the COVID-19 guidelines.

Day 2. 08 June 2022

Opening of second day and setting the scene

172. Mr Ramírez welcomed everyone to Day 2 of the meeting, noting there would be breakout sessions in the afternoon.
173. The Chair said his overall sense was of progress and momentum but stressed the importance of using the meeting to put new energy into the process. Despite positive news, there had been worrying reports the previous day about poisoning happening again in different countries and there was a need to be alert and monitor the cases as they could be witnessing a relative return of poisoning. He emphasised the need to monitor the instances of poisoning in Spain, even though they were isolated, and take necessary measures including penalties and prosecution. He then outlined the morning's agenda.

7. Scope, scale and motivations of IKB

7.1 Approaches for monitoring IKB and setting a baseline

174. The Chair led a session on approaches to monitoring IKB, setting baselines, adopting a methodology for monitoring IKB as well as an outline of a common format and methodology on motivations.

Baseline and methodologies for monitoring IKB

175. Ms Papazoglou outlined the actions on baseline and methodology in the RSP. She referred to the [Paper on Baseline and Methodology](#) endorsed in 2021 by MIKT Members and supported by SC41.
176. The RSP Vision was a reduction of at least 50 per cent in the scale and scope of IKB by 2030 and ultimately to eradicate IKB. To measure this reduction, the RSP outlined the importance of agreeing on a methodology and clearly mentioned setting a baseline in comparison to 2020 through using the Scoreboard (Obj 1.1).
177. The Scoreboard included a lot of questions on the status and scale, number of birds caught, type of IKB in each country, prosecutions etc. The challenge was that many countries completing the Scoreboard did not complete it fully, so the baseline could not be established. So it was essential to establish the baseline to know where each country was on the trajectory.
178. In 2021, during the 3rd Joint Meeting, the CMS Secretariat presented the [Paper on Baseline and Methodology](#) on monitoring IKB, an extremely difficult task as it involved illegal activities. The Paper proposed two different approaches: through full surveys using statistical methods to extrapolate to a national estimate for IKB or through monitoring proxies to establish a trend (which she proposed was most likely the most appropriate method especially for countries lacking capacity and data). A webinar to discuss some real examples was scheduled for July or September 2022.
179. Ms Papazoglou stressed that it was fundamental to the RSP to set a baseline and start monitoring to assess progress. She concluded by reiterating the need to be able to monitor IKB and that in 2023 the Scoreboard reporting was foreseen. She urged countries to raise any needs or capacity building in the breakout groups so the Secretariat could see how to support them.

Assessing trends of IKB numbers through proxies: WRCs and other official data.

180. Mr Moreno-Opo [presented](#) on proxies using Wildlife Recovery Centres (WRC) and other official data to monitor IKB and Spain's experience on how to gather data in the past few years. In Spain they had been evaluating how to assess IKB given the commitment that all the MIKT members and Bern Convention SFPs made in Rome and in the last Joint Meeting in 2021.
181. There was an inherent difficulty in obtaining population data and statistics on wildlife, in particular what was observed and the reality. There was an abundance of scientific literature comparing methods and assessing different approaches on interpretation of field data. The Pan European Common Bird Monitoring System (PECBMS) large-scale monitoring program was highly positive, for example, but there were programmes which had been criticised due to potential bias. Having absolute numbers entailed a much greater effort with many more potential biases and required a greater effort to obtain the data. It was also extremely complex to obtain reliable and robust data on IKB as it was an illegal activity, similar to drug trafficking, and consequently, it was possible to obtain details on seizures but it was very difficult to obtain exact details on the consumption.

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182. He reminded that options for a methodological approach included: an estimate of the full scale and magnitude of IKB through reviewing available data and deciding on a methodology, carrying out regular surveys of IKB activities across an appropriate scale; or to use indicators of scale to allow tracking and progress (without extrapolation to the national scale) through reviewing available data and deciding on a methodology and establishing regular surveys across an appropriate scale.
183. Spain had selected the second option, using indicators/proxies: because of the difficulty in obtaining national estimates of all IKB sources and situations; so as to take advantage of existing monitoring programmes; and to be able to understand trends and measure effectiveness.
184. He presented a map of WRCs in Spain, explaining that they had a network of 40 WRCs monitoring and registering causes for admission, either managed by authorities or privately owned with collaboration agreements with the authorities. In the 2020 Scoreboard, they had used the number of admissions to WRCs related to IKB activities in a given year (2019) as a basis for their reporting. They had had to extrapolate this information to the national situation for the Scoreboard as they had not received information from all WRCs so there was a need to ensure all regions were involved to increase the accuracy. He was not sure if this approach was applicable to other countries, depending on the number of WRCs but it was very useful to have this data. He then presented a table of number of admissions to WRCs related to IKB from which they had extrapolated.
185. They were also monitoring poisoning numbers and, thanks to NGOs, collecting official data (1992-2017) which gave them the total number of poisoned birds admitted to WRCs each year, the percentage of poison cases in relation to the number of birds admitted and from this they could extrapolate the estimate of the total number of birds affected by IKB. Obtaining the data was still challenging, however, as it was not always available yearly. They also examined the administrative/judicial case records to include as complementary information in question no.4 of the Scoreboard even though there could be a partial overlap with the data from the WRCs.
186. He concluded by highlighting the importance of these approaches to self-evaluation as without this it would not be possible to really know the impact or reality. He urged all Parties to try to push forward with this so as not to have different speeds in reporting.
187. The Chair noted this is a complex area and there were many options to consider and invited questions.
188. Mr Spina congratulated Spain. He recalled an idea he put forward at a meeting on IKB in Zakynthos, Greece some years ago, for a webtool for example started with Google form accessible by selected WRCs from MIKT and Bern Convention countries with password access to enter data on IKB. This might offer a good material spread across MIKT and Bern Convention countries and was a relatively cheap option.
189. Mr Loureiro highlighted the symmetry between Portugal and Spain, with Portugal having 14 WRCs. All the information had been received from the WRCs but had not yet been analysed. There was also data on poisoning, but data on dead specimens, was only collected if there was an investigation of the death. They did not have a lot of information about illegal cases. There was an Enforcement Group in Portugal and perhaps now with the increased staff they would have time to collaborate with Spain on this. Mr Moreno-Opo fully agreed and thought Portugal was on the right track,

- acknowledging there would always be information gaps. He explained that in Spain all dead birds for which administrative proceedings had been started were received in WRCs because that is where the investigation of the cause of death happened, so the record was always there.
190. Stefan Feger (EuroNatur) wondered whether Spain had seen any effect from the ban on hunting Finches in the data from the WRCs. Mr Moreno-Opo said suspending Finch trapping was not particularly reflected in the number of birds entering the WRC. However, even after the ban some cases were identified but the number was negligible. This should not have an effect on the data collected from now on until 2030.
 191. Bassima Khatib (Society for the Protection of Nature, Lebanon) suggested developing a mobile application where regional data could be gathered continuously in a harmonized manner. Mr Moreno-Opo agreed provided official data was used.
 192. Mr Ramírez asked why not all the WRC had sent information and Mr Moreno-Opo explained that Spain was almost federal in its structure, so this could be challenging despite the interest of the various administrations involved in IKB. He explained that he used a mailing list of focal points which was effectively a coordination forum.
 193. Susana Sanchez Cuerda (Spain) noted that SEPRONA recorded all birds detected regionally by environmental rangers in Spain and suggested there could be SEPRONA records which were not included in the statistics from WRC. Mr Moreno-Opo agreed that this could be the case, but explained that there were records from forensic laboratories which were not included in the data from the WRC to avoid double-counting.
 194. Mr van der Stegen welcomed Spain's pragmatic and cost-effective approach as it was important to dedicate the majority of resources to activities in the field. He wondered if they had the means to distinguish between illegal cases and accidents etc. Mr Moreno-Opo explained that not all WRCs ascertained the cause of death; causes were grouped into natural, deliberate and accidental causes. It was also necessary to consider whether the death was deliberate or not in the case of electrocution for example. So far most of the cases were deemed to be accidents and necropsies were significant in ascertaining these details.
 195. Mr van den Bossche noted that BirdLife had updated their monitoring guidelines with some best practices for different types of IKB. He added that the BirdLife report did not include numbers on derogations reported to the EU. The Spanish figures would have been 700,000 to 1.2million if derogations had been included. He agreed that the Spanish methodology through WRCs was practical and cost effective, however, it only covered a small percentage of the IKB going on. For example, it seemed unrealistic to expect that there would be an immediate effect from a ban and no continued trapping of Finches and that this was not accurately reflected in the current figures.
 196. The Chair said that given WRCs existed and there was a need for them, it seemed sensible to take the opportunity to standardise the information being taken. Ms Papazoglou asked BirdLife to send the new guidelines referred to so they could be uploaded to the MIKT website. She said the website would be updated later in 2022 to bring it more in line with the RSP objectives and so the CMS Secretariat was collecting as much information as possible and requested members to send this to the CMS Secretariat.

7.2 Identifying the motivations for IKB: A proposal for a common format and guidance (for discussion and comments)

197. Ms Papazoglou introduced this agenda item, explaining it concerned a guidance document for governments drafted by BirdLife International contracted by the CMS to support Objective 1.2 of the RSP ([Agreed methodology, guidance and common format for conducting socioeconomic research into the motivations behind IKB](#)). BirdLife would now present an outline of the draft guidance for discussion and input from participants.
198. Vicky Jones (BirdLife) explained that the current document provided an outline of the guidance they would produce which was intended to support governments and contained several elements including: a step-by-step guide to undertaking social science research on IKB; a suggested methodology/structure for social science research on IKB; best available evidence – case studies to demonstrate methods in action and provide ideas; and links to additional toolkits and resources.
199. An introduction to the guidance explained that IKB was a social as well as environmental issue and so in order to address the problem it was necessary to understand social, cultural and economic drivers. Socio-economic studies could help answer questions such as: who was perpetrating IKB; who was enabling it; what the demographic profiles of those different stakeholders were; what deterrents were effective; what the levels of economic incentive were; and what the cultural factors were. Ms Jones emphasised that understanding motivations would help design better, more targeted actions and was a vital element feeding into RSP Objective 5 on prevention. The guidance also covered options for partnership and collaboration. The model was not prescriptive nor exhaustive but intended to take countries through the process and offer further information on a range of methods depending on the type of socio-economic question under assessment. The national context for each country was different so the guidance offered a range of options.
200. Annex 1 contained a template and general framework with the basic sections a socio-economic assessment could contain to help governments structure the social science research. It could be used by governments in conjunction with the guidance and could be modified to suit the situation and questions being asked.
201. The intention was to also include case studies selected to demonstrate particular methods in use and provide useful examples for governments possibly interspersed throughout the document. BirdLife had provided a few examples in the draft but welcomed suggestions of good case studies.
202. Annex 2 to the document contained initial ideas on a common format or set of standardised overview questions that could be answered by each government. The responses would give the CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats comparable information from which to compile an overview regional survey, summary report and recommendations. Options included use of the Scoreboard, targeted requests for information and use of a questionnaire.
203. David de la Bodega Zugasti (SEO/BirdLife) then presented a Spanish case study of the Origins and Motivations of Environmental Crime including international aspects. The report was based on four sources of information: a scientific literature review; a survey about social perceptions; an analysis of legal judgements; and interviews with professionals.

204. The results from the literature review clarified the main motivations for environmental crime. Profit and conflicts were identified as main motivations for wildlife crime; for example in Africa money was used for funding terrorism and corruption. Other motivations included religious traditions and beliefs, and social cohesion such as with the hunting sector. However, the report highlighted that, despite all these motivations, the most recurrent factors were lack of awareness and lack of understanding of the real impact of actions.
205. The second part of the study was the survey on social perceptions. An interesting element was that people evaluated the importance of wildlife crime depending on the size of the animal, so they considered it a serious crime if it related to species of relatively large body size (e.g. Lynx) but not so if the animal was small. There was a general perception that it was important to fight against environmental crime and support investigations. The research was available in Spanish and soon in English. The analysis of judgements found that in Spain the main perpetrators were men of 40 years old, wildlife crime was committed mainly in small municipalities and birds suffered most from these kinds of activities.
206. These kinds of studies provided the opportunity to: reduce the opportunity for offending; undertake more targeted lines of investigation; have a more efficient reporting, investigation and prosecution system; implement intervention projects with primary and secondary populations; develop various strategies for awareness raising and engagement of the general population.
207. Ms Jones concluded by explaining that the document would be further developed between now and September 2022 and encouraged feedback. She presented a slide with some questions for discussion.
208. The Chair thanked the presenters and opened the floor for discussion.
209. Nina Mikander (Finland) thanked the presenters, affirming this was an important topic. She cited an example from her previous position with the AEWAs Secretariat of the Lesser White-fronted Goose, highlighting that depending on the situation in a country it could be crucial to bring in a 3rd party advisor or consultant to do the work. She welcomed the global examples in the document, and provided details on a [peer-reviewed paper](#) recently published on the Lesser White-fronted Goose as well as [the report](#) on which it is based. Ms Jones welcomed the input and said they planned to put a section in the Guide, stressing that the perspective of the person doing the interviewing was key and needed to be neutral.
210. Mr Hamada agreed the topic was critical. In Egypt the Ministry had completed a comprehensive socio-economic study funded by the EU, AEWAs, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and others. The study was not yet published but Mr Hamada felt it would be a useful study as it was based on scientifically sound methodology. He suggested including some criteria for certain sections of the document presented by BirdLife, so as to avoid bias, on the sample size for example. He stressed the importance of appropriate methodologies and urged the CMS Secretariat to ensure the quality of reports. Ms Papazoglou explained that countries had to approve any report provided through the Scoreboard. Ms Jones agreed that the sample size was an important issue and would be covered in the guidance and welcomed Egypt's work on this.

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211. Ms Khatib asked whether the document presented by BirdLife was meant to be a general guidance manual or to provide the suggested questionnaire for direct usage by Contracting Parties. Ms Jones explained that the intention was a suite of different guidance and not something prescriptive. The common format could be delivered through expanding the Scoreboard responses or through a specific request for information.
212. Tassos Shialis (BirdLife Cyprus) shared a recently published peer-reviewed [paper on trappers motivations in Cyprus](#).
213. The Chair said that given this was an important proposal there would be a period until 24 June 2022 for providing comments on the BirdLife document. He encouraged countries to follow the proposal as much as possible and finalise the document to be adopted by MIKT members and to be submitted to the Bern Convention SC. Ms Papazoglou drew their attention to the common format which would support the Secretariats to prepare the overall survey/summary report and explained that there were two options: a specialised questionnaire, or the questions of the common format could be included in the narrative comment fields of the Scoreboard.

8. Scoreboard Reporting and data collection

8.1 Scoreboard 2023: Presentation of draft instructions for additional narrative text to support Scoreboard submissions

214. The Chair introduced this agenda item on the [Draft instructions for additional narrative text to support Scoreboard submissions](#) to help bring the Scoreboard more in line with the RSP, as well as presentations on national and international databases on IKB.
215. Nadia Saporito (Bern Convention) presented a document on additional guidance on the [Scoreboard to assess the progress in combating IKB](#) focusing especially on how to enhance the narrative provided in the comment boxes contained in the Scoreboard. She presented the document for comments and endorsement by MIKT members and submission to the Bern Convention SC. The Scoreboard was adopted by the Bern Convention SC and CMS COP as an Annex to Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) and was a voluntary self-assessment tool that enabled national governments to measure their progress in fighting IKB. The TAP, which came to an end in 2020, when the RSP was adopted, assessed progress in combatting IKB both through the Scoreboard and separate national narrative reports whose template was largely based on the TAP. The RSP foresaw that the Scoreboard “may be adjusted to ensure that countries can effectively use the Scoreboard alongside the RSP.”
216. During the MIKT4/the 3rd Joint Meeting, it was noted that some elements of the RSP were not being sufficiently reported through the Scoreboard including: fundraising; communication; awareness raising activities; capacity building initiatives; needs assessment; and participation in international cooperation meetings. For future periodic assessments on the implementation of the RSP, a more extensive and systematic use of comment boxes included in the Scoreboard was proposed, to avoid creating another level of reporting and thereby discontinuing the national narrative report.
217. Ms Saporito clarified that the proposed changes would not affect the overall score a country received during its self-assessment and the filling of comment boxes was not going to be made mandatory, but it was highly recommended. A more comprehensive

reporting had the advantage of allowing the Secretariats to have a better understanding of the overall implementation of the RSP; helping Contracting Parties to better assess overall progress; and facilitating the identification of possible gaps and related actions. It would also have brought the Scoreboard more in line with the Objectives and Indicators of the RSP, enabling the inclusion of comments on communication, awareness raising, capacity building and cooperation activities, elements that the current version of the Scoreboard did not cover sufficiently.

218. She then ran through the proposed changes section by section (details can be found in the [document](#)). The Chair then opened the floor for questions, noting it was a straight-forward exercise to make this Scoreboard format clearer and bring it in line with the RSP objectives and indicators.
219. Ms Brickett supported the proposed edits to the Scoreboard and presented some proposed edits which she said she would submit in an email as well.
220. In response to a question from Ms Khatib about including NGO input, Ms Saporito confirmed the reporting was for governments but that the Secretariats recommended that governments should work with NGOs so that the country submission reflected more fully the situation in a country.
221. The MIKT Members adopted the document and the Bern Convention Network of SFPs on Eradication of IKB supported the submission of the document to SC42.

8.2 National and International Databases on IKB

222. The Chair introduced this agenda item, noting the Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas as a ground-breaking document which had had significant support from Italy and honoured Mr Spina who had pushed for this from the beginning. It was a complex issue to capture and was a significant milestone.

The Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas

223. Mr Spina [presented](#) on the Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas (Mapping EURING ringing data and Movebank tracking data for 300 species) prepared with EURING data. The Atlas had been prepared by ISPRA by Fernando Spina, working together with Caralina Fungi who had carried out most of the analysis.
224. The Atlas (www.migrationatlas.org) had been a dream for many years. They had tried several times to find resources for this project until the CMS COP had decided to include the Atlas in the programme of work (POW) recognising it as a useful piece of work to support the Global Atlas on Animal Migration. More recently, Italy had pledged €1million to the CMS and the CMS Secretariat involved EURING and Movebank to produce the Atlas. He encouraged participants to browse the Atlas.
225. The Atlas was launched on 26 May 2022 at the Migration Museum on the island of Ventotene, Italy. Representatives from CMS, EURING, Movebank, ISPRA, Milano University, the local Natural Reserve, and the Italian Ministry of Culture all attended. He shared [a Youtube link](#) of the proceedings. Mr Spina said the Atlas was a powerful interactive mapping tool which produced maps made of ring recoveries with millions of data points. It had four research modules on: historical change; intentional killing by man; migration seasons of hunted species; and migratory connectivity. These were attached to the Atlas as PDF documents.

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226. He then provided some more detail. He highlighted the relevance of when death happened for demography and status of bird populations. For any population, there were peaks in numbers of birds immediately after fledging. Natural selection then exerted its toll and the numbers declined until the point at which the birds that survive could breed.
227. They had started with a huge dataset composed of nearly 120 years of data. There were some potential biases in recording IKB incidences as people were more likely to report a killing if the species was not protected, leading to a reluctance to report the death of a protected species. This could be addressed, however, by digitally logging all first capture data through ringing and ringing effort. However, this was only possible for a few countries and in terms of time series there was no chance of having access to such data. It was important to keep this bias in mind.
228. He then presented various slides with statistics in analysing the data (1900–2010), including trends in the information on cause of death, with increasing information in more recent years. Death by shooting was high compared to road casualty or natural reasons, and that there are very different historical trends when looking at cause of death, with death by shooting declining steeply over time whilst road casualties showed a steep increase, perhaps due to road traffic increase. There were other interesting seasonal trends such as birds dying due to drowning peaking during the hottest season and road casualties higher in Spring and Summer than during the Winter.
229. The data showed a geographical pattern in the proportion of intentional/non-intentional killing, with a much higher percentage around the Mediterranean, with differences also in West and East Africa. Bar graphs according to countries and time indicated a prevalence of intentional killing which decreased progressively over the years. The percentage of non-intentional killed birds increased over time. He also presented a map series of European maps showing the proportion of intentional killing per decade, including for raptors.
230. It was also possible to use the data set to look into the relationship between killing of birds and legislation. The most important piece of legislation concerning birds was the EU Birds Directive (the UK was included in the analyses as dataset ended before Brexit). He highlighted a number of trends following the Directive's entry into force, including: a marked decline in intentionally killed birds; a higher frequency of intentionally killed birds in huntable species; and a decrease in Annex I Species being shot after the entry into force of the Directive. The worst periods for IKB of raptors were between the 1950s and 1970s, with a progressive decline after that. Graphs indicating positive trends in compliance for three groups of birds - raptors, herons and ducks – indicated a decline in reporting of intentionally killed raptors and herons even before the Directive came into force but even more so after. For ducks, there was no such decline. Another level of analysis looked at the distribution of black spots defined from an IKB perspective (during the traditional hunting period) using a complex methodology outlined in the Atlas.
231. There appeared to be a positive effect of international legislation on compliance and conservation of migratory species and birds in general across Europe. In some ways this was also an analysis of the social perspective and there was room for more specific analysis from this unique data set. He referred back to the question of potential bias, in that the EURING did not host data on the total number of birds ringed per country, per species, per year. However, there was an increasing number of countries in Europe computerising first capture data, including Finland, the Netherlands and Italy, so there was an opportunity to analyse the data for these countries.

232. The Chair thanked Mr Spina and congratulated him on the project. Mr Griffin also congratulated him. He wondered if there was data available on the number and composition of species per country and whether fewer huntable species were being ringed. Mr Spina said this was impossible to answer as it varied from country-to-country. The data was not currently stored in the data bank but rather gathered from the countries. EURING had been looking into this for a long time. The UK, for example, was 'computerising backwards' and the intention was to select information from these countries, although resources were required for this. He felt there was a positive trend of increased compliance and awareness by hunters for protected species but also a tendency in some areas of a decreasing reporting rate. Here there was an opportunity for the hunting community to push hunters to always report hunted birds which are ringed.
233. The vice-Chair asked whether the overall numbers of intentional and non-intentional killing were declining. Mr Spina explained that the percentages indicated clear trends, referring her to details in the reports. Mr Tahri asked if birds contained on the species list were classified as deliberately or non-deliberately killed. Mr Spina explained that there were specific codes in the EURING database for birds which classified birds in deliberately and non-deliberately killed and that the non-deliberate codes had been excluded in the analysis of intentional killing.
234. Laura Dami (Tour du Valat) pointed out that not all species were ringed. For example, in France there were some species which could not be ringed. This would produce a bias as where there were species ringed in some countries and not in others. Mr Spina responded that any dataset had limitations and, especially historically speaking, ringing was not standardised. Standardisation came much later. Given this bias, and given that any dataset has weaknesses, at the global level the dataset built up by EURING since the 1960s, there was no better dataset despite the weaknesses. The bias was partly compensated by the fact that in the countries where certain species are not ringed, there would be recoveries of those species (i.e. birds that were ringed elsewhere and recovered in that country).
235. The Chair asked whether the Atlas incorporated data from tracked satellite birds. Mr Spina responded that the Atlas was supported by Movebank which was a databank of all animals, set up by the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, Germany. Wolfgang Fiedler, Max Planck Institute of Animal Behaviour, had asked researchers to allow their data to be used for the Atlas. It was possible to select and create a map for more than 100 species using data for more than 300 projects and now even more scientists were willing to contribute. The Atlas could be updated in an ongoing manner through an update of the dataset so it would be possible to update this regularly.
236. The Chair thanked Mr Spina for all his work on this impressive international database.

Functionalities of the Israel national database on IKB

237. Ben Rosenberg (Head of Wildlife Protection Department, Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA)), presented on the functionalities of Israel's Monitoring and Data Collecting System on IKB. He explained that INPA managed nature reserves, national parks and protected flora and fauna outside of reserves. They oversaw hunting legislation and law enforcement, combatted wildfires and assisted farmers with damage inflicted by wildlife.

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238. Historically they had worked with a laborious ineffective paper filing system. In 2009 they had started to use Cyber Tracker, which was a software from a South African non-profit company which enabled rangers to upload information (using icons) to a mobile phone App. They could record animals, plants, observations, locations, crop types, damage types; invasive species, electrocution and so on. They were now updating this application and developing their own INPA App and it was compulsory for hunters to track and input.
239. They had had 3 million reports in 10 years. He gave the example of the Chukar Partridge which was a protected species. As numbers were decreasing it was now protected but still desired by poachers. He presented an example of observations having been entered in the App and the potential for analysis. It was possible to filter observations for the Chukar Partridge, e.g. there had been 65,000 sightings, and to click and show them on a map. It was also possible to see law enforcement incidents and to view poaching details such as the month and time of day, as well as the peaks in the legal hunting period, when it was hunted illegally, and a heat map and combine months and time of day to improve law enforcement using this knowledge.
240. Another example was the European Goldfinch. He presented the information available on the App regarding smuggling and poaching of the Goldfinch which was bred with canaries for the pet industry and obtained high prices. It was possible to see 5,862 observations and the different sightings as well as a map showing where it was common. All of this informed and improved law enforcement efforts, as when it was possible to see where and when the poaching was happening, it was possible to improve law enforcement. They were working on developing an alert for rangers whereby e.g. when they are in a hotspot area, they would get an alert that there might be poachers around.
241. He then demonstrated the wildlife poisoning alert system. There were many vultures dying of poisoning in Israel mainly due to some farmers poisoning jackals and wildboar, which led to secondary vulture poisoning. As most of the vultures were tagged, INPA monitored them closely, so that any time a vulture landed in a non-designated feeding area this would trigger an alert system indicating a vulture on the ground so the team would be alerted on Telegram and could see the geographical location and potentially go and check on the bird.
242. INPA had been working on the system for a number of years. The system had an encyclopaedia, it could be used to collect data, upload management documents, carry out data analysis and connect to external GIS system. Additionally, it had had a dashboard with graphs and a GIS system. INPA was working on more alerts for people in the field so that it was not just a one-way data system and would be able to compile custom reports.
243. The Chair thanked him for the presentation and invited comments.
244. Ms Jones welcomed the presentation and said the App looked very interesting and useful. She asked how Israel had achieved the buy-in with hunters, how they monitored the use of the App, and whether they backed up the data with on-the-spot inspections. Mr Rosenberg responded that the hunters had only been obliged to log information in the App for the past two years. If a ranger met a hunter and they had not opened a bag on the App then a fine would be imposed. They tried to share the data with the hunters to show what they were doing with the data to show it was for species management as well as law enforcement, but it was necessary to have rangers out there to make it work.

245. Mr Ramírez said it was impressive work. He wondered who the data providers were, the rangers or also the hunters and citizen science? Mr Rosenberg explained that the App was evolving. It started out for State fieldworkers but now hunters were also using it and the credibility of the data was unknown. However, they knew that the information had to match with the information coming from the rangers.
246. Ms Papazoglou wondered whether the analysis such as the hotspots was available to all and Mr Rosenberg clarified that it was only available to the authorities. The Chair asked whether they could see some trends from the data gathered on trapping of Goldfinch and the cases of poisoning. Mr Rosenberg responded that on poisoning over the past year they had started using dogs who were trained to locate poisoning which was very successful.
247. In response to a question from Mr van der Stegen, Mr Rosenberg confirmed that the App was accessible to all citizens. It was a free App but different type of users had their own menu. It was hard in the beginning as not many hunters had had mobile phones but now new hunters had to have the App, although old hunters (there were approximately 10) had the possibility to call in the details.

Draft considerations on developing international databases on IKB

248. Filipe Canário (Coordinator at STRIX Environment and Innovation) presented draft recommendations for a European IKB database. The work had been commissioned by BirdLife's LIFE Against Bird Crimes Project, explaining that one of the expected outputs of this project was to produce a European database or recommendations for the production of the database. STRIX's assignment was to produce detailed technical recommendations.
249. They had performed a literature review and met with stakeholders to familiarise themselves with existing databases and assess the problem, difficulties and challenges. Some of the findings included: that legislation differed between countries; many regions did not have an IKB database; the willingness of people to share data varied; existing databases involve different types of institutions who have different objectives; the stage of prosecution/sentencing is not always included; there are very different platforms – online/offline, paper; and so harmonisation/standardisation between local/regional/national databases was very challenging.
250. He outlined the recommendations as: the simplest possible databases were most useful in order to harmonise existing projects to be able to inform the Scoreboard; databases should be part of a platform with a web portal; and the scope should only include birds and only IKB. A database should be owned by a high-profile institution, with excellent relations with key stakeholders, organisational skills to ensure reporting and mainstreaming of IKB information and not be dependent on short-term projects but part of a well-established entity to guarantee long-term sustainability. A database administrator should be nominated and any partners ideally would be government institutions. Other contributors could be invited to participate either directly or through the national partner. Finally, any registered users would not be able to contribute directly to the database but could consult the data.
251. The database should focus on cases and be structured in five levels: users; location of the case; species; case type; prosecutions; and convictions. The consultants outlined other recommendations, including: data must be easy to access and easy to input; it should be possible to add new data and upload existing records; data should

be secured and have automatic backups; the platform should be scalable to dynamically allocate resources to handle a considerable amount of data; the database should be available online with several users being able to access it at same time; and the database should be adaptable to tablets and smartphones. The report discussed the advantages of a relations database versus a spreadsheet.

252. Storage was a very important issue for databases, and they recommended Small Scale Cloud computing by a smaller size cloud hosting service which could be transferred to a large-scale Cloud provider if needed. The consultants made a number of other recommendations, including that: it should be possible to manually submit data in a form and to upload bulk data from pre-configured Excel files; and data should be able to be uploaded by regional or national partners and by contributors to the database either directly or through the national partners.
253. They had also addressed financial costs, with the estimated initial cost as €100,000 with an €35-65,000 annual cost.
254. The Chair thanked Mr Canário and affirmed that it would be useful to have such a database. He invited comments.
255. In response to a question from Mr Ramírez, Mr Canário said that if contributors were willing a database could be developed quickly and data could be inserted via an Excel file. The vice-Chair was concerned as from her experience with a project in Georgia each agency had different datasets which could not be transferred in the pre-configured Excel sheet and the project failed because of this. Umberto Gallo Orsi (CMS Raptors MOU) suggested that it was important to start with the information available in particular from police forces who had a lot of data.
256. Ms Khatib asked if the database covered West Asia countries with Mr Canário explaining their assignment was for a European-level database but this could be extended to other regions.
257. Mr Ramírez urged participants to review the considerations and submit their comments to the Secretariats.
258. The Chair closed the session. Mr Ramírez outlined the details of the breakout sessions that would happen after lunch. Online participants would also be allocated to the groups.

9. Cross cutting issues: Capacity Building and Training Needs

9.1 Wildlife Crime Academy (Andalusía)

259. The Chair introduced the next [presentation](#) by Jovan Andevski VCF on the Wildlife Crime Academy (WCA).
260. Mr Andevski opened by saying he was excited to share a positive message about the WCA which had been implemented in past two years. VCF was an international organisation mostly working on conservation of the four vulture species in Europe through fighting vulture threats including poisoning, illegal killing and so on. They had initially started with a study trying to identify the knowledge gaps in the Balkans and other European countries. The number of prosecutions resulting in cases was very low and they had tried to investigate why. The conclusion was that this was mainly due to low government engagement and lack of capacity and so they had decided to develop

- the WCA, the aim of which was to reduce the number of incidents and support action by government agencies as it was their responsibility.
261. The WCA was a joint project of the regional government of Andalusia and MITECO, Spain, with funding from EC LIFE and the MAVA Foundation. Spain had a lot of activity on fighting wildlife crime with successes particularly in fighting poisoning. In Andalusia wildlife crime treated as any other crime. They had started with the Balkan Detox LIFE project with funding from the EC, the MAVA Foundation and others, to strengthen national capacities in the fight against poisoning in the Balkans and Greece, and various other projects which provided a platform for the WCA.
 262. The WCA was an international training programme specialising in the investigation, forensic pathology and toxicology of wildlife crimes, including illegal poisoning, shooting, electrocution, collision and trapping. The work was focused on working with people as they play a vital role in the conservation of species and the investigation of wildlife crime. It was established in 2021, in the middle of the pandemic, but thanks to the support from Andalusia and MITECO, they were able to get the permits to enable participants to travel to Andalusia for the training in June 2021. The second cohort started in 2022 and they had trained 66 people from 14 European countries so far. Participants were all representatives from government and responsible authorities who investigate wildlife crime.
 263. The main objectives of the programme were to: raise the operational capacities of the relevant stakeholders; improve investigation and prosecution efficiency; bolster institutional cooperation and working cohesion; motivate and stimulate teamwork and personal engagement; and create an international community platform to exchange knowledge and experiences on wildlife crime. The ultimate objective was to reduce wildlife crime in the Balkans and beyond. The situation was changing with ongoing investigation cases after only one year.
 264. He described the different elements of the programme, including: Level 1 which involved specialisation in forensic and police investigation of wildlife crime; Level 2 on advanced investigation of wildlife crime; and Level 3 which involved wildlife crime analysis and intelligence (and would start in 2023). There were also follow-up interviews, check-in and monitoring through virtual sessions, WCA feedback and impact assessment and a Graduation Gathering. All participants agreed to organise a national training course for colleagues.
 265. Most of the programme was based on practical work. The experts were people that carry out this work on a daily basis. There was some theory on wildlife crime peculiarities for example, but the key was the sharing and caring moments as the experts were personally engaged people and their motivation and knowledge is contagious.
 266. He called on Latifa Sikli (Morocco) as she had been a participant in the training to give her feedback. She said she considered herself lucky to participate in the Academy. It was very well organised with theoretical and practical sessions and all the experts were incredibly generous in sharing their experience. She particularly welcomed that she could share the training with local rangers in Morocco, enabling a snowball effect to help reduce wildlife crime.
 267. Mr Andevski concluded by highlighting that the programme was based on the knowledge, engagement and passion of the Spanish team. Criminal investigation was very difficult, especially in the countryside. The crime scenes were destroyed within

two days and it was not easy to find those responsible. The experts were role models and an international community was being created. The VCF's role was to facilitate this and the rest was in the hands of governments.

268. The Chair thanked him for the presentation and asked how people could participate in one of these trainings. Mr Andevski explained they were currently submitting a second funding application to LIFE. There was a lot of interest in the WCA and they were discussing the list of participating countries which depended on collaboration at the government level. Anyone interested should be in touch as they were currently working on Cohort 3 and the future. In response to a question from the Chair he explained that the programme was led in Spanish with interpretation into English. The Chair hoped they would find funding to continue and suggested it would also be interesting to develop this as a model for African countries.

9.2 Capacity Building and Training Needs

269. Mr Ramírez outlined the details for the breakout groups. Four groups met, out of which two met online and two in person. He asked the groups to focus their discussion on the RSP and the MIKT Workplan.
270. On capacity building, he asked participants to focus on their needs as a country or observer as relevant, and what MIKT could do to help with these. For example, if they had a programme like the WCA they would like to share or a topic that they needed help with. The Secretariat would take note of these needs, similarly for fundraising needs.
271. Participants then met in their break-out groups to discuss capacity building needs and training offers and then fundraising and communications. Group rapporteurs reported back to plenary at the beginning of Day 3.
272. Breakout Group report back (Day 3):
273. Ms Sikli presented on the discussions of the breakout groups on capacity building and training. Participants noted that capacity building was needed at the national level (including all stakeholders through multidisciplinary teamwork) and at the regional/international levels (to improve collaboration and provide the opportunity for peer exchange of expertise). It was felt that there was a need for periodic regular updates and annual follow-up.
274. They had identified three categories of target groups and relating topics:
- Field agents, depending on the national legislation and institutions in each country. Relevant topics included: wildlife crime forensics and techniques - how to conduct investigations, cause of death and tools such as dog units; developing and implementing IKB national databases – methodology and tools for collecting and analysing data; and IKB monitoring – about the use of acoustic monitoring devices, and how to address cybercrime.
 - The Justice Department (judges and prosecutors) and the need to remain independent and not be influenced. Relevant topics included: for students - technical documents for magistrate schools; international training, include IMPEL; and better linking of Eurojust and EUROPOL.
 - Other partners such as hunters' associations, NGOs, and electricity companies.

275. Breakout groups had also proposed holding workshops on the elaboration of IKB NAPs. They welcomed that the CMS Secretariat was working on a template which will be a good start for countries.
276. She concluded by listing various experiences participants had offered to share in organising IKB training, including: BirdLife Hungary and national parks rangers had shared their experience on forensic investigations; European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) which was also available for non-European countries; ENPE training materials were available for members funded by the LIFE project; Italy had experience in training of foreign police forces in several countries in Africa; Spain had experience in training environmental agents, nature protection police, and the WCA; Portugal had experience in training police officers on how to handle birds, identification of species, legislation and wildlife crime forensics; and Morocco had experience in training prosecutors and judges on CITES and national legislation (DEF-IFAW project).
277. The Chair invited questions. Mr Ramírez highlighted that one of the conclusions was that the CMS Secretariat put together a repository with information and links on training being provided. The Secretariat was revamping the website and would include an information hub.

10. Cross cutting issues: Fundraising and Communications

See agenda item 9.2 above for the introduction on this item.

Breakout Group report back (Day 3):

278. Mr Tavares reported on the feedback from the four breakout groups on fundraising and communications.
279. The groups had identified some communications priorities, including legislation, trade, court cases and sentencing, public perception on IKB to influence policy makers. They had also identified a number of ingredients for successful communication campaigns: social media was important in raising awareness about IKB, through influencers for example, but it was important to be aware of creating polarisation emphasising the emotional component (storytelling) and the human health component; highlighting diseases linked to the illegal trade of animals; explaining clearly what was legal and what was illegal; and cooperation with WRCs.
280. “Free as a bird” was suggested as a name of a communications campaign as per RSP 5.1b.
281. It was also felt that it was important to approach communications from the outset, to develop a communications strategy before communicating, and to monitor the impact of communication.
282. They had identified a number of target groups: youths, in particular young men, who had been identified by socio-economic studies as frequent perpetrators of IKB; farmers and land owners; hunters; traders of chemical products such as pesticides; media, both national and international media (referencing the National Geographic article on IKB), through press visits and building relationships with the press in particular through positive stories; pet traders/breeders; and policy and decision makers, including CITES officers and the different ministries and authorities.

283. In terms of scope, the groups agreed that communications campaigns worked best at the national and local level to target areas near IKB hotspots. For transboundary projects and at the international level, language facilitation and translation could be needed. They had emphasised sharing best practices internationally, suggesting the CMS Secretariat could compile tools and products. They had also noted that the CMS and Bern Secretariats had dedicated teams although with limited capacity. They had also stressed the importance of communicating about the outcomes of this meeting through participants' websites and other outlets.
284. The groups had also identified a number of fundraising MIKT/RSP priorities, including: funding for policing to build up capacity of enforcement agencies/police; developing alternative livelihoods – such as non-monetary compensation for stakeholders protecting wildlife; developing the evidence base such as for monitoring programmes to fill in the Scoreboard effectively; and activities for the prevention of IKB through awareness raising.
285. They had identified potential funding sources, including: national funds including ministries; green/environmental fund (environmental fines and taxes); hunting licenses; exploring EU funds such as: LIFE; EP pilot projects; DG Justice; DG Home; DG DEVCO; Cohesion funds; GEF8; and foreign embassies.
286. They had also highlighted the importance of having existing staff time in the ministries assigned to IKB and suggested the CMS Secretariat explored the idea of a consultancy to develop a MIKT fundraising strategy and identify opportunities.
287. The Chair thanked the facilitators, the Secretariats and the rapporteurs for a very constructive exercise. The reports would help guide the work of the Secretariats and of countries and NGOs in implementing activities at different levels.

Day 3. 09 June 2022

288. The Chair opened the final day of the meeting. He welcomed participants, outlined the day's agenda and looked forward to the field trip in the afternoon. He introduced the report back from the rapporteurs from the four groups (see agenda items 9.2 and 10 above).

11. Guidance and Best Practice for National IKB Action Plans

289. The Chair introduced this agenda item, noting that there would be several presentations on the development of National IKB Action Plans. The intention was that participants could consider some examples of how countries were approaching this topic.

11.1 Format and Guidance for preparing National Action Plans

290. Ms Papazoglou presented progress towards a proposal for Recommendations for the development and implementation of National IKB Action Plans.
291. She reminded participants that the RSP had five objectives, highlighting the final process-oriented objective on National IKB Action Plans as an effective way for a country to organise work around IKB. At the same time, the RSP recognised that a National IKB Action Plan might not be appropriate and necessary for all countries, so there was the possibility to have other policy documents, as long as they integrated national policy actions to combat IKB.

292. The aim of the Secretariats was to help countries implement the RSP. At MIKT4/the 3rd Joint Meeting, the Secretariat had offered the paper "[Considerations for the Way forward on National IKB Action Plans](#)." The document containing recommendations for the development and implementation of National IKB Action Plans was in preparation and would be available in the summer. There would be a National IKB Action Plan template, and guidance how to implement it. She regretted that the Secretariat had been delayed on this but assured that it was coming and looked forward to comments. The document would be proposed for endorsement by MIKT members following a written consultation and submitted to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. She explained that under this agenda item they would hear three examples of National IKB Action Plans from different countries some of which had been translated and were available on the meeting website under the 'Information Documents'. As part of the revamp of the main MIKT website they would be found in a subject-related way.

11.2 National IKB Action Plan of Italy Vade Mecum

293. Arianna Aradis (Area Avifauna Migratrice, ISPRA, Italy) [presented](#) an update on the [Italian National Action Plan to Combat Wild Bird Crime](#), explaining that the Action Plan focused on five main goals, with 32 actions prioritised according to the importance in achieving the main goals. She presented a table outlining a summary of the implementation status, showing a scoreboard outlining the actions, their priority and an evaluation of the implementation status up to then.
294. She highlighted a number of ongoing activities, including the establishment of anti-poison dog units and the setting-up of a national operational coordination programme which was challenging as activities were shared by different authorities.
295. Adaptation of the national regulatory framework was challenging at the political level as there were lot of decisions that the government needed to take to change the law. As an update to the table, she reported that the action regarding training of prosecutors and judges was completed and would soon be published. She also explained that her Institute had received the approval from the Ministry of Justice and a document would be prepared for use in School of Judiciary. They were also developing a focus paper on effective measures to combat IKB.
296. Other actions included stepping-up checks on restaurant businesses in black spots where consumption of wild birds was widespread, and work was underway on including a section on IKB in the national database of birds submitted to WRCs. They were also looking into how to carry out standardisation at the Carabinieri Command of Units for Forestry Environmental and Agrifood Protection (CUFAA) HQ.
297. The Action Plan formally expired in April 2020 and no update was planned as it had been agreed to continue actions under the existing Plan.
298. The Chair welcomed the presentation and in particular this kind of internal evaluation of progress which was being carried out.
299. Ms Papazoglou asked for some detail on the process of running the plan, such as the set-up of the Steering Committee, how the Steering Committee members were selected and how often they met. Ms Aradis responded that the Committee was comprised of two different levels: the political level including several different ministries, including INTERPOL, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice and

- others; and the technical level, including ISPRA and NGOs. The plan was approved by the state regional conference.
300. Mr Spina added that the Ministry of Environment asked other ministries to appoint a representative to the Steering Committee. There were difficulties mostly related to the process leading to a formal revision of a wildlife and hunting law given the polarised perspectives of those involved and that the government did not want to open the Pandora's box of the law. It was important that the ministries had shown active interest, however, and he expected that the process would continue. Ms Jones acknowledged the problem of reopening the legislative process. She was concerned that the legal penalties in Italy were so weak that they did not act as a deterrent. Ms Aradis agreed that there was a need to address this.
 301. Mr Griffin asked whether some element of the monitoring indicators could be used for indicators or the Scoreboard. Ms Aradis explained that an annual report had been prepared with data derived from CUFAA and data on people arrested or animals seized which they used for the Scoreboard and to enable monitoring. The report also included data from the Ministry of Agriculture such as hunting reports. Every region had to give its datasets to the Ministry and ISPRA also prepared a technical report and sent it to the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr Spina pointed out that there was some reluctance on the part of the regions in providing data to the central government even though EU Birds Directive Art 12 required this. Hunters were also reluctant to provide information through the volunteer network of game wardens. There was room for improvement in terms of data gathering and reluctance to provide data.
 302. Mr Gallo Orsi highlighted that it was complicated to gather data. NGOs tried to obtain the information through developing national monitoring processes independently or working with the Carabinieri, police forces, etc. There were some results showing that good reporting did affect illegal activity. Most of the black spots were being addressed but there was a general form of IKB that was difficult to prevent and monitor.
 303. Olivier Biber (AEML WG) said the lack of will to revise the law was a big obstacle in Italy and other countries, in aiming for zero tolerance. He asked what pressure the CMS and the Bern Convention Secretariats could put on Parties to accept there was a need for the revision of laws.
 304. Mr Ramírez said this was really an issue for Parties but that the Secretariats could communicate with Parties to help in terms of gathering data and best practices and they could provide guidance which is the intention of the guidance document. Ms Papazoglou said the CMS Secretariat could ask for reports, send recommendations and invite reporting from countries. Monitoring and reporting were a form of encouragement. Nadia Saporito said the annual meeting of the Bern Convention SC was a good occasion to gather forces and put some issues in the spotlight through observers taking the floor and encouraging Parties to take action.
 305. Mr Spina pointed out that the process of National IKB Action Plans had started as a reaction to a pilot procedure sent to Italy from the EC on IKB. Mr van der Stegen said that the EC had a regular nature dialogue with Member States in which they raised questions on the context of National Action Plans.
 306. The Chair noted that in Italy there was an important wolf population. He wondered if there was any relation between the presence of wolf and poisoning events. Arianna Aradis confirmed this, saying that in some areas in Southern Italy some people wanted to kill the wolves and as a result vultures were being killed.

11.3 National Strategy for tackling illegal trafficking of birds in Spain

307. The Chair introduced Diana Pérez-Aranda Serrano (Deputy Directorate on Biodiversity of MITECO, Spain) who [presented](#) on the [Spanish Action Plan against illegal trafficking and international poaching of wildlife species](#), explaining that the Directorate was also now responsible for administering CITES permits.
308. Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano explained that Spain had different documents tackling IKB such as the Strategy Against Use of Poisoned Baits and other documents related to finch trapping and captivity of species. The Action Plan Against Illegal Trafficking and Poaching of Wild Species (TIFIES was approved in 2019 following the EU Action Plan 2016-2020 (COM (2016) 87), with a renewal expected to come into force by the end of 2022. The EU Action Plan had three priorities: prevention; enforcement; and international cooperation, with four objectives for each priority and 32 actions and expected results assigned to the responsible actors (an EU Institution or Member States) with a timeline to comply. 26 of 32 actions were assigned to the Member States, with the requirement that Member States incorporate the EU measures into their national plans which was how TIFIES was born. Spain had been the first Member State to adopt the EU Action Plan.
309. TIFIES developed the 26 actions assigned to Member States and assigned them to the relevant unit of the competent Spanish Ministry. Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano stressed the importance of identifying the responsible unit as it strengthened engagement and commitment. Collaboration of NGOs and civil society was key, with 19 collaborating entities designated by Official Resolution from 24 October 2019 including universities, research centres, and public and private organisations. She highlighted SEPRONA's collaboration with MITECO, for example, in a training programme, for civil guard agents to train them in: identifying ivory, different kinds of timber or other wildlife parts in operations against international trafficking, drafting expert conservation reports to complement court files, and developing genetic and biochemical and C14 dating analysis. The result was that there had been a boost in police operations and a higher contribution of science to these investigations. She referred participants to [the main Action Plan webpage](#) for more information.
310. In 2022 MITECO had participated in the relocation of 51 birds, almost all subject to trafficking. They had supported SEPRONA with entry into the breeders' homes and 35 birds were sent to a WRC. A few years ago, following a police operation a person who had some birds was charged and, although the ruling was not corroborated, the bird was still taken to a WRC on the basis of precautionary measures. Their motto was "No seized animal remains with the perpetrator" so all animals seized were now taken to a WRC on a precautionary basis.
311. TIFIES also included international poaching aspects mostly focused on big African mammals with actions including delivering training to stakeholders in Africa, to forestry guards for example in Uganda, Mauritania and Tanzania. They had also trained canine units to identify trafficked specimens/species such as rhino horn, chimpanzees and ivory and there was a canine unit already working at an airport in Spain and another one in Congo. Other efforts included Operation ANTITOX (since 2018) focused on the illegal taking of animals. From 2018 this project was extended with a view to also identifying illegal hunting/take.
312. The Chair thanked her for her presentation and invited comments.

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313. Mr Loureiro referred to a project produced by Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal called [Good Practice in Implementing the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking](#), which highlighted that frontline officers faced problems as wildlife measures are complex and not easy to enforce. The guidance aimed to help officers to enable them to identify relevant cases and how to handle those cases properly and its implementation was ongoing, with the intention of testing it over the next three years. He invited others to join in the process and asked the CMS Secretariat to share the document.
314. Mr Schmidt asked which types of cages and traps were illegal in Spain and Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano responded that all non-selective traps were illegal in Spain. Mr Moreno-Opo added that all were forbidden but there were exceptions. All leg traps were forbidden even for scientific purposes; snares, traps and so on were forbidden with some derogations, for example for scientific purposes. There were specific guidelines on the use of specific traps for the capture of game species. Regions were beginning to ban cage traps as they were not selective. Mr Biber reminded that Annex IV to the Bern Convention on prohibited means and methods of killing, capture and other forms of exploitation dealt with legal and illegal traps. Mr Griffin noted that Spain was making progress in improving methods and developing training for trapping which could also be useful tool to avoid poisoning.
315. Ms Travaglia noted that CABS cooperated with SEPRONA and had encountered issues when an illegal trapper escaped, the SEPRONA officers felt they could not go into a private dwelling even if the perpetrator had the birds with them. She wondered how this could be addressed. Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano responded that a search warrant would be needed to enter a private property and acknowledged that this was a problem.
316. Alex Ngari (BirdLife Africa) asked whether there were any efforts by Spain to partner with African countries to combat illegal bird trade. Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano responded that Spain was working with some African countries to fight illegal trafficking such as through the forest ranger training referring to a project in the Republic of Congo where, thanks to trained dogs, they were finding a lot of Golden Jackals, and they were now building an infrastructure where they could be kept and released.
317. Mr Ramírez asked, given the Spanish experience, what she would recommend in the way of partnership building and training in relation to prosecutors and judges and the police as this was a need identified by some countries during the meeting. Ms Pérez-Aranda Serrano referred to an environmental issue prosecutor's group which met once per year and made joint decisions which helped with standardising decisions. For judges it was more complex as they were not specialised although a specialised prosecutor could provide useful support. She mentioned that the first technical meeting of the Central Management Office for Environmental Crimes (OCM) had taken place recently, which had stemmed from the TIFIES Plan and was based in SEPRONA with representatives from relevant stakeholder groups.

11.4 Sovereign Base Areas Administration (SBAA) Strategic Approach in combating IKB

318. The Chair introduced Graham Johnstone (Environmental Policy Officer, SBAA, Cyprus) who [presented](#) on the SBAA strategic approach in combating IKB. Mr Johnstone gave a brief background to the SBAA in Cyprus which was a UK overseas territory. The administration was unique in that it was funded by the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) with a primary function of supporting British Forces in Cyprus.

319. The SBAs and indeed Cyprus were on a very important migration route with numerous endemic and Red List species as well as important habitats and protected species, nationally and internationally protected areas. Bird trapping and poaching was an island-wide multi-faceted problem extending into the SBAs with strong links to organized crime, in particular capture of migratory songbirds using mist-nets and lime-sticks. Criminal behaviours had socio-economic impacts as well as substantial biodiversity impacts. Bird trapping activities in the SBA were supported through the planting of an alien invasive species *Acacia saligna* and illegal use of water for irrigation.
320. The Strategic approach had resulted from political and media pressure on SBAA and the UK Government from local and international NGOs, as well as the relevant national and international legal obligations of the SBAA. IKB had been identified as a significant risk.
321. The SBAA approach derived from the European Conference on IKB, which took place in Larnaca in 2011 and was founded upon significant work by NGO partners to develop a Strategic Action Plan for the island. In 2014 the SBAA had begun a process to identify the key policy topics and drawn in the resources. They targeted the specific crimes, breaking the issues down and looking at all the supporting and peripheral activities involved, to ensure as big an impact as possible. Mr Johnstone said this comprehensive approach was known as an 'Al Capone approach.' The activities were given to the lead agency, targets were set, and progress tracked of all the actions.
322. From the outset they had, considered the principal actions they could undertake, put in place a dedicated police team, and ensured all the permissions and permits were in place. A Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) was established. The Action Plan had a phased approach, delivered by the SBA Police Community Action Team (CAT), including three phases: pre-season preparations (July-September); trapping season (September to April); and post season activities (May-June). The objectives of the Plan included to: disrupt and deter bird trappers; carry out intelligence-led operations; implement new legislation in line with the RSP; utilize available technology (drones and covert surveillance cameras); arrest and prosecute; and encourage partnership, with successful operational outcomes on social media. Actions included habitat management, monitoring and coordination headed by the police and with key input from NGOs including BirdLife Cyprus, CABS and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Critically the latter provided an ongoing corroboration of the survey and monitoring being carried out which enabled them to review and adapt over time.
323. There had been a drop of approximately 94 per cent in trapping since 2016. The mist-nets and lime-sticks use had seen a similar drop, with a resurgence since the pandemic given the socio-economic situation. The increased use of lime-sticks appeared to be a behavioural change, and the TCG was adapting their approach accordingly.
324. The TCG had been awarded the prestigious MOD "Best Environmental Project" and "Silver Otter" trophy as the outstanding group across all categories.
325. Current activity included gaining an understanding of the effects of the pandemic and continuing to remove *Acacia*, with approximately £3million being spent across the SBA, and carrying out protected site management and habitat management. There was a 'zero tolerance' approach and the use of technology, including drones, continued to be very important. Mr Johnstone also wanted to look into whether SBAA staff could attend the WCA. The COVID pandemic-related behaviour changes indicated that there was sufficient revenue in the bird trapping activity and so they needed to maintain

resources to keep the levels low and train and develop the staff. Mr Johnstone stressed the importance of a partnership approach with the administration, NGOs and police working together.

326. The Chair thanked him and acknowledged the contribution of this to the IKB situation in Cyprus. Mr Tavares said that at the end of June, Spanish trainers from the WCA were going to Cyprus to train dozens of Game and Fauna officers on the island. He invited the SBAA officers to attend and would follow up with BirdLife Cyprus on this. Mr van den Bossche congratulated the SBA police and administration for the impressive approach of the development and implementation of the plan which was a best practice approach.

12. Prevention of IKB

12.1 A Best Practice Guide on how to implement activities aimed at preventing IKB

327. Mr van der Stegen presented a best practice guide the EC was currently developing on [Combating IKB in the EU: A review of good practices on prevention](#). Opening with an overview of threats declared by the Member States in the EU Birds Directive Article 12 reports, he flagged that within one of the threats, exploitation of species, illegal killing was the main threat, so it was clearly an issue to tackle.
328. He recalled that in the EU all bird species that occur in the wild are protected and there is a closed list of birds that can be hunted and derogations are possible under strict conditions (Article 9). He highlighted several policy documents related to this issue. The EU Biodiversity Strategy was aimed at speeding up the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives by asking Member States to make pledges on how to improve the trends and status of birds by 2030. He stressed the need to better implement and enforce existing legislation in EU Member States. The EC was currently revising the Environmental Liability Directive and had already revised the Environmental Crime Directive in 2021 to broaden the scope of the directive and oblige Member States to criminalise some offences, including IKB. This change in the Environmental Crime Directive now applied to all birds in the EU. Through the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EC also wanted to improve compliance assurance and support civil society's role as a compliance watchdog (in relation to the Aarhus Convention).
329. He reminded participants that Member States were responsible for environmental compliance assurance, but civil society also had a role to play, as did the EC, in providing support to Member States. The EU had now established an Environmental Compliance and Governance Forum, with representatives of EU Member States and EU networks active in compliance assurance such as environmental agencies, inspectors, auditors, police, prosecutors and judges with the Director General of DG-ENV. Coordination with the judiciary was a key issue raised by MIKT and this coordination group at EU-level could be of value in this. There was also guidance on combating environmental crime and related infringements on the EC website with a chapter on IKB. The EC was also providing financial support to MIKT.
330. Mr van der Stegen informed participants that the EU Roadmap towards eliminating IKB, which had an overview of actions on IKB, would not be updated as the EC was shifting its approach to streamline actions with other activities such as the RSP and to be part of the compliance assurance initiative. Following discussions with the Secretariats and MIKT, the EC was currently preparing the draft review of good practices implementing Action 5.1 of the RSP and supporting the EC initiative on

compliance assurance. The document provided examples of projects and initiatives contributing to preventing IKB with three chapters on: awareness raising and communication campaigns; alternatives to the use of poison and alternative livelihoods; and technology to help prevent IKB. He presented a table with a wide variety of examples to prevent IKB and he thanked those who had contributed. The EC had also tried to draw lessons from the existing good practices with key messages presented in the document.

331. He concluded by thanking Marita Arvela, for her work on drafting the document. As the document was also being finalised, he invited participants to send comments by 24 June 2022.
332. The Chair thanked him for his presentation and encouraged participants to send comments including case studies.

13. Broader outlook on IKB, financial matters and next steps

13.1 Working to eradicate IKB in other regions of the world

333. The Chair introduced this agenda item on extending the work of MIKT to other regions of the globe.
334. Mr Ramírez presented on the plans to extend the work of eradicating IKB in other parts of the world. He highlighted the mandate of the MIKT contained in Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) noting that it also included the possibility to involve other CMS Parties outside of the Mediterranean. There was also a decision, subject to available resources, to establish a Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (ITTEA) and to conduct an assessment of IKB in South and Central America and the Caribbean. The Resolution also instructed the Secretariat, in collaboration with others, subject to the availability of funding, to support efforts to address IKB elsewhere in the world, including through organising workshops.
335. He outlined current activities. MIKT was well established and, thanks to the funds provided by the EU, the position of MIKT Coordinator had been created and secured until 2023. Current funding did not cover priority actions, trainings and meetings, however, and there was a need to maintain ambition and capacity beyond 2023. It was important to quantify and incorporate into a fundraising plan the outcomes of MIKT5's discussions, including priorities identified in the break-out groups. He emphasised focusing on synergies.
336. The CMS Secretariat was keen to export and learn and use synergies with other areas. In collaboration with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and, with the support of the Australian Government, the Secretariat had launched the ITTEA which was similar to MIKT. A job opening for an ITTEA Coordinator would be published soon. A first communication had been sent to all EAAFP Partner countries and CMS Parties in the region inviting them to nominate representatives. There was funding for a coordinator although funding did not cover implementation of the full agenda but hopefully first steps.
337. Similarly, and thanks to the support of the local countries and BirdLife International, a Strategy and Action Plan to tackle IKB in the Arabian Peninsula, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Iraq was being finalised. There was interest from countries in the region to work

with the CMS Secretariat to lead this process towards the CMS COP14 in 2023. He welcomed that the region was ready to develop its own plan.

338. Looking to the future, he felt that the mandate provided by Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) was a strong framework. It had an ambitious scope and a large geographic area. It was important not to think that 'one size fits all' for IKB as every country and subregion had a different approach due to historic cultural and economic circumstances. At the same time there were benefits to be gained from synergies in MIKT and ITTEA and other regions. There was high interest from Parties and stakeholders, so it was important that the CMS Secretariat provided useful guidance which was being used and implemented by the Parties.
339. So far as a global strategy was concerned, MIKT provided an excellent model. The CMS Secretariat was considering appointing a global IKB Coordinator to ensure information flows across different initiatives addressing IKB but also to identify gaps and needs, and was working with some Parties to source the funding for this.
340. The Chair welcomed the presentation and said it was encouraging to see the creation of the ITTEA Task Force given the problems with trapping and pollution in that region. The news from the Middle East was also encouraging and he hoped there would also be something in the Americas region. Nicola Crockford (BirdLife) congratulated Mr Ramírez on the idea of the global IKB Coordinator and agreed that MIKT was one of the most mature processes in supporting governments to implement the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

13.2 Financial matters and next steps

341. The CMS and Bern Convention Secretariats presented the status of funding for IKB activities.
342. Ms Sticker (Bern Convention Secretariat) noted that the Bern Convention was facing severe pressure in relation to financial issues. The Standing Committee had adopted its programme of work for 2022-2023 and the Convention depended heavily on voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties which were crucial for implementing the programme of work and funding staff. The Bern Convention was undergoing a reform process towards a more sustainable financial solution and a Working Group had been set up for that purpose. The Working Group was exploring the possibility of setting up a dedicated fund or an additional protocol, but Ms Sticker clarified that doing so would take time. She urged participants to liaise with their authorities to address the issue of financial support for the Bern Convention. The Chair stressed the importance of the Bern Convention.
343. Mr Ramírez emphasised that effective implementation of a global programme of work required a permanent IKB coordinator and increased participation and feedback from Parties, which in turn would lead to increased awareness and policy changes, and funding support for both the Secretariat and project/strategic objectives. He welcomed the support from Parties and from the EU but emphasised the need for continued funding and encouraged participants to raise the flag about IKB.
344. He reminded participants to send in comments by 24 June 2022 on the Legislative Guidance and Model law, Outline on the common format and Agreed Methodology for assessing motivations and the Prevention document. He also reminded participants to look out for the document on National IKB Action Plans. Ms Papazoglou and Ms Weyer would continue to share coordination of the MIKT agenda; and the CMS Secretariat

would keep working on financial support beyond 2023 for MIKT and investigate options for sustainable support for the coordination.

345. Successful delivery of the CMS mandate relied on cooperation across Parties and supporters. He stressed that leadership was required at all levels, and he encouraged all support including country-to-country. 2023 could be a crucial year given potential synergies with ITTEA, the Arabian peninsula and globally. CMS COP14 was approaching in 2023 and he asked Parties to notify the Secretariat of any documents to be presented as soon as possible. He thanked everyone for all the great work.
346. The Chair also emphasised the importance of 2023, including the Scoreboard reporting and CMS COP14 which would bring an opportunity for further momentum. The next Joint meeting would take place in 2024, hopefully fully in person. He called for offers to host this meeting and asked Parties to discuss this once they returned to their countries.

13.3 AOB

347. No other business issues were raised

14. Closure of the meeting

348. Ms Sticker, Mr Ramírez and the Chair thanked all who had contributed to the successful organization and conduct of the meeting, including those involved in the technical support to the hybrid meeting. All welcomed the opportunity of being able to finally meet in person and to go on the fieldtrip together which took place that afternoon. Mr Ramírez welcomed the feedback that so much of the discussions had focused on action, from best practices, to synergies and progress on implementation. The Chair also thanked the vice-Chair and the Spanish hosts, in particular Mr Jimenez, saying that the meeting would not have been possible without his support. He believed MIKT was a very worthwhile model to be replicated in other parts of the world.
349. The Chair then declared proceedings closed at 13.00hrs CEST.

ANNEX

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representative	Position Institution Organization	Contact E-Mail Address	Attendance
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Representative	Position Institution Organization	Contact E-Mail Address	Attendance
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SPAIN-Representatives of Host Country and Region			
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UNITED KINGDOM			
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OBSERVER STATE TO THE TASK FORCE			
OBSERVER ORGANIZATION TO THE TASK FORCE AND/OR TO THE BERN CONVENTION			
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