



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



First Meeting of the Signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

*National Park Neusiedler See-Seewinkel, Burgenland, Illmitz, Austria
17-18 September 2004*

CMS/GB.1/Report

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES

Agenda Item 1: Welcoming Remarks

1. The CMS Secretariat Agreements Officer, Mr. Lyle Glowka, opened the meeting and introduced Mr. Günter Liebel, Head of Department of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Mr. Liebel welcomed the participants to Austria and to the National Park Nuesiedler See. Mr. Glowka also welcomed the delegates and expressed satisfaction at the level of attendance, with 11 countries represented, including one non-Signatory State, and a number of non-governmental organisations. The list of participants appears at Annex 1. He noted that the first meeting was important for catalysing further work under the MoU. He thanked the Austrian Government for providing financial and logistical support to make possible the meeting, and the two-day Symposium of Great Bustard Experts from Europe and Part of Asia, which preceded the meeting from 14-15 September. He also thanked Birdlife International for acting as the Secretariat's technical adviser and for preparing a number of documents for the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Signing ceremony

2. Mr. Glowka explained that a signing ceremony is a normal part of CMS MoU meetings. To date four Range States and the European Communities have yet to sign the MoU. The four Range States were invited to consider signing the MoU at the meeting. Three sent their regrets. Therefore there would be no signing ceremony.

Agenda Item 3: Election of officers

3. The meeting elected Mr. Günter Liebel (Austria) as chair of the first day of the meeting and Mr. Gábor Magyar (Hungary) as chair for the second day of the meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Adoption of the agenda and schedule

4. The meeting accepted the Chair's proposal that it operate without formal written rules of procedure. It also agreed to review the need for more formal rules at the end of the meeting under Agenda Item 11.

5. The Secretariat introduced the meeting documents list (Doc. CMS/GB.1/3/Rev.4). The final list of meeting documents is reproduced as Annex 3 to this report.
6. The agenda and schedule were adopted without amendment. The adopted agenda is reproduced as Annex 2 to this report.

Agenda Item 5: Opening Statements

7. The Chair invited opening statements and a report from the Scientific Symposium that preceded the meeting.
8. The representative of Austria reported that the entire Austrian population is monitored and managed. Ninety percent of the Great Bustard's habitat is covered by Special Protection Areas and 5,500 hectares is covered by agri-environmental measures. The Austrian provinces are responsible for the species' conservation. Austria will submit a LIFE application aimed at reducing the risk of electrocution.
9. The representative of Bulgaria announced his country's support for the MoU. His country would like to see the species breeding once again in Bulgaria. A reintroduction programme has been initiated and money from a special nature conservation fund has been used for Great Bustard conservation efforts.
10. The representative of Croatia announced that the Ministry of Culture and Nature Protection is responsible for the MoU's implementation in Croatia. Although the species occurs only occasionally in Croatia on migration, Croatia intends to join in any future monitoring of wintering birds.
11. The representative of Macedonia expressed his country's willingness to collaborate on the conservation of the species and foresaw the implementation Macedonia's national work programme in the next triennium.
12. The representative of Hungary called for joint efforts to reverse the negative trends of the population. He announced that all important sites for the species will be soon designated as Special Protection Areas. Already 70,000 hectares of land is managed for the species; 100,000 hectares are already protected; 200,000 hectares of Great Bustard habitat is situated in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (a kind of zonal agri-environmental programme) of which 30,000 hectares are covered by contracts with farmers. The species' conservation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Water Management, in collaboration with the National Parks Authority, MME/BirdLife Hungary, the National History Museum and the University of West Hungary.
13. The representative of Germany stated that although his country's Great Bustard population is not transboundary, his country supports international collaboration for the conservation of the species through the Förderverein Großtrappenschutz.
14. The representative of Moldova gave an overview of the species' status in her country. The species was observed in 2001. Moldova is considering the reintroduction of the species.
15. The representative of Romania noted that the species is practically extinct in his country. However, two sites for its protection have been designated. He expressed hope that the MoU will support Romania's collaboration with Hungary and Ukraine. Romania is considering starting a captive breeding project, but he noted that this alone would not be the solution for the species' conservation.

16. The representative of Slovakia reported that his country collaborates with Austria and Hungary in the protection of the species. Slovakia plans to participate in a joint LIFE project to be submitted in 2004, in collaboration with Austria and the Czech Republic, and has designated the project area as a Special Protected Area. Some of the land is also managed according to the species' requirements.

17. The representative of Ukraine reported that the Ministry for Environmental Protection is monitoring the Great Bustard. The government is taking necessary measures in collaboration with the Azov Sea Ornithological Station. The government has also tried to open a dialogue with Russian authorities on the Russian migratory populations over-wintering in Ukraine.

18. The observer for the Czech Republic announced that her country is considering signing the MoU and has submitted a national report to the meeting. Although the species has not bred in the country recently, Czech Republic is preparing a LIFE project proposal in collaboration with Austria and Slovakia.

19. The observer for BirdLife International stated that his organisation will continue to be closely involved in the species' conservation through its national partners, its European Division and through its participation in the CMS Scientific Council.

20. The observer for IUCN stated that the IUCN Bustard Species Specialist Group has always supported the MoU, noting that Mr. Hans Peter Kollar, a member of the Specialist Group, had prepared the MoU's Action Plan. Its members would be delighted to contribute to the conservation and management of the Great Bustard and the implementation of the MoU.

21. The observer for WWF thanked the Austrian Ministry for joining the MoU, for its imminent membership in CMS and for hosting the MoU meeting and the Scientific Symposium. He noted that WWF has been particularly involved with the conservation of the species in Austria and copies of an action plan were available to the meeting.

22. Mr. Rainer Raab, the organiser of the Scientific Symposium that preceded the MoU Meeting, reported on the Symposium's key conclusions:

- The total European population of the species is now estimated to be 35,600-38,500 individuals. The species became extinct as a breeding bird over the last 10 years from Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Romania. It has increased in Austria and Germany. The national population is stable in Hungary, Serbia-Montenegro and Ukraine.
- Although the habitat of the species is managed increasingly according to its requirements there is a high danger that the result will be to only stabilize the populations in very small "islands". Therefore large scale, proactive measures are needed to restore the species' habitats.
- The species is facing multiple threats, but there is a strong need to better understand the population-level impacts of these threats based on strong scientific research. The current understanding is that power lines, agriculture and predation are the most important threats. This can be addressed through agri-environmental measures and LIFE projects among other things.
- The Scientific Symposium supported the expansion of the MoU agreement area; it agreed with the broad direction of the draft Medium Term International Work Programme and called for more proactive measures to restore the species to a favourable conservation status. It also called for addressing the particular threat of collision with power lines.

Agenda Item 6: Report of the Secretariat

23. Mr. Glowka explained that the report of the Secretariat was composed of sub-Agenda Items 6.1 (Status of signatures), 6.2 (List of designated national contact points), and 6.3 (Any other matters). The report of the Secretariat was found in document CMS/GB.1/4.

Agenda Item 6.1: Status of Signatures

24. Mr. Glowka noted that the only countries that had not yet signed the MoU were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia. Only the Czech Republic had expressed its intention to sign the MoU in the near future.

25. The Chair proposed raising the issue of signing the MoU at the 25th Anniversary Meeting of the EU Birds Directive in November where other EU Member States could be encouraged to join the MoU. Austria offered to lead this. The meeting accepted Austria's offer to prepare a paper informing the Bird Directive's 25th Anniversary Conference about the MoU and the meeting's outcomes, while inviting EU Member States that have not yet done so to join the MoU.

26. The meeting took note of the report of the Secretariat and invited the four countries to consider signing the MoU as soon as possible.

Agenda Item 6.2: List of Designated National Contact Points

27. Mr. Glowka informed the meeting that three Signatories (Greece, Moldova and Slovakia) still needed to designate their respective national contact points. The meeting took note of the Secretariat's report and invited the three countries to supply the Secretariat with their officially designated contact points as soon as possible. The Secretariat indicated that this request would be reflected in an annex to the report of the meeting (see Annex 8). The list of designated national contact points is attached to this report as Annex 4.

Agenda Item 7: Review of MoU and Action Plan implementation

28. Mr. Glowka explained that Agenda Item 7 was composed of sub-Agenda Item 7.1 (Great Bustard conservation status within the agreement area) and sub-Agenda Item 7.2 (Status of development and implementation of national work programmes). The relevant documentation for the Agenda Item included documents CMS/GB.1/5 (Review of MoU and Action Plan Implementation) and CMS/GB.1/5/Add.1 (Overview Report).

Agenda Item 7.1: Great Bustard conservation status within the agreement area

29. The Chair invited Dr. Szabolcs Nagy of BirdLife International, acting on behalf of the Secretariat, to present a review of the conservation status of the Great Bustard within the agreement area. The information provided in the Secretariat's Overview Report was collected prior to the meeting and was based in part on information available to BirdLife International as part of the Birds in Europe 2 database as well as national reports available before 23 July 2004. The Scientific Symposium provided the opportunity to supplement this information and to add additional information to the report for countries outside of the agreement area.

30. In the ensuing discussion, in response to a question posed by the Secretariat on how this part of the Overview Report could be improved, it was suggested that the quality of data should be improved in the future, especially in the case of transboundary areas. It was recognised that Signatory States need to ensure the quality

of the information found in their national reports and to submit them in a timely manner. They should in particular collaborate with organisations within their countries to ensure the most comprehensive information is available and provided in the reports. It was pointed out that the draft national report format has a space to indicate which organisations collaborated in providing information for the national report. One comment emphasised that more coordination was needed between the conventions and EU regarding data collection and reporting to minimise the number of surveys asking for similar information; one comprehensive survey or questionnaire could be considered. In response to a question, the Secretariat agreed that the Overview Report could be revised to reflect additional information provided during the meeting and the Scientific Symposium.

31. The meeting took note of this portion of the Overview Report as presented by the Secretariat. The revised Overview Report is attached to this report as Annex 5.

Agenda Item 7.2: Status of development and implementation of national work programmes

32. Mr. Glowka explained that the Secretariat's Overview Report summarized the information received and available as of 23 July 2004 with regard to the status of the MoU and Action Plan's implementation. The MoU and Action Plan (Part I) provide the general substantive framework for action within the agreement area. Part II of the Action Plan, describing country-specific actions agreed by each Signatory State, supplements this. Each Signatory State was to have developed or updated a national work programme (MoU paragraph 4(g)) to implement the Action Plan within 1 year of the MoU's entry into effect. Each individual Signatory State should have reported on the status of implementing its national work programme in its national report submitted to the Secretariat. He noted that only three countries had submitted their national work programmes, although national implementation of the MoU is manifested through national work programmes.

33. The Chair invited Dr Nagy to provide a brief summary of the Overview Report on behalf of the Secretariat and to draw conclusions as necessary. The Chair then invited the Signatory States to confirm the existence of their national work programme and any problems/gaps in their establishment and implementation, as well as to make informal indications as to the need to amend Part II of the Action Plan.

34. In the subsequent discussion, Austria and Slovakia stated that their national report included their work programmes. They agreed to extract these from their reports and provide them separately to the Secretariat. Other signatories stated that, while no formal work programme existed, work was still being carried out. In at least one case an adaptive management approach had been adopted. It was further acknowledged that the MoU provided the basis for signatories to develop more formal national work programmes, that a limiting factor in developing and implementing national work programmes is financial resources and that there was a need for signatories to prioritise their activities accordingly.

35. The meeting took note of this portion of the Overview Report presented by the Secretariat and invited all Signatory States to develop and submit their national work programmes as soon as possible. The Secretariat indicated that this request would be further reflected in an annex to the report of the meeting (see Annex 8).

36. With regard to Part II of the Action Plan, Germany informally indicated that its respective part could be amended. The Secretariat noted that the representative from Albania was unable to attend the meeting, but that he had made an informal indication to the Secretariat that some possible amendments to its country specific action plan in Part II could be considered.

Agenda Item 8: Medium Term International Work Programme.

37. The Secretariat introduced Document CMS/GB.1/6 + annex (Draft Medium Term International Work Programme). The Chair invited the meeting to consider the draft Medium Term International Work Programme with a view to its adoption as required by MoU Paragraph 8. The Secretariat explained that a possible future coordinator for the MoU, to be discussed under Agenda Item 9.2, could catalyze actions under the Work Programme. After a round of initial comments, an *ad hoc* working group chaired by Hungary was formed to review the draft Work Programme. The Work Programme was adopted by the meeting, as amended, and is attached to this report as Annex 6.

Agenda Item 9: Future implementation and further development of the MoU and Action Plan

38. The Secretariat introduced Agenda Item 9 as being composed of sub-Agenda Items: 9.1 (Draft national report format), 9.2 (Future MoU coordination) and 9.3 (Preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area).

Agenda Item 9.1: Draft national report format

39. The Chair, Dr. Enrica Seltenhammer (Austria), substituting for Mr. Liebel, noted that MoU Paragraph 6 refers to reporting and that the Secretariat had developed for the meeting's consideration a draft national report format that could be used as the basis for future reporting on the MoU and Action Plan's implementation.

40. The Secretariat introduced the draft reporting format found in Document CMS/GB.1/7 + annex (Draft National Report Format). The meeting was invited to provide comments on the draft format, as well as to consider more generally the national reporting issue, the general issue of information management and, the ways and means to improve the submission rate of national reports. Comments were also invited on the feasibility of developing Internet-based reporting.

41. The meeting suggested:

- Adding tick boxes "not applicable" in case an action is not relevant for all countries;
- Separating nationally protected areas, Special Protection Areas and areas covered by agri-environmental schemes; and
- Replacing the word "negligible" with "less effective."

42. The meeting requested the Secretariat to revise the format and use it for the next meeting. The meeting also invited the Secretariat to explore the feasibility of Internet-based reporting and to move forward on this if a funding opportunity arose. The revised national reporting format is attached to this report as Annex 7.

Agenda Item 9.2: Future MoU coordination

43. After the Secretariat introduced Document CMS/GB.1/8 (Future MoU Coordination), the Chair invited the meeting to consider the general issue of MoU coordination and the particular issue of outsourcing some aspects of the MoU's coordination to a collaborating organisation to support a range of activities. This was in keeping with CMS's developing practice of outsourcing the implementation of MoUs to support meeting preparation, project (development including fund raising), membership development and range-wide awareness raising.

44. The meeting took note of the Secretariat's proposal and invited the Secretariat to explore potential opportunities. It also invited MoU signatories that are also CMS Parties to monitor the development of the new CMS triennial budget (2006-08) to ensure an adequate budget for MoU activities, such as another meeting of signatories, is considered in the process.

Agenda Item 9.3: Preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area

45. The Chair invited the meeting to have a preliminary discussion on the need for and desirability of expanding the MoU's geographical scope of application and asked the Secretariat to introduce Document CMS/GB.1/8 (Expanding the Memorandum's Geographical Scope: Preliminary Discussions) and the conclusions of the Scientific Symposium.

46. During the discussion a consensus emerged that (a) the MoU should remain focused for the time being on the middle-European populations of *Otis tarda*; (b) Serbia and Montenegro and Italy should be invited to join the MoU; (c) Russian Great Bustards, over-wintering in Ukraine should be considered middle-European and therefore the Russian Federation should be invited to join the MoU; and (d) notwithstanding the fact that the Iberian Great Bustards are outside of the agreement area, Spain and Portugal should be invited to monitor the development and implementation of the MoU and Action Plan and to consider sending observers to future meetings to share experiences.

47. The meeting requested the Secretariat to invite Serbia and Montenegro, Italy and the Russian Federation to join to the MoU.

Agenda Item 10: Next meeting of the Signatory States

48. The Chair introduced Document CMS/GB.1/10 (Next Meeting of the Signatory States) incorporating the proposal that the next meeting of the signatories should take place in 2007. Ukraine offered to explore the opportunity to host the next meeting. Germany stated that it would consider supporting Ukraine in this and, if Ukraine cannot host the meeting, it would be willing to host the meeting in Germany.

Agenda Item 11: Any other business

49. The Chair invited the meeting to raise any other issues not covered under the previous Agenda Items. No additional issues were raised.

50. The Chair invited feedback from the meeting regarding the rules of procedure. It was agreed that it was not necessary at this time to request the Secretariat to develop formal rules of procedure.

Agenda Item 12: Closure of the meeting

51. There being no other business, the Chair thanked all of the participants for their contributions and the Secretariat for the logistical and substantive preparations, and declared the meeting closed at 18.00 on Friday, 17 October 2004.

52. On behalf of the other delegates Hungary thanked the Austrian government and the National Park Neusiedler See-Seewinkel for hosting the meeting.



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CMS/GB.1/Report
Annex 1

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Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



First Meeting of the Signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle- European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

*National Park Neusiedler See-Seewinkel, Burgenland, Illmitz, Austria
17-18 September 2004*

CMS/GB.1/Report
Annex 2

AGENDA

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Signing ceremony
3. Election of officers
4. Adoption of the agenda and meeting schedule
5. Opening statements
6. Report of the Secretariat
 - 6.1. Status of signatures
 - 6.2. List of designated national contact points
 - 6.3. Any other matters
7. Review of MoU and Action Plan implementation
 - 7.1. Great Bustard conservation status within the agreement area
 - 7.2. Status of development and implementation of national work programmes
8. Medium-term International Work Programme
9. Future implementation and further development of the MoU and Action Plan
 - 9.1. Draft national report format
 - 9.2. Future MoU coordination
 - 9.3. Preliminary discussions on expanding the geographical scope of the agreement area
10. Next meeting of the Signatory States
11. Any other business
12. Closure of the meeting

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CMS/GB.1/Report
Annex 3

FINAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document	Distribution ¹
CMS/GB.1/1/Rev.1	4.0	Provisional Agenda (as at 19 July 2004)	
CMS/GB.1/2/Rev.1	4.0	Provisional Annotated Agenda and Meeting Schedule	
CMS/GB.1/3/Rev.4	4.0	List of Documents	
CMS/GB.1/4	6.0	Report of the Secretariat	
CMS/GB.1/5	7.0	Review of MoU and Action Plan Implementation	
CMS/GB.1/5/Add.1/Rev.1	7.0	Overview Report	
CMS/GB.1/6 + annex	8.0	Draft Medium Term International Work Programme	
CMS/GB.1/7 + annex	9.1	Draft National Report Format	
CMS/GB.1/8	9.2	Future MoU Coordination	
CMS/GB.1/9	9.3	Expanding the Memorandum's Geographical Scope: Preliminary Discussions	
CMS/GB.1/10	10.0	Next Meeting of the Signatory States	
Information Documents			
CMS/GB.1/Inf.1		Fact Sheet	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.2	6.1	Status of Signatures to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.3/Rev.1	6.2	Provisional List of Designated National Contact Points	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.x	7.0	National Reports from Signatories	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.1		National Reports from Signatories – Hungary	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.2		National Reports from Signatories – Albania	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.3		National Reports from Signatories – Croatia	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.4		National Reports from Signatories – Slovakia	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.5/Rev.1		National Reports from Signatories – Austria	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.6		National Reports from Signatories – Bulgaria	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.7		National Reports from Signatories – Germany	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.8		National Reports from Signatories – Macedonia	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.9		National Reports from Signatories – Ukraine	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.4.10		National Reports from Signatories - Romania	In-session
CMS/GB.1/Inf.5.x	7.0	National Work Programmes	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.5.1		National Work Programmes – Albania	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.5.2		National Work Programmes – Hungary	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.5.3		National Work Programmes - Macedonia	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.6.x	7.0	Reports from Signing Organisations	Cancelled

¹ All documents distributed pre-session unless otherwise noted.

Symbol	Agenda Item(s)	Title of Document	Distribution¹
CMS/GB.1/Inf.7.x	7.0	National Reports from Non-signatories.	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.7.1		National Reports from Non-signatories – Czech Rep.	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.7.2		National Reports from Non-signatories – U.K.	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.7.3		National Reports from Non-signatories – Serbia and Montenegro	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.7.4		National Reports from Non-signatories – Russian Federation (unofficial)	In-session
CMS/GB.1/Inf.8		Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard and Action Plan	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.9		Provisional List of Participants	In-session
CMS/GB.1/Inf.10	5.0 & 7.0	Agenda of the Great Bustard Scientific Symposium	
CMS/GB.1/Inf.11	5.0 & 7.0	Outcomes of the Great Bustard Scientific Symposium	Cancelled
CMS/GB.1/Inf.12		Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and Appendices	

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Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



First Meeting of the Signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle- European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)

*National Park Neusiedler See-Seewinkel, Burgenland, Illmitz, Austria
17-18 September 2004*

CMS/GB.1/Report
Annex 4

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REVISED OVERVIEW REPORT

(Prepared by Birdlife International on behalf of the CMS Secretariat)

1.0 Introduction

1. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (MoU) the Secretariat shall prepare an overview report compiled on the basis of all information at its disposal pertaining to the Great Bustard. It shall communicate this report to all Signatories, signing Organisations and to all other Range States.

2. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the MoU, MoU Signatories that are also Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) should in their national report to the CMS Conference of the Parties make specific reference to activities undertaken in relation to this Agreement. At the same time, MoU signatories not Party to the Convention shall be invited to prepare, after the adoption of their national work programme, a report on the implementation of the MoU both of which they should then communicate to the Secretariat.

3. By letter dated 26 March 2004 the Secretariat provided to all MoU signatory Range States, non-signatory Range States and signing organisations an indicative reporting guidance for Parts I and II of the Great Bustard Action Plan. As of 23 July 2004 the following Signatories had submitted their national reports to the Secretariat: Austria, Albania, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. The Czech Republic submitted a report though it is not an MoU signatory. In addition, the report draws from national reports submitted by Signatories and non-Signatories who are also Parties to CMS: Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Poland and Romania. Responses submitted by the EU Member States to BirdLife International in the framework of reviewing the European Action Plan for Great Bustard were also taken into account in the case of Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. Information available to BirdLife International in the form of data, project or threat reports, as well as, information available on the Internet was also used.

4. This revised report also takes account of national reports submitted after 23 July. Additional information from Bulgaria, Germany, Macedonia, Ukraine and Romania was added. Information available from the Symposium of Great Bustard Experts from Europe and Part of Asia which preceded the MoU meeting (14-15 September 2004) was drawn upon for the revised report as well.

5. The structure of this report follows that of the indicative reporting guidelines. Corresponding action points from the Action Plan are indicated in square brackets. This report does not repeat the information provided in the national reports. It only summarizes the main issues.

2.0 Status of Great Bustard in the Agreement Area and beyond

6. The status of the species is assessed here on the basis of the information available to BirdLife International as part of the Birds in Europe 2 database. More detailed and up-to-date information is available in some of the national reports and was collected during the symposia preceding the MoU meeting.

7. In general, the species' decline has been somewhat reduced in the last decade compared to the period of 1970-1990. However, the decline of very small populations has continued (e.g., Slovakia) and the species has gone extinct in Moldova and most probably also in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania as a breeding species. The decline of the German population has also continued until 1995, but since then there has been a significant increase there as a result of active captive management. The Hungarian population is now overall stable, but this is not a general trend across the country. Some populations keep declining (e.g., Bihar, Heves, Borsodi-Mezoség), while others are increasing (e.g., Kisalföld and Kiskunság). The Ukrainian population was reported also as being increasing. The Austrian population has increased significantly and the increase of this transboundary population raises hopes for the future increase of the small population in Slovakia and for the natural re-colonization of the former breeding areas in the Czech Republic.

8. Outside of the agreement area, the species population is regarded as stable in the Iberian Peninsula, but the fragmentation of the population still continues. There is an increase reported from Russia, while the population is further decreasing in Turkey. A reintroduction has started in the UK.

Table 1 European population of Great Bustard based on information collected at the Symposium of Great Bustard Experts from Europe and Part of Asia, Neusiedler See-Seewinkel, 14-15 September 2004.

Country	Number of breeding birds		Trend/Status
	1994 ¹	2004 (2003)	
Albania	-	-	Irregular winter visitor
Austria	50 - 60	107 - 140	Breeding population increasing
Bulgaria	10 - 15	0 - 10	Became extinct recently
Croatia	-		Irregular winter visitor
Czech Republic	10 - 20	1 - 6	Became extinct recently
Germany	130	85	Breeding population increasing
Greece	-		Irregular winter visitor
Hungary	1,100 – 1,300	1,300	Breeding population stable
Macedonia	-	-	Irregular winter visitor
Moldova	2 - 3	0	Became extinct recently
Portugal	1000	1,435	Breeding population stable
Romania	10 - 15	?	Became extinct recently
Russia	8,000 – 10,000	8,000 – 10,000	Breeding population stable
Serbia and Montenegro	8 – 10	30 - 36	Breeding population stable
Slovakia	25 – 30	10	Breeding population declining
Spain	13,500 – 14,000	23300	Breeding population stable
Turkey	800 - (3000)	700 - 1200	Breeding population declining
U.K.	0	0	Reintroduction started
Ukraine	300 - 400	640 - 850	Breeding population increasing
Total	24,945 – 29,983	35,600 – 38,500	

¹ Source: Table 14.1 on page 246 in Heredia et al. (1996) *Globally threatened birds in Europe: Action Plans*. Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

3.0 Implementation of the Action Plan

9. **Protected Areas [AP 1.1]:** The Action Plan requires responsible authorities to designate key breeding sites and key migration and wintering sites throughout the range of the species as protected areas and manage them according to the species' requirements. This includes also areas that are essential for the reestablishment of the species. In the *breeding range*, **Austria, Hungary** and **Germany** have reported that the leks and a significant part of the breeding areas are already protected. In **Germany** and **Austria** the sites are mainly designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. In **Hungary**, the proposed SPAs cover almost the entire range used by the species and will significantly expand the coverage provided by national designation. There is only a very small area (75 ha) under temporary protection (for 10 years since 2001) in the **Czech Republic**, where grassland was re-established. No area has yet been designated in **Slovakia**, but Sysl'ovské Polia is proposed as an SPA. In **Germany** and **Hungary** large areas were purchased by conservation organisations. In **Ukraine** the species' only protected wintering population occurs in Biosphere Reserve of Askania-Nova. There are no protected areas designated for the species in **Bulgaria**, where it can be practically regarded as extinct in the wild. Two protected areas were designated in **Romania** in 1994 and 2000 respectively, but it was probably too late to protect the species. In the *non-breeding* period the Middle-European population migrates only occasionally and often only short distances. Usually, the birds stay within traditional winter quarters nearby to their breeding places. No regularly used sites were reported from **Croatia** or **Macedonia**. On the other hand, it was reported that after 30 years the species was recorded in Bedati, Karavasta region, and Kopliku, Shkodra region, in **Albania** in 2002 and 2003. These are the same areas where the species was reported from by Lamani and Puzanov in 1962. The national programme for the protection of Great Bustard in Albania foresees the designation of these areas as protected areas. Unlike the Middle-European population, the majority of the population from Saratov, Russia migrates regularly to the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya districts as well as Crimea in Ukraine².

10. **Habitat quality outside of protected areas [AP 1.2]:** The Action Plan calls for maintenance or improvement of habitat quality outside of protected areas. It calls for extensification, introduction of appropriate crop rotation, including alfalfa and oilseed rape, and set-aside schemes supported by incentives provided under agri-environmental schemes. Agri-environmental schemes support appropriate habitat management in **Austria, Germany** and **Hungary**. In 2003 measures targeted at Great Bustard habitat conservation were introduced in **Austria** under the ÖPUL programme, the national agri-environmental scheme, and they covered approximately 5,500 hectares. In **Hungary**, the first set aside scheme has been implemented in the Moson Project on the Kisalföld since 1992. Pilot zonal agri-environmental schemes were also introduced in Hungary at five areas in 2002. They cover 276,845 hectares in total; however payments made at "only" 31,429 hectares. In **Germany**, farmers also receive payments for extensive management. The agri-environmental schemes include appropriate crop rotation with alfalfa or oilseed rape and address timing of cultivation in all countries. In the **Czech Republic** no measures were taken to influence land use for breeding Great Bustard because of the potentially high costs in the intensively cultivated region. In **Slovakia**, the State Nature Conservancy rents 75 hectares and manages it as a set-aside maintained with mowing. No measures are taken to protect habitat quality outside of protected areas in **Bulgaria** and **Ukraine**. In the *non-breeding ranges* there is no information about targeted measures taken to address the species feeding requirements during migration or winter.

11. **Preventing habitat fragmentation [AP 1.3]:** The Action Plan calls for prevention of afforestation and making infrastructure development, in particular construction of new roads, highways, railways and irrigation, subject of environmental impact assessment (EIA). **All countries**

² Y.Andrushchenko: About census of Great Bustard, wintering in the south of Ukraine (<http://ornitology.narod.ru/english/expeditions/2002/drofa.html>)

who have sent a report but **Albania** reported that their EIA procedures cover larger projects causing habitat fragmentation. In **Austria** also afforestation would require permission from the relevant authorities. In addition, the ÖPUL rules also prevent afforestation. In **Germany** there is a serious discussion on the impact of wind farms at the Karower Platte on the remaining population of the species³. In **Hungary**, many activities are subject to EIA, however a few critical activities, such as afforestation and construction of new field roads or power lines less than 120 kV, still do not require EIA prior to their construction outside of protected areas. In **Slovakia** the construction of the D2 motorway and power lines caused loss of part of the population. However, no further habitat fragmentation has happened since ratification of the MoU. Slovakia has also raised the issue of habitat fragmentation caused by the wind turbines in Austria close to the border. The former habitat of the species has been severely fragmented in the 1950s and '60s.

12. **Protection from hunting [AP 2.1]:** The Action Plan calls for prohibiting any hunting where it is considered necessary at the time Great Bustard are expected to occur in the area. These restrictions should be then strictly enforced. The species is officially protected in all countries either as a (strictly) protected species (**Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia** and **Ukraine**) or as game bird with a year-around closed season (**Austria, Germany**). However, illegal killing of birds is reported from **Albania** and **Croatia**. Disturbance associated with hunting on other species (i.e., Roe Deer, Wild Boar, Pheasant, Geese and Hare) is a problem in some countries (**Austria, Hungary** and **Slovakia**). However no measures were reported except for **Hungary** where the timing of hunting can be regulated within nationally protected areas. Hunting is also restricted around lek sites in Germany.

13. **Preventing disturbance [AP 2.2]:** The Action Plan calls for preventing disturbance of display and breeding sites through restricting or controlling access to breeding sites and adoption of the timing and techniques of land management. In **Austria, Germany** and **Hungary** the agri-environmental measures include provisions to reduce disturbance of the species during the breeding season. In addition, the management plans of the protected areas in **Hungary** include provisions to restrict potentially disturbing activities through e.g., regulating the timing of mowing, prescribing mowing from the centre outwards and regulating eco-tourism and horseback riding. The enlargement of a former military airport on the border of the Kiskunság National Park was stopped because of a nearby lekking ground. **Slovakia** has reduced disturbance caused by agricultural works by prohibiting aerial spraying of pesticides and fertilizers. **Germany** has taken measures to divert public access to core Great Bustard areas by closing roads and building observation towers, controlling air traffic. In **Austria** the provincial nature conservation bodies agreed with the armed forces that the breeding sites are not disturbed during the breeding season in bustard areas close to the border, where soldiers usually patrol the border line. In addition, there is a general agreement with farmers and hunters to keep all disturbances in bustard areas to a necessary minimum. The surveillance officers in cooperation with hunters and farmers try to reduce disturbance through leisure activities such as dog walking, biking, nordic walking, jogging and horse riding. There are agreements with the armed forces to prevent unnecessary disturbances caused by flying over the area by aircraft and helicopters. There are efforts to implement similar agreements with the private aviation bodies as well.

14. **Preventing predation [AP 2.3.1]:** The Action Plan provides for the control of foxes and feral dogs in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly. However, other species such as Hooded Crow *Corvus corone cornix*, Badger *Meles meles* and Pine Marten *Martes martes* may also damage eggs. Control measures are taken in **Austria, Germany, Hungary** and **Slovakia**, but

³ <http://www.grosstrappe.de/index.htm>

hunting of foxes seems not to be very effective. In **Germany** enclosures of 10-20 hectares large are applied to exclude foxes and give higher chance for successful breeding.

15. *Adopting measures for power lines [AP 2.3.2]:* According to the Action Plan, existing lines which cross Great Bustard areas should be buried or marked prominently. New lines should not be built across Great Bustard areas. Measures have been taken in **Austria, Germany, Hungary** and **Slovakia** as well as in **Croatia** from the non-breeding range. However, these measures were generally implemented only on a limited scale and it appears additional action is required. The main limitation seems to be the very high cost of these actions. **Slovakia** has reported that visual marking was not effective. Based on the result of testing different methods during the last years, now **Austria** is preparing a LIFE application to address this threat at a larger scale. **Hungary** is also addressing this issue through using LIFE and Structural Fund support, but also these sources were able to provide only limited help. A survey of determining the level of mortality in Crimea was implemented in 2001-2002 by the **Ukrainian** Bird Conservation Union, the national BirdLife Partner, and 11 casualties were detected on the winter of 2001/02⁴.

16. *Compensatory measures [AP 2.3.3]:* According to the Action Plan any activities which will create new loss or degradation of Great Bustard habitat or longer term disturbance of the species should be compensated by appropriate measures. There is no report about implementing this measure in practice apart from the re-establishment of small grassland in the **Czech Republic**. Compensatory measures do not appear to be applied consistently in the Range States for the benefit of the species.

17. *Possession and trade [AP 3.0]:* The Action Plan requires that the collection of eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs should be strictly prohibited and the restrictions controlled. The general species conservation measures are in place in all countries that have sent a report to the Secretariat or to the EU (i.e., Albania, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine) as this requirement is also covered by CITES, the Bern and Bonn Conventions and the EU Birds Directive. The species is also protected in Bulgaria. There is no information available whether the species is fully protected in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro or Romania. In **Austria** there is an all-year ban on hunting. The collection of eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs is strictly prohibited and the restrictions are controlled. Authorization is only granted out of nature conservation interests. In Austria, no specimen is in private or other possession such as zoos. In **Hungary**, some individuals are kept in captivity at the Great Bustard Rescue Station, Dévaványa, and some in zoos. No specimen is in private possession. Activities like breeding in captivity, supplementing of any population with individuals from foreign populations, the artificial exchange of genetic matter, the reintroduction or introduction and the export, import or transport of any individual are subject to authorization of the Ministry of Environment and Water. Because the species is a game species in **Germany**, in theory, hunters have exclusive rights to the birds found dead; however any trade is completely illegal.

18. *Captive breeding⁵ in emergency situations [AP 4.1]:* The Action Plan provides for the possibility of taking eggs into artificial incubation from threatened nests if there is not possible to guarantee the successful. Captive management of threatened nests forms part of the routine of conservation of Great Bustard only in **Germany** and **Hungary**. Some, unsuccessful, trials on captive breeding were carried out by the Szent István University in Szod, Hungary, between 1992

⁴ Andryuschenko et al. (2000) Demise of Great Bustards and other bird species because of their collision with power lines on the wintering grounds. *Branta* 5:97-112

⁵ In the Scientific Symposium preceding the MoU meeting, it was noted that in effect “captive breeding” should be read as “captive rearing” according to current practices.

and 1995. The breeding programme was then cancelled. In **Ukraine** Great Bustards originated from Russia are reared in captivity by “Fauna Agroecofirm” (i.e. this is not truly an emergency measure in the sense it is used by the Action Plan; it is instead a reinforcement measure). In **Austria** captive breeding of bustards is only carried out in exceptional circumstances, when a nest has been abandoned. Only four eggs were incubated between 2001 and 2004 in the years 2002 and 2004. There is no specific station for Great Bustards in Austria. Injured or seriously ill Great Bustards are taken to the "Eulen- und Greifvogelstation" (owl and bird of prey station) Haringsee. In 2004 two chicks hatched in captivity were taken to the Great Bustard Rescue Station at Dévaványa which can provide more specialized care.

19. **Reintroduction [AP 4.2]:** The Action Plan requires that reintroduction actions should be undertaken only at those sites where feasibility studies (following the IUCN criteria for re-introductions) have been carried out with success. There were no attempts reported to reintroduce the species. In the **Czech Republic** there are hopes that the species may re-establish itself from a nearby population Austria as a breeding species. Re-colonization of former breeding sites in the vicinity of the Kiskunság National Park is reported from **Hungary**. **Bulgaria** and **Romania** have reported that they are considering re-introducing the species. In Romania the Forest Research and Management Institute is establishing a breeding centre for releasing birds in the wild.

20. **Monitoring of the success of release programmes [AP 4.3]:** The Action Plan requires that the survival of chicks bred in captivity and of chicks hatched from artificially bred clutches should be closely monitored, as well as the survival and breeding performance of adults released into the wild. Release programmes should be permanently reassessed and discontinued if birds are failing to survive under natural conditions. In **Germany**, first clutches are taken and incubated artificially. Juveniles are released into the wild when they are 6 weeks old. The success of release programme is monitored. Without the release programme the German population would be already extinct. In **Hungary** birds are released in the autumn. Success of release is low because many released birds are predated mainly by foxes. Therefore the main emphasis is now on *in situ* protection of threatened nests and preventing conflicts with agricultural works through timing of farming operations. A new method was tried in 2003 by fencing around a 400 ha large area. This way the main predators like foxes were closed out, but otherwise the bustards can live in a natural environment and become wild birds. As the first experiences have shown (second season) the wild Great Bustards occupy this area continuously. Unfortunately, a high proportion of the birds released into the enclosure died of unclear reasons in 2003. In **Austria** only two captive reared birds were released in 2002 and they were intensively monitored. Release of captive reared birds has not yet taken place in **Ukraine**.

21. **Cross-border conservation measures [AP 5.0]:** The Action Plan requires that Signatories harmonise their legal instruments in order more efficiently to conserve and manage Great Bustards. Great Bustard populations which are shared by two or more countries should be the subject of bi- or multilateral programmes to ensure that there is appropriate coordination of national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities. A cross-border Great Bustard conservation programme exists around the **Austrian-Hungarian-Slovakian-Czech** border for the common population found in these three countries. The society called **Pannonische Gesellschaft für Grosstrappenschutz** was established with the members keeping contact on a regular basis. Joint efforts include exchange of census data and the sharing of experience on habitat management. The **Förderverein Großtrappenschutz (FGS)** collaborates with experts in **Bulgaria**, **Ukraine** and **Hungary** within the area of the MoU. (Also it does so with Russian and Spanish experts outside of the MoU area). **Germany** has also supported joint projects in Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine and Mongolia. *Ad hoc* information exchange exists between **Hungary** and **Croatia** and **Serbia** when birds leave Hungary during severe winters. **Ukraine** exchange information with Russia as well. No collaboration is known amongst **Bulgaria** and **Romania**.

22. A scientific symposium was held in association with the first meeting of the MoU signatories on 14-15 September 2004.

23. *Monitoring of population size and population trends [AP 6.1.1]:* According to the Action Plan efforts should be made to monitor the basic parameters of all Great Bustard populations, such as size and trends, by applying methods which lead to comparable results, at all breeding and wintering sites. Monitoring of populations is well established in **Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary**. The monitoring became more intensive again in the **Czech Republic** since 2002. However, it is important to ensure that several synchronised counts are carried out annually in this transboundary region and the data are stored and analyzed in a GIS database. Surveys were carried out in **Bulgaria**, covering 3,000 km² in the period of 1998-2001. In **Romania**, the forestry authority coordinates the species monitoring. In the non-breeding countries generally there is no systematic monitoring except of **Ukraine** where regular monitoring of the wintering population has taken place every winter since 1998/99. This is mainly due to the fact that there are only a few areas where the species occurs regularly far from the breeding places except for **Albania** and **Ukraine**. Methods are standardized to some extent at national/regional level, but not across the range.

24. *Monitoring of the effects of habitat management [AP 6.1.2]:* The Action Plan requires that studies should be carried out on the effects of habitat protection measures, implementation of agro-environmental regulations, etc. These studies should preferably be done at sites where the population has been well monitored for a number of years. Habitat conservation measures have been monitored in **Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia**, but no conclusive information was provided. In some countries this is due to the fact that agri-environmental measures have only been introduced a short time ago. **Germany** carries out detailed monitoring that also includes prey species and plant communities. Impacts of the Moson Project in **Hungary** are closely monitored and the results are published. The LIFE project submitted by Hungary includes a significant component of monitoring the impact of habitat conservation measures and information will be summarized nationally. No habitat management is taking place in **Ukraine**.

25. *Comparative ecological studies [AP 6.2.1]:* According to the Action Plan a comparative analysis of existing data on population dynamics, habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes and causes of decline between the populations in different Range States should be conducted in order to redefine conservation strategies in the future. There have been no comparative ecological studies implemented between Range States since the MoU took effect⁶ apart from some projects between **Germany** and **Ukraine** in 2001 and 2003. The most important comparative studies are Faragó, S., Ena, V., and Martinez, A. (1987): Comparison of the state of the Great Bustard stocks in Hungary and Spain In: Faragó, S. (ed.): Proceedings of the CIC Great Bustard Symposium in Budapest, on June 2nd 1987.: 51-63. and Litzbarski, H., Block, B., Block, P., Holländer, K., Jaschke, W., Litzbarski, B. & Petrick, S. (1996): Untersuchungen zur Habitatstruktur und zum Nahrungsangebot an Brutplätzen der Großtrappen in Spanien, Ungarn und Deutschland. - Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege in Brandenburg 5: 41-50.

26. *Promotion of studies on mortality factors [AP 6.2.2]:* According to the Action Plan all individuals found dead should be examined for the causes of mortality. This, together with field studies and monitoring of marked individuals, should help to identify the direct or indirect impact of land use on Great Bustard mortality. Reasons of mortality are studied more or less systematically in **Austria, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine**. Targeted searches are carried out when birds go missing in **Austria**. Mortality factors are systematically assessed in **Germany** using intensive

⁶ 1 June 2001.

observations, radio tracking, power-line surveys and post-mortem investigations. In **Hungary** more information is available on mortality factors affecting eggs and chicks collected during nest safeguard activities. Although all adult birds found dead are examined to identify the cause of death, the information gained this way are less conclusive. Recently, available information is also not summarized systematically at national level, but significant improvement is expected from the LIFE project.

27. *Investigation of factors limiting breeding success [AP 6.2.3]:* According to the Action Plan the factors which may have influence on breeding success shall be investigated in all countries with breeding populations. In **Austria** intensive studies have been carried out but no conclusions reached yet. In the **Czech Republic** the main mortality factor was agriculture. In **Germany** currently the predation by foxes is the main cause of breeding failure. In **Hungary**, predation and agricultural activities are responsible for the low reproductive rate of the species. According to the model constructed by Faragó (1992) the reproduction rate of the Hungarian population is 0.6 which is only enough to sustain the population. Breeding success of the small population in **Slovakia** is also monitored. Studies are also carried out in **Ukraine** by the Black Sea Ornithological Station.

28. *Studies on migration [AP 6.2.4]:* According to the Action Plan studies should be made to identify the migration routes and resting habitats of the Great Bustard and especially of key sites along such routes and in wintering areas. Ringing and studies involving satellite telemetry should be planned and implemented for those purposes. Local or short distance movements of birds are well understood in all countries. Captive reared and then released birds in **Germany** and **Hungary** are ringed and have wing tags. In **Germany** some birds were also marked with radio transmitters. Similarly, birds in Saratov, **Russia**, were also equipped with radio transmitters and proved the origin of the birds observed in **Ukraine** in winter. According to our current knowledge, birds winter in large number only in the south of Ukraine within the MoU area. In addition, there are two sites, Bedati and Kopliku in **Albania** which are suspected to hold the species regularly. IBA data from Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Eastern Turkey indicate that a second migration route along the Caspian coast may also exist.

29. *Training of staff working in conservation bodies [AP 7.0]:* The Action Plan recommends that personnel working regularly in Great Bustard areas (agronomists, biologists, wardens, etc.) should receive specific training on Great Bustard matters, especially their biological characteristics and living requirements, legal matters, census techniques and management practices. Also, communication and cooperation between the various sectors involved (e.g., farmer, hunter and nature conservation organisations, tourist companies and state authorities) should be intensified. Activities in this direction were reported from the Range States with breeding population, but not from the potential wintering ranges except **Ukraine** where a small team exists and **Albania** where the national programme for the species foresees training of members of NGOs. A national working group for the species exist in **Hungary** which facilitates exchange of experience between organisations working at different parts of the country. In **Austria** and **Germany** specialised NGOs promote exchange of experience. Collaboration between conservationist, farmers and hunters is no active at least in Austria, Germany and Hungary.

30. *Increasing awareness of the need to protect Great Bustards and their habitat [AP 8.0]:* The Action Plan recommends using Great Bustard as a flagship species to protect steppes, dry grasslands and suitable agricultural landscapes. Furthermore, farmers, shepherds, the general public and decision-makers should be subject of targeted information campaigns to secure their collaboration and adopt their management practices to the species' requirements. The species has a high profile in the countries where it breeds. Intensive media and awareness raising campaigns (articles, posters, stickers, leaflets) and liaison with local land users took place in **Austria**, **Czech**

Republic, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine and Slovakia. Dedicated websites exist in **Austria**⁷ and **Germany**⁸. Great Bustard conservation work is presented to the general public at certain sites in **Austria, Germany and Hungary**. There is a high level of acceptance already in place in these countries which is proved by allocation of significant resources to finance agri-environmental schemes targeted at the species' conservation and by the high up-take of these schemes by farmers. Organisations such as the "Interest Group European Protected Area Parndorfer Platte – Heideboden" and the "Green World" in Austria or the "Cötkény Regional Development Association" in Hungary bring together different interest groups who now realize the importance of the species' conservation.

31. **Economic measures [AP 9.0]:** The Action Plan recommends developing economic activities which are not harmful to the Great Bustard to compensate land users for any damage they may experience as a result of conservation activities. Economic incentives are available for land-users in **Austria, Germany and Hungary** which are well received in Austria and Hungary, but less successful in Germany. The Moson Project in Hungary has demonstrated a different approach. Habitat management for Great Bustard may have positive impact on other species such as Hare *Lepus europeus* and Roe Deer. Here the local agriculture company has started to manage 1,232 hectares of land partly as rotational fallow partly sown by cultures preferred by the species. Although it has lost income farming, which was anyway not very profitable because of the soil conditions required irrigation to grow maize, it has earned more from hunting of the increased population of Hare and Roe Deer. **Romania** is considering using SAPARD and other EU funds.

4.0 Evaluation

32. Based on the synthesis of the national reports and other available information the following achievements can be recognized:

- The Great Bustard habitats currently used by the species are now largely protected, or will be soon protected in the EU Member States as Special Protection Areas.
- Management of the species' habitat has significantly improved in Austria and Hungary in recent years as a result of the introduction of incentive schemes for farmers and large-scale land acquisition in the latter by conservation authorities.
- EIA processes are in place in most countries, although some improvement might be needed in some to be effective in preventing negative impacts of infrastructure developments.
- The species is now legally protected from hunting, however illegal shootings still occur especially in Ukraine.
- Possession and trade of the species specimens is prohibited in all countries who have sent a report.
- The species has a very high profile amongst the farmers and the public in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. This high profile has helped to attract funding for habitat conservation measures.
- Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia collaborate closely to protect their transboundary population.
- German expertise and financial assistance has contributed to the better understanding of the origin of the wintering Great Bustard population in south of Ukraine.

⁷ www.grosstrappe.at

⁸ <http://www.grosstrappe.de/index.htm>

Less progress has been achieved in the following fields:

- Protecting areas for re-establishment of the species and as wintering areas;
- Reducing the mortality caused by predation and powerlines;
- Applying compensatory measures for habitat loss; and
- Ensuring the protection of the species during severe winters when the partially migrating population leaves its traditional wintering places close to their breeding areas and moves into countries where it does not occur regularly.

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Medium Term International Work Programme
on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-
European Population of the Great Bustard
2005 – 2010

Introduction

By signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard, Signatories endeavour to work closely together to improve the conservation status of Great Bustard throughout its breeding, migratory and wintering range. The MoU emphasises the need for exchanging scientific, technical and legal information to co-ordinate conservation measures and for co-operation with other Range States, appropriate international organizations and recognized scientists.

According to MoU paragraph 8 the Signatory States shall endeavour to adopt a Medium Term International Work Programme for the Great Bustard. This should include (1) subjects for co-operative research and monitoring, (2) measures to implement the MoU and its Action Plan, as well as (3) items for which guidelines are needed to further develop and improve the measures listed in the MoU as well as in international and national work programmes.

The Medium Term International Work Programme is organised around these three main headings. It lists objectives related to the MoU and Action Plan, and suggests a set of activities to achieve those objectives.

Lead countries or organisations for the particular activities are indicated along with countries, intergovernmental, international and national organisations that would collaborate on the Work Programme's implementation. All Range States and relevant organisations are encouraged to review the remaining activities and take the lead on them. Changes to project leaders and collaborators will be added by the Secretariat as it becomes aware of them.

Funding will be needed to support the activities listed in the Work Programme. Multilateral, bilateral and other sources of funding will need to be secured through funding applications prepared by project leaders and collaborators. Estimated costs for a particular activity will be added to the table by the Secretariat after a project has been conceptualised by a project leader.

It is proposed that the Work Programme's implementation be kept under review by the regular meetings of the Signatories.

1. Cooperative research and monitoring

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
1.1. Synchronised counts are co-ordinated across the borders [Action 6.1.1]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical experts appointed by the Range States agree on the dates of synchronised counts annually by 1 April. 	2005-ong	n/a	SK	All Range States
1.2. Comparative studies on habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes (including infrastructure such as powerlines and windfarms) and causes of decline in different range states are available [Action 6.2.1]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical experts appointed by the Range States to agree and elaborate on a joint research programme. 	2005	€€€€€		All Range States
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement joint research programme. 	2006-ong			Scientific institutes, NGOs, protected area authorities
1.3. Experience in habitat management shared between Range States and results used when revising agro-environmental schemes for the new EU rural development programme period (2007-13) [Actions 6.1.2 and 6.2.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	€€€	AT, HU	CMS Secretariat (website)
1.4. Effectiveness of different predator control strategies monitored and experience shared amongst experts [Actions 6.2.2 and 6.2.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	Same as above	AT, HU	CMS Secretariat (website)

¹ Dates represent the year the action is to be implemented. On-going actions are indicated by the starting year followed by “-ong”. Actions expected to take several years are indicated by the starting and end year.

² To be updated periodically by the Secretariat as information becomes available from activity leaders.

³ To be updated periodically by the Secretariat as offers are made to lead the remaining activities.

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
1.5. Effectiveness of captive management programmes in different countries assessed and lessons are shared	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings of the 2004 Expert Meeting published. 	2005	Same as above	AT, HU	CMS Secretariat (website)
1.6. Key personnel and staff have opportunity to exchange experience [Action 7]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Expert Meeting organised. 	2007	€€€€		Scientific institutions, NGOs, protected area management authorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd Expert Meeting organised. 	2010			
1.7. Information on the ecology and conservation of Great Bustard effectively managed and shared within the conservation and research communities [MoU Para. 7]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Web-based information management system for the MoU with inter alia a register of on-going and completed projects and their outcomes, research reports and other relevant information (see also 2.5 below) 	2005	€€€€		All Range States CMS Secretariat
1.8. Biological targets for favourable conservation status identified	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify population targets based on population viability analysis A large scale study on the distribution of actual and potential of habitats across the range To restore connectivity between fragmented populations 	2005-2008	€€€€		All existing or former breeding countries
1.9. Joint projects carried out by Range States	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore funding opportunities for multi-country projects 	2005-ong	€€€€		All Range States

2. Measures to implement the MoU and Action Plan

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
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Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
2.1. All Range States provide the same level of strict legal protection of Great Bustard and its habitat [MoU Para. 4(1) and Actions 1.1.1 and 2]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the status of Great Bustard Range States and identify existing gaps at future Meetings of the Parties. 	2007&2010	€€€€		All Range States
2.2. Connectivity of the Pannonic subpopulation increased and the breeding population in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic recovered [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify recently unoccupied areas to be protected from adverse development in order to increase connectivity. 	2007	€€€€€€	AT	CZ, HU, SK
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify threats imposed by infrastructure (e.g. powerlines, windfarms, roads, buildings) in these areas and apply technical solutions. 				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach multilateral agreement on the site network. 	2008			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans to improve habitat quality at occupied and recently. 	2009			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop funding applications. 	2009			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce appropriate legal measures and financial incentives to protect these habitats and improve habitat quality there. 	2010			
2.3. Status and feasibility of restoring the transboundary populations between Hungary, Romania and Serbia-Montenegro is determined [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out co-ordinated Great Bustard surveys in the border zone between the three countries and along the border in the vicinity of Salonta, especially in the post-breeding and wintering period. 	2006–2007	€€€	RO	HU, RO, SM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a feasibility study on expanding the habitat in these transboundary regions. 	2008	€€€€	RO	
2.4. Status of Great Bustard along the border between Bulgaria and Romania is clarified [Action 5 and MoU Para. 4]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out survey in both countries along the lower section of the Danube River in particular in Dobrudja during the display season. 	2006–2008	€€€€	BG	RO
2.5. Wintering Great Bustard populations are adequately protected	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an Internet-based reporting system on sightings of Great Bustard in winter to facilitate collection and sharing of information. 	2005	€€€	Birdlife Int'l	All Range States CMS Secretariat

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify other countries about use of colour ring or wing tags and make information about these marking schemes available on the Internet. [Action 6.2.4] 	2005	n/a	SK	AT, (BG), CZ, DE, HU, SK, (RO),
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand radio tracking of Great Bustard, building on existing Spanish and German experience. [Action 6.2.4] 	2006-ong	€€€€		DE, AT, HU
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that wintering Great Bustards are protected from any disturbance. [MoU Para. 4(6) and Action 2.2] 	2005	n/a		All Range States
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an international inventory of key sites for Great Bustard during migration and winter. [Action 1.1] 	2008	n/a	HU	All Range States
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess potential causes of mortality (e.g. power lines, wind farms, hunting) at sites where Great Bustard occur regularly on migration or in winter and take appropriate measures to remove these threats. [Action 2.3.2] 	2010	€€€€		All Range States
2.6. Reintroduction and restocking programmes are coordinated to ensure the maximum conservation benefits for both the donor and recipient	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Technical Advisory Panel of international experts to coordinate reintroduction and restocking projects. 	2005			All Range States (IUCN)*

*Pending

3. Issues for which guidelines should be developed

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Timetable ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
3.1. Monitoring results from different countries are comparable [Action 6.1.1]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines for monitoring Great Bustard populations. 	2005	€€€€ consultancy		All, mainly breeding countries

Objective	Priority	Measures to be taken	Time-table ¹	Financial considerations ²	Lead ³	Collaborators ³
3.2. Restoration of Great Bustard populations is based on best practices [MoU Para. 4 and Action 4]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on restoration of Great Bustard populations covering the issues of habitat management and restoration, as well as, predator control, captive breeding and release 	2009	€€€€ consultancy	DE	All Range States
3.3. All Range States can apply appropriate strategies to secure successful wintering of Great Bustard [MoU Para. 4(6)]	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on species and habitat conservation measures to be implemented at places where wintering of Great Bustards occur based on recommendations of the 1st and 2nd Expert Meetings. 	2008	€€€€		All Range States
3.4. Risk of collision with power lines and loss of habitat due to infrastructure development and forestry measures is reduced [Actions 1.3, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3]	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing experience in mitigating the impact of infrastructure development (e.g. powerlines and windfarms) as well as afforestation and publish a best practice guide. 	2007	€€€€	AT ⁴	All Range States
3.5. Potential negative impacts of radio-tracking on wild birds reduced	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines on capturing and handling birds for research (e.g. radio tracking). 	2006	€€€€		All Range States, mainly breeding countries

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⁴ Depending on the approval of the LIFE project.

REPORTING FORMAT FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD MOU AND ACTION PLAN

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

Agency or institution responsible for the preparation of this report
List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input
Reports submitted to date: First: (Period covered) Second:
Period covered by this report (day) (month) (year) to (day) (month) (year):
Memorandum in effect in country since: [Date: dd / mm / yy]:
Designated Focal Point (and full contact details):

PART I. GENERAL

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

0. National work programme

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

Yes No

1. Habitat protection

1.1 Designation of protected areas.

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

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

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

Where are the remaining gaps?

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

Yes No Not applicable²

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable¹

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

- Yes No Not applicable¹

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

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

1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.

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

- Yes No Not applicable¹

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats?

- Yes No Not applicable¹

If yes, please provide details.

Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding?

- Yes No Not applicable¹

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

2. Prevention of hunting, disturbance and other threats

2.1 Hunting.

Is Great Bustard afforded strict legal protection in your country?

- Yes No

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

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

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable¹

2.2 Prevention of disturbance.

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

Please, indicate to what extent these measures have ensured the protection of the national population. The national population is covered by restrictions on other activities causing disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable¹

2.3.1 Prevention of predation.

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

What are the main predator species?

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

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (predation reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (predation reduced by 10–49%)
- Less effective (predation reduced by less than 10%)
- Not applicable¹

2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.

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

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

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

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (collision with power lines reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (collision with power lines reduced by 10–49%)
- Ineffective (collision with power lines reduced by less than 10%)
- Not applicable¹

2.3.3 Compensatory measures.

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

What is the size of the populations affected?

Were these habitat losses compensated? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

If yes, please explain how.

Were these measures effective? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

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

3. Possession and trade

Is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs prohibited in your country? Yes No

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

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

4. Recovery measures

4.1 Captive breeding* in emergency situations.

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country? Yes No

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

4.2 Reintroduction.

Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country? Yes No

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

4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.

Are captive reared birds released in your country? Yes No

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

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

- Effective (the survival is about the same as of the wild ones)
- Partially effective (the survival rate is lower than 75% of the wild birds)
- Ineffective (the survival is less than 25% of wild birds)
- Not applicable³

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

³ No release is taking place in the country.

5. Cross-border conservation measure

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

Yes No Not applicable⁴

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

6. Monitoring and research

6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.

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

Yes No

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None
- Not applicable¹

What is the size and trend in the national population?⁵

Breeding/resident population

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of adult males: _____

No. of adult males: _____

No. of females: _____

No. of females: _____

No. immature males: _____

No. immature males: _____

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

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

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

6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.

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

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

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

What can be learned from these studies?

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

⁴ For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

⁵ Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.

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

Yes No Not applicable¹

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

What can be learned from these studies?

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

6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.

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

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

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

What can be learned from these studies?

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

6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.

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

Yes Partially No Not applicable⁶

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

What can be learned from these studies?

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

6.2.4 Studies on migration.

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

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

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

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

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

⁶ Only for breeding countries.

7. Training of staff working in conservation bodies

Is there any mechanism in place in your country to share information on biological characteristics and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices to personnel working regularly with the species? Yes No Not applicable¹

If yes, please describe it.

Have personnel dealing with Great Bustard participated in any exchange programme in other Range States? Yes No Not applicable¹

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

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

What measures have been taken to increase the awareness about the protection needs of the species and its habitat in your country since signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

Do farmers, shepherds, political decision makers and local and regional authorities support Great Bustard conservation? Yes Partially No

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

9. Economic measures

Have there been any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

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

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None
- Not applicable

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (more than 50% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Partially effective (10–49% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Ineffective (less than 10% according to the species' needs)
- Not applicable¹

10. Threats

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

Threat scores:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Threat name	Threat score	Explanation and reference
Habitat loss		
Losses of eggs and chicks		
Predation		
Collision with powerlines		
Human disturbance		
Pesticides		
Illegal hunting		
Others (specify)		

PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

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

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Actions requested of Signatory States / Non-Signatories				
Signatory States / non-Signatory States	Considerations regarding signature of MoU (by non-Signatories)	National Contact Point	National Report availability	National Work Programme availability
		Yes = officially nominated No = no nomination received yet	(E): electronic format (W): MS-Word version only (electronic) (W)(p) MS-Word version paper copy only (H): hand written notes only IC: yet to be completed and submitted	C: completed IC: yet to be completed and submitted
Signatory States				
Albania		Yes	(W): completed	C:
Austria		Yes	(W): completed	C: to be submitted separately from national report
Bulgaria		Yes	(W): completed	IC:
Croatia		Yes	(W): completed	IC:
Germany		Yes	(W): completed	IC:
Greece		No	IC:	IC:
Hungary		Yes	(W): completed	C:
Macedonia		Yes	(W): completed	C:
Moldova		Name submitted but pending official confirmation	IC:	IC:
Romania		Yes	(W): completed	IC:
Slovakia		Name submitted but pending official confirmation	(W): completed	C: to be submitted separately from national report
Ukraine		Yes	(W): completed	IC:
Non-Signatory States				
Bosnia & Herzegovina	The Secretariat invited the government to sign the MoU; no response received.			
Czech Republic	Government is considering signing the MoU and has submitted a national report.		(W): completed	
Poland	Ministry of the Environment indicated by letter dated 21.7.04 that it hopes to participate in the programme in the future.			
Slovenia	Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning & Energy indicated by letter dated 23.8.04 that it will not be in a position to sign the Memorandum in the future.			