

European Parties activities for the implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species and its related instruments

Each Party within the region is to provide data and information related to activities undertaken at national, regional, sub-regional level for the implementation of the Convention and its related instruments as well as relevant governing bodies resolutions and decision in the following non-exhaustive list of areas:

Period from 44th (October 2015) to present (45th) meeting of the CMS Standing Committee

1. CMS and its relevant instruments

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The Ministry of Nature Protection has approved the Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European Bats (EUROBATS) and Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the membership question of the Republic of Armenia to these agreements. At present the membership question of the Republic of Armenia to above mentioned agreements is being examined.

CZECH REPUBLIC

- November 2015: organisation of the 2 day multisectorial seminar on poisoning of birds and other wild animals (implementation of resolution)
- January 2016: regular annual meeting of WG for CMS implementation (covers also all CMS agreement and MoU)
- February 2016: Establishment of Multisectorial WG for prevention of poisoning and other illegal kinds of wild animals killing
- April 2016: first 2 day-meeting of newly established WG on poisoning. The main task of WG is preparation of the Strategy of illegal killing prevention.
- June: second meeting of WG on poisoning
- November 2016: third meeting of WG is planned

FRANCE is a member of the Standing Committee as representative of the European Union Parties. It has been nominated member of Europe to the Working Group on the Development of a Review Process under the Convention on Migratory Species. As such, France attended the first meeting of the Group which was held on 19-20 September 2016 in Bonn, Germany.

NORWAY

- The national seabird monitoring program SEAPOP in Norway (<http://www.seapop.no/en/>) published a new status report spring 2016 (see http://www.seapop.no/opencms/export/sites/SEAPOP/no/filer/pdf/arsbrosjyre/SEAPOP-arsbrosjyre-2015-Web.pdf_1170756177.pdf). This followed the summary report for the period 2005-2014.
- The Norwegian Environment Agency has sponsored the publication of two national reports by the Norwegian Ornithological Society on Important Bird Areas (see http://birdlife.no/prosjekter/rapporter/2015_05_NOF.pdf) and on status of breeding birds (see http://birdlife.no/prosjekter/rapporter/2015_02_NOF.pdf), both of interest for a number of CMS relevant species and issues.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Concerning the procedure of accession the Republic of Serbia to Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European bats (EUROBATS) and Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Government of Serbia adopted "The Resolution of Government" on accession in December 2015.

The procedure for ratification continues and ministries responsible are preparing the documents for the Parliamentary procedure (adoption of the Law on ratification of Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European bats (EUROBATS) and Law on ratification of Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). Now after the elections, the procedure will continue after the forming of the new government.

Agreements for conservation of specific species

Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)

The AEWA MOP6 was held from 9 to 14 November 2015 in Bonn, Germany. Resolutions and national reports can be found at <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/meeting/6th-meeting-parties-aewa>.

BELGIUM

Belgium provided financial support to the AEWA International Working Group for the Pink-footed goose.

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Continuation of evaluation of the current status and trends of migratory water birds in wetlands of international importance (within the project on wetlands)
- November 2015: participation at AEWA MOP6
- Exhibition on migratory birds called « Migrates but come back! » in the occasion of 20 years of AEWA
- 2016: Start of National AEWA Communication Strategy preparation
- Participation at WG on AEWA Strategy preparation (June 2016)
- Government approved voluntary contribution for period 2016-2018 for an amount of 5,000€/year)
- 2017: Completion of National AEWA Communication Strategy and start of its implementation

FRANCE

- Participation in:
 - MOP6 (Bonn, Germany, 9-14 November 2015). During this MOP, France was nominated representative for Europe and Central Asia and Vice-Chair of the Standing committee;
 - 13th Meeting of the AEWA Technical Committee (TC13) (14-17 March 2016, Israël). Two researchers from France are appointed as thematic experts for Game Management and Rural Economics;
 - Strategic Plan Working Group on the development of the Strategic Plan 2019-2027 (Bonn, Germany, 28-30 June 2016): 3 persons (Vice-Chair of the standing Committee, the two Technical Committee thematic experts).
- Organisation together with AEWA Secretariat and OMPO of the Workshop for the Establishment of a European Goose Management Platform (EGMP) under AEWA (Paris, 11-12 May 2016). The meeting was hosted by the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea in its headquarters in La Défense. It represents a major turning point in the way AEWA Range States manage their shared migratory waterbirds as considered in the AEWA Resolution 6.4.
- France carried on providing funding to support the functioning of the Technical Support Unit (TSU) which gathers ONCFS, Tour du Valat and Senegal National Parks Directorate. The action of the TSU for technically assisting the African Parties to implement the Plan of Action for Africa adopted at MOP5, was presented at MOP6 and unanimously greeted by the attendees, in particular the African Parties.
- The project called RESSOURCE developed by the TSU and submitted by the French Ministry in charge of Environment to the FFEM (French GEF) was accepted for funding

on July 4th 2016. This project of an amount of 5 M€ on 4 years will enhance the management of waterbirds in the Sahel and Nile Valley. It will be coordinated by FAO which will also cofund the project. The project includes five components: (i) Monitoring of the resource : « Waterbirds »; (ii) Conservation of the resource : « Waterbirds » and integrated management of wetlands; (iii) Knowledge and sustainable use of the resource : « Waterbirds »; (iv) Capacity strengthening and (v) Reinforcing of legislative and institutional frameworks the resource : « Waterbirds ».

ITALY

- In the framework of the Working Group on the Yellow-legged Gull created in the LIFE10 NATIT000256 '*Environmental Management and Conservation in Mediterranean salt works and coastal lagoons (Mc-Salt)*' a document on the management of the yellow-legged gull has been conceived. The document, entitled '*Guidelines for the management of the breeding population of the yellow-legged gull Larus michahellis in the salt pans and coastal wetlands of the Mediterranean*' will be published in 2016 by ISPRA and LIFE partners in four languages (Bulgarian, English, French, Italian) and it is aimed at gathering and delivering all the experiences on gull management that have been acquired prior and during specific projects on the species that were realized in the Mediterranean area. Special attention was paid to minimize the impact of gulls on colonial waterbirds.
- In Italy, researches on waterbirds have been promoted by the Ministry for the Environment to acquire more information on migratory strategies of different populations, threats and limiting factors. Special efforts have been devoted in 2016 to capture and tag with GPS dataloggers Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*), Mediterranean Gulls (*Ichthyophaga melanocephalus*) and Eurasian Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*).

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands contributed to the establishment of the International Goose platform and also established a national platform.

The Netherlands will host a meeting for the SAP of the Black Tailed Godwit.

NORWAY

- The first meeting of the relevant parties to the European Goose Management Platform took place in Paris May 2016 (see <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/next-steps-agreed-establishment-european-goose-management-platform-under-aewa>). Norway contributed with the basic funding to have the platform up and running as we regard this as an important initiative. It builds on the experience with the adaptive harvest management plan for the Svalbard pink-footed goose population (see <http://pinkfootedgoose.aewa.info/>). The new EGMP will cover this plan, as well as expanding to include grey-lag goose, barnacle goose and the taiga population of the bean goose. Norway is committed to contribute financially to AEWA as Secretariat of this platform in the coming years.
- The third meeting of the international working group for the Lesser white-fronted goose took place in Norway in April at the invitation of the Norwegian Environment Agency (see <http://lesserwhitefrontedgoose.aewa.info/> and <http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/news/aewa-lesser-white-fronted-goose-working-group-meets-trondheim>). The meeting was well attended, and for the first time also included colleagues from Japan and China. The meeting is concluded on the process to revise the present ISSAP, as well as agreeing on closer collaboration with colleagues in the eastern flyway.

ROMANIA

Scientific Research and Monitoring

- inventory, mapping and monitoring of the species of community interest

- implementation of the project "*Evaluation of physico-chemical water quality in the wetlands identified in Satu Mare*" to determine the aquatic habitat quality of 5 lakes (Călinești – Oaș, Adrian, Apa, Bercu and Moftinu Mic) used for breeding, feeding or resting by migratory water birds.
- creation of nesting sites in the Special Protection Areas
- improvement of the habitats conditions on existing breeding, conservation measures in Natura 2000 sites, so as to reduce the mortality of species,
- implementation of the project "*Integrated Management Plan development for the Special Protection Areas ROSPA0009 Beștepe - Mahmudia and Beștepe Hills Nature Reserve*" by the Local Environmental Protection Agency Tulcea
- inventories, assessments and mapping of the distribution for protected species of national and international importance and for their areas
- analysis and mapping of environment factors, identifying forms of land ownership and land use in natural protected areas
- studies on the abiotic factors characteristic for the natural protected areas: climate, soils, hydrology, geology and geomorphology
- setting up and completion of an integrated GIS database
- development of methodologies and monitoring plans of conservation status of the waterbirds species

Education and Public Awareness

- conferences seminars, articles in the local media, national and specialized meetings with stakeholders (local authorities, NGOs, custodians, farmers), application questionnaires to achieve a socio-economic study, training and educational activities in schools and universities.
- public awareness activities (meetings with stakeholders, applying questionnaires to achieve a socio-economic study, informing the communities and the local authorities on the importance of protecting and improving the biodiversity and the natural heritage), raising awareness of population about the need for migratory water birds conservation and the benefits of applying the strategy for sustainable management of Natura 2000 sites, birdwatching tours, press-release
- exhibitions, educational games about natural values of protected areas including bird species
- Power Point presentation to youth attending the last editions of the National Eco - Know – Life Camp, promoting migratory birds
- informational events in the natural protected areas
- organization of a scientific symposium on the theme: "*Pressures and threats to migratory birds species and their habitats*" and photos exhibitions
- edition of leaflets and posters with conservation measures for birds species
- dissemination of the knowledge on waterbirds for a positive attitude about nature conservation
- Implementation of the project "*Wild animals in danger*," in the Secondary Schools
- development of partnerships between Local Environmental Protection Agencies and the High Schools, Children's Palaces and kindergartens
- Implementation of the educational project "*Know the migratory birds*" and organization of an exhibition of drawings "*Cottage for birds*" conducted by Local Environmental Protection Agency Timiș in partnership with the National College Banat
- educational activities in the Secondary Schools in partnership "*Friends of nature*" by running thematic movies

Capacity Building

- Increase and strengthening of the institutional capacity of the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat on integrated management of natural protected areas

International Cooperation

- cooperation with BirdLife Hungary, the National Park Administration Bükk, the National Park Administration Kiskunság, for the International Waterbird Count – IWC
- partnership between BirdLife Romania and BirdLife Hungary and Milvus Group in creation of a cross-border monitoring system and on line database for birds in the Romanian-Hungarian border region, in 8 border counties from Romania.

Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

- implementation of a research project by the Local Environmental Protection Agency Timiș for the assessment of the conservation status of water birds and their habitats from Timiș County and assessing the impact of human activities on habitats and migratory water bird species and elaboration the conservation measures in the Special Protection Area ROSPA0047 Hunedoara Timișană, and improving the conservation status of avifauna species and their habitats by establishing an appropriate management framework.
- implementation of the project "*Elaboration of Management Plan of ROSCI0109 Lunca Timișului and ROSPA0095 Macedonia Forest*" financed by the European Regional Development Fund, by the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat.
- improvement of the conservation status of water bird species and habitats in the Special Protection Area Lunca Timișului and the Site of Community Importance Macedonia Forest by elaborating an integrated Management Plan.
- implementation of the LIFE project "*Conservation of habitats 8310 in Natura 2000 site Nera – Beușnița*"
- implementation of the EU LIFE Nature project (LIFE10 NAT/RO/00740) "*Improving the conservation status for priority species and habitats in Iron Gates Wetlands*", for improving connectivity of suitable feeding and breeding habitats for pygmy cormorant and ferruginous duck, in order to achieve a suitable conservation status for the two protected species.
- implementation of the project "*Participatory management for eradication of invasive species from Lower Siret Floodplain protected area*"

Administrative, Institutional and Legislative Policy measures

- approving through the Minister's Order a total number of 210 Management Plans and Regulations for the Special Protection Areas and Sites of Community Importance
- the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2007 regarding management of protected areas, conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna fully transposes the Habitats and Birds Directives into Romanian law and shapes the general legal framework and subsequent policies related to protected areas was amended

Activities planned for next year

- conservation and protection of aquatic ecosystems
- reconstruction of habitats, placing artificial nests
- installation of satellite transmitters for mapping migratory routes and wintering grounds
- systematic monitoring of migratory water birds in SPAs
- implementation of the Management Plans for the Special Protection Areas and the Sites of Community Importance
- implementation of measures for maintaining/improving the favorable conservation status of water birds species and their habitats in the natural protected areas
- protection against any form of pollution and modification of the characteristics of water resources
- sustainable water management and a rational and equal repartition of water resources
- raising interest and awareness of the local communities on issues relating to the protection of Natura 2000 sites, to reduce anthropogenic pressures on species and habitats of Community interest

- actions to promote wetlands where are migratory water birds
- public awareness campaigns to protect waterbirds species
- monitoring of activities in areas with high density of migratory water birds populations.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The First World Migratory Birds Day in Serbia, has been organized on May 11. 2016., in Gallery of Natural History Museum, Kalemegdan, Belgrade, by Natural History Museum, Belgrade. The workshop “Lets make a bird” and Quiz of knowledge about the birds for the young participators and multimedia presentations for all who wants to know about migratory birds.

SLOVAKIA

- Slovakia participates in winter censuses of waterbirds. Draft Management plans for several Special Protection Areas with migratory waterbirds have been developed. Some new protected areas in wetland habitats as Natura 2000 sites are under preparation for designation. Regular monitoring and improving in nest conditions for *Ciconia ciconia*, *Tringa totanus*, *Sterna hirundo* and some other species is provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Several projects dealing with waterbirds conservation, management and monitoring have been implemented. Several projects for migratory species protection are ongoing (e.g. *Apus apus*, *Merops apiaster*, *Riparia riparia* and many others).
- A LIFE project Energy in the landscape – power lines and conservation of priority bird species in Natura 2000 sites has been implemented in cooperation NGO (Raptors Protection of Slovakia), governmental nature conservation agency, Veterinary University and energy distribution companies. Measures against bird crime have been implemented by the State Nature Conservancy and Raptors Protection of Slovakia. Draft management plans for Natura 2000 sites and several Ramsar Sites in Slovakia have been developed.
- Restoration of wetland habitats for waterbirds is implemented in several projects in cooperation with NGOs

SWEDEN

- Participation in the development of ISSAP *Numenius arquata*, *Clangula hyemalis*, *Anser fabalis*, *Melanitta fusca*. Continued implementation and revision of the ISSAP Lesser White-fronted Goose (as well as ongoing efforts related to the successful national SSAP).
- Contribution to the development and implementation of the European Goose Management Platform.
- Since 2015 there is a new national monitoring program for breeding coastal seabirds. This program started partly due to the rapid decline in certain bird populations (i.e. wintering Long-tailed Duck and breeding Common Eider), but including a large part of the seabird species breeding along the coastline.

UKRAINE

- World Migratory Birds Day had been marked in Ukraine in 2016. A number of actions devoted to the event had been organized in different parts of Ukraine. The WMBD had been elucidated in mass-media and various web-sites.
- Ukraine took part in the 3rd Meeting of the AEWG Lesser White-fronted Goose International Working Group held in Trondheim, Norway, 12–14 April 2016.

Agreement on the Conservation of cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) & Agreement on the Conservation of small cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)

FRANCE

- Participation in the ACCOBAMS Mediterranean Survey for counting marine mammals in particular

- Among recent measures taken by France, it is worth mentioning:
 - consolidation of regulations to reduce the impact of shipping on cetaceans: article 106 of the new law for biodiversity introduces a position sharing measure to avoid collisions between cetaceans and ships within both Pelagos and Agoa Sanctuaries (French waters for the Pelagos Sanctuary);
 - the development of the ACCOBAMS "High quality whale watching" label to reduce the impact of off-shore and tourism activities on cetaceans in Mediterranean sea, and of charters in French overseas territories.

ITALY

Within the framework of ACCOBAMS Agreement, the Italian Ministry for the Environment has promoted several research and monitoring field activities reported below.

Such activities have involved national and international Scientists and Researchers, to implement prescriptions arising from:

- ACCOBAMS Work Programme 2014/2016
- Barcelona Convention – SPA/BIO Protocol
- EU Habitat Directive
- EU MSFD Directive
- Pelagos Sanctuary international Agreement

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has continued its research towards by catch of harbor porpoise.

POLAND

ASCOBANS: AQUO project was built in response to the European call “Assessment and mitigation of noise impacts of the maritime transport on the marine environment”. Its main objective was to provide policy makers and stakeholders of the maritime domain with practical guidelines, in order to mitigate underwater noise impacts of shipping to marine life.

The guidance has been created, a list of possible solutions was established describing two types of solutions: The first ones linked to the ship design including propeller and cavitation noise, and the second ones related to operations as shipping control and regulation, e.g speed changes.

The main promising solutions have been assessed in terms of URN reduction, impact on fuel efficiency and impact on marine fauna . For instance, to assess masking effects, two scenarios were studied: masking of the communication signal used by male cod during spawning to attract females and detection of a killer whale by a harbour porpoise. For behavioral reactions, thresholds of received levels for potential reaction of the animal have been given.

ROMANIA (ACCOBAMS):

Scientific Research and Monitoring

- inventory and monitoring of the dolphins species from the Black Sea: *Tursiops truncatus*, *Phocena phocena* and *Delphinus delphis*
- comprehensive assessments of each of the habitat types from the Sites of Community Importance from the Black Sea
- project “*The influence of the river input on the chemical composition and the trophic state of the Romanian transitional and coastal waters with the view to the joint implementation of the Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives*”
- studies on the abiotic factors in the Black Sea
- comparison of two European eutrophication indicators TRIX and HEAT at the Black Sea
- setting up and completion of an integrated GIS database of the Black Sea
- research regarding the effects of global changes on local and regional hydrological conditions
- assessment of seawater physical and chemical parameters dynamics

- monitoring of eutrophication and marine pollution with heavy metals, hydrocarbons, pesticides
- evaluation of predicted changes in marine ecosystem status and functioning at abiotic components level and processes modelling
- scientific knowledge and management of Marine Reserves
- management of oceanographic data base and regular delivery of operational data for bathing waters and beach quality survey
- project “*Pan-European infrastructure for ocean and marine data management*” implemented by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” to up-to-date and high quality access to ocean and marine metadata, data and data products originating from data acquisition activities by all engaged coastal states, by setting, adopting and promoting common data management standards and by realizing technical and semantic interoperability with other relevant data management systems and initiatives on behalf of science, environmental management, policy making and economy.
- EU-FP7 project PERSEUS “*Policy oriented environmental research in the southern European Seas - PERSEUS*” implemented by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” to identify the interacting patterns of natural and human-derived pressures on the Mediterranean and Black Seas, assess their impact on marine ecosystems and, using the objectives and principles of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as a vehicle, to design an effective and innovative research governance framework based on sound scientific knowledge. New tools were developed in order to evaluate the current environmental status, by way of combining monitoring and modelling capabilities and existing observational systems were upgraded and extended.
- project “*Towards coast to coast networks of marine protected areas (from the shore to the high and deep sea), coupled with sea-based wind energy potential*” implemented by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa” to identify prospective networks of existing or potential MPAs in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas, shifting from a local perspective to the regional level (network of Marine Protected Areas) and finally the basin scale. The identification of the physical and biological connections among MPAs elucidated the patterns and processes of biodiversity distribution. Measures to improve protection schemes were suggested based on maintaining effective exchanges (biological and hydrological) between protected areas.
- collaborative work on marine environment notably involving 43 research centres and universities in Black Sea riparian countries.

Education and Public Awareness

- public awareness activities (meetings with stakeholders, local authorities, NGOs, custodians) on the protection of dolphins
- press-release, exhibitions, Power Point presentations in schools
- leaflets and posters with the conservation measures for dolphins were edited and disseminated
- partnerships of the Local Environmental Protection Agency Constanța with the High Schools and NGOs for educational activities
- websites available for the custodians of the natural protected areas
- celebration of: the “International Day of Biodiversity”, the “World Environment Day”, the “International Black Sea Day” by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, the Local Environment Protection Agencies, the National Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with NGOs, the School Inspectorates,

Capacity Building

- Increasing and strengthening the institutional capacity of the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa”

International Cooperation

- partnerships between the National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" and: the Institute of Marine Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Erdemli, Turkey, Institute of Oceanology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Marine Hydrophysical Institute Sevastopol, Ukraine, Shirshov Institute of Oceanology, Moscow, CLU (Italy), CNR-ISMAR (Italy), CNRS (France), COISPA (Italy), CoNISMa (Italy), CSIC (Spain), DTU AQUA (Denmark), HCMR-IOO (Greece), IBER-BAS (Bulgaria), IBMK (Montenegro), IBSS NASU (Ukraine), IEO (Spain), IH Cantabria (Spain), INAT (Tunisia), IO-BAS (Bulgaria), IOLR (Israel), ISRABAT (Morocco), ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY (Turkey), METU (Turkey), NatureBureau (UK), NEA (Georgia), NENUPHAR (France), NERSC (Norway), OBIBSS (Ukraine), RSHU (Russia), SINOP University (Turkey), University of Malta (Malta), University of Rostok (Germany), University of the Aegean (Greece), University of Zadar (Croatia), UniZKM (Albania), USOF (Bulgaria), USTV (France).

Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

- conservation measures were included in the Management Plans elaborated for the Sites of Community Interest from the Black Sea which take into consideration the habitats degradation and loss, pollution by industrial and agriculture activities, underwater noise pollution, overfishing and overexploitation, the coastal urbanisation, port construction, intensive boat traffic and shipping especially during the summer season.

Administrative, Institutional and Legislative Policy measures

- A total number of 5 Management Plans and Regulations for the Sites of Community Importance ROSCI0197: Plaja submersă Eforie Nord and Eforie Sud, ROSCI0094: Izvoarele submarine Mangalia, ROSCI0273 Marine Zone Capul Tuzla, ROSCI0237: Marine methanogenic structures Sfântu Gheorghe, ROSCI0269: Vama Veche-2 May Marine Reserve have been approved through the Minister's Order.

Activities planned for next year

- impact assessments and surveys in areas with high density of dolphins populations
- improvement of joint environmental monitoring
- implementation of the Management Plans for the Sites of Community Importance located in the Black Sea area
- cross-border cooperation with the riparian countries to the Black Sea
- protection against any form of pollution in the Black Sea
- enhancement of cross-border contacts within the Black Sea Basin including. networking, forums and the establishment of partnerships to develop emergency measures that can be put in place if a major threat to dolphins occurs in the region
- enhancement of knowledge and skills including the exchange of experience and good practice, innovation, capacity-building and joint research
- monitoring of the species covered by the ACCOBAMS, and determination of their migration routes, breeding areas and feeding areas
- public awareness of the need for regional cooperation necessary for the protection of the Black Sea
- increase in cooperation among the stakeholders in the region of the Black Sea
- sustainable management of the Black Sea.
- management of potentially dangerous interactions between humans and dolphins and appropriate action to alleviate any threats to dolphins and to develop guidance concerning such interactions
- decrease in pollution and increase in protection of the marine environment.
- public awareness on issues relating to the protection of Marine Protected Areas

SLOVENIA

Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia ratified in March 2016 the Amendment of ACCOBAMS for the geographical extension to the Atlantic.

UKRAINE

- A draft recommendation on identification of origin of cetaceans bred or kept in captivity had been prepared in cooperation with the ACCOBAMS Secretariat and submitted for the consideration of the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 September – 5 October 2016.
- Draft Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in Ukraine has been prepared and discussed at the meeting of cetaceans experts devoted to the monitoring of marine mammals in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The draft is pending approval of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

Agreement on the Conservation of Population of European Bats (EUROBATS)

BELGIUM

Belgium accepted to take on the role as Chair of the Eurobats Standing Committee after the last MoP. Belgium participated at the meeting of the Standing Committee, but unfortunately was not able to participate fully in meeting of the Advisory Committee.

CZECH REPUBLIC

- December 2015 - Completion of the first phase of study: Evaluation of compensation measures suitable for bats during process of building insulation (implementation of resolution on bats and buiding insulation)
- November 2015 – Finalisation of the evaluation of Bat species diversity in wetlands of international importance
- December 2016 – Completion of the second (final) phase of the study Evaluation of compensation measures suitable for bats during process of building insulation
- Participation at Advisory Committee meeting (April 2016)
- December 2016 - Study to evaluate the impact of road on bats (to implement Resolution 7.9 Impact of Roads and Other Traffic Infrastructures on Bats)
- 2017 – international seminar on bats and buildings insulation (Prague)
- 2017 – participation at Advisory Committee, start of implementation Resolution 7.10 Bat Rescue and Rehabilitation and Resolution 7.14 Quality of assessment and experience and skills of experts.

FRANCE

- France participated in:
 - 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee (18 to 20 April 2016 Zandvoort the Netherlands);
 - 12th Meeting of the Standing Committee (Bonn, Germany, 18 May 2016). France is vice-Chair of the EUROBATS Standing Committee.
- A new national plan of action for bats was written in 2015 and 2016; it will be approved by the end of 2016. This plan came from a comprehensive approach aiming at prioritizing the actions to carry out for threatened species; this prioritization analysis confirmed the relevance of a NAP on bats and especially on the 19 more threatened species.
- In addition, at the initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and the Sea, a national guide entitled "Bats and transport infrastructure", was published in 2016. This guide is based on the recommendations of Eurobats.

ITALY

- Italy has worked extensively to make progress with the implementation of the EUROBATS Agreement both at international and national levels. Of the 33 species recognized for the country, some await taxonomic clarification, as with Italian populations of Natterer's bats which, based on recent molecular analysis, would represent a separate species. Italy produced the Italian Red List of vertebrates and within that framework the status of all bat populations was assessed. Significant problems persist, as witnessed by the fact that one species (*Rhinolophus blasii*) is regionally extinct, one is critically endangered and another five are endangered. A recent molecular study published in the Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society arising from cooperation among Italian, Polish and Czech researchers detected the presence of the Maghrebian mouse-eared bat (*Myotis punicus*) in Sicily. So far the species was only known for Sardinia within the Italian territory.
- Research carried out in the country has covered many aspects of bat natural history and conservation biology, from interspecific social bonds in colonies to modelling the landscape effects of wind turbines. The Environment Ministry has also funded a project carried out at Naples University Federico II, whose aim was to update the distribution and conservation status of Italian bats as well as the identification of monitoring and management strategies. The Ministry has also worked on an "National Action Plan on Sustainable Use of Pesticides" with important implications for bat conservation.
- The Ministry is also cooperating with Sardinia's regional authorities and scientific societies to define the conservation status of *Myotis punicus* in Sardinia to increase conservation efforts for this species, if needed also by expanding the regional Natura 2000 network. A technical document on bat monitoring on mammals, also including bats, was recently produced in cooperation with the Italian Mammal Society and the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.
- The Italian Chiroptera Research Group recently issued national guidelines for the consideration of bats in wind farm development, and has joined the "Pan-European bat monitoring project". Moreover, in 2014 the same association has promoted a workshop on bat monitoring to inform the Italian bat workers on the ongoing project about the development of trend indicators for bat populations in Europe and train them on the use of appropriate software to assess population trends. In late 2015 the National Bat Conference was held in Trento featuring many scientific contributions by researchers from all over the country.
- Raising awareness on the importance of preserving bats has been the focus of many activities involving the general public, among which numerous bat nights across the country carried out by researchers and bat enthusiasts, two new popular books, the continuation of a very successful bat box campaign, and a new English version of the pages devoted to bats of the Environment Ministry website.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands hosted the Advisory meeting for Eurobats.

NORWAY

Norway has contributed regularly with information to EUROBATS and participates in all the AC meetings. The national monitoring program continues and a broad approach to issues forms the basis for both government and NGO collaboration in outreach and research.

POLAND

Noteworthy is the fact that the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Katowice acquired the EU funds to rescue one of the biggest winter habitats in Poland, the Szachownica Cave (every year, about 2,800 bats hibernate there). The project is implemented in the years 2014-2017, in consultation with the Central Mining Institute and the National Society for the Protection of Bats (OTON).

ROMANIA

Scientific Research and Monitoring

Project LIFE08 NAT/RO/000504 “Bat conservation in Craiului Forest, Bihor County and Trascău Mountains”, was co-financed by the Life Programme of the European Union. The beneficiary was the Local Environmental Protection Agency of Bihor County. Partners: the Romanian Bat Protection Association and “Emil Racoviță” Institute of Speleology.

Education and Public Awareness

- public awareness activities (meetings with stakeholders, local authorities, NGOs, custodians) on the protection of bats
- guideline for the elaboration of Management Plans of underground bat roosts and surrounding habitats, which could be used in the future at national level
- information boards were placed in front of 15 caves, which show the importance of bats populations
- informative materials (books, brochures, leaflets, documentary) were created, for changing the negative attitude against bats species
- increase in the level of knowledge and making aware the local communities on the importance of bats protection
- a network of specialists was established for increasing the sustainability and efficiency of bat survey, monitoring and conservation actions
- press-release, Power Point presentations in schools
- leaflets and posters with the conservation measures for bats were edited and disseminated
- partnerships of the Local Environmental Protection Agencies, “Emil Racoviță” Institute of Speleology, with the Schools and NGOs for educational activities
- dissemination of good practices and the gained experiences

Capacity Building

- Increasing and strengthening the institutional capacity of the Institute of Speleology “Emil Racoviță”

International Cooperation

- partnerships between the Institute of Speleology “Emil Racoviță” and other speleology institutes from EU.

Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

- conservation measures were included in the Management Plans elaborated for the Sites of Community Interest important for bats species which take into account the habitats degradation and loss, pollution by industrial and agriculture activities.
- Management Plans of 7 bat species were elaborated
- 15 caves were closed in a bat-friendly way, to minimize the disturbance of bat colonies
- in the most important caves, measures were taken to avoid the disturbance of bats species
- lighting conditions were modified in 3 caves
- warning sign were placed in 40 caves, to strictly prohibit the access to the bat colonies located in the cave
- 9 important underground habitats were cleaned up from waste
- The project “Long term conservation of bats in their anthropic environment by high involvement of local communities” was implemented during the period 2014-2016 . Beneficiary was the Romanian Bat Protection Association. Due to the human activities of renovation/restoration of the buildings, the building dwelling bats are facing with many threats, so urgent protection measures were needed. The main goal of the project was to establish proper conditions for bats from anthropic areas.

- protection of the most threatened bat colonies of buildings from 6 counties in Romania
 - 5 buildings were modified in bat friendly way, 50 accommodation were evaluated and classified based on bats threats
 - The project "*Help-Line – save the bats, help peopes*" was implemented during the period 2015-2016. Beneficiary was the Romanian Bat Protection Association and the partners were the Carpatina Ardeleană Society Satu Mare and Multisalva Association. The project was established a sustainable system for the protection of bats species that bothers owners of buildings in Bucharest, Cluj, Constanța, Iași, Satu Mare, Sibiu. It was established a service of "green telephone" which can be called by anyone in case of problem with bats species.
 - A Center for the rehabilitation of the bat species located in Satu Mare County and coordinated by the Transylvanian Carpathian Society was created.

Administrative, Institutional and Legislative Policy measures

- Approving through the Minister's Order Management Plans and Regulations for all the Sites of Community Importance important for bats species.

Activities planned for next year

- Improve joint environmental monitoring of bats species
- implementation of the Management Plans for the Sites of Community Importance where bats species exist
- impact assessments in areas with high density of bats populations
- cross-border cooperation
- protection against any type of pollution
- enhance knowledge and skills including the exchange of experience and good practice, innovation, capacity-building and joint research
- monitor the species covered by the EUROBATS, and to determine their migration routes, breeding and feeding areas
- raising public awareness of the need for regional cooperation necessary for the protection of bats populations
- manage potentially interactions between humans and bats species and to take appropriate action to alleviate any threats to bats.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The 19th International night of Bats, in Gallery of Natural History Museum, Kalemegdan, Belgrade, was organized by Natural History Museum, Belgrade and Mustela, the Wildlife Conservation Society. The main goal of INOB is popularization of this flying mammals, their specific way of life and incorporating the light in supernatural stories of them. This is the 14th time to organize this in Serbia.

SLOVAKIA

Regular monitoring of important sites for bats is organized by relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations. They also provided inventory consultations in cases of occurrence of bats in buildings and during insulation of blocks of flats, bat boxes were installed on these buildings. Various activities during International Bat Night are organized in different parts of the country. Experts participated in development of the Action Plan for conservation of bats in the EU.

SWEDEN

Continuous support of participation in all Advisory Committee Meetings as well as in all Meetings of Parties with the appointed counselor. At MoP 2014, Sweden became member of the Standing Committee during the next quadrennium, also representing the north-east countries of the Eurobats Agreement. Sweden has sponsored the participation in the Standing Committee from then on for the appointed counselor.

UKRAINE

Ukraine attended:

- the 12th Meeting of the Standing Committee (18 May 2016, Bonn, Germany);
- the 21th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (18–20 April 2016, Zandvoort, The Netherlands) to EUROBATS.

Memoranda of Understanding for conservation of specific species

Birds

- Aquatic Warbler

FRANCE

The National Action Plan for Aquatic Warbler 2010-2014 has been evaluated. The result of this analysis has been presented to the national board for the protection of nature (Conseil National de Protection de la Nature – CNPN) on September 23th 2016. A summary of this assessment will be translated into English so as to provide the information to all the parties concerned by the international plan.

The French ministry of Environment has already planned a new national action plan the content of which will be designed in 2017. This new plan could be part of a broader multi-species plan “Reedbed’s Birds” encompassing several species sharing this habitat.

The new action plan will be focussed on three main targets :

- carry on the French commitment taken at the third meeting of the MoU:
 - continue the monitoring on the migration sites;
 - provide indicators for breeding success;
- make managers of natural sites aware of the staging sites of the Aquatic Warbler;
- adapt the action plan, principally in the Natura 2000 sites, so as to maintain or increase the conservation status of those sites in order to meet the Aquatic Warbler’s requirements.

POLAND

Work on improvement habitats for Aquatic Warbler is being continued. The quality of them is being improved by bush removal and mowing of the meadows on which farming had been abandoned.

Agri-Environment-Climate Scheme, based on new EU financial perspective (2014-2020), ensures financing management of habitats of Aquatic Warbler.

- Middle-European Great Bustard

CZECH REPUBLIC

- New NFP nominated

HUNGARY

Hungary will participate in an international LIFE+ project to save the Great Bustard population: Cross-border protection of the Great Bustard in Central Europe. The new LIFE+ project will start in 2016. In the frame of this project, a total of 21 km of medium-voltage power lines will be buried under the ground in the Upper-Kiskunság region (Kiskunság National Park); a systematic predator management will be implemented on key Great Bustard habitats in Hungary; and a systematic monitoring of the Great Bustard populations will be carried out by the 3 National Park Directorates as beneficiaries of the project (Bükki NP, Kiskunság NP, Körös-Maros NP). Beside these activities there are some minor activities, such as monitoring of brown hare population, monitoring of protected bird species, etc. This LIFE project contributes to implement the Great Bustard MoU.

SLOVAKIA

Special measures on conservation of habitats of Great Bustard have been introduced into the Programme of Rural Development in Slovakia 2014-2020.

- High Andean Flamingos

FRANCE

France attended the first Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Andean Flamingos”, which was held in Cusco, Peru, 26 to 28 April 2016, on request of the EU Program TAIEF (Environmental Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Facility). The results of research programs on flamingos developed by Tour du Valat Research Center were presented during the meeting.

- Raptors (Birds of Prey)

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Participation at the 2MOs of MoU (Trondheim, Norway)
- Start of the work of WG for implementation of Raptors MoU
- 2016 - Start of National Raptors Conservation Strategy preparation (Czech Bird Society+ MoE+Nature Conservation Agency)
- 2017 – Completion of National Raptors Conservation Strategy

FRANCE

France attended:

- the second meeting of the Signatories (MoS2) held in Trondheim (Norway) in October 2015. One French expert was appointed to the TAG by this meeting.
- the Regional Action Planning Workshop for Europe for the development of a Multi-species Action Plan to conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) held alongside a Flyway Action Planning Meeting for the Cinereous Vulture Monfrague, Spain, 25 – 29 October 2016.

HUNGARY

- In the frame of some international projects, in Hungary there is a long-term tradition to deploy satellite transmitters to different raptor species (i.e. eastern imperial eagle, saker or red-footed falcon). According to the “Conservation of the Red-footed Falcon in the Carpathian Basin” LIFE+ project; one of the main activity is to deploy radio transmitters to Red-footed Falcon. The deployment of satellite transmitters was started in 2016 in Kazakhstan by Hungarian experts. Other activities: secure nests; improve feeding habitat conditions; preparation of a handbook and update of the National Action Plan, etc.
- In the past years, in Hungary there were some on-going actions against the illegal poisoning of wildlife: official cooperation between the ministry responsible for nature conservation and Birdlife Hungary to monitor raptor populations jointly; employment of a special dog unit belonging to Birdlife Hungary to increase detection rate of poisoned carcasses and illegal poison stores; co-operation with zoos & wildlife rescue centres: collecting and possibly saving and releasing poisoned birds, educating rangers and volunteers how to first aid poisoned birds; building data base and mapping poisoning cases; HELICON LIFE project against illegal poisoning; police investigations and court cases in several cases; communications and public awareness raising among farmers and hunters, training of prosecutors and judges. A new LIFE+ project will start in 2016: Conservation of the eastern imperial eagle by decreasing human-caused mortality in the Pannonian Region; and the abovementioned activities will continue not only in Hungary but other countries in the Pannonian region (Austria, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovakia), too. The main objective of the project PannonEagle Life is to increase the

population of the Eastern Imperial Eagle in the Pannonian Region through significantly decreasing the non-natural mortality caused by persecution incidents.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands contributes to the research of the Vulture Crisis.

NORWAY

On the follow up of work of the Raptors agreement (Birds of prey), the Norwegian Environment Agency has sponsored several reports, i.e. one of snowy owl ecology and status in Norway (http://birdlife.no/prosjekter/rapporter/2016_04_NOF.pdf), one on eagle owl status in Norway (http://birdlife.no/prosjekter/rapporter/2014_08_NOF.pdf) and one on the status of golden eagle in Norway (http://birdlife.no/prosjekter/rapporter/2015_07_NOF.pdf).

ROMANIA

Scientific Research and Monitoring

- initiation of the “Wintering Birds of Prey Monitoring Programme” by the “Milvus Group” Bird and Nature Protection Association the aims of which are the mapping of species distribution and winter populations levels in different regions of Romania and the long term monitoring of these populations
- follow-up of the changes of the breeding, migratory or wintering populations in order to detect the negative trends in time and take the necessary steps for their protection.
- identification of spatial data requirements and assessment of existing national and transnational data sets.
- harmonization of monitoring and data collection methods.
- collection of data on species and habitats in the Carpathians and their distribution.
- analysis of the collected data regarding the raptors species
- development and establishment of a Carpathian Red List of raptors species and habitats

Education and Public Awareness

- development by the project “*For nature and local communities – the bases for a Natura 2000 integrated management in Hârtibaciu – Târnavă Mare area*”, of a series of educational activities regarding raptors species from Natura 2000 sites. The project was co-financed by the European Union Regional Fund implemented by WWF Romania in partnership with ADEPT Foundation, Mihai Eminescu Trust, Local Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu and EcoTur Sibiu.
- Setting-up of a web-based data catalogue.
- Inclusion of the collected data in the Carpathian Protected Areas Clearing House Mechanism already established that is the basis for the Carpathian Joint Biodiversity Information System (CJBIS).
- establishment of the geo-web reference interactive CJBIS
- public awareness activities (200 media releases, meetings with stakeholders, local authorities, NGOs, custodians, Power Point presentations in schools, explanation of the use of the CJBIS to protected areas managers and other stakeholders through the organisation of the Carpathian Protected Areas conference)
- creation and dissemination of informative materials (books, brochures, leaflets, posters, documentary) for changing the negative attitude against the raptors species
- increase in the level of knowledge and making aware the local communities on the importance of raptors protection
- production of a short documentary film about *Aquila pomarina*.
- provision of 54 notice boards in the target Special Protection Areas
- production and dissemination of 5000 posters, 7500 booklets and 500 multimedia DVD's about *Aquila pomarina* and its conservation.

- development of partnerships of the Local Environmental Protection Agencies, with schools and NGOs for educational activities; national and local partners and scientific institutions have joined forces to contribute to the improvement of connectivity and continuity of the largest mountain range of Europe, harbouring an unique natural heritage and acted as a major ecological link within Europe.
- dissemination of good practices
- websites available for the custodians of the natural protected areas important for raptors species
- development by the Local Environmental Protection Agency Bihor, in partnership with the Association for the Protection of Birds and Nature "Milvus Group" and the National Environmental Guard - Bihor County Commisariat of environmental education activity in the secondary schools and installed of artificial boxes for Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*). The children had been informed of the Natura 2000 ROSPA0103 Valea Alceului and why it needs Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*) to be protected by placing artificial nests.

International Cooperation

- international cooperation between Romania and Hungary regarding the raptors protection
- Local Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu together with 16 international, national and local authorities, organizations and scientific institutions have joined forces to contribute to the protection and development of the Carpathian mountain region, in the project „*Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians*” BioREGIO Carpathians. The project BioREGIO Carpathians enhanced the integrated management of protected areas and natural assets of the Carpathian mountains. Sustainable regional development were promoted and ecological connectivity overcame legal and ecological barriers while considering transboundary and transnational needs. BioREGIO was building on the existing framework of the Carpathian Convention, its Biodiversity Protocol and other related transnational networks and initiatives.

Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

- implementation of the LIFE Project „*Conservation of Aquila pomarina in Romania*” (LIFE08/NAT/RO/000501) by the Local Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu together with the Association for Bird and Nature Protection “Milvus Group” and the Romanian Ornithological Society. The main objective of the project was to ensure conditions to achieve and maintain favorable conservation status for 22,2 % of the European Union’s *Aquila pomarina* population.
- elaboration and approval of the National Action Plan and the Strategy for the conservation of *Aquila pomarina* population by the Minister’s Order.
- up-date of the International Action Plan based on experts involvement/inclusion of conservation measures in the Management Plans elaborated for the Sites of Community Interest important for raptors species which take into account the habitats degradation and loss, pollution by industrial and agriculture activities.
- placement of out nesting platforms in safe areas (more than 100 new nesting platforms were in place)
- management of pastures to enhance habitat quality
- preparation of special conservation measures for applying compensatory payments by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- checking of all power lines in the key Special Protection Areas and insulation of the 1,500 most dangerous pylons which were made eagle-friendly to avoid electrocution; electrocution were reduced by 90% in the key areas for raptors populations.
- protection of nests: more than 100 nests were stabilized, more than 75 nests were protected by buffer zones from forestry activities, more than 20 nests were protected by barriers set out on key areas for raptors species.

- direct persecution caused by hunters and gamekeepers was reduced with 50% in the 12 target Special Protection Areas.

Administrative, Institutional and Legislative Policy measures

- approbation through Minister's Order of Management Plans and Regulations for all the Sites of Community Importance important for raptors species.
- approbation of the National Action Plan and the National Strategy for the conservation of *Aquila pomarina*.

Activities planned for next year

- implementation of the Management Plans and the Regulations for the Sites of Community Importance where the birds of prey exist
- implementation of the National Action Plan and the National Strategy for the conservation of *Aquila pomarina*
- protection of the birds of prey against the habitats loss and degradation
- improvement of joint environmental monitoring of raptors species
- enhancement of knowledge and skills including the exchange of experience and good practice, innovation, capacity-building and joint research
- public awareness of the need for regional cooperation necessary for the protection of raptors populations.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Realization of project "Education and dialog as the key instruments for protection of Great falcons in Serbia" in 2015, has been done by NVO Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia and financed by Ministry.

SLOVAKIA

Satellite telemetry of *Aquila pomarina* organized for several years and specialized organizations participated in preparation of the Action Plan for protection of *Aquila pomarina*. A Slovak-Hungarian LIFE project on conservation of *Falco vespertinus* in the Carpathian basin has been implemented. Monitoring and measures to improve nesting conditions for raptors, especially *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Aquila chrysaetos*, *Aquila pomarina*, *Aquila heliaca*, *Falco peregrinus*, *Falco cherrug*, *Falco tinnunculus* are provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations on regular basis. For injured birds of prey treatment is provided in a system of rescue facilities.

SWEDEN

Sweden became Signatory to the MoU in 2013.

UKRAINE

Ukraine's signing of the Raptors MoU is currently under consideration.

Marine species

- Marine Turtles IOSEA

FRANCE

France, launched in 2015 the national action plan for the conservation of marine turtles of French territories in the Indian Ocean: Reunion, Mayotte and the Scattered islands. IOSEA secretariat is a member of the steering committee. This plan follows the previous one 2010-2015.

- Marine turtles: Implementation of the Convention in the Mediterranean region

FRANCE (CESTMed, IFREMER, RTMMF) is implementing a research action about mitigating bycatch within a multispecies pilot programme (sea turtles, cetaceans, marine birds),

coordinated by ACCOBAMS executive secretary and FAO GFCM and in partnership with Spain/Balearic islands (KAI MARINE SERVICE).

France (AAMP, Marine protected areas agency) is preparing an Interreg Mediterranean project about MPA and marine Megafauna (sea turtles, marine mammals, marine birds).

- Sharks

FRANCE

The signing of the MoU sharks by France is still under discussion.

ITALY

Italy is a signatory state of the Shark MoU since 2011 Italy is an active member of the CMS Shark MoU, recognizing the importance of this instrument to improve the protection and management of migratory elasmobranchs.

- National initiatives on shark conservation
 - In the 2010 the Italian Ministry of the Environment established a Technical Panel on the protection and management of cartilaginous fish in the national seas Italian. The Panel is constituted by delegates of the Ministry of the Environment, of the Ministry of the Agricultural, Forestry and Food Policies, scientific experts, environmental NGOs and stakeholders. The main objective of the technical panel is to foster the definition and the adoption of a Italian Action of Plan on cartilaginous fishes, following the ratification of Conventions and international agreements such as the FAO IPOA-Shark.
- The involvement of Italy at EU level
 - Italy is directly involved in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which provides the framework for sustainable management of commercial fish species, including cartilaginous fishes, within EU waters. Some chondrichthyans are, in particular, considered prohibited species.
 - The EU finning ban Council Regulation (EC No 1185/2003) prohibits the removal of shark fins at sea. Moreover, the European Commission approved the development of a European plan of action for the conservation of cartilaginous fish (Resolution EC 05/02/2009). Italy was a leading voice in the approving process of both these acts.
- The involvement of Italy at International level
 - Italy is directly involved in international fora aiming the improvement of the conservation and management of the cartilaginous fishes. In particular within the Barcelona Convention, the GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Sea) of the FAO, ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas), CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), the CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) Shark MoU.
 - Barcelona Convention Italy actively participate to the redaction of the Action Plan for the Conservation of cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyans) for the Mediterranean.
 - *General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Sea (GFCM)*. Italy is a leader state of the GFCM in order to develop a sustainable management of fishing activities in the Mediterranean. Italy provides relevant data on the catches of elasmobranch species .
 - *International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)*. Italy actively joins in the ICCAT and it was involved for the banning of finning, the requirement to record catches to species level, and the prohibiting of the landing and sale of several species of sharks.
 - *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)*. As signatory state of the CITES agreement, Italy continues to consider it an important tool for the sustainable utilization of species of commercial interest. In according with the past Italian efforts for the protection of the cartilaginous fishes, Italy will continue to critically evaluate and possibly support all shark listing proposals within the CITES.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has participated in the MOS of the MOU sharks

The Netherlands has written a national action plan on sharks.

The Netherlands has assigned a nature reserve for sharks and rays in Saba.

ROMANIA

Scientific Research and Monitoring

- Inventory and monitoring of the spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) species from the Black Sea
- Activities already mentioned at the bullet points 3 to 16 in the paragraph regarding research and monitoring for ACCOBAMS which are also relevant for the sharks.

Education and Public Awareness

- public awareness activities (meetings with stakeholders, local authorities, NGOs, custodians) on the protection of spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) press-release, exhibitions, Power Point presentations in schools
- leaflets and posters with the conservation measures for spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) were edited and disseminated
- partnerships of the Local Environmental Protection Agency Constanța with the High Schools and NGOs for educational activities

Capacity Building

- See the activities already mentioned for this point in the paragraph regarding ACCOBAMS.

International Cooperation

- See the activities already mentioned for this point in the paragraph regarding ACCOBAMS.

Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

- See the activities already mentioned for this point in the paragraph regarding ACCOBAMS.

Administrative, Institutional and Legislative Policy measures

- See the activities already mentioned for this point in the paragraph regarding ACCOBAMS.

Activities planned for next year

- impact assessments and surveys in areas with high density of spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) populations
- monitoring the spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) to determine their migration routes and feeding areas
- manage potentially dangerous interactions between humans and the spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), to take appropriate action to alleviate any threats and to develop guidance concerning such interactions
- See the activities already mentioned for this point at the bullet points 3 to 7, 9 to 11 and 13 to 14 in the paragraph regarding ACCOBAMS

2. Activities related to:

- *Scientific Research and Monitoring*

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Scientific studies of fauna and monitoring in the special protected natural areas of Armenia are permanently being carried out. As a result, it was gathered and developed brief information of species composition of the animals met in Armenia and their distribution in the special protected natural areas. Analytical works with the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan State University and other institutes of the field are being implemented.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The project “Monitoring of Migration of Birds and Bats in the way of permanent marking with aluminium and colour marks (rings)”, First phase for 2016 (there are planned phases for 2017 and 2018), is coordinated by Natural History Museum, Belgrade, actually Centre for marking of animals inside the Museum. The main goals of the project are:

- monitoring of migration of birds and bats in territory of Serbia
- continuing the monitoring of migratory species and collecting data of those for latter use in servicing of international conventions and agreements
- studying the way of migration, staying of birds and bats during the transfer to the places of wintering and reproduction
- education and Public Awareness

There are many researches, concerning the birds and bats also by method of marking with colour marks and wings marks that are represented by specific researching activity and are coordinated by Centre for marking of animals inside the Museum, Belgrade:

- The project “Status and analysis of population of horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris* L., 1758) in Serbia: Protection problems and endangerment degree”, was realized in 2015 also, by Natural History Museum and financed by Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection
- Realization of the next projects (by Natural History Museum and financed by Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection) has been started (2016)
- “Atlas of Migratory Species of Birds and bats of Serbia”
- “Determination of abundance and genetic diversity of three-toed woodpecker”
- “Monitoring of populations and shelters of bats in Serbia”.

FRANCE

See actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to AEWA and Aquatic Warbler MoU.

ITALY

Some projects related to marine mammals protection were implemented in the period. 2014-2016:

1. “Environmental pollutants and related effects in central nervous system and on immunitarian system in stranded cetaceans - le Sentinelle del Mare” – Teramo University
2. “Distribution and abundance (relative and absolute) of sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Risso’s dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) e Cuvier’s beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) in Pelagos Sanctuary, considering new environmental changes and anthropic pressure” - Polytechnic Milan University
3. “Microplastic in the Mediterranean – an emerging problem – 2nd year: impact on Fin whale as environmental descriptor” – Siena University
4. “Proposal for new Aerial Surveys in the Central and Southern Tyrrhenian Sea” – IWC Scientific Committee, ISPRA, Tethys Research Institute

5. "Enhancement and integration of functional facilities in National task force on stranded cetaceans" – Padua University, Pavia University, Civic Natural History of Milan
6. "Presence, distribution and abundance of cetaceans in the seas around Italy: proposal for new aerial surveys in the Strait of Sicily, Central Mediterranean Sea" – IWC Scientific Committee, ISPRA, Tethys Research Institute
7. Satellite telemetry applied to fin whales in the Mediterranean Sea: integration to tag whales in the Sicily Straits in winter 2014/2015 - IWC Scientific Committee, ISPRA, Tethys Research Institute
8. "Strengthening of diagnostic capacity of Cetaceans Strandings Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), with particular reference to mortality due to anthropogenic causes" – Padua University
9. "Plastic Pelagos 2014: Evaluation on presence and effects of "Marine Litter" marine organism in the Mediterranean, scientific survey in the Pelagos Sanctuary – Siena University

POLAND

The programme for monitoring birds in Poland coordinated by Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection is still expanding. At present (2016) the subject of this programme is near 200 bird species, including 170 species of breeding birds, 24 species of wintering birds and 3 species of occasional migrants.

In 2015 the expanded second edition of breeding birds monitoring manual was published by the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection. It includes descriptions of monitoring methods for over 100 bird species breeding in Poland and being subjects of protection within Natura 2000 areas. The manual was prepared by team of 91 top Polish experts.

ROMANIA

See actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs.

SLOVAKIA

Special publications on monitoring of species of European importance (including birds and bats) were published by the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic in 2015 as a result of projects dedicated to monitoring of habitats and species implemented in the reporting period.

Monitoring of bats, great bustard, waterbirds and raptors is a part of annual work plans of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and of relevant NGOs.

SWEDEN

AEWA

- Funding of research projects for increasing knowledge of migration patterns and whereabouts during wintering for Taiga Bean goose
- Funding of research projects especially aimed at increasing knowledge about ducks and geese, in relation to adaptive harvest management.
- New monitoring programme for breeding coastal seabirds
- LWfG (a choice)
 - Comprehensive genetic study, results expected during winter 2016
 - Mapping of migration habits (color ringing and satellite transmitters)
 - Mapping of historical sites to develop plans for restoration

EUROBATS

- Sweden encourages research and monitoring and supports the County Administration Boards in their work with bats. Sweden also supports the Swedish Species Information Centre in recording status reports of bats, as well as keeping up the Red Data Lists on bats.

- Research has been carried out on forest bat ecology, colony structure and site fidelity of bats using bat boxes and bat migration (co-operative project).
- Monitoring activities on bats consist of yearly surveying of certain hibernation sites on a yearly basis as well as active and passive ultrasound detector monitoring at many locations throughout the country.
- Special monitoring schemes are carried out at most planned sites for wind turbines.
- Certain training courses of monitoring and bat ecology have also been carried out.

- Education and Public Awareness

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia has undertaken a number of activities to enhance public awareness on environmental issues. There is a Public Relations Department within the Ministry's structure assigned with the primary task of devising and implementing the Ministry's information policies. The Department ensures communication with the mass media organizes meetings for the Ministry's Department Heads with journalists and provides feedback to the publications in the printed press. Apart from that, the Ministry comprises an Information Analysis Center, which is responsible for a number of activities that carried out to strengthen the accessibility and transparency of the information delivered. The Center is also responsible for the maintenance of the trilingual website of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia. On the website, visitors can get information about the projects carried out by the Ministry, environmental legislation, environmental monitoring data, inspectoral operations, tendered positions to fill in vacancies, as well as the annual reports of the Ministry and ministerial statements. In addition, the website contains announcements about the projects and programs forwarded for environmental expert review, and about the arrangement of public hearings.

FRANCE

Eurobats: at the initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and the Sea, a national guide entitled "Bats and transport infrastructure", was published in 2016. This guide is based on the recommendations of Eurobats.

HUNGARY

The "Life watching (Vadonleső) Program" of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture announces the mammal of the year in every year. In 2016 the mammals of the year are the bats. 28 bat species live in Hungary, all of them are protected or strictly protected. The Life watching (Vadonleső) Program started a media campaign to reduce prejudices about the bats, in order to effectively protect the building residential colonies. We invite pop musicians and writers to promote the bats. Children story-writing competition was announced too. In this year we give many articles and reports about bats species.

POLAND

In 2016 the Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP) has launched an Internet platform www.ornitho.pl which serves as a tool for gathering data on distribution and number of birds in Poland. The special application for mobile devices is also available.

ROMANIA

In addition to actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs:

- websites available for the custodians of the natural protected areas
- celebration of: the "International Day of Biodiversity", the "World Environment Day", the "International Black Sea Day" by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, the Local Environment Protection Agencies, the National Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with NGOs, the School Inspectorates.

SLOVAKIA

The World Migratory Birds Day is promoted every year and relevant institutions organize various events in different parts of the country.

Education and public awareness activities are included in all relevant projects implemented during reporting period. For example publications on Special Protection Areas, on principles of protection of species of European importance, exhibitions, films, information boards, leaflets, lectures, etc.

SWEDEN

AEWA

- LWfG: Information campaigns to increase awareness among hunters and wildlife managers at all important sites

EUROBATS

- Monitoring is carried out as well as awareness rising of the general public through web sites, bat events and encouraging amateur bat scientists.
- General supports for the educational activities of relevant NGOs and the International Bat Night have been carried out. Those activities have included bat walks and talks, bat exhibition, producing leaflets and up-to-date web pages on bats.
- Support for NGOs and County Boards for relevant activities and information. Certain training courses of monitoring and bat ecology have also been carried out.

- Capacity Building

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

International organizations have played a significant role in expansion, development and protection of the special protected natural areas of the Republic of Armenia which strengthened their management system and capacities.

FRANCE

- AEWA: The project RESSOURCE includes five components one of which regards capacity strengthening.

ROMANIA

In addition to actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs:

- The institutional capacity of the National Environmental Protection Agency and of the Local Environmental Protection Agencies were increased and strengthened.

SLOVAKIA

Capacity building activities have been included in relevant projects implemented by the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.

- International Cooperation

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

- The Republic of Armenia is a party of 22 international treaties and protocols in the environmental field and the RA Ministry of Nature Protection implements substantial works on fulfillment of their provisions.
- The cooperation with global and regional international structures has been continued including the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union (EU), Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus (RECC), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), German Development Bank (KfW), World Wide Fund for

Nature (WWF), Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) and a number of foreign states in the field of development, negotiation, approval, coordination and implementation of international projects.

- In the field of biodiversity conservation efficient cooperation is underway with the Federal Republic of Germany, in particular with the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the KfW Development Bank. The mentioned structures together with the WWF and CI have established the Caucasus Nature Fund with the aim to support effective protection of SPNAs in the Caucasus Ecoregion, with particular focus on:
 - management of national parks, reserves and sanctuaries,
 - protection of landscapes and natural resources,
 - strengthening cooperation between managing bodies and other organizations dealing with environmental management,
 - supporting organizations, legal authorities and agencies dealing with the functions compliant with the objectives of the Fund.

FRANCE

See actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to AEWA, Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade of Birds, High Andean Flamingos MoU.

POLAND

- In January 2016, just like in previous years, the bats were counted at the “Nietoperek” reserve – one of the largest European winter habitats for bats. The study was attended by the chiropterologists from Poland (31 persons) and from Great Britain (11 persons), Netherlands (9 persons), Germany (8 persons), Belgium (5 persons), Sweden (2 persons), and Malta (1 person).
- In 2015 a Polish- German conference was organized for parties crucial to protection of the Osprey in Poland, which was attended by representatives of foresters and energy holding companies. Nesting platforms for the Osprey are being installed in cooperation with energy holding companies to protect birds and their nests from electrocution on power lines.

ROMANIA

See actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs.

SLOVAKIA

Slovak organizations cooperate on projects with neighboring countries and partner organizations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine.

SWEDEN

AEWA

- Cooperation with Russia within the national LWfG SAP for the captive breeding program.
- Funding of monitoring efforts within the African Initiative
- National authorities, Scientists as well as NGO’s in collaboration regarding data gathering (and analysis) and conservation efforts. Numerous projects both within international treaties and directives as well as smaller projects/efforts

EUROBATS

- Active participation at the Advisory and the Standing Committees and at some scientific conferences. Participation in several European and Scandinavian bat projects on e.g. migration. Bat workers (scientists as well as amateurs) have contacts with colleagues abroad. A co-operation on bat migration around the Baltic area is an ongoing project.

- Protection of Migratory Species, conservation measures

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Biodiversity conservation in Armenia is implemented mainly in the specially protected nature areas, where 60-70% of the species composition of the flora and fauna is concentrated including the overwhelming majority of rare, critically endangered, threatened and endemic species.

The SPNAs in Armenia are represented by state reserve, national parks, state sanctuaries and natural monuments. They have been established on the lands of state property and are managed by state organizations. The natural monuments, which are located on the lands of both state and community property, are still not properly managed due to the absence of respective management mechanisms.

At present in Armenia the total territory covered by SPNAs in Armenia makes 387,054 ha, which comprises 13.1% of the total territory of Armenia. At present the SPNAs of Armenia are as follows:

- 3 state reserves (Khosrov, Shikahogh and Erebuni), which cover the territory of 35,439.6 ha making 1.19% of the total territory of Armenia;
- 4 national parks (Sevan, Dilijan, Arpi Lake and Arevik), which cover the territory of 236 802.1 ha making 7.96 % of the total territory of Armenia;
- 232 natural monuments;
- 27 state sanctuaries, which cover the territory of 114,812.7 ha making 3.95 % of the total territory of Armenia;

BELGIUM

- Eurobats

Conservation measures are planned in the context of the implementation of the EU Habitats directive.

In Flanders, a general species protection program for bats is under development. The specific goals and knowledge gaps have been determined and discussed with stakeholders, specific measures have yet to be determined with a view of formal approval of the protection program next year.

- AEWA

A species protection programme was endorsed for the corncrake and is in implementation since 20 January 2016. A species protection programme for the Eurasian bittern is being developed and is planned to be endorsed at the end of 2015.

FRANCE

France is part of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) which has been established according to CMS Resolution 11.16. As such, France attended the first MIKT meeting (Cairo, Egypt, 12-15 July 2016).

AEWA: The project RESSOURCE includes five components out of which : (i) Monitoring of the resource : « Waterbirds »; (ii) Conservation of the resource : « Waterbirds » and integrated management of wetlands; (iii) Knowledge and sustainable use of the resource : « Waterbirds.

ITALY

- Protection of migratory birds
 1. CMS Resolution 11.15 Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds
 - The European Commission is evaluating the introduction of a ban on lead shot on a Union-wide basis. In December 2015 the European Commission requested to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to prepare e restriction proposals for the use of lead pellets in hunting ammunition. In Apr-Jul 2016, ECHA opened a call for evidences to acquire information and comments. A workshop will be held in Helsinki

on September 29, 2016, to discuss the more controversial aspects with experts and stakeholders (Italian experts are invited to participate).

- Through conferences and public events both in Italy and abroad, the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) is raising awareness on the risks related to the use of lead ammunition for hunting, to promote the use of non-toxic alternatives.
- In 2015 ISPRA published a technical report on the evaluation of potential risks related to the use pesticides in Natura 2000 sites. This document is part of a national strategy for a sustainable use of pesticides (decree 22 Dec 2014, issued by the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment).

2. CMS Resolution 11.16 on the Prevention of Illegal killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

- To fulfil the obligation under the 4th operational paragraph of CMS Resolution 11.16, in 2015 the Italian Ministry for the Environment promoted the drafting of a national National Action Plan on the prevention of illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds. A first draft of the plan was discussed with relevant institutions and stakeholders in a workshop held on June 9-10, 2016. Currently, a formal approval process of the plan is ongoing; the final approval is expected before the end of 2016.
- On May 16-19, 2016, the State Forestry Corps organized a IMPEL Green IRI Initiative (<http://www.impel.eu>) in Italy (Reggio Calabria, Messina Strait) to share experience and promote capacity building and best practices in the repression of IKB.

- Protection of Marine mammals

Measures taken by Italy concern:

- consolidation of National marine mammals Stranding Network
- new establishment of marine protected areas
- measures to reduce the impact of shipping, off-shore and tourism activities
- implementation of the "Code of Conduct" for "whale watching" activities and recreational boats
- education and awareness campaigns for public, professionals and stakeholders
- monitoring of bycatch
- development of national monitoring programs to assess numbers and distribution of the species
- development of national scientific researches programs concerning species habitat and anthropic pressure factors
- International Cooperation
- Administrative, Institutional & Legislative / Policy measures

Most of above mentioned measures were implemented and/or adopted with a specific focus on **Pelagos Sanctuary** area (Pelagos Sanctuary international Agreement).

Referring to:

- implementation of the "Code of Conduct" for "whale watching" activities and recreational boats
- education and awareness campaigns for public, professionals and stakeholders
- development of national scientific researches programs concerning species habitat and anthropic pressure factors
- Administrative, Institutional & Legislative / Policy measures,

Italy has paid particular attention on municipal Authorities and communities, obtaining the formal subscription to the "Pelagos charter" by 75 coastal Municipalities on a total amount of 110 entitled of them, improving several activities related to above mentioned measures. Moreover, in the mentioned Pelagos area Italy had continued to apply the whole ban of any motorboats

competitions, of any type of engine equipped boats (offshore, jet ski, wet bikes, ecc), as adopted by 2001 with the Pelagos Sanctuary Agreement relevant national ratification Law.

POLAND

- National programs (species actions plans) for several species: Lesser Spotted Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Curlew, and Harbour porpoise has been approved.
- In 2016 Polish oil concern ORLEN has launched cooperation with the Polish Birds society within the project 'ORLEN for eagles'. The scope of cooperation is protection of eagle species occurring in Poland. The main goal of the project is support of healing of wounded or sick eagles in special rehabilitation centers.
- Nesting platforms for the White Stork are being installed by several Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection to protect birds and their nests from electrocution on power lines.

ROMANIA

See actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs.

SLOVAKIA

A LIFE project Energy in the landscape – power lines and conservation of priority bird species in Natura 2000 sites has been implemented in cooperation NGO (Raptors Protection of Slovakia), governmental nature conservation agency, Veterinary University and energy distribution companies (<http://www.lifeenergia.sk/index.php/en/>).

Measures against bird crime have been implemented by the State Nature Conservancy and Raptors Protection of Slovakia.

Draft management plans for Natura 2000 sites and several Ramsar Sites in Slovakia have been developed.

Restoration of wetland habitats for waterbirds is implemented in several projects in cooperation with NGOs.

SLOVENIA

In April 2015, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015-2020), setting conservation objectives for a number of migratory species, covered by AEWA and CMS, and measures to achieve these objectives by 2020 (see: http://www.natura2000.si/fileadmin/user_upload/C5_ProgrammeNatura2020.pdf, http://www.natura2000.si/fileadmin/user_upload/C5_Ann61ObjectMeasures_2.xlsx).

SWEDEN

AEWA

- National SAP for *Anthus campestris* and *Calidris alpina schinzii* established
- National Multi Species AP for *Limosa limosa*, *philomachus pugnax* and *Charadrius alexandrinus* established
- Continuous efforts to increase protection through international treaties and directives, e.g. establishment of new N2000 sites etc.
- LWfG
 - Red fox culling in the breeding area
 - Restoration of stop over sites
- Successfully limiting the taking of Common eider – recommendation to not hunt female Eider ducks issued by the Swedish Association for hunting and wildlife management

EUROBATS

- Conservation measures are planned in the context of the implementation of the EU Habitats directive. Bat migration studies will produce useful data for the conservation of migratory species.

MoU RAPTORS

- National SAP for *Aquila chrysaetos* established

- Administrative, Institutional & Legislative / Policy measures**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

During the period of 2007-2015, the Republic of Armenia adopted a number of laws to regulate the sector of environment, including the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Hunt and Hunting Economies", as well as amendments and supplements to around 15 laws in conformance with the development prospects of the country and targeted at the improvement of its legislation.

To increase the management efficiency of the Ministry, as well as to establish clear-cut allocation of functions for policy development and policy implementation between the structural and segregated divisions of the Ministry, a series of institutional reforms were carried out within the Ministry of Nature Protection in 2010 resulting in the establishment of new divisions and departments, and restructuring of the old ones, specifically

The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia (BSAP-1) were developed in 1999 with the aim to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Armenia. The BSAP-1 was developed in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was planned for a five year period of 2000-2004. It includes 245 activities and measures, which are fully based on the national needs on biodiversity conservation with incorporation of a number of important aspects including improvement of legislative and institutional frameworks, sustainable use of biodiversity and regulation of its use.

BELGIUM

The Government of Flanders Decree on Species Protection and Species Management was updated in 2016. Important changes are a new annex to provide a legal basis for the management of invasive alien species and more flexibility to set up species protection programmes.

FRANCE

A new legislation on Biodiversity was voted on July 20th 2016 (« Loi pour la reconquête de la biodiversité, de la nature et des paysages»). This new Act will be in force on 10.8.2016.

This Act creates the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB) which has among its missions: (i) the preservation, management and restoration of Biodiversity; (ii) the development of knowledge on Biodiversity, its resources, uses and ecosystemic services; (iii) the battle against biopiracy.

Regarding more specifically migratory species, the Act provides for: (i) a very significant increase in penalties for trafficking in protected species especially if the offense is committed by an organized group; (ii) the possibility for environmental inspectors to realize fictitious purchases on the Internet under a pseudonym, which will allow them, in addition to the technique of "cyber-tracking", to get in contact with people suspected of illegally selling specimens of protected species on the Web.

NORWAY

To strengthen the control with alien species and import in Norway a new regulation entered into force as of 1st of January 2016. The new act makes it compulsory to obtain a permit for all import of live animal species (incl invertebrates). A risk analysis forms the basis for any permits given. A new scientific body has been established to conduct risk analysis when deemed necessary.

ROMANIA

In addition to actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs:

- The Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2007 regarding management of protected areas, conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna approved with modifications and completions by Law No. 49/2011 was amended.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Since the Illegal killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds has been identified as main problem (law and institutional aspects), Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Republic of Serbia has started the work on creation of Protocol proposal on procedures and cooperation of organizations and institutions concerning the illegal killing, poisoning, taking and trade of wild birds with tendency to include all the strictly protected and protected species of wild animals. We had a few meetings (representatives from ministries, the province secretariats, inspections, scientific organizations, prosecutors offices, NGOs...) and we are continuing the work on it.

SLOVAKIA

Nature conservation agency works on preparation for designation of new Natura 2000 sites on wetland habitats.

Measures in favor of some species have been included in the agro-environmental schemes with Rural Development Programme.

Updated Programme on Wetlands Management in Slovakia and the Action Plan for Wetlands 2015-2018 was adopted by the Slovak Government in 2015.

The updated Slovak Ramsar Committee (2016) includes members and experts for AEWA.

3. Activities planned for next year

BELGIUM

- Eurobats

An action plan for the conservation of the Barbastelle bat will be implemented in Wallonia in the framework of an integrated LIFE project. In Flanders a species protection program is being developed. After the development of goals and knowledge gaps, specific measures (protection measures, studies and monitoring) are drawn up in consultation with stakeholders. Approval is expected the coming year with implementation of the proposed measures following immediately.

- AEWA

The Species Protection Programme for corncrake in Flanders will be further implemented, as well as the Species Protection Programme for Eurasian bittern

Participation in the European Goose Management Platform, December 2016.

FRANCE

France will continue to represent the Region Europe in the Standing Committee, the Budget sub-committee and in the Working Group on the Development of a Review Process under the Convention on Migratory Species.

France will attend the meetings of the Task force on illegal killing of birds and provide information on that issue.

- AEWA : France will organise the 12th AEWA Standing Committee in Paris in January-February 2017.

France will coordinate the elaboration of a Management Plan for the Greylag Goose under the EGMP and will attend the first meeting of the EGMP in December 2016.

NORWAY

Norway has in close collaboration with Canada, the Polar Bear Agreement Parties and the CMS Secretariat started discussion on conducting a polar bear workshop under the auspices of CMS in 2017.

ROMANIA

In addition to actions regarding this point in the paragraphs dedicated to the various Agreements and MoUs:

- promote the co-operation across the borders between EU Member States and the countries on the European Neighbourhood.

SLOVAKIA

- Implementation of the updated Programme on wetland management in Slovakia and the Action Plan for Wetlands 2015-2018 (adopted by the Slovak government in 2015);
- Finalization of management plans for Natura 2000 sites; continuation of projects.

SWEDEN

AEWA

- Hosting the first EuroGMP meeting in Dec 2016.
- Continued participation in the development, and revision, of ISSAPs as decided during AEWA MOP6

UKRAINE

A number of guidelines adopted by the Conferences to the CMS and/or Meetings of the Parties the agreements concluded under the CMS is expected to be translated into Ukrainian.