

European Sustainable Use Group (ESUG)

General Meeting of Members

Thursday, 11 May 2017

13.30 – 17.00

Offices of the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU,
82 Rue Frederick Pelletier, Brussels, Belgium.

Minutes

1. **The meeting was opened** by the Chair, Robert Kenward. He thanked FACE for a third opportunity to meet at their headquarters, as kindly arranged by David Scallan on this occasion with generous inclusion of a sandwich lunch, and introduced Ludwig Willnegger, Secretary General of FACE. It was noted that this was also a last opportunity to visit 82 Rue Frederick Pelletier, from which FACE were moving on 1 June to 205 rue Belliard.

Changes to the Agenda involved the presence of Notary Frédéric Bertrand and an assistant from Etude Charles Huylebrouck to note the approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting and obtain individual recognition by members of resulting changes to the Statutes. This process, including registration of identity documents of those present, was necessary as permission of the Justice Ministry was being sought to alter both name and objectives of the organisation. The change in name and separation from IUCN had been requested when the group in IUCN on Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi), across Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Commission on Environmental Economics and Social Policy (CEESP), had replaced SSC's Sustainable Use Specialist Group, and had been continuing at ESUG General Meetings since 2013.

2. **Robin Sharp had provided a written [tribute to Wolfgang Burhenne](#)**, who passed away in January 2017. As a hunter and lawyer who had founded several conservation organisations following the Second World War, Wolfgang had been a giant of the conservation movement. He was an incredibly nice man who believed in guiding good behaviour via soft law, and had been behind many of the developments for sustainable use in IUCN, including the Policy Statement on the Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources. He was also very approachable and had taken a keen interest as a member of ESUG, helping in many ways behind the scenes, such as through providing representation facilities at IUCN general assemblies.

Despina Symons, as a founder member of what had then been the European regional group within the global Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) also spoke a few words of tribute to Wolfgang. She noted his prolonged efforts to try to guide CITES in sensible directions and during 7 years to establish SUSG.

Members then stood in silence to remember Wolfgang.

3. **The meeting was quorate:** Returning Officer Nicholas Aebischer noted 15 members, exceeding a quorum of 9 (10% of the 89 current ESUG members). Members present were Despina Symons, Tetiana Gardashuk, Julie Ewald, Robin Sharp, Ion Navodaru, Frantisek Urban, Pranas Mierauskas, Janusz Sielicki, Sándor Csányi, Frank Vorhies, Rob Jongman, Giuseppe Micali, Nicholas Aebischer, David Scallan and Robert Kenward.

Apologies had been received from Zenon Tederko, Mari Ivask, Jenifer Ailloud, Stratos Arampatzis, Kai Wollscheid, Viktor Segrt, Paul Goriup, Dominique Noome, Keiya

Nakajima, Melanie Mewes, Sandie Sowler, Riccardo Simoncini, Andreas Bosshard, Eduardo Arraut, Mikko Rautiainen, Lubomira Vavrova, Sonya Zlatanova, Scott Brainerd and Jim Casear.

Chair reported that allocation of a sanatorium place to the wife of committee member Zenon Tederko had prevented his attendance shortly before the meeting. Members wished Chair to convey to Zenon best wishes for her speedy recovery. **Action 2017-1.**

4. **Minutes of the [previous General Meeting](#)** held in Vienna on 24 June 2015 were proposed for approval by Robin Sharp, seconded by Julie Ewald, and passed unanimously with a correction to the name of one member.

5. **Regarding ESUG relationships with government and IUCN activities**, Despina Symons spoke on the role of her European Parliamentary Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development, which had now been running in various forms since 1994. Its support for sustainable use had been challenging, as attitudes in the parliament had been moving against hunting, and were now being quite strongly influenced by organisations campaigning for animal rights. A first such organisation had managed to join IUCN during the previous quadrennium despite having a constitution at odds with that of IUCN. Another Intergroup, across European Landowners Organisation (ELO) and FACE, was helpful in this context, and results of a vote among members of IUCN on whether membership of the animal rights organisation should continue would be known in June, 2017.

At WCC6 in Hawaii, SULi had held several useful events in cooperation with other organisations. However, a resolution against trade in ivory, and hence negative for any conservation of elephants through use of ivory, had been passed. Much needed to be done to inform the IUCN office in Brussels on the value of sustainable use (SU).

Robin Sharp explained that he was still prepared to edit SULiNews provided he is helped to obtain articles and with the publishing on-line. There is also a question of where it should be published in order to remain available for the future, as changes in the IUCN website seemed to have lost previous back-numbers.

Robert Kenward noted that the group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems (SUME), in IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), welcomes the support of ESUG and permits ESUG to display the IUCN logo in this respect. After the first SUME meeting at ESUG's 2015 GM in Vienna, three members of ESUG had attended the [second SUME meeting](#) in WCC6. The SUME meeting favoured extending Naturalliance worldwide and increasing the number of languages there and on other portals to give greater global cover; the meeting also asked for a page on ESUG's web-site ([now implemented](#)). The portal activities of ESUG were enabling SUME to contribute substantially to the CEM's programme for IUCN. SUME would meet in Peru in October 2017, with portals training also in Kyrgyzstan in September 2017.

The question of whether ESUG should apply for IUCN membership was raised. It was noted that, with relatively few members, costs might not be too high. ESUG would, if approved for membership as an International Organisation, be entitled to two votes in the General Assembly. Frank Vorhies raised the alternative possibility of ESUG creating a regional committee. It was proposed by Robin Sharp that a group with Frank, Robin and Julie should review whether ESUG could become a regional committee within IUCN or an international member with voting rights, and report back to ESUG Committee who could then put pros and cons to membership. This was seconded by Nicholas Aebischer and agreed by consensus. **Action 2017-2.**

6. **Recent Sustainable Use project engagements of ESUG** had been primarily on portal developments and activities associated with them. Both had involved working with IUCN's Member the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), in the first case also with UNEP Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, and in the second with UK's Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT).

Janusz Sielicki spoke on Saker Global Action Plan, noting the recommendation of projects to prevent electrocution, and on monitoring tagged Saker movements and trade, as well as [the Sakernet portal and survey in 5 languages](#) that had been built with ESUG, using a template improved from [the Naturalliance portal](#). Electrocution had been found to be a major cause of Saker Falcon deaths, and this revelation was a major contribution of IAF to WCC6 through a successful resolution and explanatory 'live' poster. IAF had also worked with ESUG and FACE to coordinate IUCN Members with sustainable use activities for the General Assembly, drawing help from SULI's collation of information on relevant events during the initial Forum days of WCC6. With completion of the Saker Portal Stage 1, planning for a Stage 2 contract to build a system for monitoring populations and trade, working again with Anatrack Ltd, was in progress.

A further derivation of the multilingual template had been used for the development with GWCT of the [Perdix network](#), for which IAF had produced [an attractive leaflet](#) to accompany the launch in the Bozar (in the evening of the same day as this AGM), and at which Julie Ewald would be giving a talk, [already available online](#), on behalf on Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Work on this portal had engaged ESUG members in translation, and resulted in a very good relationship with IAF leading to an ongoing contract for portal maintenance.

Julie Ewald's [presentation](#) noted that these projects were a start towards [5 ideas](#) from the 2015 General Meeting in Vienna for projects to guide conservation through sustainable use at local level. Two of these, on community management of mammals and on assessment of water quality by anglers, were also in discussion and could lead to workshops in Croatia in early 2018. Mammal opportunities were especially attractive not just for community interest in large species like deer and wild boar, but also for information on urban gardens as refugia for hedgehogs from badger predation, and even on the control of mice and rats as pests. Development of these projects would complete first-stage work planned to follow TESS, in which multilingual tools for mapping habitats had been developed.

Another idea from the 2015 GM was to develop the mapping of ecosystem services through such projects, on which Riccardo Simoncini had produced a paper, and then discussed it with Frank Vorhies and Stratos Arampatzis. Frank pointed out possible opportunities here from public payments for landscape stewardship under CAP revision. It was accepted that landscapes could deliver a range of services at ecosystem, habitat and species levels, in effect paying farmers to produce biodiversity as a crop. David Scallan noted scope for linking this approach to the [Biodiversity Manifesto](#) group of FACE. Robert Kenward noted that if extensive mapping of community habitats were to be useful, contacts should be re-developed with European Environment Agency ([EEA](#)). Rob Jongman noted that work on using land-parcel mapping for CAP was already underway in Netherlands and Portugal.

Chair proposed that a group containing Riccardo, Julie, Frank, Rob and Mari Ivask (for the soil component) should be given seed funding to organise an Agriculture Working Group meeting to investigate opportunities; Robin kindly agreed that his earlier offer of support remained open.

Action 2017-3.

7. **On ESUG portal development**, Robert Kenward had [prepared a paper](#) and gave an online demo. What appeared to be a set of websites, for local authorities, businesses, clubs and project teams, were in fact nodes in a network based on two templates. The multilingual templates, operated by multinational teams guided by ESUG (with a protocol for this now available) were designed for translation in particular projects and now contained culture-specific links to point to national-language sites in the System for Community Liaison (SYCL). ESUG could now also guide the preparation of national sites, such as [Perdix-UK](#) and [Perdix-DE](#), which linked extensively to national-language documents and local projects. Thanks to the SYCL networking, all national sites could carry [Nature Actions](#) pages prepared by an ESUG (or SUME) administrator in each country, to signpost the projects on conservation through sustainable use. To increase the attractiveness of sites for local authorities and relevant clubs, projects on community health (Health Actions) and regional cuisine (Culture Actions) were also foreseen for similar global-to-local networking in conjunction with other appropriate organisations.

It had been suggested in the SULi list-served discussions that a SYCL-based network could also be prepared to disseminate globally to the public at local level the benefits from conservation through sustainable use and the solutions to problems from trade in wild resources. This was to an extent already being done through the Naturalliance portal and posting of [Stories](#) on the ESUG website. Robin Sharp wondered whether questions of author permission arose. It was noted that in most cases the items were links to items already on-line, but that when downloads were made available (as for example of Graham Webb's book) permission from the author was obtained.

Tetiana Gardashuk (who is also SUME coordinator for Europe) had run a survey of the 10 coordinators who had been investigating use of SYCL sites for local authorities since 2015. She thanked those who contributed and presented her findings, concluding that:

- Data were gained from 8 with 2 more to add, giving similar conclusions.
- We planned only 5 national studies in 2015; this is double.
- The study covered local NGOs, clubs, businesses as well as local government.
- Lack of time to run sites was not an issue.
- Lack of importance and finding other sites attractive were most problematic.
- The €99 annual subscription had as many "Yes" as "No" (38%) to the question of whether or not this was considered too high a cost.
- Only one country considered that having a national example site was not useful.

Pranas Mierauskas noted that one of the successful [local sites](#) was operating in Lithuania; he had discussed site operation with 19 local government, agency, business, club & NGO operators indicated that most of which had their own sites already. Eduardo Arraut accompanied his questionnaire response from Brazil with a long thoughtful discussion of constraints on establishing sites there, where finance is minimal.

8. **Administration of changes to the ESUG constitution had been completed.** Before leaving, the Notary had commented that receiving formal approval from the Ministry would take about two months, to be followed perhaps 17 days later by publication in the Belgian Gazette. Publication was to be expected by September. At that point a full version in English would be completed and circulated. **Action 2017-4.**

9. **Report of the Chair.** [The report](#) was read by Robert Kenward. He thanked all who had served on Committee during the last ten years, including Despina Symons, Mari Ivask, Zenon Tederko, Angus Middleton, Kai Wollscheid, Stratos Arampatzis, Tobias Plieninger,

Julie Ewald, Tetiana Gardashuk and Jennifer Ailloud, while Robin Sharp had served throughout as Chair Emeritus. Two conclusions from a review of the period were that it would be time for a change of Chair in 2019 and that, with its change in name completed, ESUG needed to work with SULi to rebuild its capacity for policy operation in Europe. Julie Ewald had kindly agreed to be a candidate for Chair in 2019, with help from Nicholas Aebischer, so she would shadow this role during 2017-19. **Action 2017-5.**

10. **Financial reports** for [2015](#) and [2016](#) were given by Chair on behalf of Zenon Tederko. Income in the Accounts for 2015 was €23,634 due mainly to contract payments for the Sakernet portal commissioned by IAF and UNEP-CMS, but also including an anonymous donation of €2,000 towards the cost of the Vienna meeting. However, outgoings were €24,616, including €18,342 on Saker work and €5,343 for the Vienna meeting and associated translation. As a result, the net assets declined from €6,032 to €5,050 in 2015.

However, in 2016 the expenditure of €7,229, mostly on the Saker contract of €3,834 and travel for the SUME meeting at WCC6 of €2,416, was less than the income of €8,270. Thus, there was €6,091 in the Brussels account at the end of 2016, after closing and transferring funds from the UK account.

The Accounts for 2017 were in a healthy state, with close to €7,000 in the account after paying Perdixnet portal and Brussels expenses, with a final 10% of the Sakernet portal contract still due from CMS.

11. **The Accounts for 2015 and 2016 were approved by consensus**, after being proposed by Nicholas Aebischer and seconded by Frantisek Urban.

12. **Elections of Chair and Committee Members** were managed by Nicholas Aebischer as Returning Officer. [Following his report](#) that there was only one candidate for Chair and five candidates for five positions on Committee, all candidates were acclaimed by consensus. Robert Kenward continues as Chair, with Julie Ewald, Tetiana Gardashuk, Mari Ivask, Zenon Tederko and David Scallan elected to Committee. Despina Symons, who had lacked time to complete the process for being a candidate and apologised for having little time in general to assist, agreed to continue on Committee for the present as a co-opted member to obtain synergies with her Intergroup; she was thanked for kindly continuing to provide an office address for ESUG in Brussels.

13. As **other business**, following from discussion of the accounts, Despina Symons asked if she was still a signatory of the bank account. This was thought not to be the case following addition of Zenon Tederko as Treasurer, but would be checked. This raised the question of whether ESUG had any off-balance-sheet debts, and who would be responsible for any debts. The only debt was the loan from Chair for TESS, which would be repaid before 2019. The question of responsibility for debts was unclear, but it was likely to be the Committee; Chair would check the position under Belgian law. **Action 2017-6.**

14. **The meeting closed** at 17.00.