

ESUSG General Meeting held at 14.00 in Brussels on 26 August 2013, in conjunction with IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group

1. The meeting was opened by the Chair, Robert Kenward. He noted that a long-time member and staunch supporter of ESUSG, Christian de Coune, had passed away shortly after attending the previous meeting. Christian had introduced the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey to IUCN (and the current ESUSG chair), and was a wise and gentle man who would be sorely missed. Members held a short silence in remembrance of him.
2. The chair thanked FACE for kindly making their headquarters available for the meeting. Angus Middleton, Chief Executive of FACE, welcomed the participants to what was their second consecutive meeting hosted by FACE in Brussels.

The Agenda was presented and adopted. The meeting was declared quorate, with the following 14 members present (quorum 10): Nicholas Aebischer, Tetiana Gardashuk, Robert Kenward, Tamas Marghescu, Angus Middleton, Johan Oldekop, Mikko Rautiainen, David Scallan, Robin Sharp, Despina Symons, Zenon Tederko, Frantisek Urban, Gabor von Bethlenfalvy and Sonya Zlatanova.

The meeting welcomed as observers Rosie Cooney, Chair of IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi) Specialist Group, Rob Cahill, Mike O'Brien and Donald MacLauchlan from SULi in North America, and Cy Griffin with Dan Burgar Kuželički from FACE.

The following 30 members had apologised for absence: Stratos Arampatzis, David Beamont, Andreas Bosshard, Wolfgang Burhenne, Scott Brainerd, Sándor Csányi, Jim Casear, Thierry de l'Escaille, Miguel Delibes, Julie Ewald, Anders Grahn, Mari Ivask, Rob Jongman, Yves Lecocq, Peter Marshall, Melanie Mewes, Guiseppa Micali, Pranas Mierauskas, Keiya Nakajima, Dominique Noome, Marco Pani, Tobias Pliening, Harald Schaich, Viktor Segrt, Janusz Sielicki, Riccardo Simoncini, Sandie Sowler, Luba Vavrova, Frank Vorhies and Kai Wollscheid.

3. Minutes of the General Meeting on 26 May 2011 had been circulated and were approved.

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4. Following from item 7 in the minutes, Rosie Cooney was invited to lead a discussion on the development of SULi and its relationship with ESUSG. She reported that SULi had been created across Species Survival Commission (SSC, which had been hosting the Sustainable Use Specialist Group, including its European branch) and Commission for Environmental Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), following a resolution at Barcelona that originated among European IUCN members. It had taken 3 years to find funding and appoint for the new group a chair, who had been confronted with a difficult job of bridging the species-based thinking of SSC and the focus in CEESP on equity and human rights, especially among indigenous people, which tended to be unusually marginalised among the local communities that were a focus for sustainable use (SU). There had also been unease among both chairs about the independent legal status of ESUSG, so Rosie had approached ESUSG chair and proposed a name change, to be addressed under item 11.

The SULi steering group would meet in November to discuss the strategy document and prepare a work programme. Those present felt the strategy should make clear that the mission is conservation of wild biodiversity, and that SU was not adequately integrated into IUCN, so that perhaps an institutional objective such as a Councillor for SU was desirable. SU is part of a bottom-up, privately resourced approach to conservation, which tends to be overlooked in favour of top-down organisation and state funding for conservation: the strategy could make this more clear and promote understanding of what SU delivers, placing more emphasis on its role as a tool for conservation as mentioned in the policy statement from Amman. With a domination of “green” members in IUCN, perhaps SU should be more prominent in the IUCN mission to which new members are obliged to subscribe.

Rosie then addressed each of the 5 global thematic priorities of the strategy. On wildlife trade and CITES (1), those present felt that encouraging involvement of local communities in CITES decision-making would be worthwhile, and in Europe especially landowners. On small-scale fisheries (2), Despina Symon’s Fisheries Expert Group with CEM could be very important; this was a fragile sector with many livelihoods involved, and more engagement with FAO could be useful. On wild meat and food security (3), it was especially important to engage with IUCN members and work with the new Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife and links to recreational hunting should be developed. On indigenous groups and local communities (4), it was noted that the latter were a focus in Europe and the new web-activities, including Naturalliance, were relevant. On recreational hunting and wildlife management (5), Rosie felt that the previous SUSG conference could be better publicised, perhaps with link on the SULi website. In general, more use could be made of D-Groups for all activities, perhaps producing reviews of sound technical advice for access on the web.

Robin Sharp briefly reviewed how SULi was helping its members. David Beaumont had assisted greatly with establishing SULi information technology. The list-server was very active, to an extent which concerned some members, but they could always de-list. Sarah Doornbos was now helping with the website, while she and Rosie were experimenting with how best to use the D-groups. Robin, Rosie and Sarah were working closely on SULiNews and always on the lookout for material.

Tamas Marghescu suggested that the news could be distributed to all organisations that should be interested, with encouragement to join IUCN and provide more membership support for SU. Some 70 among the 94 ESUSG members were in SULi, and hence accessing these benefits. Johan Oldekop, as a recent member, felt that more could be done to put members in touch with each other.

Finally for this extended SULi/ESUSG discussion, Rosie considered what Europe could do to help globally. She felt that SULi in Europe was pulling its weight, with increasing engagement of members in discussion of global issues. Despina noted that her intergroup provided opportunity to inform and link with the European Parliament on SU and especially to address livelihood issues.

5. Despina Symons reported on IUCN changes and relevant European government activities. Since 2008, European Directors of IUCN had twice been made redundant due to shortage of funding and the Brussels office had been reduced. IUCN organized an extraordinary meeting of the National Committees in Europe earlier in the year to discuss the European program and developments in Brussels. The responsibilities of the Brussels office have now been limited to policy advice and fundraising and the European program will be coordinated by Sebastian Semene in Gland. Luc Bas had now been appointed as director of the Brussels Office and was receiving much support from Despina. The European Parliament Intergroup to which EBCD provides the secretariat, jointly with the IUCN, had held 40 meetings within the last year and is a strong forum for influencing EU policy. This was an opportunity for SULi. However, all wider Europe issues were to be handled from IUCN HQs.

6. Robin Sharp reported that the ESUSG engagement as a partner in the EU-funded TESS project had set up the Naturalliance portal as a resource for managers of land and species. A report had been circulated on this and a related system for liaison of local administrative communities. He introduced Tetiana Gardashuk to report on its especially strong uptake in the east.

Tetiana had translated Naturalliance into Russian as well as Ukrainian, to bring understanding of the political, environmental and socio-economic aspects of ecosystem services to the Ukrainian people. Analysis of visits to the sites showed a high interest in the east of Europe. Although most visitors used the English version (26%), the most frequent visitor languages after that were Russian (11%), Polish (8%), Greek (7%) and Slovak and Turkish (5%).

Zenon Tederko, who was responsible for the Polish translation, noted that a particular added value of this initiative was the provision of know-how needed by local communities for regaining rights to manage their areas.

7. Rosie Cooney reported on the response being drafted to European Commission's proposals on tightening of CITES for trophy hunting in Europe, by requiring import permits for species that would not normally have these. While there could be advantage in independent scrutiny, she felt that there would be problems from increased administrative burdens, uncertainties and costs to conservation hunting projects. Robin Sharp suggested a recommendation that Commission should estimate the economic burden from the added workload at a time of fiscal hardship.

8. The Chair reported on activities of the Group since the last meeting in Brussels in May 2011. These included 1 Committee Meeting, attendance and reporting at 10 other meetings, including representation of IUCN at 8 and reporting on ESUSG work to IUCN at an SSC Chairs meeting in Abu Dhabi and at WCC5 in Korea. Members of Committee had engaged in at least 10 other tasks for SULi, including participation in 5 consultation exercises. Members had worked on a new European Charter with the Bern Convention, and on 5 bids for funding from European Commission and UNEP. Seven new members had joined ESUSG. Chair thanked each Committee Member for their dedicated work in these contexts, and Secretariat in Brussels for continuing service.

Attention was drawn in particular to the role of SULi in preparing the Charter for Fungi-gathering and Biodiversity, which provided an opportunity to promote the message to Bern Convention of viewing sustainable use as a conservation opportunity rather than a threat. Chair and two new members had bid successfully for, and completed on time, a contract to review demographic modelling of the Saker Falcon for UNEP Convention on Migratory Species, which also involved designing a system for conserving this endangered species through use in falconry. The Naturalliance initiative to encourage conservation data-collection, and especially mapping, by beneficiaries of wild resources, now had 23 languages and was being visited by many countries outside Europe, but was not enough to engage the huge global community engaged in sustainable use. Therefore a new system for community liaison (SYCL) had also been developed, to help link local SU communities with their local authorities for projects on biodiversity restoration, monitoring species and habitats, restoring lost biodiversity and removing alien species; this was being pioneered in Europe for possible extension worldwide.

During the discussion of these activities that followed, it was proposed that SULi engagement should be recorded by publication of a paper on the modelling work on Saker populations that was presented in the contract. Members also noted a need for funding to support translation of more Naturalliance content.

9. The official financial reports for years ending 31 December 2011 and 2012 had been agreed with Treasurer Stratos Arampatzis and our accountant in Brussels. ESUSG had entered 2011 with €17,783 in its London and Brussels accounts, had income of €4,644 from TESS, and had €20,715 expenditure on TESS. With a loan of €2,000 to ensure adequate cash flow during the year, the bank accounts entered 2012 with €5,215. The outstanding €6,143 for TESS had been received early in 2012, a further €1,000 gained during the year from translation by Robin Sharp and Robert Kenward of an important SU initiative for member Fritz Reimoser, and €1,200 kindly donated, so that it was possible to repay half the loan of €20,000 made by Chair in 2010 to cover cash flow in TESS. The year 2012 ended with €3,255 in the bank accounts.

There was discussion of the way the €10,000 loan repayment was presented in the accounts, and the fact that ESUSG was in debt by €10,000 following TESS. This outcome had been predicted, and Tamas Marghescu considered that engagement in a major EU project with only €10,000 deficit was a very good performance. In the current year, more translation had been funded, €1,500 of costs from helping

country coordinators to Brussels were kindly being met by SULi, and a €2,000 overhead was being gained from the UNEP contract on Saker modelling, so accounts remained in balance subject to the interest free loans. Work to gain new funding through Naturalliance and new bids would continue.

10. Robin Sharp proposed that the accounts be adopted and this was seconded by Nicholas Aebischer. The accounts were adopted by 11 votes in favour and 3 abstentions.
11. Changes to the constitution. ESUSG originated as a regional group of IUCN's SU programme. In order to take part in projects funded by European Commission, ESUSG obtained its own legal identity. ESUSG was invited by the newly created SULi to change its name in order to lose its IUCN Specialist Group connotation (as SUSG no longer exists) and to become the European support group for SULi. A change of name and status requires constitutional change. This had been notified to members a year in advance, and again on 26 July in the Agenda circulated one month before the meeting, which proposed the following changes:

Title to become "European Sustainable Use Group".

It was noted that translation to French for the official constitution should be approved by Committee. The change in Title was proposed by Robin Sharp, seconded by Tamas Marghescu, and approved by all 14 members present.

Article 1 to read (with ~~strike through~~ for deletion and ***bold italic*** additions:

"In accordance with the Belgian Act of 25 October 1919, modified by the Act of 6 December 1954 and that of 30 June 2000, granting civil status to international non-profitmaking associations, an international non-profitmaking association ~~has been~~ ***was*** formed under the name: European Sustainable Use Specialist Group of IUCN/SSC. ***In 2013 its name changed to European Sustainable Use Group*** - abbreviated as "***ESUSG***" "***ESUG***". The statutes have been translated into English, but in the event of difficulties in their interpretation, the French text shall be considered as original and as binding."

The changes in Article 1 were proposed by Tamas Marghescu, seconded by Frantisek Urban and approved by all 14 members present.

Article 2 to read (with ~~strike through~~ for deletion and ***bold italic*** additions:

~~"Within the framework of~~ ***As an organisation which supports*** IUCN - the International Union for Conservation of Nature - whose objectives are to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of Nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, ***ESUSG ESUG*** has as its objectives:" ... *et seq.*

For consistency, the change in abbreviation from **ESUSG** to **ESUG** is also required in Article 5.

These further changes in Article 1 and 5 were proposed by Frantisek Urban, seconded by Despina Symons and approved by all 14 members present.

12. Election of Chairman. Zenon Tederko served as nominating officer for the elections. He declared that no other nomination had been received. Robert Kenward was re-elected by acclamation.
13. During the election of members for ESUSG committee, there were 6 candidates for 5 elected positions. Election took place by secret ballot. Despina Symons, Stratos Arampatzis, Zenon Tederko, Tetiana Gardashuk and Kai Wollscheid had most votes and were therefore elected.
14. Any other business. Robin Sharp asked that at least one of the working groups should hold a meeting before the next General Meeting.

The chair closed the meeting at 19.05.