

Chairman's Report given in Karlovac on 23 April 2019 – a retrospective view

It is 12 years since members of ESUSG first elected me as Chairman, at our first meeting in Vienna. The meeting presented results of our survey on Use Nationally of Wild Resources across Europe for a project, which was developed by Stratos Arampatzis with EU funding, to research Governance and Ecosystem Management for Conservation of Biodiversity (GEMCONBIO). My mentor in the role was Robin Sharp CB, who became first chair of ESUSG after a training in Classics and a successful career in government policy. With a scientist taking the chair, he suggested continuing to guide policy aspects as Chair Emeritus.

ESUSG was in 2007 still a part of IUCN, but had become a legal entity under Belgian law in order to enter into contracts and support itself financially. As sustainable use activities in IUCN were losing resources to conservation topics that focussed on protection, not conservation through sustainable use, Robin and Kai Wollscheid developed a motion for IUCN in 2008. The proposal was that SU activities in IUCN should be across Species Survival Commission and Commission for Environmental Economic and Social Policy.

After a long gestation, the new group for Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi) came to life in 2011 and decided that its annual budget could not support regional groups. Europe was given a vice-chair role in SULi. ESUG was invited to choose a new name that separated it from Specialist Groups of IUCN-SSC, but to remain a support group for SULi, for which ESUSG was already busy. We were implementing another IUCN Resolution of 2008, to build further Charters for Council of Europe's Bern Convention. ESUSG's Scott Brainerd had drafted the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity, based on simplifying CDB's Ecosystem Approach and Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use, and went on to draft the charters on Recreational Fishing and Biodiversity (2010) and Fungi-gathering and Biodiversity (2013).

In the meantime, Basil Manos and Stratos had won a new EU contract for ESUG, to design a Transactional Environmental Support System (TESS). The aim was to provide complex knowledge to to guide adaptive management at local level, while collecting local knowledge to improve that guidance. This followed findings in GEMCONBIO that huge human resources and Private Payment for Ecosystem Services were devoted to sustainable use activities in Europe. After TESS and ESUSG met in London in 2009, a final TESS conference was arranged in European Parliament by Despina Symons in 2011 and ESUSG met next day.

TESS was unusual in that it focussed at local level rather than inter/national policy level. However, it did conduct pan-European survey at higher policy level, and an extension of that to study development in Natura 2000 sites produced results that may have made it unpopular in some quarters. Partly as a result of this, and for other complex reasons, the follow-on project to implement internet-based local projects across Europe was not funded; an informal comment suggested pan-European research was undesirable.

The ESUSG General Meeting in 2013, again in Brussels, was attended by SULi Chair. ESUSG administration focussed on starting a difficult constitutional process to change our name, which ultimately took five years to achieve, at great cost in time and notary fees. We were not in good financial shape without support from IUCN, but two developments came to our rescue. The first was a fear of unintended consequences from the resolution that created SULi, such that talks had started in 2008 with Piet Wit as incoming chair of Commission on Ecosystem Services (CEM). In 2014, after work with Steve Edwards, Robin and Stratos, this led to creation of the CEM group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems (SUME), for which ESUG is also a support group. Thanks to the experts in ESUG and SUME who translate for our internet systems, starting with the 23-language 'naturalliance' portal built for education and survey during TESS, we are again able to hold meetings part-funded by IUCN.

The second event that rescued ESUG was a contract from UNEP's Commission on Conservation of Migratory Species for a report on the Saker Falcon. Under Adrian Lombard, as the new chair of

International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), this led to a larger contract to initiate a portal in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto and Russian to conserve this species through sustainable use.

TESS has set the direction for ESUG during my time as chair. TESS-partner Anatrack has built networking software that was continued for IAF as Perdixnet. The system now provides a global network by culture-specific links to satellite sites in a System for Community Liaison. During the 8 years needed after TESS to make ESUG viable again, a multi-term core of elected Committee members has included Despina Symons, Zenon Tederko, Kai Wollscheid and Angus Middleton, who preceded TESS, and also Stratos Arampatzis, Mari Ivask, Tetiana Gardashuk, Julie Ewald and David Scallan, who came to us for and through TESS. My very grateful thanks to all of them.

At our 2015 meeting in Vienna, the second arranged by Fritz Reimoser, we upgraded the naturalliance portal and discussed building projects on conservation through sustainable use that could be organised via the internet. Our Brussels meeting in 2017, hosted (for a second time) by Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation in Europe (FACE), was also funded by translation for Perdixnet, which was launched the same day by IAF. Perdixnet was the first of those Vienna-concepts (which remain on our web-site) and we will discuss others in this meeting.

In 2018, when your Committee held two meetings (with partial attendance by Skype), it was decided to seek funding from Patrons, as a new class of ESUG corresponding member, to see if ESUG could fund a global naturalliance network with IUCN SUME. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation, together with FACE, Robin Sharp and Anatrack kindly stepped up to the plate. We all owe them a huge debt of thanks, also because developing the networking software, tied by licensing to be uncommercial, has cost Anatrack close to six figures in Euros.

So, here we are in Karlovac, thanks to considerable support and effort from Viktor Šegrt. ESUG is not only rich in expertise, with 105 members, but also moderately secure financially as it passes to a new Chair. Like Robin, and if the new chair wishes, I will support from the side-lines. The challenge now for you all is to rebuild policy capacity in Europe. I will continue, at the pleasure of CEM chair, to work with Adrian Lombard to lead SUME, but SUME is not policy-focused. However, as a support group for both SUME and SULi, which has a new chair based in London and seems to be realising that regional activities can be leveraged to increase effectiveness, prospects look good for ESUG to bridge across both groups for Sustainable Use in IUCN.

Robert Kenward for 23 April 2019 in Karlovac