

European Sustainable Use Group (ESUG)

General Meeting of Members

Wednesday, 31st May 2023

09.00 – 13.00

FACE, 2nd Floor, Avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée, 1
B-1040 Bruxelles, Belgium.

Minutes

1. The meeting was opened by the Chair Julie Ewald. She welcomed to the meeting those ESUG members present in Brussels: Veronique Blontrock, Sabrina Dietz, Matt Ellis, Tetiana Gardashuk, Michael Greshake, Robert Kenward, Jonah Klocke, Dion Lunow, Julian Mühle, Paul Robinson, David Scallan, Janusz Sielicki, Despina Symons, Francis Vorhies, Kai Wollscheid. They were joined by three observers: Cristian Marquez Aragon, Santiago Camarena, Alex Jandl – all from IAF¹. Online were: Nura Abboud, Guillaume Agede (invited through IAF), Stratos Arampatzis, Scott Brainerd, Sándor Csányi, Mari Ivask, Heidi Krüger, Benoit Labarthe (invited through IAF), Adrian Lombard, Giuseppe Micali, Eduardo Moraes Arraut, Keiya Nakajima (left partway through technical difficulties), Madeleine Nyman, Meera Oommen, Viktor Šegrt, Robin Sharp, Riccardo Simoncini, Zenon Tederko. Online invitations were also sent to: Nicholas Aebischer, Vilma Alina Bezenšek, Yong-Shik Kim, Aamir Rizwan Khan, Farooq Khan, Osayomwanbo Osarenotor, Siti Suriawati Isa.
2. **Apologies** were received from: Pedro Afonso, Abigail Entwistle, Simon Potier, Piet Wit.
3. **The meeting was quorate and the Agenda was adopted by consensus.** There were 16 members attending, exceeding a quorum of 14 (10% of the 135 current ESUG members). Proxy voting is not permitted by ESUG statutes.
4. **Minutes of the previous General Meeting** held in Karlovac were adopted by consensus. Actions (with some modifications as will be noted below) were reported in the Brussels meeting. Briefly:
 - a. Action 2019.1 – Encourage ESUG members to join SUME. 42 are now members of SUME; 61 members of SULi of a total of 135, over 53 countries.
 - b. Action 2019.2 – ESUG apply to IUCN as an International NGO. Action 2019.5 – additional ESUG offices to accomplish this. Difficulties were encountered with establishing additional offices, due to costs. ESUG applied to IUCN as an international NGO but was accepted a Belgian NGO (i.e., with 1 vote).
 - c. Action 2019.3 – Possibility of partnering for side events at the World Conservation Congress 7 in Marseilles proved to be difficult due to disruption due to Covid-19, issues to do with IUCN applications.
 - d. Action 2019.4 – Develop further European Charters developed by Scott Brainerd for Bern Convention, with Forestry Charter; Covid and other illness prevented this.
5. **History of ESUG** – Robert Kenward provided an overview of the history of ESUG. He touched on the inception of the organisation as part of IUCN. Of especial importance now is the support of four main patrons: Robin Sharp CB, BASC, FACE who also deserved profuse thanks for letting us use their lovely new offices for our meeting and providing refreshments afterward, Anatrack – many thanks to them. Robert highlighted successful projects that have provided structure and funding for ESUG's work on sustainable use. Much policy work has been undertaken voluntarily – for instance the European Charters for Hunting Fishing and Fungi-gathering, as well as more recently review of IPBES assessments. It was agreed that Robert will reformat the presentation, currently online as part of the overall meeting presentations, with input from Kai Wollscheid, Robin Sharpe, and others, to make the history and background of ESUG more accessible, especially for

¹ International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

new members. **Action 2023.1:** Jonah Klocke, Dion Lunow, and Alex Jandl will work on updating, tidying the ESUG website, under Robert's guidance.

6. **SUME/CEM update** – Adrian Lombard covered the status of www.naturalliance.org and affiliated forums:
 - a. Currently 15 Forums are operating: Builders Forum, Oceania Forum, (North America Forum), Europe Forum, MENA+ Forum, Sub-Sahara Forum, South and East Asia Forum, (Arabic Forum), Czech Forum, Nordic Forum, French Forum, German Forum, Italian Forum, Portuguese Forum, Russian Forum, Spanish Forum, IAF Biodiversity WG Forum.
 - b. All forum and naturalliance participants are encouraged to sign up for the builder's forum - the largest forum, with 118 participants.
 - c. The IAF working group is set to update www.perdixnet.orgAdrian also reported that IAF and IUCN have signed an MoU, informed us about his recent attendances at the IUCN Human Wildlife Conflict Specialist group on behalf of IUCN-CEM in Oxford and the Cape Town IAF-IUCN SUME conference scheduled for end of June 2023.
7. **CEH/IAF/ESUG update** – Robert updated members on current plans for the Integrated Transactional Environmental Management Systems (ITEMS) project. This arose from contacts between SUME (taking advantage of Adrian's recent visit to the UK), Anatrack, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), and the UK's Centre for Hydrology and Ecology (CEH). The project will create a decision support system which incorporates maps and data that is fed in from various sources to model outcomes and provide strategies for monitoring results. Five countries have been approached to use and improve the sylc software to allow for modelling of efforts to improve conservation (use cases would include grey partridge conservation in the UK, other species in other countries – perhaps black harriers in South Africa). Plans are at an early stage, further information to follow.
8. **IPBES** – Julian Mühle presented on work by ESUG members in support of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Julian attended last year's IPBES 9 meeting, helping to ensure that recreational hunting was deemed as sustainable in a key output in the Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. Input into several IPBES Assessments has been collated by Robert Kenward and several other ESUG members. For future reviews of IPBES Assessments there will be a notice sent through the ESUG google group to alert members. A new page for Naturalliance has been developed on the IPBES Values Assessment, and of the IPBES Sustainable Use of Wild Species Assessment.
9. **Funding applications** – Stratos Arampatzis provided background information on two EU funding applications that ESUG had been part of since 2019: RE-Bio and PRO-COAST. RE-Bio had been unsuccessful but there was still a possibility that PRO-COAST will be funded. Its full title is: A PROactive approach for COMMunities to enABle Societal Transformation. It is designed to assist local communities to support biodiversity conservation across Europe, through community driven initiatives which benefit both biodiversity and livelihoods and leverage private investment. It will allow further development of the sylc software, if funded. Stratos also highlighted several possible funding calls whose closing dates are Feb 2024. **ACTION 2023.2:** All ESUG members to please have a look at them here and let the ESUG committee know if any are of interest.
10. **The Invasion of Ukraine and its effects on the Environment.** Tetiana Gardashuk [presented](#) on the ongoing damage being done to the environment in Ukraine. About 20% of the Nature Protection Fund areas of Ukraine are directly affected. In the Azov-Black Sea region almost all the areas are under occupation. There has been the destruction of landscapes, ecosystems, habitats, and species populations. Threats to nuclear facilities raise the risk of catastrophes, with ongoing pollution due to the targeting of industrial sites and mine laying in farmland. She highlighted the plight of many protected sites, including the Chernobyl Reserve, and protected species – for instance dolphins in the Black Sea, where more than 50,000 have died. This amounts to Ecocide. The sooner the war ends the

less damage will be done. She emphasized the need to start restoration where possible and to plan now to ensure a window for opportunity so that restoration follows a model for sustainable nature and natural resources use. Support was echoed by those present. Suggestions to help with raising awareness came from several present and online. Frank Vorhies reported on a PhD thesis (he is co-supervisor) currently being written on the environmental, ecological, and economic impact of the war. A request was made for this to be circulated as soon as possible, with the possibility of using it to raise awareness of the situation. Academic publications like this ought to be promoted via universities to record impact and proactively engage with this bringing in IPLCs. David Scallan reported that FACE had recently been joined by a Ukrainian member organization, with hunters involved in monitoring and restoring degradation. Zenon Tederko highlighted that Ukraine's intention to become a member of the EU means that a full environmental assessment will have to be done. He warned that any conservation actions taken now need to be in line with future requirements of EU membership. Kai Wollscheid said that in the UNEP there was a focus on post conflict environmental assessments and asked whether there was currently engagement to work on such political environmental recommendations. Tetiana said that planning for the future had tended to consider economic impacts with environmental considerations getting less attention. Janusz Sielicki hoped that there would be positive outcomes with the new and reformed CAP, with the production of agricultural goods in a way that minimizes potential adverse impacts on the environment. David Scallan was concerned about the risk, post conflict, for increased agricultural intensification without due consideration of environmental effects. ESUG needs to provide support as needed to Tetiana and her work in Ukraine to help ensure the best outcome for the environment.

11. **Report of the Chair.** The [report](#) was given by Julie Ewald. Julie started the report with a remembrance of two ESUG members who have sadly passed away since our last AGM - Professor Dr Evgeny Bragin in 2020 and Professor Basil Manos in 2021. They are very much missed. Three big events have had effects on ESUG members over the past four years Covid-19, Ukraine, Brexit. Going forward it is the invasion of Ukraine that is likely to be felt most acutely. The presentations during the meeting (and the Chair's report circulated before the meeting) will have briefed members on current and possible future projects. Julie hoped that these possible future projects will help to provide funds for ESUG members to travel to meetings and thanked Stratos and all at TERO for their help with applications. One major achievement over the past four years was the successful application of ESUG for IUCN membership as a non-governmental organisation. We have also regularised our standing with the Belgian authorities – due to the help of Charlotte Nyffels and the FACE secretariat. We thank them for their patience and assistance with this. Julie extends her thanks to the committee who responded quickly to several calls for documentation during this procedure. There were four formal meetings of Committee during the last four years, and multiple actions approved through email. Our tussles with the bank regulations have also been successful, thanks to Corinne Duggins at GWCT for help with this. Under Robert's leadership ESUG has contributed extensively to IPBES, providing input/review to their assessments. More ESUG members should be involved with this, especially new members. Going forward these reviews will be highlighted on the ESUG google group – please respond if you can. Robert has also been a great support to the Chair over the last four years, despite several health scares. The chair wished to thank him for this, it would not have been possible to keep ESUG running without him. ESUG membership now stands at 135, 42 of which are members of SUME; 61 are members of SULI.
12. **Financial report.** The [financial report](#) was read by Robert Kenward, reporting for Zenon Tederko. Robert thanked our Patrons again: Robin Sharp CB, BASC, FACE, Anatrack. For the year end of 2019, we had €5,102 in the ESUG account. During 2020 we spent €3,893 and received €1,244, with €2,455 at the year end of 2020. In 2021 we received €1,000 and spent €3,419, so that we ended the year with €35 in the account, though €800 the spending in 2021 was on costs for 2022. We anticipated our account being frozen due to delays in

registering our Committee with the Ministry of Justice in Brussels. In 2022 we ended the year with €2,294 in the account. The Committee is now correctly registered with Ministry and bank, and our account unfrozen. It contains €387, after paying for accounting and meeting expenses but before we request Patron contributions and pay IUCN membership fees. Zenon stood down as Treasurer at this AGM – he leaves us solvent!

13. The Accounts for 2019,2020,2021, and 2022 were approved by consensus, after being proposed by Julie Ewald and seconded by Julian Mühle.

14. Elections of Chair and Committee Members. Julian Mühle served as Returning Officer, having been Nominations Officer. As the meeting was quorate, with a matching number of candidates for the open positions, it was possible to approve the election of the Chair and committee by affirmative acclamation. Julian asked for a show of hands – the chair, **Julie Ewald**, and committee, **Sándor Csányi, Tetiana Gardashuk, Robert Kenward** (as treasurer), **David Scallan**, and **Viktor Šegrt** were elected unanimously.

15. Any other business.

- a. Julie Ewald and Robert Kenward thanked Zenon Tederko for his 16 years of work on the ESUG Committee and he was virtually presented with a ceremonially inscribed slate platter which Janusz Sielicki will transport to him in Poland (**ACTION 2023.3**).
- b. Frank Vorhies presented on standards and certification schemes for wildlife enterprise. An example of this is the [FairWild Standard](#) that enables the sustainable production of plants and is also used for wild harvesting. Julie seconded Frank to the ESUG committee to explore this subject further – particularly how current national and international standards can be supported and developed.
- c. Matt Ellis highlighted concern that sustainable use is being marginalized and eroded even in traditionally positive Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) which have become increasingly hostile to sustainable use. Should organisations, including ESUG, put forward resolutions so that we are proactively engaging to turn back the tide of anti-use sentiment? Despina Symons reported that in the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), sustainable use is still strong, but the challenge is in interpreting targets and seeing exactly what they mean for different user groups. Robert highlighted the difficulties, in the face of reduced funding, for members to travel to conventions and meetings – making this difficult. The reviews of IPBES assessments and reviews provide one avenue where ESUG can ensure that sustainable use is considered fairly and supported. Robert reported that IPBES wants us to promote their work, with efforts ongoing in the Naturalliance Network. Frank suggested that we help to make the 1000-page IPBES documents more accessible by highlighting components of it – through twitter, blogs, Naturalliance pages. Robert indicated that this may be possible with hoped for project funding on the horizon.

16. ESUG – priorities in the next two years. Based on the discussion at the meeting, Julie highlighted several priorities for ESUG.

- a. Firstly, is support for Ukraine in recovering its biodiversity - both during and following the conflict. Julie proposed that we work towards the **next ESUG AGM in 2025 being held in Ukraine**. Robert Kenward and Kai Wollscheid enthusiastically seconded this point, and it was unanimously approved (**ACTION 2023.4**). Tetiana looked forward to having us in Ukraine.
- b. Hopefully several new projects (ITEMS and PRO_COAST) will provide funding to ensure administration support for ESUG, as well as development of the sycl software for decision support and communicating in support of sustainable use. There may be opportunities for further funding around our thematic groups – ESUG members should review the funding opportunities suggested by Stratos for 2024.
- c. ESUG will continue to support IPBES, Robert leads on this but anyone who wishes to volunteer to help, please get in contact with either him or Julie.

17. The meeting closed at 13.20.