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#### INFORMATION NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Outcome of the Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA MOP8) (27–30 September 2022, Budapest, Hungary) - Report by the Presidency and the Commission

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Delegations will find in the Annex a report by the Presidency and by the European Commission on the main results of the abovementioned meeting.

**Outcome of the Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA MOP8)  
(27–30 September 2022, Budapest, Hungary)**

**- Report by the Presidency and the Commission –**

The AEWA MOP 8 took place from 27 September to 30 September 2022 in Budapest, Hungary. The Corinthia Hotel was designated as the venue for this Meeting of the Parties, carried under the theme “Strengthening Flyway Conservation in a Changing World”. MOP8 was exceptionally held almost four years after the previous MOP, hosted by South Africa in Durban from 4 to 8 December 2018. MOP 8 was originally planned for October 2021, however due to Covid health crisis, it was moved to the year 2022. MOP 8 was held as an in person meeting and the length was shortened by one day due to limited venue availability.

More than 200 people, including delegates from 45 Contracting Parties, 50 representatives from non-Party countries, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations or national and international experts, participated in the meeting. Out of 24 AEWA Contracting Parties from EU Member States, 16 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) and the European Commission were present. The first EU coordination meeting took place on 26 September. African Parties had their own coordination meetings.

In total, 16 Resolutions were proposed to be adopted at MOP8, as well as other documents. Due to time constraints, the Secretariat informed Parties about its intention to limit discussion on agenda items related to the set of reports of AEWA bodies concerning the implementation of the Agreement and encouraged Parties to send their proposals amending the Draft Resolutions in advance to enable easier workflow of the MOP. The proposed amendments from Parties, as well as the opening and closing statements, were published on the AEWA website.

The opening plenary commenced by welcoming remarks from Ms Flora Mokgohloa, South Africa, Chair of MOP7; Dr Zsolt Semjén, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary; Ms Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species; Ms Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (by video) and by Dr Jacques Trouvilliez, Executive Secretary of AEWA. Apart from the opening statements made by the Czech Republic, speaking on behalf the EU and its Member States, and by Eswatini, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group, a statement by Ukraine regarding the Russian aggression and its impact on biodiversity was delivered. Also, a statement by Cameroon as the 83<sup>rd</sup> Contracting Party to AEWA, officially acceding on 1 October 2022, was delivered. Similarly, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made a statement with regard to its intention of accession to AEWA.

Two working groups were established and their Chairs and Vice-Chairs elected: WG 1 on Scientific and Technical Matters chaired by Hungary, Mr Andras Schmidt (Vice-Chair – Egypt) and WG 2 on Financial and Administrative Matters chaired by the United Kingdom, Mr Simon Mackown (Vice-Chair – Uganda).

WG 1 discussed all Draft Resolutions (except from DR 8.12 on Financial and Administrative Matters). More substantial discussion was expected under DR 8.4 on Adoption, Revision, Retirement, Extension and Implementation of International Species Action and Management Plans, especially with regard to the Action Plan for the Lesser White-fronted Goose. The EU and its MS' proposal to retire this Plan was accepted. The inclusion of a section on Favourable Reference Values (FRVs) in the template for International Action Plan was agreed. The Action Plan for the Common Eider was agreed as part of the Resolution 8.4 further to the inclusion of a clarification on adaptive harvest management. Quite extensive discussions were held on the DR 8.15 on addressing causes of waterbird mortality, dealing amongst others with the impact on birds of energy infrastructures. Issues of recent droughts and spread of Avian Influenza were also highlighted and included in DR 8.2, 8.4 and 8.15.

With regard to DR 8.2 on Adoption of Amendments to the AEWA Annexes, both the proposals from UK as well as Ukraine were adopted. These proposals concerned the addition of a category “being data deficient” in Columns A and B of the Table 1 in Annex 3 and of the definition of wetlands as defined under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). They also concerned amendments to some species population delineations and to the listing of populations reflecting the outcomes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conservation Status Report. It was decided to add an asterisk to the Iceland/UK & Ireland population of Greylag Goose, as proposed by the UK, which enables hunting on a sustainable use basis.

The Resolution 8.6 on the inventory and monitoring of the AEWA flyway site network was amended to avoid additional reporting burden for the EU Parties. Several guidance documents were adopted (Resolution 8.8).

Resolution 8.1 has amended the procedure for submission of proposals for amendments to the Agreement by including an additional voluntary step. This step encourages Parties to submit their proposed amendments to the Technical Committee (TC) preferably 300 days and not later than 250 days ahead of the MOP to enable an assessment of possible amendments by the TC. The Resolution 8.9 on AEWA’s Past Contribution to Delivering the Aichi 2020 Biodiversity Targets and its Future Relevance to the Post-2020 Process further strengthened AEWA’s aim to align its work with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Contracting Parties considered the implementation of AEWA and its Strategic Plan 2019-2027, as well as the Action Plan for Africa, as insufficient, recognizing the shortage of financial resources and capacities to fulfil all the tasks requested, both at the AEWA Secretariat level and in the Agreement area (in particular in the African region). This concern, as well as the need to prioritize further work on the recommendations for the next triennium made in several documents prepared for the MOP, has been reflected in Resolution 8.3.

WG 2 discussed the budget for the period 2023-2025 based on four budget scenarios prepared by the Secretariat. Building on a proposal made by Germany and the insistence of several Parties to act in Africa and on species conservation, new scenarios combining different elements of all original scenarios were prepared. Finally, the group agreed on a higher budget (Resolution 8.12) compared to the previous triennium that strengthens the position of the African Coordinator and integrates part of the cost of a new position of Species Coordinator.

With regard to the Standing Committee membership for Europe and Central Asia, the United Kingdom and Ukraine continue in their position. Luxembourg and Republic of Moldova were appointed as alternates. New members of the Technical Committee were presented by the Secretariat and approved by the Plenary at the last day of the MOP.

All resolutions with the proposed amendments further to the discussions in the two working groups were adopted by the Plenary on the last day of the MOP.

In contrast to previous MOPs, a whole day was dedicated to side events focusing on many important topics such as lead poisoning, the Wadden Sea flyway Initiative, the “Ressource” project, threats on two important wetlands in the EU, and the Avian influenza.

The Award Presentation Ceremony was held during the last day of MOP and awarded three winners: Hichem Azafzaf from Tunisia in the individual category, BirdLife South Africa in the institutional category and the European Commission as a “Champion Plus” under the CMS *Migratory Species Champion Programme*. The ninth Meeting of Parties to AEWA will take place in 2025. The venue is still unknown.