



2024 EPM NOTES

17-18 October, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Hosted by ACBK

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BirdLife ECA Secretariat | Ariel Brunner

Celebration of achievements since 2022, review of 2024 workplan and finances, situation analysis and looking forward to 2025-2026

Questions/Answers

- We need to speak to and bring the youth along as mentioned in our new strategy (especially after the 2022 Global Congress).
 - o Yes, it is a work in progress. Check our new TikTok channel developed last year: <https://www.tiktok.com/@birdlife.europe/>
 - o We will feed back to BirdLife global HQ the expectation for follow up on the youth council.
- In general, we need to involve more the general population in the work we do in the field.
- More and more we introduce ourselves as part of BirdLife, and our constituency knows BirdLife. Other Partners need to step up their communication in that regard as this is an opportunity – for celebration, for growth, for fundraising.
- In response, others felt that the point is not using the BirdLife logo but communicating about the achievements. We should communicate that IBAs, SPAs, Flyways exist because of BirdLife.

Open space for discussions: closing civic space, disinformation and attacks on nature | Ariel Brunner

Co-facilitators: Dorothee Guénéheux, Irene Marchi

Far right and other populist political groups are gaining momentum globally, and across our region. The aim of this session was to develop actionable responses to the political and environmental threats posed by the rise of anti-environmental ideologies. Three facilitated breakout groups explored practical solutions and strategies for 3 identified challenges:

- the mechanics of surviving illiberal regimes,
- disinformation and attack on science, and
- politics of populism and far-right.

Key takeaways:

- Need to remain evidence based, credible, and science based.
- Don't get dragged into nonsense through a reactive mode that strengthens negative agendas. We should try to set our own agenda on sound grounds.

- Need to engage a lot more with social science, values framing and communication. We cannot simply assume people will believe us because we are right and have the evidence.
- Need to be well informed and aware about socioeconomic realities, politics, social trends, etc. We cannot be experts just on birds and environment.
- Create alliances well beyond ENGOs. This can help with bringing in the expertise we lack, credibility on topics that are not ours, etc.
- Need to massively increase sharpness of our communication- use of social media, cultivation of influencers, active outreach to traditional media. Actually, have a communication and advocacy strategy in the broad sense (not just how we broadcast our contents).
- Be very clear about target audiences and find ways to get through to difficult audiences (we cannot just keep talking to “our people”).
- Need to invest in storytelling. Move from presenting “facts” to positive emotional engagement.
- Simplify our messages (without dumbing them down).
- Seek allies and ambassadors beyond our comfort zone.
- Work at multiple scales (local, regional, national, international).
- Be prepared for government hostility:
 - Increase membership and fellowship to have a stronger voice.
 - Seek out non-institutional funding.
 - Have reserves and sound governance and management.
 - Think about having commercial arm, presence outside the country and other legal vehicles.
 - Have a civil society alliance ready to react to attacks; but be proactive, seek to protect civic space before it comes under attack.
 - Have an explicit strategy for defending civic space in your country; seek pro-bono legal advice and have a crisis plan ready.
 - Prepare your staff and organisation to deal with these attacks and risks (even less obvious ones like aggressive audits, infiltrations).
 - Seek support meant for civil society in danger from the UN, human rights community including other NGOs and donors.

Parallel thematic sessions

Flyways | Anna Staneva

Co-facilitators: Barend van Gemerden, Jaime García Moreno Meade

Participants discussed ways to collaborate on flyways conservation, focusing on flagship species, monitoring, and restoration within EAFI, CAFI, and EAEF, with the aim to identify key gaps, synergies, and opportunities for joint efforts. This conversation was followed by a mapping exercise on the needs and priorities for advancing flyways conservation.

Key documents:

- [EAFI Conservation Strategy DRAFT \(26 Aug 2024\)](#)
- [EAEF Conservation Strategy DRAFT \(01 Oct 2024\)](#)
- [CAFI Conservation Strategy DRAFT \(03Oct2024\)](#)
- [ECA Flyways Programme Strategy 2025-2027_DRAFT \(Sep 2024\)](#)

Key takeaways:

- Good cooperation on flyways already exists among Partners. There is a need for more coordinated efforts and collaboration on already existing action, not necessarily creating new activities.
- Areas of interest to increase international cooperation within BirdLife Partnership are: casework, monitoring, satellite tracking, joint fundraising and integrated projects. Some specific examples include:
 - *On IBAs*: taking action to safeguard threatened sites, complaints to multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. Bern Convention), national and international letters of support, keeping the momentum through campaigning, information exchange and alignment with same objectives, restoration of key sites/Natura 2000 areas, data gathering (e.g. through monitoring).
 - *On species*: flagship species, soaring birds, rare species and species with ASPs, Egyptian Vulture, Red-Kite, Red-footed Falcon, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Turtle Dove, seabirds, diving ducks, initiatives such as Euro Bird Watch or Spring Alive (discontinued).
 - *On site restoration*: capacity building, fundraising, communication materials (including graphics) and campaigning, policy and advocacy.
- The strategic frameworks for EAFI, EAEF and CAFI inform about flyway conservation priorities, while a better understanding about who is doing what will help deliver jointly on these priorities. Therefore, it will be useful to map all different projects Partners are involved in along the flyways (such a map is currently being developed for EAFI). Raising awareness about flyway work allows Partners first to contribute to the cause and then to collaborate with others.

- Clear communication and coordination are key for Partners to engage successfully in flyways conservation.

Next steps:

- The Flyways work is coordinated within BirdLife Europe and Central Asia by Anna Staneva (anna.staneva@birdlife.org), with inputs from our Senior Flyways Conservation Officer, Wim Van Den Bossche (willem.vandenbossche@birdlife.org). At the global level, the programme is coordinated by Barend van Gernerden.
- The supporting documents, in particular the [ECA Flyways Programme Strategy 2025-2027](#) are open for comments until the end of the year. Send those to Anna at anna.staneva@birdlife.org.
- Further information about the Flyways work in our region will be communicated to you early 2025.

Nature Restoration | Brecht Verhelst

Co-facilitators: Sofía Capellán, Vedran Lucić

With the aim of identifying areas of potential convergence within the Partnership, participants were invited to position themselves regarding value-based choices, or principles that underpin landscape scale restoration efforts before and after a discussion. The value-based propositions were elaborated in line with the *BirdLife mission, vision, and niche in restoration*. The choices were the following:

- ‘Our primary focus in restoration is to benefit human society’ vs. ‘Our primary focus in restoration is to benefit biodiversity’.
- ‘Restoration should focus on the maximal recovery of the landscape to its condition prior to degradation’ vs. ‘Restoration should facilitate the development of the landscape to a state that is maximally adapted to future climatic, ecological and societal conditions’.
- ‘Restoration should aim to be a one-time intervention that facilitates a self-sustaining recovery of the ecosystem’ vs. ‘Restoration should reserve a significant role for humans in managing the ecosystem’.
- ‘The success of restoration should be evaluated through preselected target species’ vs. ‘The success of restoration should be evaluated through emergent ecosystem properties such as overall species and habitat diversity or ecosystem functions.’

Key document:

- [BirdLife ECA_mission-vision-niche in restoration_DRAFT \(01 Oct 2024\)](#)

Key takeaways:

- Our goal is to restore biodiversity for its intrinsic value, recognizing that humans are an integral part of nature and deeply reliant on it.
- Even in cases where a single intervention might bring the ecosystem to a self-sustaining state, some management will ultimately still be required.
- As we expand to larger spatial and temporal scales or aim to engage broader audiences, we shift from a species-focused approach to a more ecosystem-level perspective. It is essential to establish success indicators at both species and ecosystem levels.
- A reference model clarifies restoration goals and helps set measurable targets by reflecting historical or ecologically similar ecosystems, while accounting for natural variability and future changing conditions like climate change. To ensure long-term sustainability and resilience, the model should also incorporate cultural values and public perceptions.

In addition, during the plenary introductory session, the following question was asked to participants via Mentimeter. The diagram below shows the answers collected.

Which benefits could restoration bring to the BirdLife Partnership?



Next steps:

- The document [BirdLife ECA_mission-vision-niche in restoration_DRAFT \(01 Oct 2024\)](#) is open for comments until the end of the year. Send these to Sofía Capellán, our Nature Restoration Working Group facilitator at sofia.capellan@birdlife.org.
- The Nature Restoration Working Group continues its discussions and initiatives on nature restoration, which you can follow on [Hatch here](#). Key insights and next steps from the [two-day Nature Restoration Working Group meeting](#) will be shared [here](#).

- The policy aspects of the restoration discussions will be addressed by the [Nature and Climate Task Force](#), facilitated by Bárbara Herrero, Attila Králl and campaign-led by Sofie Ruyschaert (i.e. National Restoration Plans).
- The Nature and Climate Task Force is [hosting its bi-annual meeting](#) on 19-20 November 2024 online.

Nature-Positive Energy Transition | Ariel Brunner

Co-facilitator: David Howell

Three breakout groups discussed four possible positive outcomes for our work on renewables by 2030 if we were to adopt a positive engagement with the topic and with the renewable energy sector. These four outcomes were:

- More and better data on renewables/nature are available to inform action.
- Better results for nature are achieved through the sector's growth.
- The energy transition speeds up to reduce the climate threat for birds and people.
- BirdLife is stronger through a visibly more constructive engagement with the issue.

Through these discussions, various needs, possibilities, doubts or opportunities to be considered in moving forward were identified.

Key documents:

- [2023 Note to BirdLife Partners Directors on a Safe Energy Transition](#)

Key takeaways:

- Better data for faster, better decisions is a growth opportunity to invest in.
- Therefore, we must organize, offer our own data, share best results from leading tech tools to detect/avoid collisions and identify clearly data gaps/needs (e.g. bird avoidance behaviours, carrying capacity of an area for renewables, bird flight heights, etc.). Our sensitivity mapping approach can really help in applied spatial planning/zoning and mitigation for instance.
- A range of approaches is worth using – not just lobby, object and challenge on bad approaches for nature, but also work closely with the renewables sector on delivering real benefits/mitigation, project by project. We need to be able to say where we will support them thanks to Strategic Environmental Assessments at larger scales, with better spatial approaches and mitigation.
- If/when we have a positive plan for nature recovery, and with clearer ideas and data on restoration and compensation needs, we can make deals with developers on renewable projects and thus, reduce our concerns, speed up permitting, make the available funds be well-directed to nature priorities.

- There are risks though, and we need to be clever and firm if we are accused of collusion, greenwashing, etc. We need to choose our path with care given very different national circumstances, and try to take our members and closest allies with us. Failure to engage constructively is more likely to be costly in the medium-long term.
- We must improve internally: organizing and sharing information, internal communication (to staff and members, and across borders between Partners) and processes, getting messages right for external communication to explain better our role/position, and the need for faster, more but more responsible renewables. Within the Partnership, we also need to share information on practice of multinationals in different countries so that we can insist on their best practices everywhere. A good central specialist support can help Partners focus on delivery for nature.

The overall conclusion is that we have more to gain than to lose, for birds and their habitats, for the climate, and for the strength and image of BirdLife, by constructive engagement with the sector than by being simply critical and defensive ‘from the outside’.

Next steps:

- We will take this work forward collectively through the Task Forces and their subgroups, through individual/collaborative projects, through direct support to Partners available via David Howell (david.howell@birdlife.org) and others in the BirdLife Europe and Central Asia team, and through a new post that we will recruit to start as soon as possible in 2025 to lead the external-facing renewables work within the ECA Policy Team.
- Partners are encouraged to dedicate time to reflect internally on where they want to go on this topic, at what speed, and what they will need to get there. And they can count on ECA team (especially from David) to support that thinking process, as well as for day-to-day technical support needs, etc. It is really important for Directors to lead a whole organisation reflection, ensuring coherence between different units, structures and levels of the organisation.
- At the online [Nature and Climate Task Force meeting on 19-20 November 2024](#), David will facilitate two sessions on renewables and climate adaptation. At this NCTF meeting, we will also invite Partners to consider whether they wish to work on onshore renewables in a manner similar to the Marine Task Force arrangement for offshore wind (Partner-led sub-group, monthly calls, etc.).
- Off-shore wind energy is indeed a recurring topic of our Marine Task Force, led by Daniel Mitchell. The Marine Task Force is on [Hatch](#), but Daniel (daniel.mitchell@birdlife.org) needs to validate you joining the group.
- This piece of work will also be a topic for discussions and review at one of the ECA Committee meetings in 2025.

Fundraising together | Irene Marchi

Fundraising activities in BirdLife ECA: a snapshot

The presentation provided an overview of BirdLife ECA fundraising record since 2020, explained the current process to assess funding opportunities, informed about roles and responsibilities, and presented the activities and opportunities of the Fundraising Working Group (FWG).

Questions/Answers

- *Do you include crowdfunding within your strategy? The Partnership has immense potential to do crowdfunding.*

As BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, we don't but we have had some discussions about crowdfunding both in the FWG and within BirdLife International. We are happy to continue discussing it within the FWG.

- Thank you for having this working group. We see it as extremely helpful for sharing experience. *To Partners who are not participating in the group, including from Western Europe: why do you not use this excellent opportunity we have among all Partners?*

We guess it depends on individual capacity and capacity need. But we are trying to find individual approaches and other ways to collaborate.

→ A suggestion was made to organise smaller thematic workshops for interested Partners.
→ Another suggestion was discussing at a FWG meeting challenges linked to organisations' dependence on many small projects and current funding model.

- *Why is it that currently the EU funding received by BirdLife ECA is that small?*

The EU is our biggest institutional donor, but a limiting factor is the co-funding we need to secure for this core grant, which cannot come from other EU funding. When it comes to EU funding programmes, we lack capacity - however we work on exploring some programmes such as Horizon, trying to be strategic and find collaborators.

- Two complex topics of interest for fundraising were then raised: on *carbon credits and endowment*. Both are not dealt with by BirdLife ECA but by BirdLife global colleagues.

BirdLife International has an endowment fund, which is managed and invested strategically and sustainably. It is overseen by Global Council and taken care of by the treasurer.

On carbon credits, we did organise several sessions at the FWG webinars or meetings, but we don't have capacity to follow as this requires expertise. Some global colleagues work on it though and we can always introduce you to them for any question.

- *What are the prospects of funding for biodiversity (especially of the LIFE programme)?*

This is a policy question as the risk that the LIFE programme will be shut down by the EPP is real, if not killed at least modified on the model of the post-covid recovery funds with only macro-conditions. It would be very unlikely then that the governments would want to spend these funds on nature, and even less likely that they would do so through civil society. Our

Policy team in Brussels is very busy with this at the moment, as there will be a debate on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). We are lucky to have NABU's contribution to this with 1 full-time officer based in Brussels to help our team on this topic. All EU Partners need to take this threat very seriously and deploy the resources they have to stop such a trend in the EU Council. Also, Partners should start thinking on how to decrease their dependency on the LIFE programme.

Fundraising together for Flyways, Nature Restoration and Nature- Positive Energy Transition

Co-facilitators: Anna Staneva, Sofía Capellán, Ariel Brunner

Through 3 thematic breakout groups, participants discussed of establishing ways to fundraise together, to ensure that BirdLife joint programmes advance concretely through pooled fundraising efforts. The groups had to answer two questions on:

- Identifying elements for project proposals to ensure coherence with BirdLife programmes, and roles for Partners and Secretariat to implement joint projects; and
- Preparing ourselves proactively for upcoming funding opportunities on topics we already work on.

Key takeaways:

- Elements to include in joint proposals are listed below:
 - **for the flyways programme:** common umbrella species; shared threats; Species Action Plans (SAP); topics of international importance such as policy, advocacy, management, and the network role of the Secretariat in sharing best practices; sites connectivity networks; nature restoration priorities; capacity development opportunities; and topics of social importance like education.
 - **for nature restoration:** incorporate the importance of migratory pathways; adopt strategies suited to different ecosystems where Partners can work collectively; evaluate political, economic, and contextual risks, and plan mitigation strategies; include the social safeguarding elements from BirdLife policies and trainings.
 - **for nature-positive energy transition:** we can “sell” sensitivity mapping and the AVISTEP tool is an asset. Involve the Secretariat and other Partners in national funding applications around methodology co-development, the use of tools like AVISTEP, etc.; cooperation in addressing multinational companies; regional birds (e.g. Baltic); working together on species compensation at sea basin level.
- What is needed for a pro-active joint fundraising:
 - **for the Flyways programme:** knowing other Partners and their work; seeking common priorities during the preparation phase (e.g. with EC); have a clear plan

of what we want to do, including 1) Action plan, 2) SAP, 3) Strategies; prepare project concepts (e.g. through RENATE process) and get help to develop it; a platform on flyways to learn from others (e.g. EAFI), knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each Partner; meet every now and then to exchange and know what other regions too are doing; have a repository and a dedicated group on Hatch to discuss funding opportunities specifically on flyways, from strategy to implementation.

- **for nature restoration:** identify priorities (where, when and why) across the region; build a common narrative; regularly update, in a database, the existing skills and expertise within the Partnership and write these down in project proposals; focus on creating business models to ensure sustainability; share best practices through peer-to-peer exchanges; Partners need to communicate the discussions happening in the TF and WG across their organizations; keep updated a shared platform or database on Partners' priorities; build a portfolio of projects by developing and following standardized methods like in RENATE to identify the priority sites to be restored and funded; integrate funding flexibility in the proposals; analyse failed proposals to learn from past failures and improve future outcomes; have a space in the Nature Restoration WG meetings or other Task Force to discuss this; analyse the market dynamics for restoration funding and how to incorporate non-restoration supporting activities such as legal assistance in.
- **for nature-positive energy transition:** hard to convince colleagues of "positive" side of renewable energy, but we need to make people see the value of positive engagement with the sector - this requires developing a shared narrative about why we work with such a sector. Suggestion to use AI to harvest Partners activities in a database. Use Task Forces to agree joint priorities.

Questions/Comments:

- Can the Secretariat lead a regional effort similar to the development of the national IBA inventories in the 90's, but looking at the key sites to be restored across the ECA region? Some Partners would like to see the Secretariat leading a large regional project.

Joint online fundraising

Co-facilitators: Emma Bolton, Mairianne Walker

Following a request from the BirdLife Fundraising Working Group, research was led this year to investigate pros and cons of BirdLife facilitating joint online fundraising campaigns in Europe and Central Asia. This session presented the findings and opened the discussion with Partners to agree on a way forward for collaboration and next steps.

Questions/Answers

- The more specific and more story-oriented we are, the more we touch people's hearts, and the more likely they will be ready to put money into it. A joint fundraising campaign would be welcome.
- It is more efficient to use existing crowd-funding platforms instead of using/creating our own. Could that not save money? Especially if we pool our resources together, surely this would be cheaper to do crowdfunding together instead of each Partner doing their own campaign. We could try to divide the work between what needs to be coordinated by the Secretariat and which activities are to be undertaken by the Partners.
- Recognising that this is very complex undertaking, still simple messages should work in an international context and in all national contexts really. While we can agree with your decision, postponing such a joint online fundraising campaign won't help any of us as we need to start working on increasing unrestricted funding.

It is a challenge that we recognise and share. We lack capacity at the moment, and it is definitively an investment that for now, we cannot make but we commit in looking into in upcoming years.

After a raise of hands, more than 16 organisations attending said they would be willing to get involved in.

Next steps:

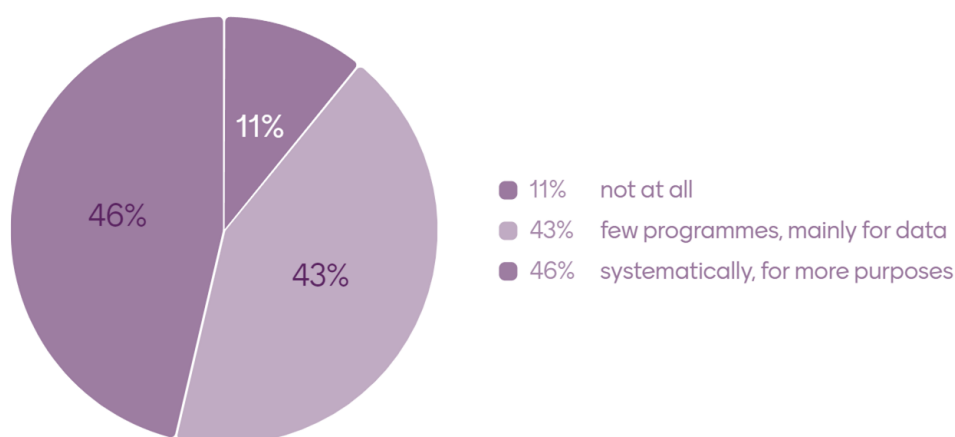
- The Fundraising Working Group (FWG) is on [Hatch](#), but Irene Marchi (irene.marchi@birdlife.org) needs to validate you joining the group.
- The 2024 Fundraising Working Group annual meeting was hosted by BSPB in Bulgaria, on 5-8 November. The joint fundraising discussions were also part of the topics broached there. In 2025, the FWG will continue addressing these questions through its programme (still to be agreed).
- The Fundraising Working Group launched an effort to keep a database of [ongoing projects](#) and [ideas for joint fundraising](#). Participants are invited to contribute and share their ideas/projects to facilitate knowledge exchanges.
 - The first list of [ongoing projects](#) can be used as a reference to contact other Partners to learn about their experience and to reference their projects.
 - The second list with [ideas for joint fundraising](#) includes project ideas for which the BirdLife ECA Partners are seeking funding and/or partners. (This is not a list of general open funding opportunities, which is sent every month by Daniela Arturo, our Fundraising Officer, reachable at daniela.arturo@birdlife.org).

Partner-led parallel sessions

Citizen science and our approach to it | Zdeněk Vermouzek

Zdeněk Vermouzek (ČSO) presented the successful co-operation of 6 Partners (Czechia, Bavaria/ LBV, Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia, Serbia) on a joint citizen science programme, the winter bird count (see in Czech, www.ptacihodinka.cz). Through this programme, the 6 Partners share development costs of the web application for data collection, data processing and presentation, as well as educational and promotional materials, best practices and ideas for publicity and subsequent fundraising. Through the joint data processing, each Partner is responsible for its own server including security and connectivity, for the website static content and for the implementation of all promotional, educational and fundraising activities.

Participants were asked how they use citizen science currently:



In the subsequent breakout groups, participants were asked to list existing barriers to a similar approach being used more often/broadly and to brainstorm on features of an ideal joint programme.

Barriers

- Many said they are already using an app such as eBird, which has the widest application but limitations. (Also, a special, tailored app is needed for a successful citizen science programme for the wider audience.)
- Organisations can be territorial about their systems and there are concerns re-cyberattacks.
- Several participants are using citizen science for fun and engagement. Others are not convinced that many new prospective members would use these apps.
- Cost of creating such a platform.
- Lack of people to count birds in some countries, and apps don't work effectively in countries with low density of human populations.

Wishes

- BirdLife Secretariat should consider implementing a global BirdLife database.
- BirdLife Secretariat could collect and disseminate best practices on citizen science, including a best practice guide with case studies for implementing citizen science projects and the subsequent marketing and fundraising work with leads.
- Partners should be more proactive.
- If there is a new joint programme, then it should provide a developer/system for Partners to use. This software, either mobile app or web app, should be easy to use, and should employ a simple and functional UI. It should acknowledge similarities and break down language barriers. It should enable easy sharing and assembling data. Special security measures should be implemented for handling users' personal data.
- Some expressed their interest in sharing stories, not apps (e.g. white stork – very different population sizes among countries – app in some, webcam in others).

Next steps:

- This discussion's outcomes will be raised with members of the BirdLife global science team and will be considered at an upcoming BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Committee meeting.
- Presentations and sharing best practices on citizen science, marketing and fundraising happen within the Fundraising Working Group, facilitated by our Fundraising Manager, Irene Marchi (irene.marchi@birdlife.org). The Fundraising Working Group is on [Hatch](#).

Bilateral policy cooperation among BirdLife Partners, lessons learnt from OTOP and NABU | Konstantin Kreiser, Iza Gadi

Co-facilitators: Jarosław Krogulec

Increasing policy capacities across the BirdLife Partnership in Europe and Central Asia is instrumental if we want to improve legislative and financial conditions for nature and bird conservation. Since 2021, NABU and OTOP are cooperating bilaterally in the field of policy. The NABU (unrestricted funding) support allowed OTOP to build up a policy team and to leverage other funding and staff time. OTOP was able to put in place policy activities in the field of agriculture and nature. Other Partners have received policy support from RSPB which also was beneficial to them to gather further policy experience.

Key takeaways

- Challenges: how to effectively transfer complex policy information to national and executive levels; policy and advocacy work often needs unrestricted funding, and it is hard to fundraise for.

- Opportunities: being a BirdLife Partner qualifies almost automatically as a partner organisation that can be trusted; the supporting Partner gets a good “return” for limited resources and does not have to invest much working hours.
- Bilateral policy collaboration in practice: networking; mapping potential collaborations and identifying relevant stakeholders; organizing visits and exchanges to foster connections and learn from others; encouraging bottom-up approaches; and building coalitions and collaborating with experienced organizations and experts to enhance capacity and effectiveness.
- Policy collaboration as knowledge transfer: sharing expertise and best practices on advocacy work; utilizing resources like goodlobby.eu for capacity building.
- Prioritize stakeholder engagement: actively involve stakeholders, including volunteers and local groups, in policy discussions and decision-making processes.
- Leverage existing resources, such as foundations and funding opportunities, to support advocacy work.
- Foster creative thinking: encourage innovative approaches to policy advocacy, including reframing advocacy as "stakeholder facilitation", or "participative democracy" to donors.

Recommendations

- Organize follow-up sessions to deepen the discussion and share progress updates.
- Create a shared platform, or an online community to facilitate ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Compile a repository of best practices and case studies to inform future policy work.
- Advocate for increased funding for advocacy and capacity building initiatives.

Next steps:

- This discussion’s outcomes will be considered at an upcoming BirdLife Europe and Central Asia Committee meeting.
- Already, the organizers and participants are welcome to share their best practices via the [BirdLife Europe and Central Asia main group on Hatch](#).

Closing remarks | Ariel Brunner

Conclusions of the meeting, discussing next steps

Key main points

- Thank you to Vera and Milan for being part of the ECA Committee in the past 2 years!
- **Sessions' summary:**
 - 1) **Closing civil space:** a lot of ideas around engaging with emotions and psychology, with parts of society we have not engaged before. Need to make our organisations resilient in the face of a more hostile climate.
 - 2) **Nature restoration:** excitement and good ideas shared, with a message to find the balance between the intrinsic value of nature and thinking bigger, longer term and more holistically.
 - 3) **Flyways:** a lot of progress and many good activities on and within the flyways are already happening – what is needed is not new ones but more clarity, communication and better coordination.
 - 4) **Energy transition:** we are all struggling with remaining very strong in defence of nature, while becoming part of the energy transition, moving to engaging and proactive mode, and becoming more knowledgeable on the topic. We need to shift our mindset from what we don't want to what we do want.
 - 5) **Joint fundraising:** this is also a mindset shift – we and our organisations need to think about finding the money for both our individual organisations and the Partnership as a whole; this requires better coordination.
- **Sessions' presentations and videos are [in the governance folder, under Hatch here](#), and available as follow:**

 - [Martin Hellicar memorial video](#)
 - [Oleg Dudkin tribute video](#)
 - [BirdLife ECA Secretariat](#)
 - [ACBK](#)
 - Introduction to parallel thematic priorities ([video recording](#) and [ppt presentation](#))
 - [Flyways](#) (preparatory documents)
 - [Nature restoration](#)
 - [Nature-positive energy transition](#) (preparatory documents)
 - BirdLife International with [Martin's introduction](#) and the [BirdLife's important achievements video](#),
 - Central Asia ([general overview+ Kazakhstan](#), [Uzbekistan](#), [Turkmenistan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#))
 - [Fundraising](#), including the video recording of the [joint online fundraising part](#),
 - Partner-led parallel session on [Citizen science and CSO approach to it](#)
 - Partner-led parallel session on [Policy collaboration between BirdLife Partners](#)
 - The photos can be found [here](#).

Questions/Answers

- Noah Janssen, Director of Natuurpunt: *"Thank you for great organisation!"*
- Dan Hulea, Executive Director at the SOR: *"This 2024 EPM has provided us a chance to see what we are doing and compare with what others do, realising things we don't value in our*

own organisation. I gained new ideas and approach, which refresh the mind. It is good to go back with such energy, to be together, as it is never the same in online meetings. The event was excellently organised and enjoyable."

- Karsten Schipperheijn, Director of Vogelbescherming Nederland: *"The week has been a learning curve for me - realising the common responsibilities we share. What do I bring home? Many beautiful stories we didn't know about and to be shared. A thought on how to be helped."*
- Alex Trajçe, Executive Director of the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA): *"It has been my first EPM, and an amazing experience with an amazing energy. Knowing there is such a strong network of support and inspiration is fantastic to keep the motivation up. I am very happy to be part of the network."*
- Danka Uzunova, Programme Coordinator at Macedonian Ecological Society had a suggestion: *"After the 2022 World Congress, we need to find the way to engage the youth as we lack younger generation here. We need to get them prepared so that the young generation can lead in the future – and they need access to these kinds of events."*
- Christian Verschueren, Chairman of Natagora: *"Thank you for the great organisation! I want to make 3 points: the level of alignment between global, regional and national levels is now impressive; I valued the level of participation by the Central Asia region, thanks to strengthened capacity; and last, a suggestion to have external keynote speakers on some topics to inspire the sessions (e.g. on energy transition)."*

An immense thank you to ACBK!