

**Inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee for
the Interregional Committee for Europe, North and Central Asia (ICENCA),
- a hybrid meeting at the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Marseille, and via the
Zoom platform
Tuesday 7th September 2021**

Participants

Chris Mahon (United Kingdom) - Co-Chair West Europe
Tamas Marghescu (Hungary) - Co-Chair East Europe, North and Central Asia (via Zoom)
Hans de Iongh (The Netherlands) - Vice Co-Chair West Europe
Alexei Zavarzin (Russian Federation) - Vice Co-Chair East Europe, North and Central Asia (via Zoom)
Divija Jata (Belgium) - Steering Group Member West Europe
Thomas Tennhardt (Germany) - Steering Group Member West Europe
Ruben Khachatryan (Armenia) - Steering Group Member East Europe, North and Central Asia
Tamar Pataridze (Georgia) – Steering Group Member East Europe, North and Central Asia
Ann-Katrine Garn (Denmark) - Secretary IUCN National Committee Denmark/Copenhagen Zoo
Alberto Arroya Schnell (Belgium) – IUCN Brussels (observer)
Hilde Eggermont (Belgium) – IUCN Councillor West Europe (observer)
Jan Olov Westerberg (Sweden) IUCN Councillor West Europe (observer)
Jesús Bellido (Spain) – IUCN National Committee Spain (observer)

Apologies

Boris Erg (Serbia) – IUCN Regional Office for East Europe, North and Central Asia, Belgrade

1. Introduction

Chris opened the meeting with a warm welcome to those able to attend in person and online, in particular to Co-Chair Tamas joining via Zoom. A proposed agenda with six objectives had been circulated previously and this was adopted. Chris emphasised that this would be largely a ‘getting to know each other’ meeting and also to begin to get to understand some of the things the ICENCA might wish to achieve.

2. Objective 1 To formalise the Interregional Committee

The idea of closer collaboration between the two regions of West Europe and East Europe, North and Central Asia has been discussed for a long time and has been tested within the activities of the Working Group for National Committee Development in Europe North and Central Asia (WGNCD). Emerging from the work of the WGNCD acting as the Interim Steering Group for the new entity, the ICENCA concept has been developed and processes to formalise it put into place. These have included the creation of draft by-laws, consultation with IUCN Council and its Governance and Constituency Committee, a consultation process to achieve the support of 50%+1 of Members in the two regions and a nominations process to bring forward individuals willing to serve on the Steering Committee of the ICENCA. It has taken two years to get to this point. but now we have a mandate from the relevant membership and widespread support in general. Council has noted the existence of the ICENCA and the Director General has already made reference to it in his presentation to the Congress. Therefore, we believe that the ICENCA is formally recognised as an IUCN Member Committee but should check with Luc de Wever, the Senior Governance Manager and Secretary to Council Union Development Group on the exact position, as it maybe that IUCN Council requires to see the names of the Steering Committee representatives.

Action: contact Luc de Wever with the names of the Steering Committee so that the official recognition status can be understood. (CM/TM/AKG)

3. Objective 2 To introduce ourselves and those serving on the Steering Group to each other

The meeting continued with a presentation round by the meeting participants during which all introduced themselves and their backgrounds.

Alex congratulated colleagues with this achievement and highlighted that this is also a tribute to previous IUCN Councillor and Chair of the Russian National Committee, Rustam Sagitov, and all his effort to foster collaboration between the two regions. It has been a long journey since the National Committee of Spain presented the Motion in 2008 on strengthening collaboration across the Union, he noted.

4. Objective 3 To identify any areas of the bylaws that require proposals for adjustment

Gratitude was expressed to Jan Olov Westerberg for generating the draft bylaws and liaising with IUCN's legal adviser, Sandrine Friedli Cela. The draft by-laws have been presented to IUCN Council via a communication with the Director General and have been appropriately noted. However, one of the first actions of the ICENCA Steering Committee is to pay attention to the draft bylaws and propose amendments to them early in our evolution in order for us to operate effectively within their guidance. For example, the positions of Co-Chair do not exist in the draft by-laws and there may be other adjustments that might come forward, for example adding the position a Co-Secretary for East Europe, North and Central Asia.

Action: propose amendments to the draft bylaws for consideration at the next meeting of the ICENCA Steering Committee in November 2021(All

5. Objective 4 To identify individuals to approach to fill the last two places

There remain two vacancies for members in the Steering Committee which need to be filled. Transparency is important so we need to discuss whether we go for another round of nominations or alternatively, come up with some names. The members of the ICENCA Steering Committee currently are as follows:

Co-Chair West Europe

Chris Mahon (United Kingdom) IUCN National Committee UK/The Sibthorp Trust

Co-Chair East Europe, North and Central Asia

Tamas Marghescu (Hungary) International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (via ZOOM)

Vice Co-Chair West Europe

Hans de Iongh (The Netherlands) Leo Foundation

Vice Co-Chair East Europe, North and Central Asia

Alexei Zavarzin (Russian Federation) All-Russian Society of Nature Protection/IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (via ZOOM)

Steering Group Member

West Europe

Divija Jata (Belgium) Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences

Thomas Tennhardt (Germany) Naturschutzbund Deutschland (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union)

Vacant

East Europe, North and Central Asia

Ruben Khachatryan (Armenia) Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets

Tamar Pataridze (Georgia) – outgoing IUCN Council Member

Vacant

Secretary

Ann-Katrine Garn (Denmark) IUCN National Committee Denmark/Copenhagen Zoo

Co-Secretary – vacant

Alex highlighted that there is an unevenness in the IUCN Membership in the East. Tamar and Thomas agreed and highlighted the low number of IUCN Members in the Central Asia. It was agreed that the nomination process should open again as well as everyone thinks of potential candidates to put in. Geographical representation and gender should be considered factors in this process. The nomination process should be completed by the end of October 2021 in time for the next meeting which should be held in November 2021, after the nomination period has ended.

Action: Nomination process to re-open as soon as possible (CM/TM/AKG with the help of the Secretariat).

6. Objective 5 To begin the conversation about what the ICENCA will do in the next 4 years

It was proposed the ICENCA Steering Committee needs to consider some ambition and creative thinking so we need to think ahead 4 years to next WCC when we can demonstrate what we have achieved.

Tamas suggested focussing on joining all the components of the IUCN family. Alex continued that one of the purposes is to facilitate cooperation. However, the further we are from the West Europe border, the less is known. One issue is language which a particular problem in Russia but also in Central Asia. In this context, Tamás suggested to facilitate the process of communications by including the Russian language in the communications of ICENCA through the assistance of the Russian government. Strengthening IUCN in these regions with a stronger IUCN presence is key – our work should be ‘transbordering’ and joining-up the efforts of IUCN Members in the two regions.

Jan Olov followed with the question about where the next World Parks Congress 2024 will be. Might be able to provide added value to Russia if it was hosted there? Tamas concluded that language is a barrier which we have to deal with. Maybe the State Member could assist?

Tamar expects that ICENCA can deliver a strengthening platform especially to the Eastern, and Central Asian IUCN Members, as in West Europe where IUCN Members collaborate. The capacity building element is important. One of the outcomes from ICENCA is our joint efforts. Alex supported that we should focus on serving the Members.

Tamas highlighted that IUCN is a membership organisation but often Members are not being asked and this is important. For example, candidates for the appointment for the Regional Director for West Europe could have come from the Membership. Member representation should also form part of the selection panel and should be engaged in the selection process. Alberto informed that he was not opposed to this idea and he will refer back to it.

Hans noted that there are 424 IUCN Members represented by ICENCA, of which 354 are in West Europe and only 70 in East Europe, North and Central Asia. Language is a problem but also finance and resources. Maybe we could identify these issues through the finance support to the Brussels and Belgrade Regional Offices. Hans also refers to a side event organised by the Netherlands Committee for IUCN during which Peter Larsen presented the results of a questionnaire survey among IUCN members on perceived risks.

<https://www.iucncongress2020.org/programme/speakers/peter-bille-larsen> Hans suggests to put the

results of this survey on the agenda of the next ICENCA meeting, if the results are available.

Action: Hans to request the results of the survey from Peter Larsen.

Tamas noted that the financial support to other IUCN Regional Offices is higher than in our regions. There are many imbalances which we should focus on. We need to strengthen the resources in the East and this Committee could play an important role here.

Chris mentioned that he and Ann-Katrine had co-facilitated a contact group for Motion F on the role of Commission members in the governance meetings of Member Committees. An appropriate ICENCA connection will need to be made with the IUCN Commissions.

Action: To consider further the proposals discussed at this meeting and other activities that ICENCA could engage in, to be included in the agenda of the November 2021 meeting (All)

Action: To approach the IUCN Commissions for their view on engagement with ICENCA when a sufficiently detailed ICENCA work programme has been agreed. (CM, TM, AKG)

7. Objective 6 To schedule future meetings of the ICENCA

A meeting in the beginning of November was suggested for the next occasion and for the additional nomination process to take place in between. It was agreed to spend the next two months keeping in contact by email and then organise a meeting at the beginning of November.

Tamas reminded that during the interim period we should have the amendments to the draft bylaws ready so we can agree them at the meeting in November. Chris agreed with this good suggestion.

Action: A Doodle poll to be circulated for the beginning of November (AKG)

8. Any other business

There was no additional business. Tamas and Chris concluded this first ICENCA Steering Committee meeting thanking everyone for joining the meeting.