



5th SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
14 – 18 May 2012, La Rochelle, France

“Migratory waterbirds and people - sharing wetlands”

RESOLUTION 5.20

**PROMOTE TWINNING SCHEMES BETWEEN THE NATURAL SITES COVERED BY
THE AEWA AND THE NETWORK OF SITES LISTED UNDER
THE RAMSAR CONVENTION**

Submitted by the European Union and its Member States

Noting the complementary nature of AEWA which encourages international cooperation for migratory waterbirds at flyway scales and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which encourages, as far as possible, the wise use of all wetlands including the designation and management of Wetlands of International Importance based on ecological criteria including those related to waterbirds,

Recalling AEWA Article III.2, paragraph (c) of the Agreement according to which Parties “*shall identify sites and habitats for migratory waterbirds occurring within their territory and encourage the protection, management, rehabilitation and restoration of these sites, in liaison with those bodies listed in Article IX, paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Agreement, concerned with habitat conservation*”,

Recalling target 1.2 of the AEWA Strategic Plan, that refers to the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive and coherent flyway network of protected and managed sites, and other adequately managed sites, of international and national importance for waterbirds and *noting* that the Ramsar site network and the EU’s Natura 2000 network can be considered as good examples,

Recalling also paragraph 3.2.2 of the Action Plan which states that: “*Parties shall endeavour to give special protection to those wetlands which meet internationally accepted criteria of international importance*”, and *noting* that the conservation and wise use of wetlands is one of the three ‘pillars’ of the Ramsar Convention,

Recalling Article 5 of the Ramsar Convention text concerning international cooperation and Resolution VII.19 which calls on Contracting Parties to *inter alia* intensify efforts in the application of site twinning arrangements,

Recalling the numerous countries traversed by the same migratory wild birds within the Agreement area,

Noting the generally good knowledge of sites important to migratory waterbirds *inter alia* as described by the wetland inventories of Wetlands International, the “*Important Bird Areas (IBAs)*”¹ inventories of BirdLife International, as well as the Critical Site Network² resulting from the Wings Over Wetlands (WOW) UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Flyways Project,

¹ <http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/sites/>

² <http://wow.wetlands.org/INFORMATIONFLYWAY/CRITICALSITENETWORKTOOL/tabid/1349/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Stressing the benefits of twinning initiatives between protected areas in different countries in helping to exchange expertise and build capacities, including through collaboration on joint research programmes, the transfer of knowledge, and direct exchanges of wardening staff or others; and *recalling* the technical guidance from Eurosite "*How to make your twinning a success*, June 1998" to this end,

Noting the operational, cultural and financial challenges which mean that bilateral arrangements rarely last for more than 10 years,

Further noting that important opportunities are provided by the addition of environmental elements to existing cultural, educational and economic exchanges that already exist between local and regional authorities in different countries.

The Meeting of Parties:

1. *Encourages* Contracting Parties, in particular through managers/administrators of sites of importance for migratory waterbirds to promote twinning arrangements with equivalent sites in other countries, within the framework of site management plans and especially where such sites share common migratory waterbirds or conservation issues;
2. *Encourages* Contracting Parties to consider to facilitate the conclusion of twinning schemes between managers/administrators of sites of importance for migratory waterbirds;
3. *Encourages* each AEWA Contracting Party to consider with other Contracting Parties from the same or another region with which it shares a common flyway, the feasibility of twinning arrangements between sites and to report any such arrangements arising to each session of the Meeting of the Parties;
4. *Suggests* that such twinning agreements could be concluded for a renewable period of three years;
5. *Encourages* the Contracting Parties to consider taking advantage of Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties to conclude a twinning agreement of at least one site in their country and a site in another country sharing common migratory waterbirds or conservation issues.