

## **DECLARATION**

**By participants at the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Planning Workshop held in Sofia, Bulgaria from 5 - 8 July 2015**

We, seventy representatives of Governments, local authorities, nature conservation organizations and universities from 33 countries gathered in Sofia, Bulgaria in the framework of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan workshop, jointly hosted by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife Bulgaria) and the Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU);

Recognizing that the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) is one of our region's most threatened bird species (classified by the IUCN Red List as 'Endangered') due to rapid and continuing population declines for over 20 years.

Further recognizing the valuable ecosystem services provided by scavenging birds such as the Egyptian Vulture, particularly in relation to reducing the spread of diseases (such as anthrax and rabies), and the significant associated benefits for human health.

Aware of a range of international instruments, the activities and decisions of which are relevant to vulture conservation, and which include:

- the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
- the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its Raptors MOU
- CMS Resolution 11.15 – Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds
- CMS Resolution 11.16 – the Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds
- CMS Resolution 11.27 – Renewable Energy and Migratory Species (establishing a Multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force)

Calling on the European Union, national governments, INGOs, NGOs, partners and other stakeholders in the Range States of the Egyptian Vulture to provide and/or seek resources for and opportunities to collaborate on vulture conservation activities through relevant financial mechanisms, such as:

- EU LIFE Programme (esp. actions outside of the EU)
- EU African Wildlife Strategy (European Commission DG DEVCO)
- Bilateral donors, the Global Environment Facility and charitable foundations
- International NGOs

Have identified that the combination of the following threats has caused serious declines in Egyptian Vulture populations:

- poisoning, due to persecution of predators or inappropriate use of agricultural chemicals and veterinary drugs (such as Diclofenac) and the use of lead shot;

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- insufficient amounts of accessible food caused by habitat degradation and undesired side effects of sanitation practices necessary for maintaining human health;
- electrocution on power line poles and collision with wind turbines and power lines;
- disturbance at breeding sites
- illegal harvesting (for example for use in traditional medicine and to meet demand from collectors).

We have also identified the following priorities requiring coordinated concerted action at international level:

- Reducing threats from all types of poisoning
- Reducing illegal killing, taking, trade and disturbance of breeding pairs
- Preventing electrocution and collisions with wind turbines and power lines
- Building capacity in Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East
- Promoting research (particularly outside of the breeding areas along the flyway and in wintering areas)
- Improving the exchange of information
- Establishing a network of safe areas for vultures along the flyway
- Monitoring the impact of the implementation of EU legislation concerning the disposal of livestock carcasses

We call on all stakeholders concerned with Egyptian Vulture conservation to do the following:

- Play their part in promoting and implementing the Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Egyptian Vulture (due to be published before the end of 2015)
- Allocate the required human and financial resources for the implementation of the actions therein
- Improve coordination and scale up conservation efforts for the species
- Crack down on the illegal use of poison for any type of animal control, develop national anti-poisoning action programmes and improve international coordination and sharing of best practice
- Pay special attention to secure safe migration flyways for the Egyptian Vulture by eliminating and avoiding dangerous developments of infrastructure and facilities
- Ensure that important energy infrastructure development conforms to best practice standards of safety and design at the planning, construction and monitoring stages
- Keep in mind the possibility of using ex situ conservation initiatives to support higher productivity within the wild population.

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