

Summary Report

The **Czech Republic** invited the 48 European Ramsar Contracting Parties to the **9th European Ramsar Meeting** (ERM9), organized by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat. The Meeting took place on 19-23 March 2018 in **Olomouc**, the historical capital of Moravia. It was an occasion to show the European participants Czech Ramsar Sites, including field visits to three of them, and Czech wetland policies, illustrated with several presentations and a film on the *Mysterious World of Wetlands*. A detailed programme of the sessions, with thanks to the hosts and sponsors of the Meeting, is provided in the [Programme and Annotated Agenda](#).

The main aim of the Meeting was to prepare the European Parties for Ramsar COP13 in Dubai in late October 2018. The European “pre-COP” Meeting was attended by delegations from 26 Ramsar Contracting Parties, three International Organization Partners (Wetlands International, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, WWF International), the European Commission, the Rhine Commission (ICPR), the International Peatland Society (IPS), and participants representing academic and research organisations, business partners and NGOs, as well as wetland experts and Ramsar Secretariat staff, totalling 89 participants. Names and contact details can be found in the [Participants List](#).

The participants were made aware of all Draft Resolutions (DRs) submitted to the 54th meeting of Standing Committee (SC54, 23-27 April 2018) for deliberation and transfer to COP13 (hyperlinks were provided in the [Programme and Annotated Agenda](#)). Participants in the European Meeting discussed substantial aspects of most of the DRs and prepared bullet-point recommendations for their improvement during 18 interactive sessions. Short [presentations to introduce the DRs](#) and [summary recommendations](#) elaborated during the interactive sessions were shared after the Meeting with all participants and with all European Ramsar National Focal Points, including those who were unable to attend the Meeting. The short texts are available on demand from the Ramsar Secretariat.

Concerning the DRs submitted for COP13, some topics triggered longer discussions that could not be concluded during the Meeting; notably the DR on improving the efficiency of structures and processes of the Convention, proposing to replace the executive team of the Ramsar Convention with a conference bureau (*Doc. SC54-21.8*), the DR on the rapid assessment of wetland ecosystem services, where delegates considered it important to make the proposed approach compatible with already existing European Union tools, such as CICES and MAES (*Doc. SC54.21.1*), and the DR on agriculture in wetlands (*Doc. SC54-21.5*). Delegates regretted that no DR on the Convention’s CEPA programme was submitted and made reference to specific requests for this in Resolution XII.9. The delegates agreed that the Parties participating in SC54 will have to convey to the Standing Committee the recommendations compiled during the discussions at the European Meeting.

The Meeting discussed also a number of European Union policies and instruments, such as the EU Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy, and the upcoming review of the Water Framework Directive. International projects in Europe were presented and discussed, such as the EU Interreg projects “WetNet” and “PANACeA”, the EU Horizon 2020 project establishing a Satellite-based Wetland Observation Service (SWOS), the Mediterranean Island Wetlands project and the “Mediterranean Wetlands Outlook 2”. This helped the Ramsar Administrative Authorities to better understand the tools in preparation by these projects and how they can be used for Ramsar implementation at national and local scales.

For the second time, after ERM8 in 2014, a special evening was devoted to the screening of short wetland videos. Nine videos from different parts of Europe were shown, produced in Belarus, the Czech Republic, Italy, the Mediterranean, Montenegro, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, and Turkey. The participants had an opportunity to vote for the video they liked best. And the winner was [Doňana’s Beating Heart](#) by Ofelia de Pablo & Javier Zurita for WWF Spain with music by Paco de Lucía.