

EUROWA CHARTER

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Introduction

This Charter aims to establish EUROWA (**EUROpean Oiled Wildlife Assistance**) as an international network that assists European governments with developing national plans and preparedness systems to deal with marine wildlife emergencies such as oil spills. The Charter aims to clarify what EUROWA is, how it is organised, and how it can be integrated into national emergency response systems.

The concept of EUROWA has been described in the 2007 European Oiled Wildlife Response Plan that was published as a delivery of an EU funded project 2006-2007. It was described how experts from different European countries ideally would be able to come together in the event of an oil spill in one of the European countries. Jointly they would be able to apply good practices and obtain the best possible result with the oil affected animals in the given scenario. For European countries, this was thought to be a cost-efficient way of achieving an international level of preparedness, while the costs for each country would be minimised.

Funding from another EU project 2015-2016, allowed EUROWA to be developed. The project designed roles and responsibilities for wildlife response personnel, delivered technical guidelines, training manuals and standard training modules for personnel. A database was developed in order to keep track of people being trained on the basis of the new material and ensure a central register as an attempt to maintain and guard the quality objectives. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was written to specify how a EUROWA team or Module (meaning experts and their equipment) could be mobilised by a requesting party, with the consent of the (European) authority. An internal SOP was written to specify how different organisations could select team members for the Module, and how they would cooperate from notification to demobilisation.

The first opportunity, after the EU project, to demonstrate the added value of the EUROWA concept was the response to the Bow Jubail (The Netherlands, 2018). Here a wide mobilisation took place of EUROWA-trained experts from various countries, to reinforce the management team and work force of the facility where over 500 oiled swans were treated. Whereas the Netherlands preparedness project is based on EUROWA standards, the trained team of Dutch experts was supported by the immediate assistance from colleagues and equipment from abroad, part of the EUROWA Module.

Still, in Europe, the national preparedness to marine wildlife emergencies has remained very much in its infancy, despite many years of advocacy investments by organisations such as Sea Alarm, and its partner organisations.

This Charter aims to provide a way forward in reinforcing the bonds between organisations that are, or desire to become, part of the EUROWA network and the bonds between them and the leading authorities in their countries, and enabling EUROWA to become an integrated and recognised professional service available to governments and NGOs in Europe.

Preamble

WE THE ORGANISATIONS OF EUROWA ARE DETERMINED

- To encourage that the expertise and skills of our organisations in the response to marine wildlife emergencies are increasingly recognised, valued and actively integrated in national emergency response plans developed and maintained by the national authorities.
- To demonstrate that the use of science-based rescue and rehabilitation methodologies provide the best perspective on the long term survival of treated animals and their welfare at any stage between their capture and release, according to international standards.
- To demonstrate that the results achieved with those methodologies are highly dependent on the level at which authorities are supporting a wildlife response and responders by adopting and integrating these efforts into the wider emergency response operation in terms of planning, logistics, operations and finance.
- To demonstrate that the capabilities of NGOs and the value of their contributions will grow if they are allowed to train and exercise as part of, and fully integrated in, other relevant branches of authority emergency response systems, via funded preparedness, training and exercise programmes.

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- To practice tolerance and work together, learning lessons and developing standards of good practice on the basis of new insights from incidents, exercises, case studies, and scientific research.
- To further join forces, both nationally and internationally, in mutual respect for each organisation's interests and specific aims and capabilities, to learn from and with each other, to innovate new approaches and methodologies, and to be able to respond together if requested.
- To ensure that a simple but effective governance and management system is in place to ensure and direct the coordination of a joint international programme to develop national preparedness in different countries, and the structural involvement of the authorities in this programme.

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, we do hereby establish EUROWA as an international endeavour in which NGOs and authorities can work together in partnership at national and international levels to enhance the effectiveness of marine wildlife emergency response, before (preparedness programme), during (response effort) and after (evaluation and reporting) the occurrence of incidents.

Chapter I: Purposes and principles

ARTICLE 1: A NETWORK OF EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

EUROWA (**EU**ROpean **O**iled **W**ildlife **A**ssistance) is a network of European organisations who in the past have responded together to various oiled wildlife incidents in different European countries. They have realised that their effectiveness in such events could only be enhanced if international standards of good practice were developed and adopted, and if they would invest into their collaborative efforts to implementing those standards. Over the years the organisations have invested in their regular meetings and joint activities, for which funding was sometimes successfully found. As a result of an EU-funded project 2015-2016, EUROWA has developed a firm basis for providing response and preparedness services to European authorities via the EUROWA Module (experts and their equipment, see Article 3). The EUROWA network is increasingly gaining weight and has a firm profile by the signing of MoUs between the network organisations, and the adoption of this Charter.

The Network is the total of all registered Associated Organisations that have signed the MoU.

ARTICLE 2: PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS

Professional organisations are an invaluable resource to governmental agencies, when they can be mobilised to deal effectively with the needs of live oiled animals in the aftermath of an incident. Too often it is assumed that expert organisations will mobilise themselves and be helpful any time they are needed. This assumption overlooks the fact that a professional organisation needs to be fully embedded in the emergency response and preparedness structure in order to deliver at the expected service levels. A cooperative national system in which governmental agencies and EUROWA network members form a partnership to collaborate in a well-funded training and exercise programme has the highest potential to deliver an effective response when it is requested by the authorities.

ARTICLE 3: A MODULE THAT CAN BE MOBILISED

Qualified experts from the EUROWA network organisations can join together to form a EUROWA Module. The Module consists of a team of experts and a stockpile of equipment that can be mobilised 24/7 to complement the capability or capacity of a local wildlife response. The experts of the Module will act as a Tier 3 international team, that provides tailored support to the capacity of local first response teams (Tier 1) and national experts (Tier 2). They can assist with management aspects of the wildlife response, its integration into the larger response, all aspects of collection and treatment of oil affected animals, the education and coaching of local responders and aspects of media and communication. An internal procedure provides guidelines for joining and operating as a team. An external procedure provides guidelines for authorities as to how to notify and mobilise the Module.

ARTICLE 4: PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

The cooperation between EUROWA network organisations and between them and their national authorities is based on the following principles:

- Mutual respect for each other's viewpoints, interests and values
- Genuine interest in each other's needs in order to achieve and accomplish the jointly agreed objectives for preparedness and response
- Agreements by consent based decision making rather than by majority vote
- Partnership rather than transactional relationships
- Rational approach on the basis of an understanding of good practices, scientific evidence and new insights

Chapter 2: Vision, mission and work

ARTICLE 5: VISION

EUROWA's vision is that European countries can deal effectively with emergencies that threaten and affect marine wildlife, because each country has developed and adopted an integrated marine wildlife response plan and invests in training and exercising the actors of that plan, where possible in close cooperation with neighbouring countries for purposes of cost-efficiency and mutual assistance.

ARTICLE 6: MISSION

EUROWA's mission is to support and empower European authorities, NGOs, and potential polluters in Europe in dealing jointly and professionally with the challenges connected to the assistance of affected marine wildlife using agreed international standards and procedures.

ARTICLE 7: WHAT EUROWA DOES

The purpose of EUROWA activities, as carried out by the network members, is to educate and involve key individuals in national authorities, NGOs and industry, to understand the key issues of a marine wildlife emergency, and via training and exercises, maximise their potential to make a constructive contribution as part of a wildlife emergency response to mitigate the effects of oil on species, habitats and populations.

Collectively, EUROWA members aim to work, train and exercise together to ensure that at all times, in case of a marine wildlife emergency, a well-disciplined, coordinated and structured EUROWA Module (experts and their equipment) can be put together to assist a requesting country.

EUROWA aims to have at least one network member in each coastal country in Europe, and ideally this member is the accepted coordinator of a national network of cooperating organisations, who collectively aim to work under the guidelines of this Charter.

Chapter 3: Organisational structure of EUROWA

ARTICLE 8: ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS (NETWORK MEMBERS)

An organisation that has signed the EUROWA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) becomes an Associated Organisation. By signing the MoU, the Associated Organisations commit to the EUROWA Charter, standards and procedures that ensure that these standards are implemented to the highest possible quality.

An Associated Organisation can then register personnel for acquiring EUROWA qualifications via the standard training programme. These personnel could be personnel on the payroll, but also associated individuals (volunteers, independent experts or experts from other organisations) with whom the organisation has a collaborative relationship. Personnel will be registered in the EUROWA database after their first completed course, and can then expand their expertise and qualifications by participating in formally registered EUROWA training events.

An Associated Organisation represents EUROWA at its own national level and works closely with the Secretariat (see Art. 10) to ensure consistent messaging in the interest of the network as a whole.

An Associate Organisation can request the Secretariat to attend meetings, trainings and/or exercises with authorities at national levels, when required.

ARTICLE 9: ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS WITH EXPERTS

As soon as registered personnel of an Associated Organisation have obtained the qualifications of Specialist or Manager, the organisation could be considered and requested to allow these personnel to join a Module to respond abroad following a response request. This comes with additional responsibilities, as the personnel will be mobilised abroad and during this mission, need the continued logistic, financial and legal support from the Associated Organisation. This needs additional consideration by the Associated Organisation in question. If this burden is acceptable, and this is explicitly expressed by the organisation, the organisation becomes registered as an Associated Organisation with Experts.

ARTICLE 10: SECRETARIAT

The EUROWA Secretariat manages the EUROWA database, publishes the EUROWA standards, organises meetings, maintains the website and publishes newsletters.

The EUROWA Secretariat provides a 24/7 service where incidents and requests for assistance can be reported. A reported incident that is addressed to EUROWA is treated by the Secretariat according to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). In reaction to notifications addressed to EUROWA, and according to the SOP, Secretariat staff will assume the role of Module Duty Manager and work through the SOP accordingly.

The Secretariat is the formal representative of EUROWA in international meetings with Governments (e.g. Regional Agreements).

The Secretariat can provide support to Associated Organisations in their activities to reach out to national governments and develop national preparedness programmes.

The Secretariat liaises closely with the Governance Committee (See Art. 14) and acts within the mandate provided by the Governance Committee.

The EUROWA secretariat has got its own contact email: secretariat@oiledwildlife.eu.

Sea Alarm Foundation, until further notice, acts as the EUROWA Secretariat.

Chapter 4: Experts, trainers and registration

ARTICLE 11: REGISTERED EXPERTS

Individuals registered via an Associated Organisation in the EUROWA database can be invited to training events, exercises or real time spill responses, where they can obtain a qualification for a work floor level (See Art. 26). These qualifications are reported to the Secretariat by the qualified trainer that has provided the training. The Secretariat updates the database accordingly, and can provide certificates on demand to the registered individuals. Individuals who have obtained the qualification of Specialist or Manager could be invited to join a module. Individuals who have obtained the qualification of Manager can be assigned as Module Technical Director.

ARTICLE 12: REGISTERED TRAINERS

An individual can obtain a trainer's certificate after having been accredited by an existing EUROWA trainer. To be considered for a trainer's accreditation, a candidate should have carried out a training under supervision of an existing trainer. In order to provide a training for a given work floor level, a candidate trainer should have obtained previously a work floor level qualification one level higher than the one that he/she aims to deliver the training for.

Once certified as a trainer, the individual is allowed to provide training to others at the certified level. It is expected that the trainer will ensure the quality of that training according to the EUROWA standards. After the training is provided, the trainer must personally request the Secretariat to register the participants who have successfully completed the training course and obtained qualifications in the EUROWA database.

ARTICLE 13: REGISTRATION

Registration of individuals who have obtained qualifications by successfully completing a training course with standard EUROWA training modules will be carried out by the EUROWA Secretariat on request of the accredited trainer who provided the training. The registration of qualified individuals will take place in the central EUROWA database, and reference will be made to the training event, and the trainer on whose responsibility the registration takes place. Before registration, the EUROWA Secretariat checks if all requirements were met, and a dedicated officer in the Secretariat signs off the registration as proof of the quality check. By default procedure, individuals who are planning to attend a EUROWA training course will be asked to provide explicit permission for their registration in the Database, in compliance with the GDP regulations.

Chapter 5: EUROWA Governance

ARTICLE 14: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

EUROWA's Governance Committee is the main decision-making body of EUROWA and oversees the implementation of the Charter.

The Governance Committee has an elected Chair and Vice-chair, and a minimum number of 3 and maximum of 5 other Committee Members.

The Governance Committee is elected from candidates proposed by a General Assembly of Associated Organisations. The first Governance Committee to be established will have one Committee Member from each Associated Organisation at the time of signing the Charter.

Chair and Vice-chair are elected by the sitting Members of the Governance Committee.

Members of the Governance Committee have a term of 3 years, with a possible extension of one more term.

Chair and Vice-chair have a term of 2 years, with a possible extension of one more term.

The Governance Committee meets at least once a year and the meeting is prepared and facilitated by the EUROWA Secretariat in close consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Governance Committee oversees the content and implementation of the Charter, produces an annual report of EUROWA activities and developments, and takes strategic and policy decisions in accordance with the stipulations of the Charter.

The Secretariat is instructed and mandated for the implementation of the Committee's decisions made and reports to the Committee on progress made.

The Governance Committee can propose modifications to the Charter. Modifications to the Charter must be ratified at a meeting of the General Assembly of the Associated Organisations.

The Governance Committee can propose and effectuate modifications to the internal or external SOP, or the MoU. The Committee can work with the Secretariat to initiate a discussion amongst the Network (See Art. 1) and compose an ad-hoc working group to develop a proposal that can be discussed electronically by the Network. On the basis of comments received and no further major objections, the Governance Committee can issue an updated version of the SOP or MoU at their next formal Committee meeting.

ARTICLE 15: TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

EUROWA's Technical Committee is formed by qualified experts and ensures the highest quality and updates on the current (and future) published protocols and technical standards of EUROWA, the quality of the standard EUROWA training modules and the equipment stockpile.

Any registered qualified expert can request the Secretariat to initiate a meeting of the Technical Committee and should provide the agenda for the meeting with an explicit description of the topics that need to be discussed and decided.

A Technical Committee meeting can take place electronically or in person and is facilitated by the Secretariat.

The Technical Committee is an ad-hoc Committee, always led by registered EUROWA experts that have a MANAGER qualification, but can be attended by experts with a SPECIALIST qualification, invited representatives from recognised internationally operating animal welfare organisations or other external experts who can provide advice, guidance or other forms of assistance.

Because of the importance to keep the EUROWA Protocols and Standards based on international good practice and most recent scientific literature, the Governance Committee, assisted by the Secretariat, is charged to direct and oversee the process of selecting the best possible composition of the Committee for any given task.

ARTICLE 16: GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is a meeting to which all Associated Organisations will be invited. It will be organised by the secretariat every second year using an electronic platform and lasts two hours as the target default. The meeting will be held in November every even year (2020, 2022, etc).

At the General Assembly meeting, the Governance Committee will report on their work and propose a two-year work plan. The General Assembly agrees to the work plan after discussion and agreed modifications.

Meeting dates will be announced a minimum 60 calendar days before the actual meeting day. This allows Associated Organisations to propose items to the agenda.

Changes to the Governance Committee will be a fixed item on the agenda. In case of a vacancy in the Governance Committee, any Associated Organisations can propose a candidate for election. Vacancies will be announced as part of the invitation for the General Assembly meeting.

An Associated Organisation can bring up an agenda item for the General Assembly at any time by informing the Governance Committee but no later than 35 calendar days before the scheduled meeting.

The Governance Committee proposes the agenda, which is sent to the Associated Organisations two weeks before the scheduled meeting. At the General Assembly meeting, Associated Organisations will be asked to adopt the Agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

Extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly can be organised at any time, on the basis of a decision by the Governance Committee. An extraordinary meeting will be announced a minimum of 60 calendar days before the meeting day to all Associated Organisations and will follow the same procedure as a regular meeting.

A General Assembly meeting will be chaired by the chair of the Governance Committee.

Chapter 6: Incident response management

ARTICLE 17: NOTIFICATION FIRST STEPS TO FORM A MODULE

In case of an incoming request from a Government authority or NGO, asking for the assistance from a EUROWA Module, the Secretariat appoints a Module Duty Manager (MDM), who activates the Network by following the internal SOP and external SOP.

ARTICLE 18: MODULE COMPOSITION

The Module is comprised of the following functions: Module Team Leader (MTL), Module Technical Director (MTD), and Team Members (TM). Role descriptions and guidance are provided by the internal SOP.

ARTICLE 19: MODULE OPERATIONS

The mobilisation, operational assistance on site, demobilisation and evaluation of the Module is following guidance of both the internal and external SOPs.

ARTICLE 20: REMUNERATION OF MOBILISED EXPERTS

Experts who are selected for mobilisation as part of a Module should receive a daily remuneration for their work, if that can be agreed and formalised with the Requesting Party.

The Governance Committee decides on the daily fee for MANAGERS, SPECIALISTS and other mobilised personnel, during their annual meetings.

The Module Duty Manager (MDM) uses these set fees in the communication with the Requesting Party, as described in the external SOP.

Chapter 7: Equipment stockpile

ARTICLE 21: OWNERSHIP OF STOCKPILED EQUIPMENT

The EUROWA stockpile of equipment is, until further notice, formally owned by the current acting EUROWA Secretariat (Sea Alarm Foundation) on behalf of EUROWA and currently stored in Belgium in a warehouse that is offered by the Belgian authorities as an in-kind contribution to EUROWA. Ownership of the equipment could be transferred to another party, on the condition that the equipment remains available for EUROWA mobilisation.

ARTICLE 22: COMPOSITION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE STOCKPILE

The equipment comprises items necessary for a wildlife response, such as pools, water pumps and filtration systems, veterinary equipment and supplies and is stored in numbered aluminium containers of different size and volume. This equipment can be mobilised within 12 hours either as a whole or as a subset of one or more containers.

The equipment stored is, at all times, only a subset of what will be needed to carry out a complete oiled wildlife response (a range of additional equipment must be purchased or sourced locally). Scenarios can vary and so will the equipment needs required for any given unfolding scenario.

The EUROWA stockpile of equipment aims to provide a useful starting point for the Module to work with, with the aim of providing minimum care to oiled animals that have already been captured. In all cases though, other equipment will have to be sourced at the time of the spill.

Depending on funding available, the EUROWA stockpile can be extended with new purchases.

The Secretariat works with the Equipment Committee to make decisions on new purchases, and on the removal of objects beyond their expiry date or not kept in good condition.

Chapter 8: Training modules

ARTICLE 23: PORTFOLIO

EUROWA has a portfolio of standard training modules.

ARTICLE 24: QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDED IN THE PORTFOLIO

Qualification levels include BASIC Responder, ADVANCED Responder, SPECIALIST Responder, SECTION HEAD, and MANAGER.

Each qualification level is subdivided in so called Work Floor Modules, which are relevant to different Departments of the response (e.g. Field, Reception, Intake, Prewash Care, Wash, etc).

ARTICLE 25: MAINTENANCE

The quality of the training modules and the documentation that is used in training courses is overseen and maintained by the Technical and Protocol Committees.

Chapter 9: Published standards and guidelines

ARTICLE 26: PORTFOLIO OF PUBLISHED STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

EUROWA has developed its own standards and these standards are a regional elaboration of the global principles.

Good international practice is considered to available in the form of;

- Documents published on oiled wildlife response by IPIECA/IOGP as long as they have been written by recognised global experts
- Papers published in peer reviewed scientific documents
- Formal evaluations of exercises and incident responses if carried out by EUROWA itself

The Technical and Protocol Committees are charged with the task to ensure that the EUROWA standards are always one to one with the international good practice.

ARTICLE 27: PUBLICATION AND UPDATING

EUROWA publications are in “Parts” and numbered A to G (etc). Their quality and updates of those are coordinated by the relevant committee:

EUROWA Publications	Committee responsible
A: Internal and External SOP	Governance Committee
B: Protocol for the rehabilitation of seabirds	Protocol Committee
C: Facility handbook	
D: Equipment handbook,	
E: Response concepts,	Technical Committee
F: Facility management,	
G: Basic course manual (POSOW)	

In addition, ad-hoc reports can be generated from the EUROWA database, including job descriptions, work floor qualification descriptions, registered experts, etc. Some of these reports are electronically published.

The Governance Committee decides which of the reports can be shared with the various audiences, e.g.:

- Associated Organisations only
- Trainees who will be registered in the EUROWA database
- Governmental organisations
- General public

Chapter 10: Involvement of Authorities

ARTICLE 28: NATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN EUROWA ACTIVITIES

Authorities are invited to participate in EUROWA at national levels in the following ways:

- Adopting EUROWA standards as national standards for the response to wildlife emergencies.
- Supporting the forming of one national network of Associated Organisations that aim to cooperate with each other at national level, and with the authorities with one voice.
- Develop a national marine wildlife emergency plan that is integrated in national marine emergency plans.
- Enable the involvement of the national network of Associated Organisations in the national preparedness programme that includes training and exercises and the material needed for these purposes.
- Consider the structural funding of this national network so that Associated Members can:
 - Optimise their contributions to the national preparedness programme, by allowing their staff and volunteers to take training and participate in exercises;
 - Guarantee their safe and professional participation in a coordinated first response effort in the immediate aftermath of an unfolding emergency
 - Participate in international EUROWA activities, meetings and international training events.

ARTICLE 29: INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN EUROWA ACTIVITIES

Authorities are invited to participate with EUROWA at international levels via Regional Agreements, international conventions or EU programmes and institutions in the following ways:

- Give due consideration to the EUROWA charter and ensure the integration of the EUROWA objectives and activities in international emergency response preparedness and mutual assistance.
- Adopting EUROWA standards as international standards for the response to wildlife emergencies.
- Encourage and support international projects and initiatives by EUROWA.
- Encourage coastal states to start working on a national implementation of the EUROWA objectives and report about progress internationally.

ARTICLE 30: GOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Governmental Advisory Committee will be put in place with the aim of promoting the EUROWA charter and activities amongst European governments, and to provide advice to the EUROWA network.

The Committee will meet at least one time per year, electronically or physically.

Members of the Committee will be invited on the basis of regional representation in Europe, personal commitment to help implementing the EUROWA Charter, and the high level of influence.

Members of the Committee can select new members to the Committee on the basis of proposals made and consensus by the existing Committee.

Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Governance Committee will be invited to attend meetings of the Governmental Advisory Committee.

The Secretariat will initiate, prepare and facilitate meetings of the Governmental Advisory Committee

Chapter 11: Solving financial needs

ARTICLE 31: FUNDING VIA NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

More structural and sustainable funding of EUROWA should be realised via an increasing number of countries where Authorities adopt the EUROWA charter and start supporting a national NGO network of Associated Organisations via a response planning and preparedness programme. Such a programme should include funds for representatives of the national network to participate and contribute to the international EUROWA activities.

SIGNATURES

Sea Alarm Foundation (Secretariat)

XXXXXXXXXX

Date:

Date:

Name:

Name:

Function:

Function:

Signature

Signature