



"LITTLE SYDNEY"
PROTECTING NATURE IN EUROPE
HAINBURG, AUSTRIA 28-31 MAY 2015



Theme 3: Influencing Policy and Institutional Responses

Irene Lucius
Regional Conservation Director
WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG VON BUND UND EUROPÄISCHER UNION



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Working session 3A1: “Connectivity conservation and climate change” analysed the challenges and opportunities of planning the management of protected areas and connectivity conservation landscapes in the context of climate change.



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Key Recommendation 1

Based on climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments, protected areas must be planned and managed for change, reconsidering conservation goals in the light of climate change and adopting forward-looking and climate-informed goals.



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Action points:

- a) Encourage protected areas managers to cooperate with stakeholders at the landscape-seascape level and beyond the boundaries of their protected areas on nature-based climate change adaptation solutions.
- b) Assess climate change vulnerability and adaptation options at the landscape and seascape levels to identify the full range of potential adaptation options as a basis for management strategies
- c) Develop and implement capacity building measures for staff of protected areas agencies on how to assemble a baseline of information, develop effective outreach programmes, and designing manageable actions.
- d) Invest in infrastructure that allows connectivity conservation and plan infrastructure in an integrated fashion to harmonize contradictory policies and incentives for economic growth.



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Working session 3A2: “Towards harmonizing agriculture and biodiversity policies in Europe” focused on in rural areas managed under common tenure systems (ICCAs) where the decline of biodiversity values is driven mainly by the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP)



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Key recommendation 1:

European Commission, Council, and Parliament should design a CAP for the next period that clearly supports the provision of ecosystems services and public goods, in particular through collective tenure systems; this should be funded through outcome-based measures and designed 'bottom-up'.

Key recommendation 2:

Civil society groups need to form alliances at all possible levels to implement a common strategy and jointly push for a radical agricultural and rural community policy change, including a debate of more balanced CAP Pillar budgets and integrating agriculture into a Common Rural Development Policy.



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Action points:

- a) gather information about the present state of communal tenure systems in Europe and elaborate solid economic arguments to support communal systems and their role
- b) Collect and analyse data on how the CAP influences health, wellbeing and quality of life of people living in rural communities as a basis for designing a new CAP that promotes economic, social and cultural diversity.
- c) agree new management systems for land and sea commons that enhances stakeholder and local community involvement
- d) develop a twofold public communication strategy, with scientifically and technically well founded messages but also appealing to people's emotions.



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**Working session 3A3: “Natura 2000 fitness check”
discussed the European Commission’s
comprehensive policy evaluation, or “fitness check”,
on the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and
identified obstacles to achieving high conservation
status on Natura 2000 sites. Key statements were
delivered by a Member of the European Parliament
and a young nature conservation activist.**



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Key recommendations 1:

The EU Nature Directives are globally recognized as providing a successful framework for effective conservation of species and habitats in the face of growing threats. **It is essential that the current Fitness Check does not seek to reopen these Directives, but focuses instead on seeking to improve their implementation.**

Key recommendation 2:

There is a need to tackle the root causes of failure to achieve high conservation status and that is lack of integration and implementation caused by resource constraints and low awareness among authorities, stakeholders, politicians and public about the benefits of Natura 2000, e.g. its role of connecting valuable sites but also people across borders.



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Action points:

- a) Nature conservation organisations to encourage their stakeholder community to participate in the ongoing Natura 2000 fitness check public consultation
- b) DG Environment to step up its role of monitoring implementation of the Nature Directives at national level and taking action in case of non-compliance
- 3) National decision makers to provide better access to funding for Natura 2000 monitoring and management activities
- 4) Civil society organisations to address top level national decision makers to communicate to them the importance of Natura 2000 and need for better support



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Working session 3B1: “Multiple international protected area designations” identified a growing focus on measuring management effectiveness of protected areas and the need of coordination between World Heritage, MAB, Ramsar, European Diploma (CoE), and Geoparks as currently there is an overlap and scarce funding needs to be used more efficiently



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Key recommendation 1:

Assess (using case-studies) and communicate the contribution of internationally designated sites to EU biodiversity policy (including into Natura 2000) to both EU (Commission and EEA) and national governments

Key recommendation 2:

Ensure there is communication between bodies responsible at national level for the implementation of the different instruments (e.g., National MAB Committee and National UNESCO Commissions)



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Action points:

- a) Set up formal and informal communication structures between the programmes and instruments at European level
- b) Carefully explore the potential for harmonization of reporting formats;
- c) Feed national and site-level experiences in Europe into the ongoing IUCN project on multiple international designations
- d) Deliver accurate (digital) data on boundaries to WCMC and regularly update them and make PA managers understand boundaries and management responsibilities
- e) Develop guidance for harmonized management of sites with multiple designations including glossary of terminology, training of trainers, and experience exchange among site managers.



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Working session 3B2: “Management of wilderness in Europe in the lights of the EU Strategy 2020” discussed the challenges of long-term wilderness protection, thus providing space and conditions for natural succession and dynamics



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Key recommendation 1:

Clear guidance for site managers has to be developed and disseminated for identifying and using opportunities for wilderness development and protection

Key recommendation 2:

National and EU authorities need to protect all remaining primeval habitats in the EU , regardless of habitat type, or degree of representation in the Natura 2000 network.



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Action points:

- a) Wilderness stakeholders to influence the further development of the CAP in order to include measures for using marginal and abandoned agricultural land for wilderness development where appropriate - highlighting socio-economic as well as intrinsic and conservation benefits
- b) Promote direct wilderness experiences, in order to raise acceptance for the wilderness idea.
- c) Highlight the development and protection of wilderness as the most appropriate management approach for sites which host species dependent on non-intervention management or unrestricted action of natural processes.



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Action points:

d) Review definitions of favourable conservation status for habitats, to account for natural dynamics and to include a broader range of ecosystem states, successional stages and structural features, thus going beyond definitions solely based on species composition.

e) Support protected area managers of sites with wilderness potential or designation in developing long-term visions.

f) Review the Natura 2000 reporting template for possibility of including information about management practices (intervention/non-intervention)