Dear Readers,

Wishing you the happy Holiday’s Season, we are sending you the 19th issue of the IUCN SEE e-bulletin. As always, it brings information on activities in the region, events and publications related to nature conservation. As announced, it also highlights the main outcomes of the World Conservation Congress.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed to this issue. Please note that the bulletin is available online at www.iucn.org/southeasterneurope.

With best regards,
IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe
When did your organization join IUCN and what is your organization’s mission? Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW) has joined IUCN in January 1970. Its mission is to ensure conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and the preservation of healthy environment. It focuses on sustainable economical growth and prosperity - sustainability in both socio-economical and ecological sense. In this way ecological diversity would be conserved for us and for the next generation. Priorities for MOEW are: successful membership in the EU; Changes for the better natural environment and development of the ecological infrastructure; Biodiversity conservation and Integration of the environment policy in the policy of each different sector. It will be possible to fulfill this mission, only with the full support and partnership with other state institutions, local communities and public – NGOs, business, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences etc.

Which projects or joint activities between MOEW, IUCN and other members would you stress out? MOEW applies the newest approaches for sustainable management of the large mammals’ populations on national and regional level. Based on the cooperation between IUCN members in the country, scientific organizations, NGOs and foreign experts, we have elaborated Action plans for Bear, Wild cat and Wild goat Conservation. The Action Plan for Wolf Conservation in under elaboration. The MOEW experts are in active contact with IUCN Medicinal Plant Specialist Group and are involved in projects on sustainable use of renewable resources. We have activities in the project Important Plant Areas in Bulgaria and in IUCN’s Green Belt initiative as well as other transboundary projects that focus on the ecotourism development.

What is, to your opinion, the benefit of being the IUCN member? Does it help to improve your position at the regional/national/international level? IUCN membership offers the opportunity to participate in new initiatives, to support new nature conservation projects and to be a part of new partnerships. IUCN allows optimal use of the information databases and experts’ knowledge; it facilitates reaching financial resources and the involvement in the current policies’ development.

How does IUCN contribute to the sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the region? IUCN’s main role is networking, elaboration of common projects and policies. IUCN contributes to international conventions’ activities - CBD, CITES, Bern Convention, Ramsar Convention, Bonn Convention is by offering expertise through specialised structures and commissions, database and technical documents.

What should IUCN change or do better in terms of communication with members in the region? MOEW would like to propose to organize the National IUCN centre or Association of Bulgarian NGOs. We hope that the initiative in this direction will come from NGOs. We would gladly support their IUCN membership application. In this way NGO representatives could participate in intercessional and regional meetings, the WCC and thus, have direct access to information on future activities and establish connections with other similar organizations. The most essential thing – they would be a part of effective nature conservation and participate in elections with their own voice!

What are the 3 most valuable events you personally have experienced with IUCN? That would be the work on the second edition of the Red Data Book. It will consist of 3 volumes – plants and fungi, animals and habitats. It will be followed by the electronic version with their recent population state. The conservation status of species is assessed in accordance with IUCN criteria. The information will allow the application of appropriate measures for conservation and management of the species. We participated at the European Green Belt – Workshop, 19-22 October 2008, in Blagoevgrad, which was organized with the support of Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation.
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THE WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS IN BRIEF


PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNICATION

1. IUCN Protected Areas Categories Guidelines
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TRAININGS & SEMINARS - ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Beyond boundaries - protected landscapes, cities and the European Landscape Convention
2. Workshop on assessing the values and benefits of protected areas
3. Adriatic Flyway Conference
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News & Events

1. Bears and highways

Greece: Kapetanios, Kleopatra, Aris, Dias, Sofoklis, Ilias and Lignos are seven new members of the environmental NGO Callisto. They are all brown bears that have been radio collared at the mountains of Central Pindos in Greece, by the Callisto field team. Scientists took advantage of the bears' love for honey and set “sweet” traps so as to monitor their movements using new generation GPS radio collars. Collars provide bear geographic coordinates by SMS every hour.

The satellite telemetry collected data will be used to assess the environmental impact of the construction of the Egnatia highway (section Metsovo-Panagia, 7 km. long), focusing on the bear population and the habitat in the Central Pindos mountain range. Callisto, through this project, studies the bear behavior and movement in response to the disturbance caused by the construction noise and habitat fragmentation. The project is the succession of a similar project (section Panagia-Grevena, 37 km. long), in which Callisto had managed to radio collar and monitor 14 bears. Both projects aim to determine necessary mitigation measures (tunnels, bridges, wildlife underpasses) that need be taken by the sub-contracting construction companies, in order to minimize the negative effects.

For further information please contact Iliana Bousiaki, Callisto at bousiaki@gmail.com.

2. MSc Management of Protected Areas

The University of Klagenfurt, Austria, in co-operation with international institutions such as IUCN, WWF, CBD, RAMSAR, and prominent Protected Areas, has launched an international postgraduate Master programme dealing with management of protected areas. Its vision is the promotion of biodiversity conservation and regional sustainable development in Europe and worldwide.

The third round of the programme will start in September 2009 and its directors look forward to more participants from the South East Europe. Therefore, the Info Day Belgrade took place on 9 December 2008 at the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, opened with a welcome speech by Milena Lazarevic, from the INPS. Michael Jungmeier, director of the MSc programme, gave a thorough presentation of the programme, explaining the aims, curriculum and organization. Marija Zupancic Vicar from the WCPA/IUCN, gave an insight to the programme as a member of the advisory board. Current participants of the MSc programme, Ivana Grujicic and Katarina Vuksic shared their experience and main impressions with the audience.

In addition, the attendants had a chance to hear about potential sources of funding that could cover tuition costs and travel expenses, as well. The presentation was followed with an open discussion, where the participants had an opportunity to personally enquire about the programme.

The programme is organized in 9 blocked modules of compulsory lectures in order to optimally meet the requirements of employed professionals. In addition to 70 days of presence, there is intensive e-learning support. The courses take place at the University of Klagenfurt and in prominent Protected Areas in Central and Eastern Europe. The general deadline for applying for the MSc programme “Management of Protected Areas” is 30 June 2009.

For more information about the project please visit contact www.mpa.uni-klu.ac.at
Belasitsa Nature Park by P. Rzerzycha

The European Green Belt initiative has the vision to create the backbone of an ecological network, running from the Barents to the Black Sea that is a global symbol for transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development. 23 countries across Europe are adjoining the course of the former Iron Curtain along some 12,500 km, cooperating to preserve the natural heritage of the Cold War times. The route of the Green Belt in South-Eastern Europe, including sharing experience on the last five years of the initiative’s existence and on the numerous activities carried out while paying special attention to the future development of the initiative.

Participants visited a very positive example of transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and regional development in the Belasitsa trilateral border area between Bulgaria, Greece and F.Y.R. Macedonia.

During the Belasitsa International Forum hosted by the local municipality of Petrich, the partners from Kerkini National Park (Greece), Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and the NGO Planetum (Strumica, F.Y.R. Macedonia) presented their joint efforts in this trilateral border area and celebrated the newest Nature Park in Bulgaria – Belasitsa Nature Park proclaimed November 2007. A folk group from Samuilovo village in the foothills of Belasitsa mountains presented folk dance and vocal singing as a part of the rich cultural heritage in the region.

3. Zasavica river ecosystem named for the Ramsar List

Serbia: The Ramsar Secretariat announced the designation of the 9th Wetland of International Importance in the Republic of Serbia. Zasavica (1,913 hectares, 44°56’N 019°32’E) is a Special Nature Reserve and BirdLife IBA located in northern Mačva, a riverine ecosystem that dominates the area south of the river Sava, with the rivulet Zasavica and its tributary the Batar, for a total length of 33 km. Aquatic and swampy eco-

The natural conditions are favourable for many rare plant and animal species, such as greater spearwort (Ranunculus lingua), water violet (Hottonia palustris), marsh nettle (Urtica kioviensis), freshwater sponge (Spongilla lacustris), a rare species of oligochaete (Rynchelmis limnosela), Danube crested newt (Triturus dobrogicus), ferruginous duck (Aythya nyroca) as well as otter (Lutra lutra) and beaver (Castor fiber). It is also the only habitat of the mudminnow, Umbra krameri, in Serbia. Traditional grazing and cattle breeding, particularly of autochthonous races, along with the several centuries’ long usage of the area, supports the maintenance of grassland habitats within the Reserve. Zasavica has inspired many legends and myths, and it is woven into the cultural being of the people.

For more information please contact Monica Zavagli, Ramsar Secretariat at europe@ramsar.org.

4. Iron Curtain turns Green Belt in the Balkans

Bulgaria: The second meeting of the South-Eastern European partners of the European Green Belt, 19-22 October 2008, reconfirmed that the Green Belt initiative holds a unique position, focusing on transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and regional development along the former Iron Curtain. „Mapping Synergies – Branding Ideas“- the motto of the meeting brought together about 50 participants from the countries along the South-Eastern European Green Belt. In addition to long-term partners, new participants from several countries from the region joined the initiative. The meeting focused on the Green Belt in South-Eastern Europe, including sharing experience on the last five years of the initiative’s existence and on the numerous activities carried out while paying special attention to the future development of the initiative.

Participants visited a very positive example of transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and regional development in the Belasitsa trilateral border area between Bulgaria, Greece and F.Y.R. Macedonia.
Belt is divided into three regional sections. One of them is the South Eastern European section, including border sections of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, F.Y.R. Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro.

Since the start of the initiative in 2003, several meetings on regional and pan-European level have helped to implement its goals and to exchange experiences within its network. The meeting was organized by IUCN, the implementing partner, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation BBF, in partnership with the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water, and with the financial support of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) (www.bfn.de).

For more information please contact IUCN office at see@iucn.org.

5. Central Balkan hosted the UNESCO’s MAB workshop

**Bulgaria:** From 11 to 15 November, a workshop on implementation of the Man and Biosphere Programme for the countries of South Eastern Europe took place in the town of Apriltsi near the Central Balkan National Park. The event was organized by the Regional Bureau for Culture and Science in Europe (UNESCO BRESCE), together with the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Bulgarian Committee of the MaB Programme, Central Balkan National Park’s Directorate, and the National Commission of UNESCO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The focus of the workshop was more efficient use of biosphere reserves, strengthening of local economic and social development and improvement of the programme functioning in the Balkans. There were participants from Romania, Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkey, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Germany and Italy. Giorgio Andrian from UNESCO BRESCE made a brief review of the latest events within the framework of the programme – meeting of the member countries of EuroMaB in UK, in Turkey and the 3rd congress held this year in Madrid, Spain.

Representatives of MOEW and the Bulgarian National Committee of the MaB Programme introduced the national ecologic network and application of the international treaty in Bulgaria. Specialists from the park’s Directorate presented good communication practices with local beneficiaries of natural resources, experience linked to the PAN Parks certification, and partnership relations with local tourist business. Participants in the seminar visited the Vidimsko praskalo eco-trail in the national park.

For more information please contact Diana Terzieva, Central Balkan National Park Directorate at did@centralbalkan.bg.

6. Membership announcement during the WCC

**Serbia:** The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia (MESP) was represented at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona by a three-member delegation which attended the events of the four-day Forum.

During the evening hours of the 7th of October, a joint event was organized by the MESP and the Institute for nature protection of Serbia on the scholar ship “Jadran”, moored in Port Vell.

The MESP and the Institute both had a representative on the ship that sailed from Kotor to Barcelona and proved to be one of the most attractive participants in the Sailing to Barcelona initiative. Numerous guests present at the joint event organized by the MESP and the Institute included IUCN representatives, scientists, policy makers, government officials, NGOs and many other guests from the region and the rest of the world. The nature conservation efforts in Serbia were presented and distributed to the guests in the form of an interactive digital presentation containing numerous publications issued by MESP and the Institute.

The assistant minister, Mr. Radislav Momirov, used the opportunity to express the willingness of MESP to officially submit the membership application to the IUCN before the next deadline in March 2009.

For more information please contact Pavle Jovanovic, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning pavle.jovanovic@ekoserb.sr.gov.yu.
7. Successful activities on banks of the Sava

**Serbia:** Ecological movement Forme Ljubavi has, in the course of 2008, implemented various activities, while the best results were achieved in the floodplains of the Sava, in the vicinity of Drenovac village.

Members of the movement participated in the cleaning of the river banks, placing of informative plates and the overall result is the initializing the dialogue to reach the permanent agreement of the waste problem in this area. During the visit of a delegation from Russia, the Sustainable development strategy was presented in Drenovac, followed by the discussion on ecotourism development possibilities. Forme Ljubavi organized the workshop on biodiversity protection in this part of the Sava, with the support of fisherman association Bistro. Its focus was the degradation of one of the biggest hatchery in the area - Drenovacka Ada Savica.

For more information please contact Ivan Geratovic, Environment protection movement at eko@formeljubavi.org.yu

8. Energy policy in Montenegro

The government has now published its action plan for the energy policy, which foresees a number of dams to be built. Unfortunately, this plan doesn't take into account the EU standards to which the country has officially subscribed. WWF and Green Home organized a press conference in order to express concern publicly and put pressure on the authorities. Key media attended the conference and the news was broadcast on prime time evening TV news, as well as in many newspapers, websites and radios. WWF and Green Home strongly and positively encourage Montenegro in being a model and leader in Europe in preserving their natural asset in compliance with EU standards.

For more information please contact Chantal MENARD, WWF Mediterranean Programme Office at cmenard@wwfmedpo.org

9. High Nature Value Agri-environment Project for Serbia

**Serbia:** A new project promoting the development of agri-environment support schemes for the conservation of High Nature Value (HNV) farming has been launched in Serbia. The two year project is funded under the Dutch BBI-MATRA programme and will be implemented jointly by IUCN SEE and Natura Balkanika with support from the Dutch NGO Avalon and the Institute for European Environmental Policy in London.

The HNV farming concept is highly relevant to biodiversity conservation in Serbia, both inside and outside of protected areas. The project aims to raise awareness amongst policy-makers and other key stakeholders of the importance of maintaining HNV farming systems. Local experts will take the first steps towards identifying the characteristics of these farming systems, as well as their likely distribution. More detailed studies will be undertaken in the Stara Planina Nature Park and a contrasting lowland site with the aim of developing pilot agri-environment measures which encourage those farming practices that are beneficial for biodiversity.

Pilot agri-environment measures are “preparatory actions” which are eligible for funding under IPARD (the EU’s current pre-accession programme for rural development). The project therefore lays a foundation for future actions under IPARD, as well as complementing existing rural development programmes and projects.

For further information contact Mark Redman, Team Leader at redman.consultancy@gmail.com or Boris Erg, National Co-ordinator at boris.erg@iucn.org
10. Coexistence of people and nature

Croatia: Green Action / Friends of the Earth Croatia organized a multistakeholder workshop “River Vrljika – coexistence of people and nature” in Glavina Donja, Croatia, 10 December 2008. This was one in the series of workshops in the framework of EU CARDS 2004 Project Promoting conservation of border river ecosystems and sustainable use of resources in border area of Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina, where former workshops were organized on rivers Neretva and Cetina, and two upcoming workshops will be held on rivers Glina and Una in the first half of 2009.

The goal was to find a way to reconcile human activities and utilization of the area with nature protection in the Vrljika River Basin. Discussion involved participants from local fishing society, water management institution (Croatian Waters), Public Institution for Management of Protected Areas in Split-Dalmatia County, nature protection inspectorate, State Institute for Nature Protection, Faculty of Science, tourist association, local population and NGOs from both Croatia and B&H. Problems and conflicts of various interests in the area are numerous and participants expressed need for future cooperation in order to solve them beneficially. They asked relevant authorities to recognize these issues and provide support for solving them.

For further information, please contact Irma Popovic, Water Protection Program, Green Action / FoE Croatia at irma@zelena-akcija.hr

11. Neretva Delta region update

Croatia: Adriatic Regional Centre for Responsible Tourism Development organized the International conference “New approaches to territory development” in Centre for advanced Academic Studies in Dubrovnik in November 2008. On this occasion, Meri Rogosic from the REC Project “Neretva Delta Forum for the sustainable use of shared natural resources” presented the local development through exploitation of natural resources of Neretva Delta region. The focus of this presentation has been given to sustainable tourism and agriculture development with best practice examples from the region.

One of the results of the project “Neretva Delta Forum for the sustainable use of shared natural resources” is the REC ECO Calendar 2009 that covers high biodiversity of the Neretva Delta region, recognized as the largest remnants of the Mediterranean wetlands on the eastern Adriatic coast sand and one of the few areas of this kind remaining in Europe.

For further information, please contact Meri Rogosic, REC Office for Site Coordination at rec-neretva@hi.htnet.hr

12. The first Symposium on Nature Conservation in Serbia

Serbia: On the occasion of 60th anniversary of Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, the first Symposium on Nature Conservation in Serbia was held in Novi Sad, 1-3 October.

The focus of this event was the discussion on all aspects of nature conservation from scientific and professional perspective, the knowledge exchange and practice in this area and the strengthening of scientific grounds for approach and methodology of conservation activities.
Gathering more than two hundred scientists and experts, discussions included eight main areas: Conservation and management of natural resources in Serbia; Status and protection of biodiversity in Serbia; Status and protection of geodiversity and geoheritage objects of Serbia; Utilization of natural resources and conservation of nature; Global changes and their impact on nature in Serbia; Implementation of national and international legislation within the framework of nature protection; Education in/for nature conservation and the role of public interested in the protection of nature.

One of the main conclusions is the necessity to provide an integrated system of legislation covering the protection of nature and natural resources. Some of the conclusions referred to identifying the source of financing the protection of nature, establishing the state fund for purchasing the land covering natural resources, etc. Many of them referred to protection of biodiversity and geodiversity of Serbia, also strengthening of cooperation on nature conservation, especially with local community, improve education and raising public awareness. Finally, one of the conclusions pointed out the necessity of such symposium growing into the event that would gather scientists and experts on a regular basis, as the key precondition for responding to numerous and complex issues connected to the activities of nature protection.

For more information, please contact Maja Radosavljevic, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia at maja@zzps.rs

13. The 11th regular meeting of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC)

Greece: The 11th regular meeting of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC), 21 - 22 November, in Pyli Info Center. Prespa gathered the highest number of participants and the widest breadth of agenda issues, since the inception of PPCC. The progress of conservation activities in Prespa Park and the future of the trilateral cooperation were the main issues discussed. In the next few months, it is expected that a trilateral working group on water management in the Prespa basin, composed by the competent authorities of the 3 states, will start operating. It will focus on organizing the necessary consultations and other activities necessary for the wise management of water - basin-wide - on the basis of the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60.

The meeting was conducted in the presence of the President of the Board of the Prespa National Forest Management Body and Prefect of Florina Mr. Ioannis Vokopoulo and in his statement he stressed that “the transboundary cooperation between us, as citizens and as authorities, the co-understanding and the common action must become a realization, [...] because all of us share the water and the air of Prespa”. As Ms. Myrsini Malakou, Society for the Protection of Prespa Director and PPCC member, remarked “such a meeting – especially nowadays – was more than necessary for the effective management and rational development of the Prespa basin as well as for the pursuit of a common perspective for the people of the 3 countries.”

For further information, please contact Society for the Protection of Prespa, Daphne Mantziou at d.mantziou@wwf.gr or Marianna Vlassi at m.vlassi@wwf.gr

14. Successful recovery of the griffon vulture

Serbia: On 18 November 2008, in the Special Natural Resort Trešnjica Gorge the griffon vulture was successfully returned to nature. The griffon vulture, meanwhile named Živko, was found with a serious wings injury and was given intensive care in the wild animal sanctuary in the Palić zoo since. 15 months later, it was released to its natural habitat, in the joint action of the administrator of the Special Natural Resort Trešnjica Gorge – “Natura” Centre for natural resources, the Wild animal sanctuary of Palić zoo, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, Birds of Prey Protection Funds and Institute for biological research.
Before it was released, the experts from the Birds of Prey Protection Funds and IBISS marked the bird in order to be able to monitor its recovery to nature. Since 1995, when the gorge region of the Trešnjica River was protected, the Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia and the Centre for natural resources “Natura”, which is in charge of the Special Natural Resort have been taking measures of active protection and making efforts to preserve and develop these farthest North colonies of griffon vulture in Serbia. Thanks to such activities, compared to the beginnings of protection activities of these resorts, when the gorge of the Trešnjica River had only five pairs of griffon vulture colony threatened with extinction, today, there are 15 nesting pairs and about 35 to 40 pairs of these birds.

For more information, please contact Maja Radosavljevic, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia at maja@zzps.rs

15. Livanjsko polje named Ramsar site

**Bosnia & Herzegovina:** The government of BiH has designated “Livanjsko Polje (Livno karst field)” in Hercegbosanska canton as its third Wetland of International Importance for a surface. The new site is the largest karst depression in the Dinaric karst region and perhaps the largest periodically flooded karst field in the world. It comprises seasonally flooded agricultural land and alluvial forest, seasonal marshes and pools, permanent streams, karst springs and sinkholes, and the largest peatland in the Balkans. Together with the Sava wetlands, it is the most important wintering, migration and breeding site for waterbirds and raptors in the country and a key site along the Central European Flyway. The polje is important for the identity of the local community of Livno, well-known for its traditional cheeses, and for a wide range of recreational pursuits.

For more information please contact Monica Zavagli, Ramsar Secretariat at europe@ramsar.org.

16. Largest Karst Polje in achieves international recognition

**Bosnia & Herzegovina:** EuroNatur, Youth Center Livno and WWF, applaud the new designation of Livansko polje, the largest karst plain in Bosnia and Herzegovina and South Eastern Europe, as a wetland of international importance, under the International Ramsar Convention. It is the largest wetland of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with important populations of rare birds and significant communities including corn crake, Montagu’s harrier, lesser spotted eagle, redshank, snipe and great bittern.

Livanjsko Polje vegetation is a very special mix of northern European grasslands and forest as well as Mediterranean plants, while large areas are covered with oak, ash and alder forest important to conservation. EuroNatur, Youth Center Livno and WWF fully support the decision by the Bosnian government to designate Livanjsko Polje under the International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

For further information, contact M.Schneider-Jacoby, EURONATUR martin.schneider-jacoby@euronatur.org or visit http://www.euronatur.org/EuroNatuer-News.english+M50f94a23b7b.0.html?&cHash=213aacd240.

17. “Prokop” protected as a natural resource

**Serbia:** In October 2008, Serbian nature has become richer by one more protected natural resource – the “Prokop” Natural Resort. The establishment of this natural resort in Southeast Serbia will protect the original forest community in the central part of Veliki Jastrebac mountain massif which is the community of birch constituting pure stands or stands of birch and beech and fragments of pure beech stand, unique and uncommon in Serbia.
The Prokop Resort also has the special importance from the scientific and expert standpoint, since it enables monitoring of the process of natural succession of vegetation, where beech keeps gradually replacing the birch and becoming predominant in the stand. Despite such advancement of beech, the birch forests in Prokop have preserved their structure, which ensured their future survival and development. Being rich with diverse species of fauna, Prokop Resort constitutes the unique and exemplary natural resource. The Regulation of the Republic of Serbia Government has given Prokop Natural Resort the status of protected natural resource of vital importance, having the status of scientific and research and educational asset.

For more information, please contact Maja Radosavljevic, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia at maja@zzps.rs.

18. Rehabilitation and restoration of wet meadows at lake Ludas

**Serbia:** In 2001, the Ramsar Convention through its Small Grant Fund Programme was able to fund a 2 phase project in Serbia aiming to rehabilitate and to restore wet meadows at Ludasko Lake, and to contribute to the realization of a Visitor educational Centre. The site, located in Vojvodina province is the oldest of nine Serbian Ramsar Sites, in fact one of the few remaining natural lakes of the Pannonia Plain. In the 50s most of the wet and fen meadows were converted into hayfields, pastures and arable lands, leading to severe degradation of the original ecosystems.

Throughout several activities of field monitoring, evaluation, measurements with the collaboration of local communities the condition to pursue the rehabilitation of these wetlands are now being created. Several educational activities such bank cleaning campaigns and celebration of environmental days with school children have been organized increasing the awareness of the site’s values. The creation of new facilities for ecotourism such as observation paths has enhanced the economic values of this Ramsar Site in line with the concept of wise use of wetlands. The visitor centre are also presented different thematic areas illustrating other three protected areas in the region, wetlands conservation strategies and challenges.

For more information please contact Monica Zavagli, Ramsar Secretariat at europe@ramsar.org or visit [http://www.ludas.rs/](http://www.ludas.rs/).

19. SEE Workshop on Business Planning for Protected Areas

**Germany:** Securing a sustainable financing is a prerequisite for the effective long-term management of a protected area (system). However, protected area managers mostly have rather a background in nature-related fields than in finances. To be able to understand and to steer key financial processes and planning instruments, a workshop on business planning for protected areas was held at the International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm, Germany, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and WWF, 3-7 December 2008.
Participants from SEE countries’ Ministries of Environment and protected areas’ managers had lectures in activity-based cost accounting, selection of financial mechanisms and formulation of financial plans, country group exercises and exchange of experiences. They developed a roadmap on further steps for the next two years which they will achieve either nationally or in joint action; this workshop is just the first step of a whole process of implementing the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). The offices of the WWF Mediterranean Programme (Dinaric Arc Ecoregion Project) and the WWF Danube-Carpathian Project will accompany this ongoing work directed toward the implementation of the PoWPA where securing sustainable financing for Protected Areas was identified as one of the major activities. The workshop was hosted by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funding from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

For further information please contact Judith Jabs, BfN at judith.jabs@bfn-vilm.de.

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First Croatian NBSAP was adopted by Croatian Parliament in 1999. In the year 2006, whole document (aims, guidelines and action plans) was analysed, and it was decided to proceed with new approach, hence the new Strategy was needed. In period from 1999 to 2008, the most important milestones for development of nature protection system were activities related to implementation of Convention on Biodiversity and other international agreements. Process of the EU accession preparation and development of nature protection sector in line with EU standards had an important role. Achievements in that period were capacity building at all levels, access to International multilateral agreements, setting up national legislative frame in nature protection and regulation of the use of GMOs, designation and proclamation of ecological network, etc. The main challenge for the next period will be alignment with European legislation and assurance of financial resources for implementation and active role of other sectors including support from NGOs.

For further information please contact Kornelija Pintaric, Ministry of Culture, Nature Protection Directorate at kornelija.pintaric@min-kulture.hr.

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**21. Environmental Education Programs in the Protected Area of Rhodope Mountain Range**

**Greece:** Callisto has implemented a series of environmental education programs in Paranesti, Drama, in cooperation with the Management Authority of Rhodope Mountain Range PA.

The project was funded by the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training. Programs were designed for both primary and secondary schools, involving 17 from whole Greece.

Activities were implemented in the protected area and included guided tours in marked paths in the mountain. The focus was put on the Nestos River and aquatic environments, the biodiversity of Rhodope Mountain and the large carnivores living in the area. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Management Authority of Rhodope Mountain Range Protected Area, Callisto published a brochure on the application of environmental education activities in the field. In the framework of the project, Callisto cooperated with the Centre for Environmental Education and the Natural History Museum of Paranesti.

For further information please contact Iliana Bousiaki, Callisto at bousiaki@gmail.com.
22. Greenways for the sustainable future

**Romania:** Greenways are successful and well recognized initiatives in Western European countries and in the United States. In Romania, the idea of creating Greenways is more recent and belongs to the Partnership Foundation located in Miercurea Ciuc.

After the Mineral Water Trail Greenway in 2004, one of the first initiatives of this kind in Romania, other projects were developed in different regions with a rich tourism potential followed, such as the Pine Way. This first programme called Limestone Trail is located in the Central part of the Trascău Mountain, in Transylvania.

The trail is developed on three parallel valleys and offers the possibility to visit 15 natural reservations, proposed to be included into a Natura 2000 site and within the future Trascău-Muntele Mare Natural Park. Well known mainly due to the Rîmetului Gorges, the Central part of the Trascău leads through a high number of natural reservations that include old traditional houses and more than 250 years old churches. Informative panels are placed at the starting point of each of 8 routes. This Greenway contributes to the sustainable development of the region given that Apuseni Mountains region is one of the poorest in Romania.

For further information please contact Andreea Baltaretu, Faculty of Tourism and Commercial Management at andreeabaltaretu@gmail.com.

23. Research camp organized in NP Stara planina

**Serbia:** Last July, Biology student study and research society “Josif Pancic” together with SYRIG “Branislav Bukurov” and Ecological-research society “Mladen Karaman” organized a research camp in the village Temska, with several excursions on the other parts of the Nature park “Stara planina”. Whole event was coordinated by the Association for conservation and sustainable development of Stara planina. In the course of 16 days 80 people visited this camp including and contributed to the formation of rich photo documentation, giving the special interest to the study of birds, plants, small mammals, lichens, hydrobiology.

Local population representatives had opposed to the possible construction of the ski resort on the ridge of the mountain, in the Nature park Stara planina, but supported other tourism branches development, such as eco-rural tourism on the mountain and research and volunteer camps.

For more information please contact Marko Sciban at sciban@eunet.yu or visit www.josifpancic.com, http://www.branislav-bukurov.com/, www.staraplanina.rs.

24. Environmental Problems – Local view

**Albania:** Elbasan is showing alarming statistics - the first place in the ranking concerning the air pollution on the state level. The work of major factories is affecting the livestock and crops, soil fertility. Since the ‘90s, environmental awareness has improved, but at the same time urban pollution is constantly increasing. The most important way to prevent air pollution is to pressure stakeholders reminding on the biodiversity targets, in this case asking for the use of a less-polluting technology and installation filters.

For more information, please contact Gjergji Shqau, Faculty of Economy at gjergjishqau@yahoo.com.
25. Transboundary cooperation on the Danube

**Serbia:** The National park Djerdap administration has signed the cooperation agreement with the Romanian Geopark in Turnu Severin. The main objective of this protocol is the protection of natural and cultural heritage of this area on both sides of the Danube. Signatories were the director of NP Djerdap, Sasa Nestorovic and Aleksandar Srbulovic, the director assistant for Protection and development on one side, and on the other Marius Balu, president of Mehedinici county and Stefan Wisket, office coordinator. The cooperation will be based on common project promoting transboundary cooperation, eco-tourism development and experience exchange.

For more information, please contact Marija Milenkovic-Srbulovic, NP Djerdap at office@npdjerdap.org

26. Nature Trails in Bojana-Buna Delta

**Montenegro:** The Urban Institute Washington is designing, on behalf of Public Enterprise for Water Supply, Wastewater Drainage and Treatment and Solid Waste Disposal (PEW), Budva, Montenegro, eco-infrastructure facilities that will connect some of the Bojana Delta’s most interesting sites (e.g., Velika Plaza, Port Milena, Starigrad Ulcinj, Svač, and Ada Bojana) found in a number of diverse habitats as surface waters as the River Bojana and Šasko Jezero; wetlands, marshes, and woodlands as on Ada island and near the Bojana. The planned eco-infrastructure facilities will include foot paths and bike trails and riding paths, observation towers and platforms, and an Information Center on Ada Bojana, and will promote better public access to these diverse habitats.

As part of its public consultation activities, the Urban Institute has engaged RT CG to produce a television series “Trails to Wild Beauty”. The episode series describe the planned eco-infrastructure and outline some of the development challenges faced by Ulcinj municipality in balancing commercial development, eco-tourism and conservation. EuroNatur supported the filming with one episode concerning the most interesting site for bird watching: Solana Ulcinj. The episodes are part of the World Bank programme to establish a Regional Park in the Bojana-Buna Delta.

For further information, please contact Martin Schneider-Jacoby, EURONATUR at martin.schneider-jacoby@euronatur.org or visit

Part 1: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AAbP1TQoDU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AAbP1TQoDU)
Part 2: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtuKhu4LMAI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtuKhu4LMAI)
Part 3: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idR_5HGTUN8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idR_5HGTUN8)

**WCC in brief**

The 4th World Conservation Congress (5-14 October 2008, Barcelona, Spain), gathered nearly 8,000 delegates that discussed, shared, learned, voted and decided about ideas, actions and solutions for a diverse and sustainable world. At the same time, it was an opportunity to celebrate the 60th anniversary of IUCN created in 1948 in Fontainebleau in France. The Congress is the highest body of IUCN and its held every four years.

For further information: [http://www.iucn.org/congress_08](http://www.iucn.org/congress_08)
IUCN members defined the environmental policy of the Union. More than 100 resolutions and recommendations were voted (http://www.iucn.org/congress_08/assembly/policy/index.cfm) and a four-year mandate was given to the Commission Chairs and Council (http://www.iucn.org/about/union/council/members/index.cfm). Elected Regional Councillors for East Europe, North and Central Asia are Amirkhan Amirkhanov (Russia), Vilmos Kiszel (Hungary) and Kalev Sepp (Estonia).

During the Congress, IUCN SEE welcomed its new member, Croatian Herpetological Society – Hyla (HHD-Hyla http://www.hyla.hr/). Its mission is protection of amphibians and reptiles in Croatia, as well as their habitats.

Summarizing, 44 participants attended the Congress from the SEE region, out of which there were 14 member organizations’ and 8 media representatives.

Sailing to Barcelona - an action-oriented initiative linked the worlds of sailing and conservation. It gave a voice to creative marine conservation efforts from various corners of the world, while helping to build new and innovative partnerships for future action, and raise awareness beyond the conservation community.

http://www.iucn.org/congress_08/about/special_events/sailing/index.cfm

Sailing to Barcelona initiative was strongly supported by the SEE region, especially the Montenegrin Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Ministry of Defense, resulting in the participation of the beautiful three-master Jadran, a scholar ship that sailed to raise awareness for marine and coastal protection in SEE. Apart from bringing a number of dedicated scientists and nature conservation experts to the Congress, the Jadran conveyed a strong message on improved regional cooperation.

Launch of the World Data Base on Protected Areas (WDPA) – significantly improved online tool which allows users to zoom in, fly over and explore over 100,000 national parks. It looks at areas including endangered species, habitats, landscapes and livelihoods, paying attention to the world’s oceans, including mangroves, corals and sea grasses. The new WDPA aims to assist decision makers and relevant stakeholders in their decisions relating to protected areas. More information is available from:

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_focus/index.cfm?uNewsID=1719

The most comprehensive update of The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ unveiled, covering now nearly 45,000 species. The Global Mammal Assessment will be released at the same time and will include an update on all 5,490 of the world’s mammals.

http://www.iucnredlist.org/
1. IUCN Protected Areas Categories Guidelines

The new Category Guidelines were launched at a major WCC 2008 workshop, which emphasized the Categories as a powerful tool for strengthening protected area management. The new guidelines emphasize that the priority objective for all protected areas is protecting nature, but that protected areas also have other, important management objectives, such as providing ecosystem services and enhancing the livelihoods of people, so long as these other objectives do not negatively impact biodiversity conservation. The new Guidelines represent the culmination of much work and extensive consultation with IUCN and WCPA Members over the last 4 years, which included a web based discussion forum and a major "Categories Summit", held in Almeria, Spain in 2007. The new PA Management Categories Guidelines can be downloaded from:

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/index.cfm

2. Solana Ulcinj

With 1,500 ha in size, the Solana Ulcinj is a unique continuous wetland area. It is the best example of operational salinas on the Eastern Adriatic coast (800 km). It fulfils the criteria of a Natura 2000 & EMERALD Site and is an Important Birds Area according the EU Bird Directive.

The author, Vaso - Vasko Radovic, worked until 2006 in Solana Ulcinj and was manager of the business unit “Solana Nature - Park”. Since January 2007 he is Secretary for economic development of the municipality Ulcinj. His book is a fascinating description of the development of the salinas from the very beginning. Many historic documents and the relation to the history of Montenegro make the book an interesting example of recent history. It also explains why the locality has been chosen and how the salt pans are linked to the development of Ulcinj.

The Solana Ulcinj is the only natural site in Montenegro so far for which a Management Plan has been prepared. The results of the EuroNatur Solana Ulcinj project are included as well as the new exhibition in English, Albanian and Montenegrin language prepared for the Solana Museum.

For further information, contact M. Schneider-Jacoby, EURONATUR martin.schneider-jacoby@euronatur.org or visit Rapid Assessment http://www.euronatur.org/Publications.411.0.html.
Trainings & Seminars - ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Beyond boundaries - protected landscapes, cities and the European Landscape Convention

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles announces a seminar, "Beyond boundaries - protected landscapes, cities and the European Landscape Convention", to be held in London 26-27 January 2009.

Protected landscapes and cities are interdependent. Protected areas provide valuable services for our urban population - ecological, recreational, economic - and the majority of people live in cities. It is from urban areas that visitor income originates. Many opt to live in high quality countryside and work in a nearby conurbation. Increasingly we are being encouraged to see the borders between urban and rural, between protected and non-protected, as porous and reciprocal. The European Landscape Convention requires signatories to think about how all landscapes need enhancing and celebrating; and to bring people into the foreground of that work. The seminar will focus on the practice, on how can protected landscapes work best with urban populations and how they should respond to major growth plans. The event is aimed at advancing the application of the European Landscape Convention by Protected Landscape organizations which border major conurbations and interact with them.

For more information contact Dan Bloomfield, EAI at dan.bloomfield@europarc-ai.org.

2. Workshop on assessing the values and benefits of protected areas

Conservationists know much of the different values of protected areas for nature, but maybe less of the benefits for humans, and sometimes they even do not find the right words or approaches to communicate them to other stakeholders. Enabling Protected Areas’ managers to better identify, assess and communicate values and benefits of their protected areas is the main objective of a workshop which will be organized by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) together with Europarc Federation.

Making the case for protected areas by identifying the benefits will help to generate political will, create public awareness, and mobilize an increased funding for protected areas. The workshop is directed towards European
countries and will take place at the International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm from 14 – 18 April, 2009.

For further information please contact Judith Jabs, BfN at judith.jabs@bfn-vilm.de.

3. Adriatic Flyway Conference

In order to improve the protection of the priority wetlands and to stop the decrease of many birds’ species, which need the Central European Flyway, more information and cooperation is needed. Flagship species are Spotted Eagle, Spoonbill, Ferruginous Duck, Garganey, Black-tailed Godwit, Slender-billed Curlew, Curlew sandpiper and Crane. But the protection will be only improved, if the value of the resting sites for tourism and regional development is understood by the responsible authorities and the governments. The Adriatic Flyway Conference 14 – 18. April 2009 is a platform to promote solutions and to exchange information. It is supported by the MAVA Foundations and will hopefully lead to a better protection of the resting sites at the Eastern Adriatic Coast.

For more information contact Martin Schneider-Jacoby, EURONATUR at Martin.Schneider-Jacoby@euronatur.org or visit http://www.adriaticflyway.com/

4. Earth hour

71 cities in 62 countries including Kyiv and Odessa in Ukraine, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Moldova have committed to switch off for WWF’s Earth Hour in 2009. The campaign, which hopes to reach out to more than one billion people in 1,000 cities around the world, asks individuals, businesses and governments to switch off lights for just one hour on Saturday March 28 at 8:30pm to create a platform of support for action on climate change. Earth Hour aims to demonstrate unprecedented solidarity and provide a visual global mandate that will put the heat on world leaders meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009 to strike a new global deal on climate change.

For more information please contact Andreas Beckmann, WWF International at abeckmann@wwfdcp.org or visit http://www.earthhour.org.

Guidelines for contributing to the IUCN SEE e-bulletin

IUCN welcomes articles in which you report on the activities related to transboundary cooperation in protected areas and biodiversity conservation. Please inform the public on the status of your projects and actions, as well as events that you attended. You are welcome to announce new meetings and workshops and briefly report on new publications and announce funding opportunities. Please send a photo to accompany your article if appropriate and indicate your email and/or weblink for further reference.

The articles should be 150-250 words in length. Please note this as the interest to distribute news articles through the bulletin is extremely high and we are trying to secure space for all of you to contribute. You are responsible for any content that you post or transmit. The editors reserve the right to shorten and modify the text if necessary.

Thanks for taking these guidelines into consideration!

All contributions should be sent to Aleksandra Nestic, aleksandra.nestic@iucn.org.
ROfE’s Structure

Regional Office for Pan-Europe (ROfE) is a branch of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Along with offices and commissions around the world, we link back to the President, Director General and Council of IUCN. For a history of IUCN and an explanation of the global structure please visit [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org).

ROfE is comprised of four IUCN offices located in Brussels, Belgrade, Tbilisi and Moscow. The head office in Brussels, is a meeting point where the Programme Office for the Southern Caucasus, The IUCN Programme Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade can disseminate information and strategies. Together as ROfE we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable Europe by utilizing local expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

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