

Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity Annual Meeting

9-10 November 2003
Krakow

Minutes

9:00 Opening of the Annual Meeting
The AM is chaired by Erzsébet Schmuck

Welcome by András Krolopp, General Secretary

Modification of Agenda:

Future perspectives of the network will be presented after the overview of past and present activities and the approval of the Articles of Association

The new agenda was adopted

Klára Hajdu and Anna Iványi are elected as minute-takers. The minutes will be authenticated by Gábor Töröcsik and Jaromir Sibl.

Orsolya Bónis and Dorottya Papp are elected as members of the Credentials Committee

Orsolya Bónis and Klára Hajdu are elected as the members of the Election Committee.

András Krolopp presents the past activities of CEEWEB, the historic background, the purposes of the AM, the outset of the AM and the achievements made so far.

Erzsébet Schmuck adds that CEEWEB has an important sleeping membership, who should be activated. It is a great opportunity to develop the network, and make the voice of the member organizations heard in Brussels. The achievements of CEEWEB are also recognized by the European Commission, proved by the Core Funding.

The credentials committee states that the number of voting rights is 11. As 50%+1 of all voting right to be present is required for quorum, the AM is terminated.

10:00: Opening of the AM

The report on past activities is adopted.

The financial report is adopted.

According to the proposal of Erzsébet Schmuck, for next AM a brief status report should be presented to give an overview on current year expenditures (salaries, maintenance, projects, Working Groups) for the information of members, in the format developed by the Board. However, only the report of the closed financial year can be approved by the AM.

The decision is adopted.

András Krolopp presents the 2004 Work Program of CEEWEB, which is adopted by the Annual Meeting.

Coffee break

The representatives of Carpathian Heritage Society arrive, the number of voting rights increases to 12, as accepted by Credential Committee.

Voting on accepting new members

The following applicant member organizations are presented and accepted:

Birds of Prey Protection Society, Bulgaria

Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany

Environmental Organization – Rhodope, Bulgaria

Friends of Nature, Hungary

The Credentials Committee states that the number of voting rights is 16.

Discussion on the Articles of Association

The structure of CEEWEB, the role of decision-making bodies (Board, Annual Meeting, Supervisory Committee) is briefly presented by András Krolopp.

Erzsébet Schmuck proposes that all member organizations should be notified 21 days before the AM; all background information should also be sent out. According to Mojmir Vlasin MOs should give feedback whether they would like to attend the AM, but Inga Racinska thinks, that MOs cannot be obliged to respond.

The decision on notification 21 days in advance is adopted.

Discussion on the composition of the Board

The decisions of the Board are made by simple majority (51%).

The elected Chairs of the Working Groups become Member of the Board. The President, the Vice-President and two standing members are elected by the AM. Members of the Board can be elected as Working Group Chairs.

The composition of the Board is adopted by consensus.

Discussion on the number of voting rights per organization

Schmuck Erzsébet proposes that the number of voting rights could be determined according to the membership of the member organization, but Tamás Papp points out that the number of members is not easy to check. An agreement is made, that each member organization has one voting right, and this decision is adopted by consensus.

Aims and tasks

Erzsébet Schmuck proposes, that the aim should be broadened, not only the implementation of a single convention, but the protection of biodiversity. According to Michael Meyer, the Articles of Association shouldn't include tasks, only objectives. Tamás Papp recommends the formulation of a single objective. Jaromir Sibl: proposes to form an ad-hoc working group, which could define mission and objectives, and report back tomorrow to the Annual Meeting. Members of the working group: Michael Meyer, András Krolopp, Erzsébet Schmuck, Jaromir Sibl.

Erzsébet Schmuck proposes that CEEWEB should apply for a legal status of public benefit organization. CEEWEB has two offices, the Headquarters is in Miskolc, the Policy office is in Budapest, fulfilling the tasks of the Secretariat.

The proposal is adopted by the Annual Meeting by consensus.

Antonia Chilikova raises the issue of what should be done with inactive, not responding member organizations. A discussion is developing on the necessity of introducing a membership fee.

The Annual Meeting votes on whether the membership fee should be included in the Articles of Association.

The result of voting: in favour: 6 votes; against: 6 votes; abstention: 4 votes, so the issue is left pending, to be discussed again at the next Annual Meeting. Michael Meyer proposes that the Board develops a proposal on the introduction of membership fee that will be sent to all member organization before the next Annual Meeting.

Based on the proposal of Andrzej Kepel, the Secretariat will finalize the layout of the Articles of Association.

The Articles of Association is adopted by the Annual Meeting.

Lunch break

Michael Meyer briefly presents the history of creating the Memorandum of Understanding, as the framework for the operation of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, regulating the role of the Secretariat, the Working Group and its Chair. András Krolopp adds that it is not a legal document, rather a gentlemen's agreement. Michael Meyer recommends that the Memorandum of Understanding should be the same for all Working Groups. Jaromir Sibl raises the issue, that it should be clarified under Article 8/a, whether the Board or the Secretariat should approve communications.

The Annual Meeting votes on Article 8/a (Secretariat or Board should be replaced by Secretariat)

The modification is adopted by consensus.

The Memorandum of Understanding is adopted by consensus.

The Chairman of the Annual Meeting is Michael Meyer in this part.

Windows of opportunity – presentations

CBD and PEBLDS by Klára Hajdu

Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative by Pam McCarthy

CITES Working Group by Márton Kelemen

Sustainable Tourism Working Group by Anna Iványi

Proposed Working Groups in alphabetical order:

Agri-environment, rural development

Climate change

Forestry

Nature conservation in military areas

Natura 2000

Wildlife and energy

Overall perspective by Erzsébet Schmuck

Regarding the proposed working groups, Michael Meyer states, that the Working Groups need the support of the Secretariat, so the available human capacities should be taken into consideration.

Michael Meyer raises the question of a member organization to the General Secretary: what countries are eligible to be included in the “CEE” region?

András Krolopp confirms, that the issue must be settled, but it’s not in his competence to decide; and proposes the establishment of an ad-hoc working group to define “Central and Eastern Europe”

Michael Meyer recommends that the working group (its members are Jaromir Sibl, Dobromir Domuschiev and Márton Kelemen) comes up with a proposal next morning.

WG sessions

10 November, Monday

Andras Krolopp is the elected chair of the session, the quorum is determined by the Credentials Committee.

The ad hoc working groups report back to the Plenary

The **ad hoc working group on Article 1** of the Articles of the Association recommends the text for defining the mission: “The mission of CEEWEB is the protection of the biodiversity through the reconciliation of economic and social development trends with the sustainable use of natural resources”.

Klára Hajdu suggests that the word “protection” is replaced by “conservation”, arguing that protection only refers to the action, but conservation rather to the aim and result. The AM discussed whether it is the aim to conserve nature, acknowledging its continuous change. The AM votes on and approves the word “conservation” in the mission of CEEWEB. The AM votes on and approves the first sentence of Article 1., as well as the first defined aim of CEEWEB.

With regard to the second aim, Michael Meyer suggested to add to the aim: “with special regards to the Convention on Biological Diversity”. The AM votes on and approves the amendment of the second aim. A discussion starts on the wording of the third aim, with several suggestions emerging (to contribute to, to enhance, to promote, to ensure, to implement sustainable development, to promote the concept and implementation of sustainable development). The Chair suggests that the different proposals are written down and the AM will come back to the topic later. The working group suggests adding one more point to the aims: to raise public awareness about the importance of biodiversity and its protection. It is voted and approved by the AM. The suggested tasks of CEEWEB are defined as: lobbying activity, campaign; education; information and expert exchange; and capacity building. It is voted on and approved.

The AM comes back to the aim concerning sustainable development. The discussed final version: “to promote the concept and strategies of sustainable development and contribute to their implementation” is voted on and approved.

The **ad hoc working group on the definition of CEE region** suggests that the following countries are defined as CEE countries: Baltic countries, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova,

Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, but any other NGOs from any country interested in nature conservation in this region shall be accepted as member as well. Antonia Chilikova suggests that NGOs actively working in this region should be defined instead “NGOs interested in”. Andras Krolopp raises whether to include Switzerland, Austria, Germany, as well as Malta, Cyprus, and the European part of Turkey into the region, while others support including the European part of Russia and Caucasus.

The AM votes on and approves that all the above listed countries proposed by the ad hoc group belong to the CEE region. The AM votes on including Germany, Switzerland, Austria into the CEE region, it is rejected. The AM votes on including the European part of Russia (as far as the Ural) and the Caucasus in the CEE region. The proposal does not receive the majority of votes, thus the issue is regarded pending until the next AM. The Annual Meeting votes on adding Malta, Cyprus, and the European part of Turkey into the region; the proposal is rejected.

Election of the Board and the Supervisory Committee

After reviewing the tasks and obligations of the Board and the Supervisory Committee, Orsolya Bonis from the Nomination Committee presents the nominated persons for the elections. Each nominee is voted on for getting on the candidate list for each position.

Nominated persons for:

President:

Erzsebet Schmuck (Hungarian Association of Nature Conservationists), nomination approved

Vice-President:

Michael Meyer (Ecological Tourism for Europe), nomination approved

Inga Racinska (Latvian Fund for Nature), nomination approved

Regular members of the Board:

Antonia Chilikova (Environmental Organization - Rhodope), nomination approved

Tamas Papp (Milvus Group), nomination approved

Mojmir Vlasin (Veronica), nomination approved

Inga Racinska (Latvian Fund for Nature), nomination approved

Andrzej Kepel (Salamandra) is nominated, but could not undertake the nomination due to his ample duties

Nominated members of the Supervisory Committee:

Antonia Chilikova

Tzvetan Spassov

Tamás Papp

Tana Paskova

Agnieszka Lopata

The AM agrees with the proposal, that also a Working Group Chair can be elected as Board member, as the WG can elect new chair even before the expiration of the mandate of the Board member. Following this Jaromir Sibl (BROZ) is also approved as candidate for the Board.

Due to that there are two candidates for Vice-President, Erzsebet Schmuck suggests changing the Article of the Association to have two Vice-Presidents instead of one, as Vice-Presidents could better represent the organization at high-level meetings than the general members of the Board. Marton Kelemen deems it unacceptable to change the Article of the Association after its approval just because of the number of the candidates for a position. The AM votes on changing the Article of the Association in this matter. The proposal for modification is rejected.

Voting on the members of the Board and the Supervisory Committee:

Erzsebet Schmuck is elected for President with consensus. The Annual Meeting decides to have a secret vote on the Vice-President, the two general members of the Board and the Supervisory Committee. Michael Meyer is elected as Vice-President. Inga Racinska is elected as one general member. As no other candidate receives 50%+1 vote of voting rights, another round of vote is necessary. Mojmir Vlasin is elected as the other general member of the Board.

The elected Board members present themselves in a few sentences.

Tzvetan Spassov and Antonia Chilikova are elected as members of the Supervisory Committee in the first round. For the third member a second round of vote is held. Tamas Papp is elected as the third member.

Coffee break

The WGs report back to the Plenary

Michael Meyer reports on the Sustainable Tourism WG meeting . Gabor Torocsik from Nature Friends Hungary is the chair elected by the WG.

Jaromir Sibl reports on the Natura 2000 WG meeting and presents its Work Program. The WG elected an interim chair (Jaromir Sibl, BROZ,) until June and a normal chair (Mojmir Vlasin, Veronica) for the period after June.

Marton Kelemen reports on the CITES WG meeting and presents its Work Program. The elected chair of the WG is Marton Kelemen (Milvus Group).

The AM votes on and approves the creation of the new WGs and their WPs.

Erzsebet Schmuck suggests that WGs' activities are supported by 50% of the Core Funding for 2004, and the other half will be a contribution to the operation of the Secretariat. The AM votes and approves the suggestion.

The Chairs of the WGs introduce themselves in a few sentences.

Erzsebet Schmuck closes the AM.

Participants:

Bónis, Orsolya – CEEWEB, Hungary
Chilikova, Antonia – Environmental Organization – Rhodope, Bulgaria
Dabrowski, Piotr – PTTK, Poland
Czech, Andrzej – Carpathian Heritage Society, Poland
Domuschiev, Dobromir – Birds of Prey Protection Society, Bulgaria
Grebieniow, Anna – Salamandra, Poland
Hajdu, Klára – CEEWEB, Hungary
Hoffman, Jörg– IUCN Office for Central Europe, Poland
Iványi, Anna – CEEWEB, Hungary
Kelemen, Márton– Milvus Group, Romania
Kepel, Andrzej – Salamandra, Poland
Kotunova, Tamara – IUCN Office for Central Europe, Poland
Krolopp, András – CEEWEB General Secretary, Hungary
Kryzanauskaite, Rasa – Lithuanian Fund for Natura, Lithuania
Lopata, Agnieszka – Carpathian Heritage Society, Poland
Lytvynenko, Alla – Youth Environmental League of Pryniprovyia, Ukraine
McCarthy, Pam – WWF Danube – Carpathian Program Office
Meyer, Michael – Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany
Mirutenko, Vladislav – Carpathian Ecological Club „Ruthenia”, Ukraine
Papp, Dorottya – CEEWEB, Hungary
Papp, Tamás – Milvus Group, Romania
Paskova, Tatiana – BROZ, Slovakia
Ponicsán, Péter – Hungarian Association of Nature Conservationists, Hungary
Racinska, Inga – Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia
Schmuck, Erzsébet – Hungarian Association of Nature Conservationists, Hungary
Sibl, Jaromir –BROZ, Slovakia
Spasov, Tzvetan – UNEP National Committee, Bulgaria
Töröcsik, Gábor – Friends of Nature Hungary
Vlasin, Mojmir – Veronica, the Czech Republic
Zawilinska, Bernadetta – PTTK, Poland

This document has been authenticated by

.....
Jaromir Sibl

.....
Gábor Töröcsik

11/12/2003