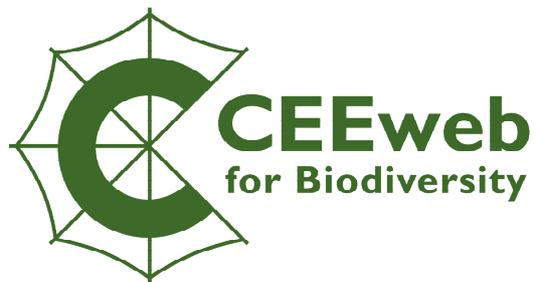


Electronic Newsletter of CEEweb

Spring Issue - 2012



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Dear Readers,

Spring has come to an end and summer is ahead of us with the promise of a well-deserved, refreshing holiday. You will be certainly enjoying picturesque landscapes, turquoise sea, magnificent mountains, bright green meadows, cool forests, beautiful wild flowers and amazing wildlife, not mentioning the traditional culture of local inhabitants, local communities attached to them. When you are there, please, keep in mind: that is what we want to save for the coming generations. That should be a strong motivation to answer the upcoming challenges.

In this issue of CEEweb Newsletter, we list a number of such challenges. The EU has long marked the aim to halt the loss of biodiversity and restore degraded habitats, but it has failed to reach the aims so far. Now the Commission, in order to achieve the goals, has set up a working group on "No Net Loss of Ecosystem and their Services", in which CEEweb will be the coordinator on behalf of the European Habitats Forum, a coalition of European nature conservation networks. Infrastructure development is a serious threat on intact habitats as it usually causes fragmentation and thus disconnection of wildlife populations. Elements of Green Infrastructure may be a great help to treat this problem, as a CEEweb study shows, and they can work most effectively as part of a holistic EU land use policy. Of course, there are always questions about the financing – the examples that CEEweb collected may provide at least some answers.

Apparently, there are very similar problems on global level as well, as the negotiations about mobilising financial resources for biodiversity within the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the Rio+20 Conference show. The situation is unfortunately not too promising. Fortunately, there are good examples at local level too. Some glimpse of hope can be seen in the cross-border project aiming to conserve the Balkan lynx in Macedonia and Albania.

Finally, we should not forget about all the good things happened so far! Let's celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Habitats Directive, and let's celebrate European nature! You may figure out how, if you read the article about the upcoming events.

Enjoy summer and enjoy reading CEEweb's recent Newsletter!

Wishing all the best!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matyas Prommer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matyas Prommer, Secretary General

EU POLICY ISSUES

No Net Loss

Strengthened by Council Conclusion(s) the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 sets the tone for biodiversity conservation related activities for the next years. Subsequently, the Commission has established a Working Group on “No Net Loss of Ecosystems and their Services” in order to facilitate the development of the “no net loss” initiative announced for 2015 in the EU Biodiversity Strategy— and there is a very challenging discussion going on among Member State and other experts. However, it remains to be seen, how ambitious the initiative will be: focusing on local conservation losses and mitigating the negative effects of development, or contributing to tackling the drivers and halting biodiversity loss on EU and global levels. For sure CEEweb will be an active contributor in the process, also as the coordinator on behalf of the European Habitats Forum.

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/No-Net-Loss-201205251.pdf>

Connecting the Green Dots in the Visegrad Countries - Outcome of the Analysis of Green Infrastructure Elements in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia

With CEEweb for Biodiversity's **March conference in Brussels on Green Infrastructure and the 7th EAP** (http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/sustainability/land-use/brussels_ivf/), our Visegrad project came to an end. With our results, we came to the conclusion that the already existing GI elements and ecological networks in most of the assessed countries will serve as a valuable base for the future Green Infrastructure Strategy. On the other hand, the results also indicate that we may need more than a new strategy. Already numerous national and EU legislation ensure the connectivity and protection of GI elements – in spite of this, biodiversity loss is ongoing. This may raise a question what new and innovative tools should be additionally applied to save our remaining natural heritage: CEEweb for Biodiversity tries to draw up an alternative solution.

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/sustainability/land-use/>

Wasted Money and Good Investments - Financing Nature Case Studies from Five CEE Countries

Innovation as a water tax for biodiversity in Bulgaria, biodiversity deteriorating goofs in the Structural Funds in Poland and examples for good financial cooperation for area managements in Slovakia – these are some of the cases CEEweb has collected from five CEE countries in order to investigate the situation in financing nature in the light of the forming new financial framework and LIFE programme. The data were collected based on a questionnaire that wished to focus on specific cases from a financial perspective, may it be either one particular location or one particular programme. The questionnaire also obtained some general information on national financing and financing reporting on biodiversity as well as inquiring for the use of innovative financing mechanisms.

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/working-groups/natura-2000/resources/cases/>

INTERNATIONAL

Where are Rio+20 negotiations going?

The Rio+20 Summit is approaching, but instead of hope, scepticism and potential global failure are accompanying it. The worsening ecological and social situation on Earth indicates that Rio might be our last chance to initiate the essential U-turn. However, decision-makers have still not found agreement on the main parts of The Future We Want document, because they are still grabbing the end of the pipe instead of tackling the problems at their roots.

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Rio+20.pdf>

Negotiations gear up in international biodiversity financing

Securing financial means for international biodiversity conservation is definitely a core issue for developed and developing countries alike. The views on the financial needs themselves, as well as the ways and means of defining those, and the possibilities of utilising new and innovative mechanisms are rather far apart between donor and recipient countries. This makes the issue very sensitive while at the same time the stakes for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the expectations from developing countries are very high.

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/CBD-RMS1.pdf>

Conservation of Balkan lynx in Balkan mountains

Balkan lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*) is a subspecies of the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) distributed in the south west Balkan mountains in the border areas between Macedonia and Albania. Potentially, there are also a few individuals in Kosovo and Montenegro. It is an enigmatic animal and has become a symbol for nature conservation in the West Balkans. In 2006 a conservation project started to study and secure the survival of the lynx and to protect its habitats: the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme. Implementation of the project is bilateral in Macedonia and Albania by the partners Macedonian Ecological Society, Protection and Preservation of the Natural Environment in Albania, Swiss KORA and EuroNatur from Germany. So far the project lasts for six years in two phases and is financed by MAVA foundation. We believe that the last stronghold of this elusive species is Mavrovo National Park in west Macedonia. Active monitoring is still conducted in this area (the last two years in the frames of SCOPES program financed by SNSF).

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Balkan-Lynx.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Let's Celebrate European Nature! – Short Film Contest and Photo Competition to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Habitats Directive

To mark this important date in CEEweb's calendar, we kick-off again the Green-Go Short Film Contest and Festival, where we call for short films in a category specially dedicated to celebrate the Habitats Directive and Natura 2000. Besides, to make the date more memorable and to compile a timeline of a success story, we also call for photos on Natura 2000 species and habitats. With the short film contest and festival along with the photo competition we aim to raise awareness on the European protected area network, the immense services they provide and the vast amount of efforts of conservation institutions and NGOs all around the continent to save European biodiversity.

Join the film contest and photo competition and let us celebrate European nature together!

Further information:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/2089/life-programme-and-the-habitats-directive-celebrate-its-20th-anniversary-in-2012/> and www.greengofest.eu/

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