

Diversity



Newsletter of the Central and
East European Working Group for
the Enhancement of Biodiversity
C E E W E B

Volume 1, Issue 2: December 2005



**Where
should
we go
next,
darling?**

Rush for sustainable tourism

Wait a year to see again

Highlights about the CEEWEB Annual Meeting, and four new members accepted

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Climate is a threat

Impacts of climate change on biodiversity will be huge. Can they be positive?

See page 24

Nature behind bars

Are zoos necessary? Read two different opinions and join the debate.

See pages 8-11

by Kristina Vilimaite

Tourism for Nature

Three biosphere reserves take part in the Tourism for Nature project funded by GEF and UNESCO. When sustainable tourism plans come to life, the local people will benefit and biodiversity will be better preserved.

We were walking through a dead forest. The trees were without leaves, the bark was on the ground, and only bare gray trunks were still standing. I bet some people in our group of 15 didn't feel comfortable entering this area where the sign was saying that the visitor bears responsibility for any accidents.



A hypothesis says that the forest will regenerate naturally after the bark beetle disaster. Foresters and politicians often disagree, but the interest of tourists in the dead forest may serve as yet another argument for the preservation of this unique ecosystem. Photo courtesy of Sumava National Park.

But the place was not dead – new life was breaking through the fallen bark of the trees killed by the bark beetles (mainly *Ips typographus*) in Sumava National Park in the Czech Republic. Capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) is more often seen nesting in the areas attacked by the beetle, says Vladimir Silovsky, Deputy Director for Public Relations of the national park, and the reasons are related to the abundance of food. We checked ourselves – it is true that blueberries grow much better in such areas.

The path we took was set up by the national park in summer 2005 and is one of the attractions in the park that counts almost 2 million visits annually. The main ecological value of the park is 3,000 bogs hosting unique ecosystems. Preservation of these fragile areas given the high amount of visitors requires careful planning. The park is assisted in the development of sustainable tourism by Tourism for Nature project. Other two national parks participating in the project are Babia Gora in Poland and Aggtelek in Hungary. All three National Parks are designated biosphere reserves.

The project aims at implementing CBD Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development as well

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The Right Choices

Winter break is near. Where will you spend your vacations? Tourism is one of the fastest growing economy sectors in our region. The impacts of tourism can be devastating to nature and local communities. On the other hand, tourism can also help to preserve biological and cultural diversity. The decision is for individuals to make, but NGOs can contribute by creating awareness and options for the right choice.

However, if you have booked already your flight to the Maldives, do not feel sorry, this feeling does not bring benefits to anybody. Enjoy the islands and when you return check out what the options in your country or in a nearby one are, reachable by train (so you show concern about climate change impact on biodiversity) to spend your summer vacations in a sustainable way!

This issue of the Diversity also tells our members who didn't take part in the CEEWEB annual meeting what they have missed. According to independent reviews by the participants, it was a useful event with lots of fun. Check out the article and links on page 14.

Mountain Tourism Challenge: Sustainability

Non-governmental organisations can influence the development of tourism in the Carpathians and Balkans. Such projects as sustainable Gomorszolos village in Hungary provide an example that could be uptaken through the Carpathian and Balkan Conventions.



The road ends in Gomorszolos village located near the Slovakian border in the northern part of Hungary. Ninety-six people live in the village, two third of them are above sixty years old. Job opportunities are scarce. There would be no signs of development if the Ecological Institute of Sustainable Development had not started a project here seven years ago.

The project activities are rooted in cultural heritage of the region: revival of folk arts, restoration of traditional buildings and organisation of cultural festivals. The institute runs the Ecological Education Center in the village, which among other things promotes the production of bio-wool artefacts and bio-food, and alternative environmental technologies. The village attracts individuals and groups of visitors, around 2000 people a year.

Similar initiatives could blossom in culturally rich but often economically poor areas in the Carpathians. These mountains are about to become one of the three most attractive European destinations according to the World Tourism Organisation. Tourism is often one of the driving forces in economy, especially in rural areas. However, if private and public investments

in the tourism sector remain uncontrolled, they are bound to have serious negative impacts not only on biodiversity, but on social and cultural diversity as well. On the other hand, if well channeled and managed, investments in this sector could produce vital benefits to communities. This also could contribute to the change of investment patterns towards the alternative economic sectors and in this way prevent negative biodiversity impacts.



Sustainable tourism is not only experience in nature, but local food, architecture and good service as well. Photo from Gomorszolos by Stefanie Roth



If properly managed, tourism can bring sustainable benefits for local people in need, preserve cultures and finance nature conservation. Photo of a Romanian family by narva99 (SXC).

The Carpathian Convention emphasizes the need for sustainable development of this region and proposes joint action on cross-boundary conservation and management of valuable areas. This is expressed in the title (the Framework Convention for the Sustainable Development of the Carpathians) and in the articles of the Convention. Two paragraphs of Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention are directly addressing tourism by referring to the need for measures to "promote sustainable tourism [...], providing benefits to local people" and "pursue policies aiming at promoting trans-boundary co-operation in order to facilitate sustainable tourism development."

The Carpathian Tourism Protocol is possible

The parties to the convention, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine, have indeed realised that tourism is one of the major possibilities for these countries, but also a potential source of problems. Most probably on the First Conference of the Parties, which will take place in early 2006, these states will decide to elaborate a Work Programme on Tourism Development in the Carpathians.

This draft work programme will be discussed in a broad stakeholder consultation process where NGOs will play a major role.

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The "little sister" in action

The Carpathian Convention is a so-called regional Convention which falls under the topical umbrella of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is so to say the "little sister", which follows the same objectives: conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits.

In Europe we have a fairly high number of such conventions aiming at the protection of rivers, seas and other habitats. Regarding mountains so far there was just one, the Alpine Convention. With the Carpathian Convention we will have the second one targeted only at mountains.

The convention text is ratified by all the involved countries, and is a firm commitment by these states for changing the present situation. Nevertheless, only the text as such does not give the countries enough guidance for the implementation and that is why strategies, work programmes and finally and most importantly, protocols under such a convention are needed. Out of these three before mentioned tools only the protocol is legally binding, because it is separately ratified by the countries and obliges them to act immediately.

CEEWEB is continuously monitoring the process for the development of the Carpathian Convention since its start and has a seat in the ad-hoc expert group, which meets regularly to organise the First Conference of the Parties and develop its preparatory documents.

For more information check these web pages:

The Carpathian Convention:
<www.carpathianconvention.org>

The Convention on Biological Diversity:
<www.biodiv.org>

Relevant CEEWEB activities:
<www.ceeweb.org/workingareas/conventions>

Continued from page 5

The programme will outline the necessary steps for the implementation of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians, connected to concrete activities to be undertaken by the parties.

It is planned to draft a legally binding protocol, which gives guidance to the parties in synchronizing their legal frameworks and master plans considering the needs for a coordinated governmental initiative. This protocol, when adopted by the parties, will have a great impact on the countries involved, because they are obliged to implement all the measures indicated.

The Balkan Convention has a chance

A consultation process among governments and experts for the development of the Carpathian Convention took three years. The same is going to start in the Balkans. At present it is hard to say if all the states in the Balkans see the urgency to have a convention outlining the sustainable development of the mountain range. However, some experts already are saying with full confidence that in the very near future we will have such a convention. The development of the Balkan Convention will be facilitated by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe so there is a hope that they will be as successful as with the Carpathian Convention.

What can NGOs do?

In relation to both the Carpathian and the Balkan Convention there is a lot for NGOs to do. A number of actions can influence the processes.

Lobbying at governmental and international levels to achieve that this topic is taken seriously can be done at conferences and workshops. In addition to this, NGOs can support their governments in contributing to the development of the Balkan Convention and the tourism protocol for the Carpathian Convention as valuable experts in their fields of work.

NGOs can support these processes by showing that there is a need and demand for better protection and sustainable development of the region. Successful cases can be highlighted to show the government that sustainable development already works.

Two strategic documents can be useful for NGOs to look at. First, International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development adopted in March 2004 by the Seventh Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity and second, the EU Commission document "European Agenda 21 for Sustainable Tourism" that is to be finalised in March 2006.

CEEWEB will certainly keep you updated and if you have further questions, please get back to Mr. Michael Meyer, vice-president of CEEWEB, via e-mail <m.meyer@ceeweb.org>.



December 11, from 2003 onwards, is celebrated as 'International Mountain Day'. Hopefully the Carpathians and Balkans countries will celebrate the adoption of legal documents regulating tourism development next year. Photo of St. Hieronim church, Nanos, Slovenia, by Aleš Cerin.



Training on Sustainable Tourism

More than 30 participants took part in the CEEWEB Academy on Sustainable Tourism on November 13th in Serbia. Such topics as sustainable tourism management plans, development of tourism products, and labelling of tourism facilities were covered by Michael Meyer of Ecological Tourism in Europe. The evaluation of the academy session will be finalised in mid January and will serve for outlining the future trainings to be held for the members of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of CEEWEB.

Materials of the training are available at www.ceeweb.org/academy/ST

Sustainable tourism is tourism that meets the needs of present visitors without undermining the possibilities of both future visitors and local people to meet their own needs.

Dangerous Charm of Fake Ecology

The dislocation and extension of the Skopje Zoo Garden offered by the mayor of the city will not serve for the benefit of animals or of citizens, states Petar Bosevski, President of Environmental Society "Eko-misija"

False friends are more dangerous than open enemies. The same applies to ecology. Often hidden behind the "environmental" label is something which is actually the antithesis of environmentalism.

The zoo of Skopje, capital of Macedonia, is in a very bad condition. The animals live in small cages, are underfed and often die. Also, the animals are frequently beaten and injured by hooligans. The last and worst incident happened in August 2005, when some maniacs broke into the zoo at night and decapitated three roe deer. After that some safety measures have been taken, and these days the mayor of Skopje, Trifun Kostovski announced that he is considering the possibility to move the zoo to a more natural location, like the mountain Vodno, or the mountain Skopska Crna Gora, both near the city of Skopje. His idea is to build there "a real European zoo", with much more species represented and with much more space provided per animal.

Destruction in the name of love

A typical example of the contradiction between intentions and reality is the phenomenon of the zoo gardens. Wild animals are

being extracted from their natural environment and put behind bars for the rest of their lives serving as live display for the only reason that people could come and watch them. The most tragic thing is that all this is done in the name of "education", and even "love" for the animals. What this kind of "education" teaches us is that the strong ones can do whatever they want to the weak ones (even kill them or deprive them of their freedom for fun). This "love" has led to the extinction or near extinction of numerous wild species. In summary, the phenomenon of the zoo garden is a relict of the past and it is this philosophy that led to an unprecedented exploitation and destruction of nature.

Alternative solutions

This is why true environmentalists are disgusted by zoo gardens and want to observe wild animals in nature and films, and not behind bars. As there is no good prison, thus there is no good zoo garden. If Skopje mayor Kostovski wants to do something good for the Skopje Zoo Garden, it is certainly not to increase the number of captives that he will bring there, but to make life of the existing ones more bearable.

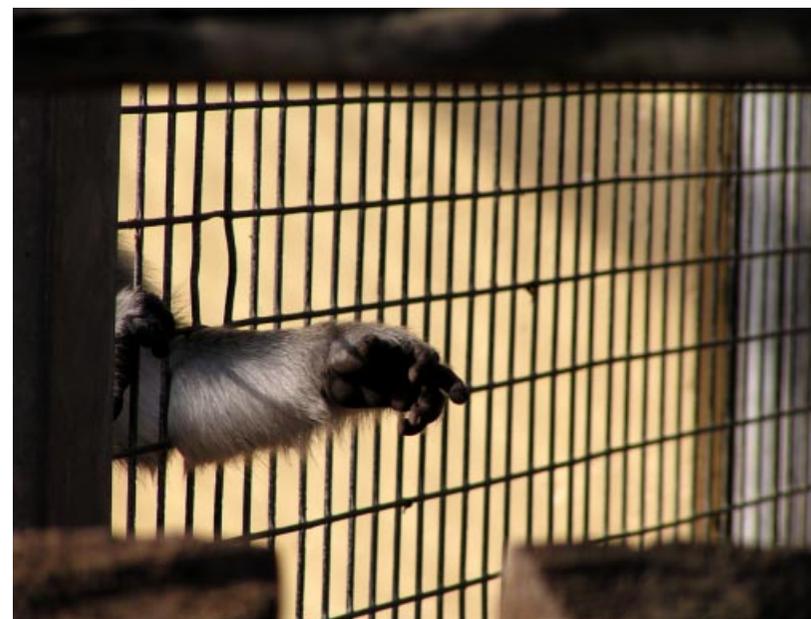
"The phenomenon of the zoo garden is a relict of the past"

The dislocation of the zoo to the mountains of Vodno or Skopska Crna Gora will be yet another "great move" from the arsenal of fake ecology because this will mean expelling wild animals that now live freely in that environment (and has very little space to escape to) in order to provide space for wild animals to be confined and rot behind bars. Perhaps behind the "ingenious" idea there are calculations that by dislocating the Zoo Garden there will be free hectares of land in the heart of Skopje which will be used in a "smarter" way. However, it is quite certain that the environment will suffer a loss with this since it will mean urbanization and destruction of part of the natural eco-system at Vodno or Skopska Crna Gora.

If Mr. Kostovski truly wants to make an authentic ecological move, then he should leave the Zoo Garden where it is now, and rather transform it into a Reproduction Centre for the domestic endangered species. The offsprings of the species born at the Zoo Garden can then be returned to nature in Macedonia rather than being traded with lions or white bears captured who knows where and brought here so that we could give vent to our desires and get "educated" by watching them behind bars. This "school" is not much different from the one that "educated" those who tore away the deer's heads at the Skopje Zoo Garden.

The author of the article recently informed the *Diversity* that mayor of Skopje announced his decision to leave the zoo in the original place while improving the well-being of the animals.

Check overleaf for another point of view and join the debate on www.ceeweb.org/debate/zoo



European Network for Animal Welfare (ENAW) states that hundreds of thousands of animals suffer in Europe's slum zoos. Photo by Sandy Lewanscheck.

"As there is no good prison, thus there is no good zoo garden."

Mild Wilderness

Zoltan Hanga, animal management engineer working for the Budapest Zoo & Botanical Garden, answers the Diveristy's questions about the pro's for zoos in the 21st century.

Many people think that zoos are simply wild animals put in cages and displayed to the public. How far is this picture from reality?

Although there can be very big differences between one zoo and another, all modern zoos serve four basic purposes: conservation, education, research, and recreation. The first three are obviously very important recently, but we shouldn't underestimate the latter. Zoos are a very good place for getting rid of everyday stress, and ideal for a family program.

Probably the least visible aspect of the work at a zoo is research.

Perhaps not very visible, but one of the earliest activities. Harvey in the early 17th century created his theory of the circulation system based on his work with animals in the Windsor zoo. Another example is that experiments on blood groups were carried out on rhesus monkeys. The very name of Rh blood groups comes from the word rhesus. But apart from these human oriented experiments and observations, research is very important as well for the well-being of animals – both living in zoos and in the wild. Conservation specialists in protected areas and game reserves recently face the same problems – management of

small populations – that zoos faced a few decades ago. With our knowledge, we can efficiently help them.

The research activity seems to take us already to the conservation related activities of zoos.

The four fields of activity fairly overlap. Results of the research can be used in conservation, education, and through education, even in recreation. The most interesting findings are the ones that contradict "common sense". One good example is the gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*). These gazelles can acquire all the water they need from their diet. In zoos they are kept accordingly, which sometimes led to the protest of visitors. Then it turned out that if gerenuks are given drinking water – which they happily accept – they stop breeding. The hormone in females that is responsible for advertising their receptive state to males is diluted, and males no longer notice when it's time to think about kids.

The most "popular" argument against zoos is that we don't have the right to deprive animals of their freedom.

Freedom is a human concept. Animals seem to roam "free" in the wild, but in fact most of them

have very strict territorial systems, which means even in the nature they live behind invisible bars. And space is by far not all that matters. There is a minimum space requirement for every species. If this is met, other qualities, like shelter or suitable toys become more important than further increasing their enclosure.

Furthermore, nature is a dangerous place. In modern zoos animals live considerably longer than in the wild. Zoos can protect animals not only against each other and diseases, but as well against their most dangerous enemy – humans. The European bison (*Bison bonasus*), which was rendered extinct by hungry soldiers towards the end of the 1st World War, was reintroduced in the 50's after decades of careful, planned breeding of zoo individuals. The same is done recently with the Przewalski's horse (*Equus przewalskii*).

How important is the protection of species in the activities of zoos?

More and more important. The more knowledge we have, the more species it is possible to breed in zoos. A few decades ago it was unimaginable to breed gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla*) in captivity, and now it is far from uncommon. But species protection is only one aspect. Zoos can also help individual animals. The Budapest Zoo serves as a rescue station – mainly for birds and bats, but sometimes for small mammals as well. In 2004, over 300 sick or wounded birds were brought in, of which 205 could be released after healing and strengthening them. (The rest died or could be saved

but wouldn't have been able to survive if released.) Zoos are very important in enforcing international treaties as well. For example, if it is not possible to return animals confiscated by customs officers to their original habitat, they often find their new home in a zoo.

Zoos can serve as refuges for endangered species, but it doesn't mean that natural habitats don't have to be protected.

Of course, habitat protection must be number one priority in conservation. This is beyond the scope of a zoo, but we can make future chances better by good environmental education. And this is definitely what a zoo can do.

This is an extract of the interview. The full version with a list of other information sources can be found on the CEEWEB web site.

Check pages 8–9 for another point of view and join the debate on www.ceeweb.org/debate/zoo



For captive animals toys are as important as available space. Photo by Clare Talbot.

"Zoos are very important in enforcing international treaties."

"Freedom is a human concept."



Campaign against GMOs Goes Local

Although the majority of the public is against genetically modified organisms (GMO), the national government has not banned them. Local resistance offer a good opportunity for GMO-free Croatia.

Recent research of GfK Croatia agency shows that 66,8 percent of Croats do not want to use genetically modified food – under no circumstances. The research was carried out on a representative sample of 1000 citizens above 15 years old.

Former Environment Protection Minister Bozo Kovacevic initiated a campaign "Croatia – a GMO-free country". The campaign promoted Croatia as a country where food is healthy; this image was publicised through billboards placed at the

state borders. These caught the eyes of Americans who perceived it as a threat to free trade and obstructed the campaign with the complaint to the World Trade Organisation.

While the discussion about food production and bioethics is going on in Croatia since 1998, and the country has adopted the Law on GMOs recently, "it is not true that GM products are strictly regulated", claims Jost, the most popular anti-GMO expert in the country.

Fight for GMO-free zones

The Law on Genetically Modified Organisms forbids introducing GMOs into protected areas and the areas of ecologic networks, areas intended for ecological production of agricultural products and for ecological tourism. In this way the state passes the responsibility to deal with GMOs to local authorities.

Thanks to lobbying of activists and experts, Istra County in 2003 adopted the conclusion that "for the sake of consumer protection, genetically modified seed is forbidden". This is how a new form of resistance against GMOs on the local level was initiated, known as GMO-free zones. Further success was achieved in Pozega-Slavonija County in which after the lecture of Marijan Jost, resolution that insemination, insertion into production and trade of GMOs throughout the entire county was banned. Up to now 10 GMO-free counties have been declared in Croatia, and according to suggestion of Osjecki zeleni (Osijek Greens), Osijek-Baranja County intends to do the same soon.

Ecological agriculture and GMOs can not coexist

"Today we have more than 200 family economies enrolled in the registry of ecological producers in Croatia, working on more than 4000 ha of agricultural land. Besides, about 500 farmers are not included in the registry though they meet the requirements of ecological agriculture. A number of associations that educate and support producers in their work

and development of ecological products have been founded", says dr. Davor Samota, the chairman of Biologic and Organic Production Association which is the most prominent of it's kind in Croatia. Today it has 187 members from all around the country, and is the member of International Organisation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

"Since we haven't succeeded in forbidding GMOs in Croatia by law, we can achieve it through GMO-free zones. So we continue with our propositions to counties to reach such decisions in order to ensure possibility for development of ecological agriculture. Especially we target Slavonia and Baranja Counties that want to base their economy on production of agricultural and milk products. We think this is the only option for domestic farmers to survive in the future open European market", states Ljiljanka Mitos-Svoboda, president of Osjecki zeleni.



Pupils receive a training on biodinamic agriculture at the workshop of the NGO "Living Earth" in Ilok, Croatia. Photo courtesy of Osjecki zeleni.

Time to Decide, Time to Meet Again

Every year CEEWEB members meet their old friends, make new ones and take the decisions that are important for the functioning of the network.

The Annual Meeting of CEEWEB was held from 14th till 15th November 2005 in Banja Vrujci, Serbia and Montenegro this year. Twenty-two member organisations participated at the annual meeting, represented by forty-eight persons.

The work was combined with entertainment and networking. During the Intercultural Evening, local foods and drinks from all twenty-two countries represented were in abundance and the mood was great. The evening was opened with an exotic belly dance performance and the end was early in the morning. An excursion to the spectacular town of Valievo was organised by the hosts of the meeting, the Young Researchers of Serbia.

Election time

Michael Meyer of Ecological Tourism in Europe was re-elected for the position of Vice-President. Jelena Beronja of Young Researchers of Serbia was elected as a new member of the CEEWEB board. Inga Racinska of the Latvian Fund for Nature was re-elected as a regular board member.

Kristina Vilimaite, Benedek Róbert Sallai and Jaromir Sibl were elected as the new members of the Scrutiny Committee.

CEEWEB re-elects the members of the board, the president and vice-president, the additional two general board members and the members of the Scrutiny Committee.



Michael Meyer, vice-president of CEEWEB, opened the meeting with a lively speech. Photo by Ildiko Arany.

tee for a two-year term. The president of CEEWEB, Ivan Gyulai of the Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development, Hungary was elected last year. The Diversity plans to introduce the board members in the next issue.

It's all about making decisions

The CEEWEB Work Programme for 2006 was approved by the annual meeting participants.

During the meeting the working groups of CEEWEB met and developed the programmes of work and budgets for 2006. These were presented to the annual meeting and accepted by voting.

The membership fee was fixed to 20 Euros. The Board of CEEWEB will develop a concept on alternative in kind contribution.

Four non-governmental organisations became new members of the network: AGORA, ORCA, Naturalists Club Poland and Ecolibri. Read about them on pages 16 to 19.

The annual meeting decided that CEEWEB headquarters should be changed. The new address is Kuruclesi út 11/A, 1021 Budapest, Hungary.



During the Intercultural Evening Dominika Lemler, dressed up in Polish folk costume, was at least as popular as Enisa Imamovic, who performed a belly dance. Dominika represented the Polish Country Lovers' Society at the meeting; Enisa participated on behalf of the Danube - River of Cooperation, Serbia and Montenegro. Photo by Ildiko Arany.

Independent reviews

Andrzej Kepel from Salamandra, Poland made photo impressions about the CEEWEB Annual Meeting. The presentation can be viewed at www.ceeweb.org/aboutCEEWEB/annualmeeting

Kruno Kartus from Osijek Greens published an article about the annual meeting in Independent Environmental Media – Alert (in Croatian). To read the article and see some pictures go to www.alertonline.org and type CEEWEB into the search field.

AGORA – Working Group for Sustainable Development



AGORA – Grup de Lucru pentru Dezvoltare Durabila

AGORA – Fenntartható Fejlesztési Munkacsoport

The AGORA – Working Group for Sustainable Development was established in April 2001 at the initiative of young specialists in natural sciences.

Romania. The region has 125,000 inhabitants, of which 92 percent are Hungarians.

We have joined CEEWEB because we thought it is useful to be a member of an international NGO network, so we can be more effective in our work by receiving more information, and exchanging experience. Our main activities are related to nature conservation and sustainable rural development, and CEEWEB is active in these fields.

We would like to be involved in the rural development (Agri-environment) and Sustainable Tourism working groups of CEEWEB.

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The mission of our organization is to promote sustainable development through concrete actions and environmental education. In the past years our activities were focused on these areas:

- Nature conservation
- Rural development, agri-environment
- Urban ecology (waste management)
- Environmental education

We have one full-time employee and several part-time project managers. The number of volunteers depends on activities in or programmes and varies between five and 30. The members of the Working Group are specialists in different natural and social sciences. At the moment we have 16 members.

Our main target area is the Odorhei region located in the eastern part of the Harghita Mountains, in Harghita County,

**CEEWEB
currently
has 71
members.**

ECOLIBRI-BIONET – Agency for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development



Agencija za ocuvanje biodiverziteta i održivi razvoj
ECOLIBRI-BIONET

The mission of the Agency for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development ECOLIBRI-BIONET is the conservation of the biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development and environmental education as socioeconomic issues. ECOLIBRI-BIONET is active in Serbia and Montenegro.

Since 1996 ECOLIBRI-BIONET is well known within the country and in the region for its prestigious environmental education programs, promotion and work on biodiversity conservation, publishing activities and TV productions. Also, we work on the implementation of the Carpathians Convention in Serbia, the Convention of Biodiversity, TV production of ecological education films etc.

The Agency has four full-time employees and 32 volunteers. One hundred and four members, experts in various fields such as botany, zoology, geology, hydrology, ecology, engineering, economics or spatial planning can be

involved for implementation of projects. Most of them are professors at universities or researchers in scientific institutions all over Serbia.

ECOLIBRI-BIONET will join the Sustainable Tourism, the Agri-environment and the NATURA 2000 working groups of CEEWEB.

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**Four new members were
accepted to the network
during the CEEWEB
Annual Meeting.**

Naturalists Club Poland

Klub Przyrodnikow

Naturalists Club Poland is a non-governmental organization, active in nature conservation and environmental education. The club implements its activities in the whole territory of Poland.

**CEEWEB
has
members
in 17
countries.**

The Naturalists Club has approximately 400 active members. Any person involved in nature conservation can become a member of the organization. Ten persons are employed by the club and 20-30 volunteers contribute regularly to the club's activities.

The main areas of activities are:

- management of various nature conservation projects, including habitat conservation (xerothermic grasslands, peat bogs, fens), and species conservation (snakes and European turtle conservation, solution of conflicts between beavers and man);
- communication and public awareness building for some Natura 2000 sites;
- management of own lands for nature conservation (the club owns 300 ha of nature-valuable land, including xerothermic grasslands, wet meadows and European turtle habitats);
- lobbying for nature conservation (influencing nature conservation legislation in Poland,



Natura 2000 designation, active involvement in the administrative procedures important for nature conservation);

- preparation of nature management plans, nature inventories and surveys;
- education in nature conservation, especially on the local level.

In CEEWEB we joined the Natura 2000 working group. We are also interested in agri-environment and sustainable tourism. We expect that as a member of CEEWEB we will have better possibilities to exchange information and experience and more opportunities to act for nature conservation on the European level.

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ORCA – Organisation for Respect and Care of Animals



Organizacija za postovanje i brigu o zivotinjama – ORCA.

ORCA – Organisation for Respect and Care of Animals is a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organisation with a mission to promote respect and care of animals and nature.

ORCA was officially registered on November 28th, 2000. Its founders were a group of students, professors and teaching assistants of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Belgrade, but today it has around 420 members, of which nearly 100 are active volunteers. A curiosity about ORCA is that so far all work has been performed completely on a voluntary basis – there have never been employees!

ORCA acts as a national organisation and has regular contacts with national (Serbian) and federal (Serbia-Montenegro) authorities.

Activities are mostly focused on improving the legal basis of animal protection in Serbia-Montenegro and introducing humane education programmes in the primary and high schools of Serbia. The earlier includes lobbying for a Law on the Protection of Animals and for regulation in Criminal Law concerning animal abuse and violence to animals, and lobbying for the

ratification of international conventions concerning protection of animals and wildlife.

Individual campaigns address the problems of poaching in the hunting grounds of Vojvodina, protection of Quail and Turtle Dove, implementation of CITES, humane and efficient programmes of stray dog and cat population control, replacement of laboratory animals in university education with adequate software, and fur farming and trade.

As a new member of CEEWEB, ORCA joined the CITES Working Group. Previous work related to CITES and membership in the Species Survival Network determined our interest to join CEEWEB and this working group, as the most appropriate partner in the struggle for supporting the CITES.

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**AGORA,
ECOLIBRI-
BIONET,
Naturalists
Club Poland
and ORCA
are the new
members
of CEEWEB.**

Agri- Environment

CEEWEB has four working groups. During the annual meeting the working groups met to discuss their future activities.

During the meeting the members agreed that the scope of the working group activities needs to be reformulated along a broader, multisectoral concept of Sustainable Rural Development. The group also will possibly change its name.

The members agreed on setting up a scientific advisory group on SARD in Hungary. If it is successful, it could be expanded to other countries as well.

The working group decided to maintain the membership in the European Commission Advisory Group on Agriculture and Environment, and in the Agriculture Working Group of the European Environmental Bureau.

The working group will establish co-operation with other governmental and non-governmental organisations. A national coordinator in each of the countries will collect the information and contact data of relevant organisations. Agora from Romania will co-ordinate the establishment of the contacts database.

During the next working group meeting in February 2006 the members will elect the chair, finalise the work programme, consider a new name for the working group and discuss possible pilot projects.

CITES

The working group on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) met on the second day of the CEEWEB Annual Meeting. The agenda was mainly built around the most actual concern of the working group, namely the recently initiated CEETES project. (It was presented in the September 2005 issue of the Diversity on page 16.)

The participants of the meeting shared the lessons learned from the first monitoring period of the CEETES and slightly modified the methodology of direct trade monitoring. The methodology of the e-trade monitoring was also discussed. The necessary modifications on the baseline survey guidelines will be done during the next meeting of the working group in the presence of the developer of the methodology from the Green Balkans, Bulgaria.

The chair of the working group, Kelemen A. Marton of Milvus Group, Romania, was re-elected for another two-year period. The work plan for 2006 was adopted. Different financial scenarios were considered when planning short and medium term activities.

The working group currently has 10 member NGOs from seven countries.

Sustainable Tourism

The sustainable Tourism Working Group has developed a detailed work plan for 2006.

A series of four training sessions will be organised in 2006 to satisfy the need for capacity building for the group members. These sessions will serve for development of training material on sustainable tourism that will be made available in local languages. The participants will use the materials developed to hold similar trainings to other stakeholders in their countries in 2007.

The group will also develop a set of actions to reverse unsustainable tourism developments in Croatia and Bulgaria.

Michael Meyer of Ecological Tourism in Europe was elected to chair the working group. He will be assisted by two co-chairs: Mirna Stanic of Green Action (Croatia) and Mariya Achkova of Environmental Organisation Rhodope (Bulgaria). One of the co-chairs will replace the current chair after 12 months.

The overall objective of the working group is to make tourism in Central and Eastern European countries sustainable through joint activities, such as information exchange, promoting good practices, training and education, policy making, pilot projects and lobbying.

Natura 2000

The working group decided to establish a network of national focal points in each country where CEEWEB is represented. They will be responsible for preparing a country report on Natura 2000 implementation by the end of 2006. The reports will form a basis for a publication.

Four focal points are chosen already: BROZ in Slovakia, Naturalists Club Poland in Poland, Young Researchers of Serbia in Serbia and Montenegro, and CEEWEB Policy Office in Hungary.

Three seminars in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia are planned. The seminars will serve for the exchange of experiences about Natura 2000 preparation between NGOs from the EU, accession countries and potential candidate countries.

Cooperation with IUCN, WWF, and BirdLife will be established or strengthened. The working group will continue to participate in European Habitats Forum and European Environmental Bureau meetings. A joint meeting with CEEWEB Agri-environment Working Group was proposed.

Since the annual meeting

The Boreal biogeographic seminar took place on 5-7 December in Latvia. As usually, CEEWEB carried the mandate of the European Habitats Forum (EHF) to organize the NGO input from the new member states to the seminar. Out of the four NGO participants, three were CEEWEB members. They were selected (or confirmed) on the NGO preparatory workshop for the seminar in Riga on 21 November.

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as UNESCO's Man and Biosphere concept. Awareness raising about sustainable tourism among local people is another area of focus for the project team.

Sustainable tourism services are often provided by local people. Tourism for Nature project supports the development of sustainable tourism products to empower the people in the Babia Gora area.

"If you look down from the top of the Babia Gora Mountain, you will see a patchwork of tiny agricultural plots – and these will look different on the different sides of the mountain" – sais Tomasz Lamorski from Babia Gora Biosphere Reserve.

The Babia Gora Mountain ridge was a state border until 1918 and the communities living on the different sides of the massif have

developed independently, giving rise to different architecture, folklore, clothing and dialects. This makes it an ideal location for the development of tourism products based on regional identity.

A tourism product is a combination of services, commodities and other material or immaterial items that enable the visitors to have a "complex experience". The experience consists of what the tourist does and learns during the stay and the individual impressions acquired when visiting the destination.

Sustainable tourism should integrate all three sustainability aspects – socio-cultural, environmental and economic. Obviously, the Tourism for Nature project is looking for ways to create economic benefits to local communi-



Sustainable tourism can facilitate the revival and preservation of local cultures if local people are involved in the development of sustainable tourism products. Photo courtesy of Babia Gora National Park.

ties and people. For example, in Babia Gora as well as in Sumava the project will train local people to become nature guides. In all the biosphere reserves local people will be taught about the principles and development of sustainable tourism. In Aggtelek and Sumava national parks specific courses, such as organic farming, bee-keeping, catering and handicrafts will be held.

The project will develop the Trail Planning Guide. Sumava Biosphere Reserve will have the possibility to apply the principles outlined in the guide when improving its network of 500 km hiking and 400 km bicycle trails.

"Unsustainable tourism is one of the primary reasons and future threats for biodiversity losses in the three biosphere reserves" – states Michael Meyer, the coordi-

nator of the project. Therefore each biosphere reserve will prepare an integrated management plan for sustainable tourism development that takes biodiversity into account.

It is not a simple task to do. The tourism management plan should be developed together with the stakeholders, otherwise they may not be willing to implement it.

Of the three biosphere reserves, only Aggtelek has a tourism management plan, which also will have to be updated and prepared in line with participatory UNESCO's Programme on Man and Biosphere (MAB) principles.

There are only two small villages within the Aggtelek biosphere reserve with a population of about 1,500 people. The main attractions for the tourists are karst



Sustainable tourism should guarantee satisfaction with the least impact. Visit to protected areas is an opportunity for education about the importance of nature conservation. Photo courtesy of Sumava National Park.

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Early Birds Indicate Change

While climate change is an obvious threat to biodiversity, the Convention on Climate Change creates opportunities for biodiversity enhancement

The birds will probably arrive earlier this spring. The report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that climate change has already caused measurable impacts in the Northern Hemisphere on biodiversity, including earlier plant flowering and earlier bird arrival. And there are more.

On November 28 – December 9 the conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change took place in Montreal. The future of Kyoto protocol that came into force in February 2005 was also on the table of negotiations. The conference succeeded in taking the decision that there should be commitments for future reduction of emissions also after the first period of Kyoto ending in 2012.

Climate change itself as well as mitigation and adaptation mea-

asures can have negative, neutral or positive impact on biodiversity, states the CBD technical report on interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change.

The negative ones are related mainly to temperature and sea level rise as well as extreme weather events already recorded and projected in the future. For example, due to flood hazard increase in Europe, up to 17 percent of wetlands of the Atlantic coast, 84–98 percent of the Baltic coast and 81–100 percent of the Mediterranean coast wetlands will be lost by 2080. This would have serious consequences for biodiversity in Europe, particularly for wintering shorebird and marine fish populations. It is expected that European mountain areas will shrink due to upward migration of tree species.

There may be significant benefits to biodiversity from mitigation mechanisms described in the Kyoto protocol – Joint Implementation and Cleaner Development Mechanism. In Romania for example, the Afforestation of Degraded Agricultural Land Project proposes ecological reconstruction of 10 islets making up a natural park and Ramsar site in the Lower Danube that would occur through planting of native species (*Populus alba*, *Populus nigra*, *Salix* spp., *Quercus* spp.). Carbon finance may help to implement such restoration activities.



Conventions on Biodiversity, Desertification and Climate Change Conventions bear a lot of common features, for example the intention to contribute to sustainable development.

The real name of T4N

The official title of the Tourism for Nature project is Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Sound Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe. The project is funded by GEF, UNESCO and national institutions. More information is available at www.tourism4nature.org

Biosphere reserves

UNESCO's Programme on Man and Biosphere (MAB) since 1970 tests and demonstrates sustainable development approaches in almost 100 countries.

This is done through one of the projects of MAB that establishes a coordinated world network of protected areas, designated as "Biosphere Reserves".

Biosphere reserves seek concrete solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with the sustainable use of natural resources, for the benefit of local people.

Establishing and managing a biosphere reserve obviously poses an enormous challenge, namely to set up an appropriate mechanism, for example a committee, to plan and co-ordinate all the activities that take place there. This human dimension of biosphere reserves makes them special, since management essentially becomes a "pact" between the local community and society as a whole.

Based on information available at www.unesco.org/mab

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caves. Most of the visitors come for a one-day visit to the caves and therefore do not spend much on the services and products, which these two villages could offer.

Preparation of the tourism management plans will typically take two to three years. The planning process starts with the assessment and recording of the state of the biosphere reserve and its tourism activities, continues with the evaluation of current and projected needs and threats, and concludes with designing of strategies and planning of specific activities to address those threats. All stakeholders should participate in the development and implementation of it.

Time will show that the dead trees are not the end of life for the forest. Similarly, tourism will not necessarily devastate these unique natural areas. If developed properly, it can bring lots of benefits for both communities and nature.



An old church in Aggtelek National Park hosts a concert that attracts local people and visitors. Photo by Zsuzsa Tolnay.

GEF Redefines Resources for Environmental Projects

The Council of Global Environmental Facility adopted a new system of allocating resources in the five focal areas. This step will likely have some implications for NGOs applying for GEF funding.



The Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) was adopted by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Council in September 2005. It aims to assure that allocations for each country in biodiversity and climate change focal areas are done in a transparent and agreed upon manner.

According to the RAF the total grants to each country in each covered focal area are linked to two factors. The first is the country's potential to generate global environmental benefits consistent with the relevant global environmental convention, the second is the performance of a country. The latter reflects the country's capacity, national policies and practices, and the enabling environment that facilitates successful implementation of GEF projects, including transparency and good governance.

The information about the allocation of the grants that each country is able to get from the GEF during the GEF4 replenishment period (2006-2010) for technically qualified projects in these focal areas will be available by June 2006. Additionally, to

ensure an equitable distribution of GEF resources, the RAF also provisions for a minimum allocation of USD 1 million in each of the biodiversity and climate change focal areas for each country. The RAF also sets aside 5 percent of the resources available for a focal area for regional and global projects.

For more information please check www.gefweb.org/Operational_Policies/Resource_Allocation_Framework.html

The RAF does not change the existing project cycle or the technical criteria used to evaluate the eligibility of specific projects for GEF grants. Neither will GEF grants in the remaining focal areas – land degradation, international waters, pops, and ozone – be covered by the RAF and will continue to be allocated based on current practice.

Why is the new framework important for NGOs?

A critical point voiced by the NGO community is that this system of allocation might be treated rather as an entitlement by the governments concerned. Thus NGOs

wishing to submit a GEF project proposal – and having to secure the government's endorsement – might easily find themselves in a competing situation with their own government. This is obviously caused by the fact that there is a maximum amount of funding allocated to each country.

Recently our region is getting less support from GEF. Nevertheless, there are still some EU member states mentioned in the relevant documents: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia are still eligible for support with a ceiling of USD 3 – 3.6 million.

The word of advice? Should you be interested in applying for GEF fund, please get in touch with the GEF Focal Point of your government and discuss how the Government is planning to put the RAF to practice. Of course, we are also happy to assist you from the CEEWEB office!

CEEWEB Policy Office is a Regional Focal Point of GEF

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was established as one of the results of the Rio Summit in 1992. Its mission is to provide financial mechanism among others to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The so-called GEF NGO network represents the public opinion in formulating the policy of GEF. It functions through the network of Regional Focal Points, which can only be NGOs with regional outreach capacities. In the Central and East-European region CEEWEB holds this position.

Therefore, among other things CEEWEB Policy Office is entitled to provide know-how for NGOs considering to apply for GEF support for projects and ensure the involvement of the NGO movement in the planning and decision making processes of GEF.

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The Diversity is a quarterly newsletter of the Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB).

Owner/Publisher: András Krolopp, CEEWEB Policy Office

Editing and layout: Kristina Vilimaite, CEEWEB

Cover photo by Jamie Harris

Photo inside front cover by Olga Shelego

Back cover photo by Dave Sackville

An internship is a unique opportunity to gain international work experience, get to know yourself better, and have fun!



Experience CEEWEB – Try an Internship!

CEEWEB launches an internship program to enhance the cooperation among the members of the network. The hosting organisation can be the CEEWEB Policy Office or any CEEWEB member. The list of CEEWEB member organisations is available at www.ceeweb.org/members.

The interns will gain insight into the activities of other non-profit organisations in foreign countries and gather work experience in areas relevant to the activities of the sending organisation. Areas that are in line with the mission of CEEWEB can be chosen for the internship, for example, biodiversity, sustainable tourism, campaigning or CITES.

The skills and experience required for each position will differ.

In general, knowledge of English or another language that is used at the hosting organisation is necessary, as well as good communication skills and independence in daily activities. The intern should be at least 18 years old.

The duration of the internship is flexible depending on the available funding, needs of the hosting organisation and the preference of the intern. In general, the internship should last for 1-6 months.

Please express your interest in participating in the internship programme as sending or hosting organisation to Dalma Foldes in the Policy Office via e-mail dalma@ceeweb.org or telephone (+36 1) 398 0135.