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Informative narrative report on activities in 2010

The mission of CEEweb for Biodiversity is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development. Registered in 1994, it is now a network of 64 members from 18 countries, who actively work in the CEE region. While covering a broad range of European and regional policies in pursuing its mission, the members of CEEweb especially focus on four thematic areas within the Working Groups (WGs): CITES, Natura 2000, Rural Development and Sustainable Tourism. In addition the Policy Working Group was established in 2007 for developing horizontal policy responses to tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss.

This present report only covers the regionally coordinated activities of the network, and not the various actions of the members. More information about the activities can be found at www.ceeweb.org. The work of the network is guided by the Board comprising three members, and the International Advisory Committee comprising three regular members as well as the WG Chairs.

The most important results in 2010

Supporting Pan-European cooperation for biodiversity conservation

Providing NGO input into the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10)

CEEweb organized and coordinated an NGO preparatory meeting for the CBD COP10. The event at the same time was preceding the Pan-European High Level Conference on Biodiversity. Forty NGO representatives from all around pan-Europe got together. Joint NGO messages on the three topics (The Green Economy and the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity; Protected Areas, Ecological Networks, and Poverty Reduction in the Surrounding Communities; Post 2010 biodiversity targets and the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity: Priorities for the Pan-European region) were developed and channelled into the high-level discussions. Besides, common project ideas were worked out and have been followed up, with the implementation of which conserving the biodiversity of Pan-Europe would be enhanced.

Besides the event, CEEweb prepared its position on the Strategic Plan (SP) of the CBD, which was under revision due to not having achieved the 2010 target. We channeled our views into high-level discussions on the CBD SP through different platforms: 14th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) as well as at the third meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI) in May, and at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October.

Supporting European biodiversity policy formulation

Post 2010 Biodiversity Policy formulation

CEEweb has been lobbying for an ambitious holistic new EU Vision and Target at European Commission and Member States through our written positions as well as bilateral consultations. We have prepared a position ahead of and also a response to the EU Biodiversity Communication. Besides, we have replied to the online public consultation 'Protecting our natural capital' targeting how to formulate the EU Strategy in order to achieve the target stated in the Communication. Our positions have been widely distributed through different forums and platforms throughout the year.

Preparing for the Hungarian EU Presidency

CEEweb has gathered interested nature conservation NGOs for influencing the work of the Hungarian EU Presidency related to biodiversity conservation. We inform them monthly about the most important and relevant processes. Besides, we prepared a position on what we expect from the EU Presidency to do in order to conserve effectively the remaining natural heritage of the EU.

Getting in contact with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

CEEweb reached out to the European Parliament during the spring of 2010. Representatives of the Policy Office met seven Hungarian MEPs and discuss CEEweb activities, policy works and possible ways of cooperation.

Climate change and biodiversity

Results of UNFCCC COP15 in Copenhagen were evaluated, and CEE NGO position prepared on it and disseminated among EU level and national decision makers during high level conferences, as well as towards the public through different media channels. European Commission was lobbied to formulate an ambitious policy response in the follow-up to Copenhagen.

National level activities are still ongoing. Based on work done in 2009, we are continuing the assessment of national climate change policies in CEE countries, focusing on how much they take into account biodiversity considerations. We have collected best practice examples of integrating biodiversity considerations into national climate change policies and are preparing recommendations on possible national policy options. Forums are being organized on climate change and biodiversity for national decision-makers in order to raise awareness on the biodiversity and climate change nexus.

In ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, multi stakeholder seminars were organized in three microregions in Hungary where possibilities for climate friendly land use and spatial planning were discussed. A review study is being prepared on climate-friendly land management. A large-scale project is under preparation on local level ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change.

Soil

CEEweb has started its activities in soil protection. We have participated in the conference 'Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity' in 23-24 September, Brussels. Lessons learned at the conference were disseminated within the network. Cooperation with the Agriculture, Forests and Soil Unit of EC DG Environment has been initiated. We are participating at the ongoing EU public consultation on the role of land use, land use change and forestry sectors (LULUCF) in climate change mitigation.

Invasive alien species

CEEweb was represented in the stakeholder meeting on future IAS policies at EU level, where views of the members were channelled into the discussion. We have sent also a collection of recommendations to DG ENVI via email.

Wilderness

CEEweb has become a member of the Wilderness Working Group (WWG) formulated by European NGOs. We have taken part in the WWG's meeting and channelled CEEweb's views on land use policy into the discussions. We are organizing a meeting for CEE NGOs and stakeholders on November 18 in Brussels, right after the European Presidency Conference on Wilderness and Restoration. As a result of the stakeholder meeting, recommended criteria for wilderness management will be collected.

CITES Working Group

Monitoring wildlife trade in CEE

CEEweb has organized a workshop, which was focused on identification of species included in the CITES Appendices as well as on exchanging best practices and lessons learned among CEEweb CITES WG members. During this event, participants developed a lobbying plan for the EU Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora. Besides, the members of the CITES WG have continued to monitor the internet commerce of CITES-listed species in CEE countries based on the CEEweb methodology developed in 2008. The results were provided to European decision makers as well as fed into CITES COP15.

Input to 15th Conference of the Parties to the CITES

Members of the CITES WG influenced the decisions made during the CITES COP15 with special attention to those affecting biodiversity in the CEE region. They disseminated the newly published booklet on the danger of trade in endangered species through internet in the Central and Eastern European region, called e-CEETES. Therefore, they contributed to strengthening the positive image of CEEweb CITES WG as an important regional non-governmental stakeholder in CITES issues.

Natura 2000 Working Group

Representing CEE positions at European level

CEEweb has prepared a form to collect Natura 2000 related infringement cases and is gathering and after analyzing ca. 30-50 cases related to Natura 2000 sites in new MSs. Besides, we have organized a seminar to transfer the latest best practices and experience on implementation of the Habitats Directive Art 6 (4) –

compensation measures for CEE NGO experts (Natura 2000 Working Group Meeting) in Bled, Slovenia 30 June-2nd July with 22 participants from 10 countries. Furthermore, we have updated Natura 2000 Implementation Fact Sheets. We are compiling a collection of national reference documents that aid the implementation of Natura 2000 and that were drafted in the new Member States. Last but not least, we have been representing NGO positions on Natura 2000 towards EU based on the meeting results and documents gathered through different forums. We regularly participate in the EC Natura 2000 Management Working Group, EC Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, and in the European Habitats Forum.

CEE Military Training Areas project

CEEweb has continued data collection of European and nationally protected biodiversity in military training areas in CEE countries for the established online database: www.naturstiftung.de/osteuropa_test/start.php. Data for Hungary has been completed and initial data for Lithuania has been filled in.

Rural Development Working Group

Direct marketing of farm products

CEEweb has promoted direct marketing initiatives in the CEE countries by raising awareness of the benefits of direct marketing and showing practical examples on the simplification of the related regulations. The project partners (from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Estonia) assessed the national legal regulation on direct marketing and prepared proposals on the simplification of the regulations in their countries. CEEweb has prepared and distributed a brochure in English, Romanian, Bulgarian and Estonian languages on the environmental and socio-economic benefits of direct marketing.

GAEC and cross-compliance legislations

CEEweb has aimed at investigating the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and Cross-compliance legislations of CEE countries and comparing them. We have prepared a survey and a study on the implementation of the Cross-compliance regulation in relation to Habitats and Birds Directives requirements in Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. The results were distributed among stakeholders and EU decision makers.

Sharing Fresh EU Accession Experience in Rural Development and Agro-environment Management

CEEweb organised two workshops (in Romania and in Serbia) for NGOs from SEE countries. This aimed at tackling existing professional gaps by bringing together CEE EU member NGO experts to share their related experiences with NGOs from SEE countries. CEEweb has successfully provided sufficient knowledge in a "Train the trainers" format.

Position paper on the Common Agricultural Policy

CEEweb has actively participated in the debate launched by Commissioner Ciolos on the future of the CAP by providing written proposals for the CAP post-2013 and by participating at the conference organised by the Commission on the topic. The Rural Development Working Group of CEEweb organised two meetings in 2010 related to greening of the CAP.

Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG)

The STWG organized its meeting in Kroszsenko, Poland in September. During the meeting participants compiled the list of recommendation to the Indicators developed by Tourism Sustainability Group of the European Commission's DG Enterprise. Besides, they drafted the plans of the group for 2011 and developed project ideas to realize them.

A representative of the STWG continues the work within the Carpathian Convention Sustainable Tourism Working Group, which is finalizing a Tourism Protocol and tourism Strategy for the COP3 of the Convention.

Policy Working Group

The CEEweb Policy Working Group had its 5th meeting in April, where the main policy messages and activities of CEEweb were formulated. The following topics were discussed: resource cap, ecological footprint, EU Biodiversity Strategy, 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, land use and green infrastructure, re-defining terms of 'well-being' and 'development', cooperation with the social sector, review and update of relevant literature. The meeting had 12 participants from seven organizations.

Awareness Raising on Biodiversity

Pan-European Biodiversity Picnic

This initiative was proposed by CEEweb and launched at the Belgrade conference in 2007. Its aim is to raise political and public awareness on biodiversity through regular national picnics on International Biodiversity Day. This year the third wave of Pan-European biodiversity picnics took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Portugal and Romania under the coordination of CEEweb. During the picnics stakeholders from various sectors listened to presentations on the importance of biodiversity, carried on informal negotiations on how to preserve it and enjoyed the locally produced, mostly organic lunch in the nature.

Cooperation with other networks

With environmental and non- environmental networks

CEEweb continues its active contribution of the European Environmental Bureau, namely taking part at the Biodiversity meetings. CEEweb has continued its active participation in the European Habitats Forum (EHF). From the end of 2009 on behalf of EHF we are participating in the Natura 2000 Management Working Group of the European Commission. We have continued negotiations about possible ways of cooperation with the non-environmental networks.

As a result of the above mentioned efforts, CEEweb kicks off a coalition including environmental and non-environmental stakeholders interested in Recourse Use Capping in Europe. The opening conference of this platform takes place in November resulting in a statement of intent, the outline of the future activities and identified necessary next steps.

With social networks in Hungary

The implementation of the pilot project on cooperating with Hungarian social NGO networks continued in Hungary. Three workshops were held and a Final Conference will be organized in order to reach common understanding on the interlinks between seemingly sectoral issues such as biodiversity loss and poverty, rural abandonment and intensive agriculture, etc. Joint publication will be compiled and channelled into high-level national and international discussions preparing for the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011.

Capacity-building, networking and communication

Capacity building

Members of the Policy Office and members of the network had a one-day training called "New Media Skills". Furthermore, to build capacity of the network, CEEweb Academy was organized on Climate Change and Biodiversity, with 29 participants representing 22 organizations. Besides, staff of the Policy Office continued the individual and team performance evaluation and bilateral feedbacks within the Head Office and within the Network.

Networking

We organized local visits by Head Office staff to 12 member organizations to provide trainings on policy, NGO proactivity and ways to increase success in the NGO field. Besides, a three-day Annual Meeting for the members of the network is organized in November.

Internship programme

The internship programme continued in 2010. Two interns from the Harvard University supported the Policy Office in the fields relevant to the pan-European biodiversity policy formulation and also to the Communication during the summer. Since the summer other two interns and two volunteers have helped the work of the Policy Office in these fields.

Communication

CEEweb have kept members updated with EU and national policy developments through the mailing lists and the CEEweb website (www.ceeweb.org). We wrote and published CEEweb's "Biennial Report for 2008–2009" to communicate the achievements of the network. Moreover, we have issued press releases on eight topics related to biodiversity conservation. Additionally, we developed and maintained a CEEweb blog (<http://ceeweb.blogspot.com/>), but at the same time started an account on Twitter, on Facebook and on RSS to keep up with blogs and sites of politicians and other decision-makers.

CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of non-governmental organizations in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.