



Central & East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity

Informative narrative report of activities in 2007

The mission of CEEWEB is the conservation of the biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development. Registered in 1994, it is now a network of 72 members from 17 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 areas in the Working Groups (WGs): CITES, Natura 2000, Rural Development and Sustainable Tourism.

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 members as well as the WG Chairs.

The most important results in 2007

First of all the activities of CEEWEB aimed at integrating and enhancing environmental considerations in policy and decision making first of all at EU, but also at regional and national, as well as at local levels within pilot activities. The capacity-building activities aim to build a stronger NGO community in the CEE region.

Influencing Pan-European biodiversity policies

CEEWEB co-organised the NGO-ministerial roundtable on behalf of ECO Forum at the Belgrade "Environment for Europe" conference in October and the pre-conference on biodiversity and production and consumption. We coordinated/prepared background materials, publication, leaflets, posters and other awareness raising materials. The CEEWEB initiated "Pan-European Biodiversity Picnic" was launched at the NGO-ministerial roundtable. CEEWEB was also actively participating in the reform of the Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Diversity Strategy in 2007.

Natura 2000

CEEWEB members continued the cooperation within the Natura 2000 WG in various activity fields. They represent regional concerns related to Natura 2000 in the work of Brussels based NGO networks and coalitions and at international conferences and workshops.

Natura 2000 designation

CEEWEB continued to coordinate the NGO input in Natura 2000 designation in the new member states and thus organised a preparatory meeting for Romanian NGOs in April. The updated booklet on the designation process was translated to Romanian and distributed among NGOs. In Poland CEEWEB contributed to the designation progress through providing NGO expertise on site designation (shadow reporting).

Natura 2000 monitoring

CEEWEB followed up Natura 2000 monitoring reports on national level in CEE countries. We produced a shortened Hungarian version of the European Habitats Forum report on this, which was distributed among Hungarian NGOs and experts working in the field of biodiversity monitoring.

Natura 2000 and EU enlargement

A Natura 2000 seminar for accession country NGOs was organised in order to explore the situation in (potential) candidate countries and share EU 10 experiences regarding Natura 2000. A publication entitled – "Lessons learned – Natura 2000 from NGO point of view" summarising the experiences of EU 10 NGOs in this field was prepared for later distribution.

Natura 2000 communication

Case studies highlighting the interconnections between Natura 2000, ecosystem services and rural development have been collected for later distribution among local administrations in CEE countries.

CEE Military Training Areas programme

This new programme started in late 2006, we organised the first meeting with interested NGOs in April. We started to gather biodiversity related information from military training areas, as well as to prepare a baseline study on the situation in the four Visegrad countries. The first contacts to Ministries of

Environment and the Ministry of Defence were made at national level. A strategic, long-term cooperation with the German Foundation Naturstiftung David in this field has been initiated focusing on data collection, the determination of future project areas and the start of pilot projects in the next years.

CITES Working Group

The CITES WG finalized the regional report on CITES implementation in May. The report is divided in two main sections; one dealing with internet trade of wildlife covering seven countries in the CEE region, the other one dealing with legal and illegal retail commerce with wildlife in six CEE countries. The report was distributed at the 14th CITES COP.

Participating at the 14th CITES COP

The CITES WG participated at the 14th CITES COP in The Hague, in June. For the first time own lobby material was developed for targeted actions, which helped to successfully achieve our targets in all the three priority issues. The event also greatly contributed to the capacity building of the CITES WG members.

Rural development model project in the Carpathian Eco-Region

The model project continued in 2007 in cooperation with one member organisation, Milvus Group, based on the development plan prepared by the community and experts in 2006. The main results in 2007 were the starting of the environmental school at the model site for children and the development of the traditional farm and extensive orchard. Branding activities for local products were also initiated and four issues of the local newspaper were published in 2007, written almost exclusively by the locals.

Tourism in the Carpathian Convention

Within the regional Carpathian Project CEEWEB organised consultations for Carpathian NGOs and governmental representatives in order to facilitate the development of a strategy and protocol to the Carpathian Convention and prepared the first draft of the protocol.

Enhancing cooperation among NGOs in CEE in the field of sustainable tourism

By mid-November two WG meetings combined with thematic workshops on "stakeholder involvement/participatory tourism development" and on "NGO participation in decision making on tourism development: advocacy and campaigning" were organised. From inside and outside the CEEWEB network 18 and 23 NGO representatives participated, respectively.

Best practices of implementing the CBD Tourism Guidelines

A project called *Joining the Dots* was launched. The overall goal of the project is to facilitate the implementation of CBD guidelines on tourism and biodiversity by training NGOs, initiating actual tourism developments at three sites in CEE, and developing a manual which shall enable other NGOs to use the Guidelines. In addition to the two workshops tourism potential assessments were drafted for the three sites involved in the project (Djerdap National Park, Serbia, Strandja Nature Park, Bulgaria and Trascau Mountains, Romania).

Agenda for the Sustainability of European Tourism

Information about the activities of DG Enterprise regarding the Agenda for the Sustainability of European Tourism was shared with the CEEWEB network; position of CEEWEB STWG was prepared and articulated during the consultative process organised by DG Enterprise. CEEWEB representative participated in the DG Enterprise Tourism Sustainability Group meeting.

Business and Biodiversity

CEEWEB prepared a CEE NGO position on the „Business and Biodiversity“ initiative of the Portuguese EU Presidency and collected good case studies on pro-biodiversity business from Europe. Both the CEEWEB position and some of the collected examples were presented at the High Level Conference in November in Lisbon, Portugal.

Agro-environment scheme in Hungary

Within a pilot project in Hungary an independent advisory committee comprising seven experts was formed, which through its four meetings developed expert opinion on the agri-environmental measures starting in 2009 and channelled it into the official planning process.

Capacity-building on Strategic Environmental Assessments

In cooperation with the National Society of Conservationists training was organised in October, where NGOs from the SF Team and CEEWEB could share their experiences on participating in SEAs and regional planning in the CEE region.

Internship programme

The internship programme started in autumn, with two interns from the CEEWEB Network joining the Policy Office for the rest of the year working in the fields of tourism and Nature 2000. A Dutch intern from outside CEEWEB was supporting the work of the Sustainable Tourism WG in the summer.