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## **CEEweb Interim Narrative Report 2016**

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 50 members from 20 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 with 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. The work of the network is guided by the CEEweb Board comprising of nine members.

This present report only covers the activities of the network, and not the various actions of the members. More information about the activities can be found at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org).

### **Managing and advocating for Natura 2000**

CEEweb is part of a consortium organizing the biogeographical seminars, lead by ECNC. In April, we organized with the Danube-Ipoly National Park and WWF Hungary a workshop on Invasive Alien Species. In October, two seminars have been scheduled, Boreal in Vilnius, Latvia and Atlantic in Dublin, Ireland. On both seminars CEEweb facilitates two of the Working Group discussions. In April, we also had a capacity building workshop together with Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation on the Fitness Check and Natura 2000.

CEEweb is actively advocating for safeguarding Europe's Natural Capital by keeping EU's Nature Directives. We are running the campaign towards EU and National level Politicians as well as other stakeholders showing socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000 and possible ways of cooperation between nature and business, both with special publications prepared for this (Factsheet on socio-economic benefits and business cases of Natura 2000). We are also building non-formal group of supporters, the Friends of Natura 2000 with currently over 30 people from various sectors. We also run social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter. Natura 2000 and European nature is one of the categories in our Green-Go Short Film Contest.

### **Green Infrastructure**

Together with Eftec, ECNC, Enefjörn Natur AB and University of Antwerp, CEEweb is participating in the project "Technical support to the promotion of ecosystem restoration in the context of EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020" for the European Commission. The preliminary results of the project were presented at the EHF Working Group GIIR meeting in June, the 10th European Conference on Ecological Restoration in August and at a restoration workshop held in September in Brussels. We also targeted putting Green Infrastructure to spatial planning and organized a workshop on GI for CEE capital cities, while we also strengthened cooperation on ICLEI, IUCN and other city-based organization.



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As a member of the Horizon 2020 Advisory Board, we advocated for more inclusion of GI to the Horizon 2020 priorities.

CEEweb continued providing expert input to the EHF Green Infrastructure Working Group of the European Commission. We are actively participating and providing expert input in the discussions and development of ideas with regards to the establishment of the trans-European Green Infrastructure network (TEN-G), together with other EEB, BirdLife International and WWF EPO. We are continuing to manage our European Green Infrastructure Practitioners' Network and Learning Alliance on LinkedIn, with a substantial increase in the the number of members during 2016. CEEweb is also working on expanding its Green Infrastructure hub on [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org), integrating Green Infrastructure to water, health, spatial planning and agriculture and advocate for the inclusion at different sectorial meeting, bilateral discussions and events (e.g. presentation at the IEEP Conference on Health and Nature, participation in Green Week, Antwerp conference on ES, Green Infrastructure Technical workshop, Nature Directors Meeting, etc.)

### **Biodiversity Strategy with focus on Target 2**

CEEweb lead a project on wetlands restoration, where we restored three wetlands sites in Estonia, Slovakia and Romania with our members, Estonian Fund for Nature, BROZ and Milvus Group. We also assessed wetland ecosystem services and surveyed 16 wetland restoration projects from Central and Eastern Europe and their associated ecosystem services. During our MAES projects we assessed the ecosystem services of 91.000 ha Natura 2000 in Romania with Milvus Group.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

CEEweb and the Sustainable Tourism Working Group in the lead with ETE worked on the project "Support for the Implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians" funded by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. We created a specific [database online](#), which shows from all Carpathian Convention countries cases on projects, handbooks and financial mechanisms. We also participated in April in Brasov the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism meeting, where we advocated for the Carpathian Coordination Platform and provided coordinated NGO input.

### **Rural Development and Agriculture**

CEEweb participated in several meetings with different stakeholders promoting the importance of conducting a Fitness Check on the actual CAP. CEEweb, collaborating with some major NGOs and NGOs network at European level (European Environmental Bureau, BirdLife Europe, WWF Europe, IFOAM EU, among others) highlighted the reasons for the CAP greening failure, which are clearly explained in a letter that was addressed to the President of the Commission Mr. Juncker in March 2016 (available [here](#)). Another letter was addressed to Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan in early September 2016: the [letter](#) is again emphasising the need for a Fitness Check of the Common Agricultural Policy. While conducting advocacy work at European level, it was clear that there is a gap in the quality of



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information available about the impact of the CAP money at rural level: for this reason, CEEweb decided to start to develop a new indicator (called the Sustainable Rural Development Index) that will support our advocacy work. Two workshops dedicated to the development of the methodology were held on 11th March, Belgrade and on 18th October, Budapest. We also organized CEEweb Academy dedicated to CAP and Green Infrastructure in October with 80 participants. CEEweb is also strongly involved in the Civil Dialogue Group: we participated in the Climate and Environment CDG, in the Rural Development CDG (presenting the SRDI) and we will contribute to the one on CAP greening and direct payments. The CDG is a meeting format adopted by the Commission (the organiser) where stakeholders are invited to exchange information and views about the different issues on the political agenda.

CEEweb is also involved in the work of the European Network of Rural Development and of the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture. CEEweb is an active member of the Sustainable Food and Farming Platform (SFFP) composed of Brussels based NGOs advocating for a sustainable food and farming policy.

In March, we organized a conference for helping small scale farmers to find out more about the current CAP and to make their ventures profitable and sustainable. On this we also produced a booklet. CEEweb also participated in the Cork 2.0 conference in Cork and contributed to the development of the new [Cork Declaration](#).

A factsheet on the CAP spending is under preparation and several communication activities will be conducted with the help of CEEweb members in some specific member states.

### **Multiannual Financial Framework**

CEEweb started to work on the post 2021 Multiannual Financial Framework (the EU Budget) with a view to introduce sustainability proofing. We started working on a stakeholder screening exercise and the setting up of an expert group, which will develop the sustainability proofing guidelines. CEEweb also organised a meeting with DG BUDG and participated in a workshop in the European Parliament about the MFF mid-term review. On 27 September CEEweb participated in the EU Budget Focused on Results Conference, and shared its views on the next MFF with relevant representatives of the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament. We also prepared an infographic on the current MFF spending.

### **CITES**

CEEweb and its members, Milvus Group and Salamandra took place on the CITES COP17 in South Africa and represented CEE NGOs.

### **Resource Cap Coalition and campaigning for more sustainable resource use**

Together with its European partners, CEEweb continues the European campaign aiming at the sustainable production and consumption of raw materials in the EU. This includes communication activities related to resource use through media work and the Green-Go Contest, advocacy work mainly focusing on the EU conflict mineral regulation, and working with companies for advancing circular economy with a view of reducing resource use.



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CEEweb also co-organised a scientific workshop on sustainable consumption and social equity in August, Budapest on behalf of the Resource Cap Coalition.

### **Awareness raising and communication**

Since the beginning of 2016, CEEweb for Biodiversity initiated and took part in several awareness-raising campaigns. Some campaigns are concluded and some are still in progress:

#### **1. Stop Mad Mining**

The objective of the campaign was to raise awareness on mining and overconsumption issues, as well as on the related EU policies (draft conflict mineral regulation). The key message of the campaign: we stand for ethical mining and resource consumption.

The following actions were taken: joint advert on NGOs position on conflict mineral regulation published in the Financial Times; “sign the petition” button published on the CEEweb for Biodiversity web site (home page); participation at the Africa Expo in Hungary – visitors signed the petition in person; Senior Policy Officer Klara Hajdu - radio interview on the subject; news related to the campaign published on the CEEweb’s website; social media: posts on Stop Mad Mining and CEEweb for Biodiversity Facebook pages.

The estimated overall audience reach is 748,877.

#### **2. Earth Overshoot Day**

CEEweb for Biodiversity partnered with Global Footprint Network in #pledgefortheplanet campaign. The objective was to raise awareness about the approaching Earth Overshoot Day – the day when the Earth will use up all of its natural resources for the year (this year it landed on 8 August), trough calls for action – pledges for reducing energy consumption.

CEEweb for Biodiversity website, Facebook page and Twitter account were the external online channels used. We informed European resource campaign partners and media about our involvement in the campaign via e-mail. We produced material: videos, visuals, press-releases, website and social media content.

The estimated overall audience reach is 297,000.

#### **3. Green-Go Short Film Contest**

The call for the 6<sup>th</sup> international film contest was launched in May 2016 and is still in progress – the deadline for submitting films is 31 October. The campaign will continue after the deadline and will include promotion of the received films during the online voting, the promotion of winning films and their authors and screening events.

This year’s film categories are small-scale agriculture, circular economy and European nature (interlinked with the European campaign on resources and Natura 2000 activities).

CEEweb’s website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts as well as Green-Go’s Facebook and Twitter are the main communications channells. Furthermore, the emphasis is on information dissemination via e-mail (including the CEEweb’s newsletter distribution) – contacting partner and member organisations and asking them to spread information about



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the contest via mailouts and newsletter, as well as via their online channels; contacting other NGOs, film schools, festivals with green component, national parks, nature conservation societies, contest websites, short film authors, businesses relevant to film categories, Facebook pages and groups, etc.

The estimated audience reach so far is 1.5 million (average), 2.4 million (optimistic).

#### 4. Green Roof Beauty Contest

This international photography contest was launched in May and the deadline for submitting photos is October 30. The communication activities will continue after the deadline – sending calendars with selected photos to relevant decision makers, showcasing received and winning photographs, contacting traditional media with the outcomes, using photos as visuals for further advocacy efforts etc.

The objective of the campaign is to show the importance of green infrastructure and citizens' awareness of it, through showcasing the beauty of green roofs and urban greeneries. Partnerships with Livingroofs .org and ZEOSZ are established. Online communications channels: CEEweb's website, Facebook, Twitter. Dissemination of information includes photography contests, non-governmental organizations, green roof companies and associations, etc.

The overall audience reach so far is 120,000 (average) and 197,000 (optimistic)[i].

#### 5. Natura 2000 Twitter campaign

The campaign is currently focused on two objectives: pushing the European Commission to release the results of the fitness check and keeping the directives.

Campaign materials include factsheet on Natura 2000 (the whole factsheet and .jpeg extracts), visuals, stories of Friends of Natura 2000, website content. Business cases brochure and infographics are currently being developed. Tweets are published on daily basis.

We also participated in the People4Soil campaign. On Earth Day, we organized interactive games for school groups.

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[i] This is not a conclusive number, audience reach track is yet to be updated.

### **Networking**

We enhanced our cooperation with NGO networks, such as BirdLife Europe, European Environmental Bureau, Eurosite, FOEE, IUCN, WWF DCP. We continued exploring new areas and fields - we cooperated more with cities (Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague, Warsaw, Bratislava) and related organizations (ICLEI), green infrastructure specialists (Deep Forest, Green4Cities, Livingroofs, ZEOSZ), businesses (Circular Economy Foundation) and consultation firms (Adelphi, Deloitte, eftec).



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### **Capacity building**

We built capacities of staff and volunteers during a two-day meeting in May where we had a communication trainer. In October, we built capacities of members in terms of CAP and Green Infrastructure and on communication skills. We also built cities' capacities on Green Infrastructure integration and small-scale farmers capacities on financial viability and sustainability in March and NGOs' capacities in April in Bulgaria on Natura 2000. We also provided expertise to BalkanNatureNet, a new biodiversity expert network formed in the Balkans.

### **Fundraising**

We have been constantly following the upcoming funding opportunities, e.g. the 2016 calls of Interreg (Central Europe, Danube, Adrion, BalkanMed), LIFE, Horizon 2020, DEAR, relevant EU Tenders, EEA Norway Grants as well as private foundations' calls. We have updated the private funders' database of CEEweb and scanned 220 foundations for relevance and started to approach them with project fiches and Letters of Intent. In special, we have

- submitted an application to the H2020 call on nature based solutions SC-5-10-2016 with the Lead of ICLEI Europe (not selected)
- prepared and submitted an application to the Spring call of CE Interreg on Green Infrastructure in cities with the lead of our member organisation SEED Foundation and the participation of 6 major CE capitals (the city administrations of Budapest, Ljubljana, Ferrara, Turin and Prague and the Academy of Sciences Warsaw) (under evaluation)
- We are partners in three Interreg applications (related to Green Infrastructure and transport and sustainable tourism) (two approved)
- submitted two applications for DEAR related to Ecosystem services and Climate change mitigation, one as Lead Applicant and one as Co-Applicant (latter in 2nd round)
- submitted four applications to the International Visegrad Fund related to resource use and GI (two not selected, two under evaluation)
- won and completed a Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects project which helped us to identify 30+ new partners with relevant project ideas/projects on wetland and grassland restoration project
- submitted three applications for EC tenders on Target 2, Natural Capital and Natura 2000 (under evaluation)
- submitted an application to the Central European Initiative entitled to fund the 2017 CEEweb Academy (under evaluation)
- submitted application to Advocate Europe (not selected)
- Submitted letters of intent to BBVA Bank, Network for Social Change, KR Foundation, Stiftung Merkator

We have included members to these applications, namely Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Estonian Fund for Nature, ETE, Green Action, Latvian Fund for Nature, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Milvus Group, SEED, Sunce.



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### **Human resources**

CEEweb staff increased with a Biodiversity Officer and Agriculture Officer based in Brussels, with one Natura 2000 coordinator, one Communication officer, one visual assistant, one project assistant and one office manager. Veronika Kiss also returned from her maternity leave and worked on our joint MAES project with Milvus Group. Altogether CEEweb staff increased to 13. We have had many interns and volunteers from various countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Italy, Hungary, United States) assisting in our projects.