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CEEweb Informative Narrative Report on 2015 Activities

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 62 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 Board comprising of nine members.

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 MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS IN 2015

Global cooperation for sustainable development

Management of Natura 2000

The Biogeographical Process project focused on preparing the Kick-off Seminar for the Continental, Pannonian, Steppic and Black Sea Biogeographical Regions in Luxembourg. CEEweb participated in preparing the background document, collecting expert input and analysing it. In June/July, the Kick-off seminar took place in Luxembourg, where CEEweb facilitated two of the Working Group discussions. Following from the Kick-off event, CEEweb is involved in preparing two follow-up networking events, one to be held in Budapest in the frames of CEEweb Academy on wetlands and the other to take place in Arad in early November on forests and grasslands. CEEweb acted as a trainer in Europarc's seminar on Natura 2000 management in Germany.

Green Infrastructure

The project, ***Building Blue-Green Infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe*** funded by Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection began in January 2015 with three pilot projects in Slovakia (BROZ), Estonia (ELF) and Romania (Milvus). Removal of invasive species, planting native species, stakeholder meetings and volunteer activities have so far been taking place on the Slovak site, bird watching excursions and stakeholder activities, fencing and cattle grazing have been introduced on the coastal wetland site in Estonia and adjusting the ponds for amphibians and the banks for birds has been carried out in Romania. A stakeholder conference in October in Budapest (in the frames of CEEweb Academy) has also been organised. The project's scientific and policy reports are underway. We organize together with our new member, Excelsior a conference in Arad on Green Infrastructure implementation in the EU and in Romania in October.

In May, we presented on the EC's conference on Green Infrastructure experience in Brussels and we further continue providing expert input to the Green Infrastructure Working Group of the European Commission. We also take part in the project development together with WWF and UNEP on developing guidance and working with road authorities for including Green Infrastructure to road and railway developments. Together with ECNC, CEEweb disseminated a Green Infrastructure Training Manual for Trainers and presented its Green Infrastructure work in the European Commission's Green Infrastructure Conference in Brussels, in Construma architecture fair in Budapest in Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Moldova. We were also invited to join an EIP Water Action Group on Nature-based technologies for innovation in water management. We further managed our LinkedIn group on Green Infrastructure practitioners.

Biodiversity Strategy with Specific Focus on Target 2

CEEweb together with Milvus Group and Hungarian Academy of Sciences - Centre for Ecological Research launched a project in Romania "Mapping and Assessment Ecosystem Services in Natura 2000 sites of the Niraj -Târnava Mică region, Niraj-MAES" planning to assess 91.000 hectares of the region. CEEweb role includes policy analysis and policy recommendations as well as communication tasks. At the beginning of 2015, CEEweb disseminated further its new website resource hub on Ecosystem Services.

Throughout the first half of 2015 CEEweb actively informed its members regarding policy processes such as the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives, the Invasive Alien Species regulation, etc. Currently CEEweb is collecting a shadow list of Invasive Alien Species, which was not included in the regulation's list.

Resource Cap Coalition

CEEweb continued to coordinate with its partners the work of the Resource Cap Coalition (RCC), which adopted a common proposal of a European Energy Budget Scheme, based on the UK TEQs proposal and the Hungarian energy entitlement scheme. The proposal is fed into public consultations on the SDGs and circular economy and

presented at the World Resources Forum.

Campaigning on sustainable resource use

CEEweb started a three-year project on promoting the sustainable consumption and production of raw materials in 2015. The related activities included media communication and campaigning activities in Hungary, relevant lobbying actions, activities related to the 5th Green-Go International Short Film Contest, the organisation of an international conference on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change in October in Hungary and several coordination activities within the project.

Sustainable Development Goals

CEEweb provided electronic input into the final outcome document of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the monitoring and reporting framework through a high-level consultation meeting in Berlin. It also organised an international conference on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change in October in Hungary and prepared a study on the trade-offs and synergies among the SDGs.

CITES

At the beginning of June CEEweb for Biodiversity, together with the Polish Society for Nature Conservation “Salamandra”, Polish CITES SA and the International Fund for Animal Welfare, held an international workshop whose main aim was to present and practice a methodology for monitoring of e-commerce in specimens of species on the Convention on International Trade with Endangered Species(CITES) annex list. The workshop took place in Warsaw (Poland).

Sustainable Tourism

ETE with cooperation of CEEweb further continue the work on the Sustainable Tourism Strategy of the Carpathian Convention with identifying already existing manual and guidances, financial mechanisms and already existing projects on sustainable tourism in the Carpathians.

Rural development and biodiversity

The project, conducted together with the Young Researchers of Serbia, Eko-Centar, Juniperia, Daphne – Institute of Applied Ecology and Naturalists Club Poland began by surveying farmers’ knowledge and needs through a questionnaire. In February, a Train-the-trainers event was organised in Szeged, followed by local trainings for farmers in Serbia throughout April and June. In September, the Serbian farmers visited interesting initiatives, farms and cooperatives in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to gain the necessary knowledge and skills in order to replicate the min Serbia. A guidance for small-scale Serbian farmers is currently being finalised.

Networking

CEEweb continued to provide the Vice-Chair and co-chair the Green Infrastructure Working Group and chair the Natura 2000 management Working Group within the European Habitats Forum. CEEweb continued to participate as a member of the European Environmental Bureau and strengthen further cooperation especially with

ECNC, Eurosite, EUROPARC. Due to the DEAR project on promoting the sustainable consumption and production of raw materials, CEEweb made partnership with social NGOs (e.g. CIR, HAND) and continued to seek more cooperation with climate NGOs (CAN Europe). CEEweb also improved contact with scientific institutes, local and regional authorities and businesses as well as deepening the relationships with members and donors on further applications.

Fundraising

CEEweb has submitted applications to the EU COST Fund (topic: development of a Sustainable Rural Development Indicator and partner in ecosystem services), Danube Start Technical Facility (topic: Green Infrastructure), two European Commission tenders (Natura 2000, ecological restoration), 3 Horizon 2020 -as project partner (short food supply chain, ecological restoration and ecosystem services), the LIFE Operating Grant for NGOs (Core Funding), the LIFE Operating Grant for Balkan NGO networks, and IPA Turkey and several other applications (e.g. International Visegrad Fund). We have submitted business ideas to the Climate Launchpad idea competition. We also increased our efforts to CEEweb's 1% campaign.

One more LIFE preparatory action application, and two Danube Transnational Programme applications (as partner) are planned for 2015. Preparations for Central Europe and Danube Transnational Programme applications (as lead), and EuropeAid submission in 2016 have started. CEEweb consultancy options have been explored and put on the website with some initial response from local governments.

Capacity building

One day strategic meeting of the Policy Office was held in September on future planning. Individual and team performance evaluation and group feedbacks within the Policy Office were carried out and documents on quality checks as well as on organizational structures were prepared and merged. CEEweb Academy as well as our thematic events on rural development, Natura 2000, CITES and sustainable tourism built the capacity of members and partner organisations on relevant policies and practices.

The Policy Working Group will be revitalized and along with a strategic policy planning is envisaged in November.

Internship programme

The internship programme continued in 2015. Two interns from the University of Georgia, USA supported the work of the Policy Office in addition to an Indian intern within the frame of the Erasmus project in addition to several Hungarian interns and volunteers.

Organisational and financial issues

CEEweb Policy Office held regular weekly meetings for the whole Policy Office for better personal management and prioritisation of issues, as well as for identifying internal synergies to increase efficiency. Evaluation of efficiency was carried out and changes in staff and work distribution were adjusted according to feedback. As the communication

officer and the office manager left CEEweb, these tasks were merged with already existing positions. Fundraising activities of CEEweb continued, attempting to identify new donors, innovative ideas and creating new products.

Awareness raising

The 5th Green-Go Short Film Contest was organised within the project "Time for Change: Promoting sustainable consumption and production of raw materials in the context of EYD 2015 and beyond!". The competition received 150 short film submissions from 40 countries in the category themes Our Footprint on Earth, Exploitation and Nature. In 2015, previous Green-Go short films were screened on the large-scale Nature Film Festival Gödöllő. 26 official partners helped in the dissemination of the call. The Green-Go Facebook Group followers grew from 10 000 to 20 000 in 2015. With 150 registered appearances in online media, and with several Radio and TV appearances (6 TV interviews, 7 radio interviews), with screenings at international conferences (DEAR Fair, Brussels; Review and Monitoring of the Post-2015 Agenda, Berlin; Breaking Barriers: Stakeholder and Public Engagement for Natura 2000 sites, Bristol), Green-Go reached about 3 million people with its message.

We further participated in street events (EU day, Europa Pont), Film Festivals (BUSHO - Budapest Short Film Festival, Gödöllő International Film Festival, screening in Kino Movie Theatre) and provided environmental education lessons to schools.

Communication

CEEweb kept members updated with EU and national policy developments through the mailing lists and the CEEweb website (www.ceeweb.org). We issued electronic newsletters targeting decision makers and the members on thematic topics. We also used at a more elevated level our social networking sites for communication such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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.