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NARRATIVE REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN 2014

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 65 members from 19 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 nine members, and the Supervisory comprising three regular 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 2014

Global cooperation for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development

Advocating for Pan-European cooperation in resource and land use

CEEweb contributed to the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference held in April in Batumi, Georgia; where we presented our views and prepared a background document on the potential of the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform in addressing the underlying cause of biodiversity loss as well as compiled a position paper on *Ensuring that Biodiversity Financing Mechanisms serve the benefit of all life on Earth*.

Sustainable Development Goals

CEEweb in close collaboration with ANPED compiled NGO recommendations on Sustainable Development Goals and channeled these recommendations to the EU and UN OWG discussions and communicated them towards the public through social media. CEEweb in collaboration with ANPED compiled a briefing on how NGO networks (including EEB, WWF, BL, FoEE, ANPED) in the EU implementing Rio+20 commitments.

Convention on Biodiversity Diversity

CEEweb with Friends of the Earth Europe has been working to make an assessment on how far we are advanced in reaching the Aichi targets. The data were completed with national expertise from our member organisations and ministries in 18 European countries within and outside the EU and the results will be issued during the SBSTTA 17. Besides, we also participated in the EU Expert Working Group on Biodiversity and Development (Target 6) in April in Brussels.

In cooperation with FoE Hungary, a capacity building workshop on biodiversity and its financing, including National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was organised. Participants discussed the recent state of biodiversity in Hungary, threats, possibilities and future scenarios of biodiversity conservation.

Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

CEEweb for Biodiversity participated and provided input to the working documents of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services during the Pan-European Stakeholder Consultation in Leipzig and during the Eastern European Consultation in Budapest.

Supporting European biodiversity policy formulation

EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 with special focus on Mapping and Assessing Ecosystem Services (MAES), No Net Loss, offsetting and restoration targets

CEEweb along with other NGOs has been involved in the work of the EC's working group of the No Net Loss initiative launched by the European Commission and coordinates the NNL working group within EHF. The initiative aims to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in non-protected areas target to project development, however it raises serious concerns if not designed properly, especially in case economic considerations will dominate the initiative. CEEweb through the EHF and in cooperation with other NGOs has been represented the conservation interests via commenting on official documents, contributing to a review, participating actively in meetings and lobbying.

CEEweb co-leads the Target 2 EHF working group and participates and coordinates European NGOs to provide input to the Restoration Prioritization Framework along with MAES and Green Infrastructure. CEEweb participated in the Restoration Prioritization Framework workshop in May and provided input to the workshop document as well as to additional related meetings (CGBN, October 2nd Restoration Prioritization WG meeting in Brussels, etc.). Besides, CEEweb has been also collecting cases on restoration cases from the CEE to provide as an input and form further recommendations for the process at national level.

CEEweb participated in the EC's MAES' pilot on thematic pilot on habitat and species conservation status for ecosystem assessments and provided comments and input on several documents.

This year's CEEweb Academy focused on the Biodiversity Strategy's restoration targets and the No Net Loss initiative apart from the Mapping and Assessing Ecosystem Services (MAES).

Green Infrastructure, land use and the 7th EAP

In cooperation with ECNC, CEEweb organized a workshop in Budapest for several stakeholders to design and implement joint Green Infrastructure projects. Besides, CEEweb also collected case studies at CEE level on already existing successful Green Infrastructure implementation from local to national scales. Based on the outcome of the workshop and the cases, CEEweb compiled a brochure on the benefits of Green Infrastructure based on the case studies also including recommendations for stakeholders for the better integration of Green Infrastructure elements into spatial policies and FAQs of the planning and implementation of GI project. Besides, during the 2nd European Conference on Regions and Biodiversity: 'Local action for biodiversity: the role of regions', the Green Infrastructure section was chaired by CEEweb and we co-organized a Croatian workshop on Green Infrastructure sectoral implementation in Croatia in November.

Besides, CEEweb channelled its opinion on Green Infrastructure through the EHF Target 2 Working Group to the Committee of Region's opinion on Green Infrastructure and provided information for members on the issuing of the strategy and relevant sources.

CEEweb also collected information on land use, Green Infrastructure and protected areas in three Hungarian counties and compiled a report of the outcomes.

Climate change and biodiversity

Ecosystem-based climate adaptation measures were discussed in the Natura 2000 workshop in Bulgaria, as well as at national level in Bulgaria, Estonia and Poland. The role of agriculture and forestry in mitigation is to be presented in the CEEweb Academy. Results of the UNFCCC COP18 will be evaluated; CEEweb position prepared on it and sent to the Environmental Council participants. CEEweb also contributed to the in-depth assessment of vulnerability to climate change and ecosystem-based adaptation measures in the Carpathians.

CITES - Monitoring wildlife trade in CEE

In 2014 CEEweb for Biodiversity CITES Working Group was involved in the international project of monitoring of e-commerce in specimens of CITES listed species lead by International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). the main activity of the CITES WG in 2014 was to organize III-rd Seminar "Implementation of CITES and EU Wildlife Trade Regulations in CEE region". It took place in Budapest on 16-18 of June 2014. The seminar was addressed to national CITES authorities and the leading subject was e-commerce in specimens of CITES listed species. It was organized in cooperation with Hungarian CITES Management and Scientific Authorities as well as Polish CITES Scientific Authority. At the end of the year, as a follow-up of the seminar, a meeting of Polish CITES Scientific Authority, CEEweb CITES WG and IFAW took place in Warsaw. During the meeting it was agreed, that the special workshop for CITES enforcement authorities from the CEE region will be organized in 2015. During the workshop, invited participants will have an opportunity to learn the methodology (both in theory and practice) of the e-commerce in wildlife monitoring.

Nature and Biodiversity

Representing CEE positions at European level

CEEweb was represented in the EC Natura 2000 Management Working Group and the EC Natura 2000 and forestry expert group, EC Large Carnivores Stakeholder Meeting and the EC Agriculture and Biodiversity WG as well as the Wild10 Conference in Salamanca. CEEweb also attended additional EC consultations and the meetings of the European Habitats Forum. CEEweb participates in all EHF subgroups dealing with specific topics, and as group coordinator especially the one following and influencing the Target 2 processes as well as the No Net Loss Initiative. CEEweb also met the European Commission and discussed specific issues.

Financing Natura 2000 and ecosystems

CEEweb provided recommendations to the new LIFE budget's negotiations and provided a material together with EEB and Latvian Fund for Nature on identifying biodiversity related opportunities in the forming MFF with special focus on PAFs and OPs. CEEweb members also provided comments on the PAF formats and collected information and input to PAF developments at CEE level along with OP discussions. Besides, CEEweb participated in the Hungarian PAF workshop in Budapest.

Natura 2000 management – fostering cooperation for reaching Favourable Conservation Status of species and habitats

CEEweb organised a biogeographical process side event on Alpine and Continental regions in Budapest - to follow up from the Alpine Kick-off seminar and prepare for the upcoming Continental/Pannonia/Steppic and Black Sea Kick-off seminar to be held in Luxembourg in July 2015. CEEweb's Natura 2000 Working Group met twice during the year to share experience and discuss current Natura 2000 challenges and opportunities. CEEweb also launched the CEEweb Award to reward excellence in biodiversity conservation.

Facilitating and lobbying for timely implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy

CEEweb's Knowledge Hub on Mapping an Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services aims to induce knowledge sharing among ecosystem service valuation schemes and align

parallel processes and projects. CEEweb also organised the Biodiversity day on 22nd May on the topic of MAES. We collected restoration and Innovative Financing Mechanism Case Studies in order to share best practice examples and pressure Member States to reach their 2020 biodiversity Strategy commitments.

Promoting Green Infrastructure Europe-wide

CEEweb launched a new Green Infrastructure resource on its website – the Green Infrastructure Knowledge Hub. The Hub is a source of information, videos, additional sources and most importantly Green Infrastructure case studies from different sectors: conservation, local community, business, policy, water management, ecological restoration, climate change adaptation and agriculture. In addition to website development, CEEweb organised events to raise awareness on Green Infrastructure. Annual CEEweb Academy was organised in October 2014 in Ráckeve, Hungary, on the topic of Green Infrastructure. The Conference covered GI sectorial integration and GI at different scales. Speakers included EC representatives, national governmental officials, NGO sector and researchers from all over Europe. CEEweb also organised a GI workshop for local authorities in cooperation with Biebrza National Park in Poland. Additional GI presentations were delivered at Green City Council meeting in Budapest, the MTBK Conference in Szeged and the Green Week Side Event in Budapest. CEEweb also launched the online Green Infrastructure Practitioners' Forum to facilitate knowledge and experience exchange among GI, Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive experts.

Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000

CEEweb organized an event within the frame of the Green-Go Film Festival to distribute materials on synergies between the WFD and the nature directives and also collected cases on the overlapping issues to help implementation of EU policies.

Common Agricultural Policy, Rural Development Programmes and small-scale farming

Building on 2013's joint CEEweb-EEB activities (comprehensive study on five national RDPs 2007-2013 and a high-level conference in Brussels), we further disseminated the study on National Rural Development Programmes (NRDPs). To exchange information and develop common action, a workshop was organised in Hungary for 12 CEE NGO participants from 10 countries in June 2014. Within the workshop, specific training was provided on Green Infrastructure with discussion followed on identifying GI elements and active lobby for their inclusion on RDPs. We provided specific comments on Operational Programs from Hungary and Poland in terms of GI to DG Environment and induced our members to comment on Rural Development Programs in terms of Green Infrastructure. In cooperation with EEB and BirdLife, CEEweb organized a conference in Brussels for 150 participants (EC, MSs, NGOs and other stakeholders) in September 2014 to contribute to 2014-2020 RDPs development.

We enabled our members to have in person consultations in Brussels attached to the conference with Brussels representatives of DG Environment and DG Agriculture (Romania, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia).

We channelled the outcomes in five MSs (Romania, Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary) to relevant policy processes at national level through CEEweb members via consultations and meetings, especially with ministries, to influence RDP implementation; its outcomes were channelled to DG Environment who included NGO opinions when formulating views of new RDPs.

Biodiversity proofing - Integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into the EU Funds

CEEweb advocated for the biodiversity proofing of EU funds in the new funding period together with its members in Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania on multiple levels. The collection of good and bad examples from the previous financial period and the international conference and workshop in Hungary aimed to share experiences among NGOs and other stakeholders. Also based on these experiences CEEweb compiled a

guidance document together with the Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development and FoE Hungary on the suggested project selection criteria, other biodiversity proofing methods of Cohesion Policy funds and the ways of NGO advocacy work at national level.

Enhancing cooperation for the profit of business and biodiversity

We finalized the draft guidelines prepared in 2013 about cooperation between business and NGO containing CEE specialities as well as commitments and opportunities arising from relevant EU processes and tools through online consultations with 10 CEE NGOs and the collection of 7 case studies on successful business and biodiversity cooperation from CEE region. The updated guidelines were disseminated to 500+ business and NGO electronically. The press release and newsletter articles on the guidelines were disseminated in at least three languages to 500 media contacts.

We organised a Green Week satellite event on resource efficiency also targeting SMEs and multinationals that was attended by 53 people, including four presenters from the business and finance sector.

We communicated and disseminated the points of discussions, updated guidelines and presentation materials to relevant stakeholders from the for-profit sectors through participation with a stand or presentation in five large and smaller business events in Hungary (For example: CSR Hungary Conference, CSR Trends Conference, Lodz) as well as the first EU Business and Biodiversity Platform Conference in Brussels.

We established an on-line database and a mailing list containing business and NGO stakeholders and created a monthly newsletter on the most recent findings in relation to Business and Biodiversity.

We promoted the project results in various business and multisectoral platforms, initiated strategic cooperation with business stakeholders by email list, website, press release and event participation.

We re-worked the WBCSD's on-line training material on business and biodiversity to reflect more CEEweb's priorities and have a CEE focus.

Sustainable Tourism

CEEweb together with ETE ensured coordinated contribution of CEE NGOs and other CEE key players to the Carpathian Convention Sustainable Tourism Strategy: we organised two seminars for NGOs and assured NGO participation at three expert events focused on drafting and implementation of the strategy as well as at the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention.

We contributed to the final drafting of the Carpathian Convention Sustainable Tourism Strategy, prepared, laid out and printed case studies on Good Practices of Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians as brochures and posters, and contributed to the documentation of methodology.

CEEweb NGOs and other stakeholders were regularly informed about the strategy development via website, mailing lists and during events.

We also collected ten CEE examples on invasive tourism cases affecting natural values as well as implemented/potential solutions to tackle them, and disseminated them among CEE NGOs.

Resource Cap Coalition

CEEweb continued to coordinate the work of the Resource Cap Coalition (RCC), which is lobbying for EU-wide resource use limitation. CEEweb lobbied for a legally binding 20% energy savings target for 2020 as well as promoted the ambitious implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive. CEEweb organized a scientific session and an interactive workshop in collaboration with RCC partners during the Degrowth conference in September in Leipzig, and a Green Week satellite event in Budapest. Based on the outcomes we

compiled a report including policy recommendations on the feasibility and socio-economic benefits of sustainable resource use. CEEweb also presented the RCC at the International Conference on Environmental Economics, World Resource Forum, SUSCO Conference, European Resource Forum, OECD meetings, Sustainable Energy Week.

Awareness raising

CEEweb organized the fourth Green-Go Short Film Contest, an international competition for short films including three categories on ecosystem services, small scale farming as well as nature based climate change adaptation and mitigation. We employed short films on water from the 2013's Green-Go Short Film Contest to communicate the importance of the Water Framework Directive's targets electronically. Besides, CEEweb continued its international photo contest on Natura 2000 and Green Infrastructure with the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and other members.

Moreover, CEEweb compiled and disseminated various brochures and posters (e.g. the brochure on Sustainable Tourism Strategy in the Carpathians, posters on Business and Biodiversity, Resource Use Limitation, Green Infrastructure).

Capacity building

We organized a staff retreat on strategic questions and with the Board and the Annual Meeting, we compiled CEEweb's Strategy 2015-2020 and its action plan. Following the outcomes of the team retreat we defined clearly divided responsibilities among staff members, rethought the internal structure in light of the changes in staff and increased efficiency.

We organized a CEEweb Academy on the most relevant biodiversity policies (Green Infrastructure, MAES) and CEEweb's role in it along with celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the organization and Annual Meeting.

We extended the fundraising activities of CEEweb, identified new (strategic) donors based on the experiences from previous years.

Networking within and outside the CEEweb network

Policy Office staff organized local visits to three member organizations. CEEweb further deepened cooperation with other NGO networks (strategic partnership and joint applications with ECNC, common projects and application with EEB and cooperation with BirdLife Europe, FOEE, CAN Europe), had cooperation on communication activities (FACE, IUCN, ELO) and built partnership with business networks (CSR, SEED, Greenwill, etc.)

We built partnership with development organisations and jointly submitted two EuropeAid proposals as well as with acknowledged academic organisations (NINA, Hungarian and Slovak Academies of Science, Helmholtz Centre, CEH) and joint submission of three proposals. In 2014 CEEweb continued its active participation in EHF (Co-chair Target 2 Working Group, chair Natura 2000 management group) and fulfilled the position of EHF vice-chair

Internship programme

The internship programme continued in 2014. We hosted three intern from the United States who supported the work of the Policy Office. In addition, five Hungarian interns and volunteers helped the work of the Policy Office throughout the year.

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 feedbacks. Fundraising activities of CEEweb continued and extended, identified new (strategic) donors based on the experiences from previous years, led by a fundraising and innovation officer.

Successfully deepened the cooperation and increased the number of joint fundraising activities with member organizations, as well as enhanced and widened partnerships and cooperation with other NGOs, European networks and research organizations also with the purpose of joint fundraising

Communication

CEEweb kept members updated with EU and national policy developments through the mailing lists and the CEEweb website (www.ceeweb.org). We issued four electronic newsletters targeting decision makers and the members on thematic issues and issued press releases on several topics related to biodiversity conservation, but we also used the community channels for communication such as Facebook and our new YouTube channel.

We updated our website with new information and knowledge hubs (GI knowledge hubs, MAES knowledge). We offered a communication workshop for members in October and created an internal and external communication strategy, drew up internal and external communication manuals and prepared a communication strategy adjusted to the network's needs.

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.