



CEEweb for Biodiversity is an international network of non-governmental organizations in Central and Eastern Europe.

The mission of the network is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.

CLEAR VIEW



Regional synthesis report on the biodiversity challenges in Pan-Europe

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CLEAR VIEW:

REGIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

on the **BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGES**

in **PAN-EUROPE**





Boys klimb into tree (photo by Valdas Zajanckauskas)

CONTENTS

- 5 INTRODUCTION

- 7 REGIONAL DIVERSITY
 - 9 PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS
 - 13 STATE OF BIODIVERSITY IN PAN-EUROPE
 - 15 MAIN THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

- 18 PROGRESS IN NATURE CONSERVATION
IN PAN-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
 - 18 THE ROLE OF NBSAPS
 - 19 PROTECTED AREAS AND NATURA 2000
 - 21 IMPLEMENTING THE KYIV RESOLUTION IN PAN-EUROPE
 - 29 OTHER ASPECTS OF NATURE CONSERVATION

- 35 SUMMARY: FIELDS FOR PAN-EUROPEAN COOPERATION



INTRODUCTION

Biological diversity and ecosystems provide the basis for all life on earth and sustain societies through social and economic processes. The link between ecosystems, human activities and human well-being has also been explored in the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* which shows that about 60 percent of ecosystem services are being degraded or used unsustainably. The Assessment predicts that biodiversity decline will continue or even accelerate in the future. This also results in the deterioration of human well-being.

Realising the importance of biodiversity for humans and our responsibility in its decline, decision makers committed themselves to halt its loss (or significantly reduce its rate of loss) by 2010 on EU, Pan-European and global levels. In order to facilitate the achievement of the 2010 target, several subtargets were identified at Pan-European level for biodiversity conservation and sectoral integration within the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity in 2003.

Five years have passed since the Pan-European Kyiv Resolution was signed and we are on the eve of 2010. It is time to review the progress towards the implementation of the Kyiv targets and other international commitments in the light of the biggest biodiversity challenges in the region. The review will reveal successes and lessons learned, and will help to focus Pan-European cooperation under the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) on the most pressing problems and biodiversity challenges

Thus CEEweb for Biodiversity has coordinated a Pan-European assessment in 2008-2009 to review progress and identify the biggest challenges on national level. The assessment was done by biodiversity experts from national NGOs and other institutions from the region and analyzed the situation in 46 countries. It covered the following topics:

- » the state of biodiversity, including the main threats;
- » the progress of nature conservation including the implementation of the Kyiv targets and other priority commitments;
- » the involvement of civil society in nature conservation.

The synthesis report was prepared using data collected in the national biodiversity assessments. The assessments were based on a uniform template developed by CEEweb that allowed for collection of data from different countries in a similar manner. CEEweb analyzed the data collected, crosschecked it through desktop research and prepared the synthesis report. The comments of experts to the drafts of the synthesis report were collected and integrated. Therefore it can be presumed that the information contained in the report reflects the state of biodiversity in these countries as of September 2009.

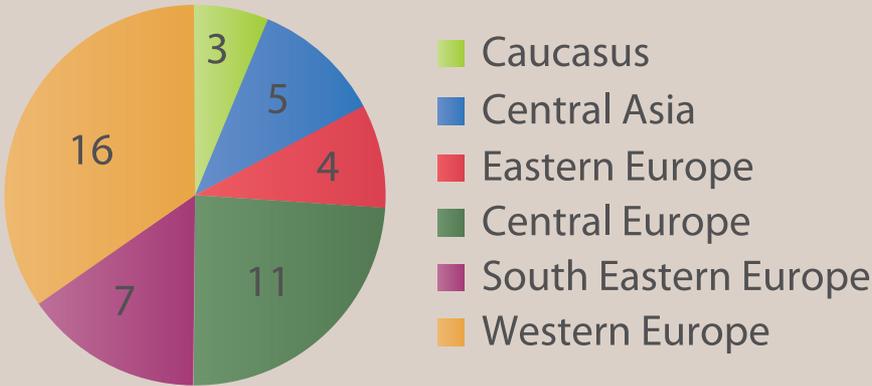


FIGURE 1. THE SUBREGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE 46 ASSESSED PAN-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (SEE ANNEX I FOR THE NAMES OF THE COUNTRIES)

REGIONAL DIVERSITY

The Pan-European region is greatly diverse not only from biological, but also from socio-economic point of view. This in turn results in variety in terms of impact on the environment through the human pressures and drivers behind them. Due to the socio-economic, cultural and historic differences we assessed the Pan-European countries divided into six subregions: Western Europe (including the old EU Member States), Central Europe (the new EU Member States), South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (see list of assessed countries in the six subregions in Annex I). Different levels of development and development priorities in these subregions influence the level of political support for biodiversity conservation, while the availability of human and financial capacities has practical implications for the planning and implementation of activities.



Swamp on the Algarve, Portugal (photo by Mauro Rodrigues)

Biodiversity conservation is often deemed a luxury of the most developed countries. Many non-EU countries, but sometimes also new EU Member States, declare economic and social development as their exclusive priorities. At the same time, in exactly the same countries biodiversity is still richer and the national capacities for nature conservation are lower. Therefore decision makers from Western countries see international biodiversity policy processes and policy guidance as mainly targeted towards “less developed” countries. This is how subregional differences generate excuses for not making the necessary steps in biodiversity conservation at higher political levels anywhere in the region.



At the same time sectoral thinking does not reveal the common drivers behind biodiversity problems which all Pan-European countries share in a globalised world. International cooperation would be needed to eliminate these common negative drivers for the future wellbeing of all citizens in Pan-Europe. Human wellbeing is closely linked to the state of biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services on local, national and global levels. Therefore each country has the responsibility to safeguard its remaining ecosystems or even enable their recovery if much of them have been lost already. This calls for at least two changes. First, there should be a paradigm shift in the socio-economic framework and environmental policies where international (and Pan-European) cooperation is indispensable. Second, increased commitments and efforts on national level in basically all fields that this assessment covers are necessary. Also on this level Pan-European and subregional cooperation can provide an added value through experience exchange, common projects and other means. By analyzing threats to biodiversity and conservation efforts, this report highlights some of these common Pan-European interests and points out some priority fields of cooperation at subregional and regional levels. These findings of the report are especially important for planning future actions and setting priorities for funding. Currently most of the financing from developed countries are directed primarily to African and South American countries; unfortunately the high natural values Pan-European regions are not included in the list of priorities.

Participation in international conventions

Within the Pan-European region almost half of the countries are part of the European Union. EU environmental legislation provides a minimum legal standard for biodiversity conservation –the most important cornerstones are the Birds and Habitats Directives establishing the European Natura 2000 network. But EU membership also has some implications in terms of participation in international conventions, especially because the European Community as a legal personality is also a Party to several conventions. This means that in several cases the EU takes responsibility to negotiate and to be responsible for implementing these conventions based on the principle of subsidiarity.

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** has undoubtedly the widest scope and global participation among biodiversity conventions. It does not only focus on biodiversity conservation activities, but also tries to integrate some other concerns. It reaches out to other sectors through its objectives on sustainable use and access and benefit sharing, as well as the related provisions and decisions. All assessed Pan-European countries have ratified the CBD. In addition, all of them are member of the **Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)** which aims to be the regional arm of implementation of the CBD. However, the potential provided by PEBLDS has been used so far to a very limited extent. This can be attributed both to factors already mentioned above and to some others:

- » EU Member States do not see the necessity to carry out extra efforts within this framework;
- » Many non-EU countries do not find the available capacities for active involvement when there is no financial mechanism attached to it;
- » There is poor coordination between PEBLDS administrative body and NGOs, e.g. in Georgia, in Romania;
- » PEBLDS is not incorporated into intersectoral policy documents in many countries.



Coastal view on the North Sea, Holland (photo by PanoArt)

However, with the recent reform of PEBLDS, new opportunities arise for enhanced regional and sub-regional cooperation, which we also aim to facilitate with the analysis and conclusions presented below.

Similarly to the CBD, the **Ramsar Convention** has been ratified by all assessed states. The **Bern Convention** also has a universal participation among Council of Europe members except for Armenia, and Herzegovina, Russia and Turkmenistan, while Liechtenstein, Montenegro and Serbia signed it, but ratification is pending. Pilot projects for establishing the Emerald Network under the Bern Convention have been completed in all countries in Central and Eastern Europe, South and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus by now, also including Russia.

The **Convention on Migratory Species** is ratified by a great majority of the countries.



The **Washington Convention CITES** has already been ratified by almost all assessed states (except for Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and for the only assessed Liechtenstein and Slovenia).

Somewhat fewer countries from the region participate in the **European Landscape Convention** developed under the Council of Europe. It is ratified by 33 assessed states out of the 39 Council of Europe members from the region. Among EU Member States all countries are Party to it except Austria, Estonia, Germany and Liechtenstein. Austria claims that the implementation would require too much administrative and financial effort. Instead of ratifying this convention, Austria aims to ensure landscape protection through advancing efficiency, coordination and transparency of existing national, European and international legislation and instruments. The added value of the Convention lies in its scope. It applies to the entire territory of the Parties and relates to natural,

urban and suburban areas, whether on land, water or sea. This scope extends much beyond valuable natural landscapes (which often enjoy national protection status already) and covers ordinary landscapes and degraded areas, too.

Most countries as well as the European Community ratified the **Aarhus Convention** developed within the framework of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Exceptions include Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Uzbekistan and Turkey. The resolutions of this Convention are very much in line with existing European legislation. However, the reason for the lower rate of ratification outside the EU is that some countries may have no institutional capacity in coping with so many international instruments. Therefore they ignore important international commitments which are less important from a political point of view.

The **Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment** has no ratification at all, although it was opened for signature in 1993. Only five of the assessed countries (altogether eight countries in the whole region) signed it, all of them EU members. The cause of not ratifying might be that too many changes in the national and international legislation have occurred related to this issue lately. For instance the EU Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage came into force in 2004, which provides a liability framework in the EU Member States.

Similarly, the **Convention on the Protection of Environment through Criminal Law** (opened for signature in 1998) is not in force either, as only Estonia has ratified it so far. Eleven additional countries from the assessed have signed it, all of them EU Member States except for Ukraine. However, the adoption of the Convention has also contributed to starting a similar legislative work in the EU, which after long discussions among EU institutions has led to the adoption of the Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law. But, as our assessment showed, illegal activities of environmental destruction constitute an even bigger threat to biodiversity within non-EU countries, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Thus Pan-European countries should increase their efforts to ratify the Convention and establish national and also regional measures in line with that. In this re-

gard Central Asian countries, even though not being members to the Council of Europe, should also consider joining to the Agreement.

Unfortunately, it has to be added that these Conventions are rather political commitments than strict regulations. Moreover, the language of the recommendations or decisions sometimes is not straightforward, but rather confusing. Due to the nature of international multilateral agreements, during negotiations legal advisers are paying attention mostly to verbs and the harmonization with other environmental political commitments. The real implementation becomes a secondary priority.



State of biodiversity in Pan-Europe

The Pan-European region hosts precious biological values. Four biodiversity hotspots out of the 34 hotspots globally were identified by Conservation International in the region: the Mediterranean basin, the Caucasus, the Mountains of Central Asia and the Irano-Anatolian area. These regions both show an exceptionally high biodiversity (with at least 1500 endemic vascular plant species) and have experienced huge adverse changes (have lost at least 70 percent of their original habitats). Looking at the whole Pan-European region a serious decline on species level can be also observed, where the most threatened groups are mammals and birds. What is more, there is a worsening trend among bird species in the whole region except for the Caucasus, which showed only minor improvement. At the same time the highest numbers of globally threatened animal species can be found in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

The national NGO assessments showed some particularly negative biodiversity changes in some countries and subregions. In Western and Central Europe large scale habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation could be seen. For example, in many countries a historically large proportion of wetland habitats have degraded or disappeared (75-92 percent wetland loss reported in Bulgaria,

the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). Apart from the changes in forest coverage, their naturalness status is even more worrying in many countries, for instance with between 0 and 4 percent of forests being natural in some of the assessed countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal and Poland). But at the same time 46 percent of the country territory is covered by natural forests in Slovenia, 40 percent in Georgia. Semi-natural grasslands and coastal habitats also experience a decline leading to biodiversity loss. The reasons for severe natural habitats decline can be *inter alia* unsustainable forest management as well as overgrazing practices. Furthermore, due to lack of funding and capacity as well as insufficient operation of small, national platforms, and different scaled initiatives can not develop this situation either.



Trees, forest in Hungary (photo by Andor Nagy)

In SEE and EECCA countries a higher proportion of land is covered with natural or semi-natural habitats than in Western and Central Europe (except for Norway). However, a large number of vertebrate species is vulnerable or (critically) endangered (based on IUCN Red Lists), as well as more endemics can be found in these subregions, though higher extinction numbers have been reported from EU countries. While freshwater fish species are particularly threatened in Mediterranean countries (31-44 percent globally threatened in Spain, Portugal, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia and Greece), the introduction of freshwater species is most of concern in Western and Central Europe and Central Asia (reaching 30-69 percent of all species in several countries). However, the scarce scientific data on biodiversity within SEE and even more in EECCA countries is a major impediment for providing a clear overview.

Main threats to biodiversity

The main threats to biodiversity in Pan-Europe are mostly related to infrastructure development and intensive agriculture, but illegal logging and poaching, overexploitation, pollution, uncontrolled tourism developments and invasive alien species (IASs) are found as significant threats as well.

In Western Europe the most significant biodiversity threats are clearly linked to the western lifestyle and the development patterns based on an ever increasing input (natural resources and land) into the economy. Intensive land use (also accompanied by land abandonment), pollution, the spread of IASs, infrastructure developments, urbanisation are reported most often in the national assessments, but mass tourism, biofuel production and drainage of wetlands also constitute a threat in some countries. This high-scale exploitation of natural resources and the increasing human use of land are made possible by the current economic regulatory framework. These lead to the destruction and fragmentation of natural habitats, the decline of species and pollution. The readily accessible financial resources are invested into the intensive exploitation of natural resources, which are comparatively cheap on the market, while labour costs are high. Thus agriculture is more profitable, if higher resource input

(pesticides, fertilisers, water, machinery) is used, while the labour input is kept low. This has both negative environmental (pollution, changes in water tables, soil compaction, destruction of bird nests) and social consequences (unemployment, rural depopulation, loss of traditional practices). Transport infrastructure developments are needed to serve the growing needs for trade, which is closely related to the relatively cheap fuel prices. Growing trade on the other hand also increases the potential for introduction of IASs. However, holistic environmental policies, which could change the course of these socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity loss are lacking. Moreover, there is low understanding of the links among environmental, social and economic issues among policy makers and also in the public. Consequently the socio-economic drivers exert a huge environmental pressure leading to biodiversity loss.

In Central Europe the production and consumption patterns have undergone big changes since the political changes and they were further intensified with the accession to the EU. The most significant threats in these countries are reported to be infrastructure developments followed by intensive agriculture and urbanisation. These socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity threats were intensified by the EU funds coming into these countries and their accession to the common market. Therefore, they contribute to the increase of the environmental pressure on biodiversity. Unfortunately this growing environmental pressure cannot be outweighed by the improved standards of environmental legislation coming from the EU *acquis communautaire* (e.g. the establishment of Natura 2000). Thus even though Central Europe still possesses a higher biodiversity than Western European countries, it is coming under increasing threat from the same drivers that have destroyed much of nature in the West before.

In South Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe the trends and pressures related to intensive agriculture, infrastructure developments, spread of IASs, unsustainable forest management, overgrazing practices can be also seen. Pollution is a much bigger threat in these regions as clean technologies and higher environmental standards are still not so widespread. Tourism developments and illegal logging and poaching are also more of concern in these sub-regions. Therefore, developing incentive measures in this region at national, but as well as international levels is urgent, and they should be in line with CBD COP9 decisions and related EU policies. Moreover, integration mechanisms of nature conservation

policy into other policies (tourism, agriculture, economy, education, transport, food and feed, etc.) are vital too. Thus poorer countries would benefit from enhanced networking, cooperation and capacity building.

In the Caucasus and Central Asia illegal logging and poaching were reported from almost all countries, but (legal) over-hunting is also a problem mostly in Central Asia due to the lack of power and capacity in environmental institutions. While the intensification of agriculture and infrastructure developments were also reported as threats from many countries, pollution and deforestation seem to be a lesser threat, while urbanisation on national level is not at all.



All in all, clear distinctions can be made among the main biodiversity threats that the different sub-regions face today. Western European countries struggle with major problems originating from *inter alia* the flawed economic regulatory framework and sectoral approach. On one hand, Central European, but more and more South East European as well as East European countries adopt the same consumption and production patterns, moreover commit the same mistakes in biodiversity conservation as the West. On the other hand, the specific threats of illegal activities seem to be especially severe in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It must be noted that with the current development patterns of the globalised economy, all Pan-European countries face or will face the same socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity loss. It is the common interest of all Pan-European countries to reveal these drivers and find holistic policy tools in international cooperation to change their course and stop biodiversity loss.

PROGRESS IN NATURE CONSERVATION IN PAN-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The role of NBSAPs

As a basic fundament of conservation efforts, all assessed Pan-European countries have nature conservation laws in place. As all of these countries are Party to the CBD, they have the obligation of developing a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). However, NBSAP has been approved only in two-thirds of the countries, while a few others have similar documents in place or have developed the NBSAP but have not approved it. Regular review of the implementation is ensured in a great majority of the countries having NBSAP (exceptions include Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Montenegro, Romania and Russia), though the quality of the review and the channelling back of the results into the implementation could not be considered in our assessment. However, looking at the institutional background of the implementation, only approximately half of the countries have any interministerial mechanism in place to review implementation. While almost all Western European countries (poorer in biodiversity) have such a mechanism, no country in the Caucasus (richer in biodiversity) has any. At the same time in the rest of Pan-Europe it varies whether interministerial mechanism is in place already. Although it is difficult to assess the level of implementation of NBSAPs in the countries where the first period of implementation has ended, NGOs reported that merely about 20-50 percent of the measures have been implemented.

The most serious shortcoming in implementation identified is the low integration of biodiversity into agricultural practices, forestry and industrial policies (in almost all countries). This also substantiates the need for establishing interministerial implementation mechanism in all countries, and also the need for developing holistic environmental policies. The other most often mentioned shortcomings are the insufficient designation of protected areas and their man-

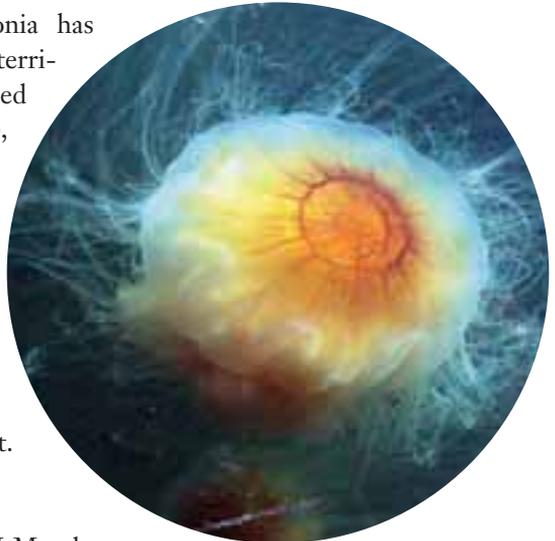
agement, and the insufficient institutional and financial capacities for implementation.

Protected areas and Natura 2000

The problem of insufficient designation of nationally protected areas is also proven by the data from countries. The designation of protected areas on land remains below in some subregions. For Pan-Europe the average is 11.24 percent. The smallest proportion of nationally protected areas occur

- » in Central Asia in Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (it is only between 4 and 6 percent);
- » in Central Europe in Bulgaria (5.4 percent);
- » in East Europe in Moldova (4.65 percent) and Ukraine (4.6 percent);
- » in South Eastern Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina (only 1.5 percent).

Regarding the marine PAs, Estonia has designated the most of its marine territory (30 percent) among the assessed countries, while Albania (0 percent), Montenegro, Croatia (0.01 percent) and Bulgaria (0.1 percent) perform the worst in this respect. Besides, Cyprus, Italy, Russia, Finland and Greece protect 7.3, 9.4, 13.8 and 15 percent of their marine territory respectively, while the remaining countries protect only between 1 and 2 percent. These figures must be improved.



Natura 2000 designation in the EU Member States includes additional sites into nature conservation, where human use and conserving species and habitats of European Com-



Fisherman at Langinkoski, Finland (photo by Elisa Nobe)

munity importance must be harmonised. On average about 15.7 percent of the EU territory is designated as Natura 2000, but the areas vary between 35 and 6.8 percent. According to the state of progress of Member States in reaching sufficiency for the Habitats Directive, old Member States such as Denmark, the Netherlands (sufficiency index for the HD is 100 percent) as well as Germany, Greece, Italy (99 percent) perform the best, while among the new Member States Poland (17 percent) and Cyprus (25 percent) perform insufficient, where significant additional efforts are still needed. Bulgaria on the other hand has accomplished the most among new Member States (94.3 percent). These figures show that the legally binding nature of EU nature directives where human use and nature conservation are harmonised, provide a great contribution to saving the region's biodiversity through the establishment of the Natura 2000.



Implementing the Kyiv Resolution in Pan-Europe

The Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity sets the target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 and in support of that also identifies nine subtargets in different fields. However, the degree of implementation varies among subjects and subregions, while the overall implementation of the subtargets is 37 percent. Based on the NGO assessment, none of the Kyiv subtargets were achieved by the agreed deadline.

Assessed Kyiv subtargets	Number of the countries implementing the subtarget (Number of all assessed countries)	Pan-European achievement of the subtarget by 2009
National Forest Programmes according to the MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe exist by 2008	30 (44)	68%
All High Nature Value areas in agricultural ecosystems are identified in Pan-Europe by 2006	18 (43)	42%
Substantial proportion of these areas is under biodiversity-sensitive management by 2008	10 (43)	23%
The pan-European ecological network of nature sites (PEEN) is identified in all states by 2006	27 (44)	61%
All core areas of the PEEN are adequately conserved by 2008	16 (44)	39%
The PEEN gives guidance to all major national land use and planning policies as well as to the operations of relevant economic and financial sectors by 2008	15 (44)	34%
The pan-European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species is implemented by at least half of the countries of the pan-European region by 2008	16 (44)	36%
There is substantially increased public and private financial investments in integrated biodiversity activities in Europe, via partnerships with the finance and business sectors by 2008	18 (43)	42%
At least half of the countries in the pan-European region are implementing National Communication, Education and Public Awareness action plan, in line with the CBD's Global Initiative on CEPA by 2008	15 (43)	35%

TABLE 1. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSED KYIV SUBTARGETS

The implementation shortcomings can be attributed mainly to the lack of Pan-European financial mechanisms, secondary to a lack of review mechanisms, a lack of experience exchange (which could support the implementation), a lack of sufficient cross-sectoral cooperation, a lack of political awareness and willingness.

While the highest rate of implementation was reported from Western Europe, the greatest shortcomings can generally be found in South Eastern Europe. Considering the full set of the subtargets there are no substantial differences in implementation among Central European, Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries.

In the case of old EU Member States (as well as Norway, Lichtenstein and partly Switzerland) the higher implementation can possibly be attributed to the greater awareness and incorporation of some of the specific requirements of the Kyiv Resolution into the EU policies.



However, it cannot be asserted whether the Kyiv Resolution itself has helped that process. It should be noted that there are specific EU programmes and activities related to High Nature Value (HNV) areas and the involvement of business in nature conservation (see for instance the EU Biodiversity Action Plan¹), where implementation is relatively high. Even though EU-wide cooperation in forest issues is more limited, there is a wide implementation of developing national forest programmes according to the approach of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). Summarizing, the text of the Kyiv resolution is for sure in line with the existing legal framework of the EU, as well as with the realization of some of the national work programmes.

¹ Annex to the Communication entitled „HALTING THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY BY 2010 AND BEYOND Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being”, Com (2006) 216 final

Though the national and regional programmes on ecological networks started a long time ago in Europe, the assessment proves that there are still serious shortcomings in the integration of identified ecological networks into national policies and ensuring their proper management. The connectivity of the Natura 2000 network also needs to be strengthened (as also required by the EU Biodiversity Action Plan). Some discussions have already started within the EU on the implications of climate change to ecological networks.

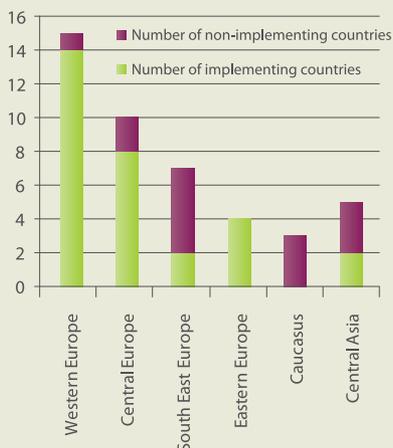
In other subregions, although there is no significant difference in the level of overall implementation of the Kyiv Resolution, there are striking differences among the different thematic fields. It can be said that progress in national **forest** programmes according to MCPFE approach is most advanced in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, while countries from South East Europe and the Caucasus are lagging behind. For the SEE and Caucasian countries the main reason for this can be the low legally binding level of this resolution (contradictory to the strict EU regulations) additionally to the low institutional capacity and the low support available.

Implementing the European Strategy on **Invasive Species** is reported from less than one-third of the countries from all subregions, except for Western Europe where 41 percent have implemented it. The reasons for low implementation could be *inter alia* the lack of international mechanism, its non-legally binding attribute, as well as insufficient cross-sectoral cooperation.



Somewhere in the middle of Baikal, Russia (photo by sunnix)

Implementation of forest programmes



IAS strategies

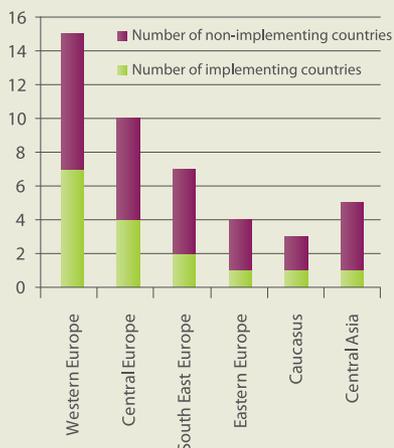


FIGURE 2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYIV SUBTARGETS ON NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MCPFE APPROACH AND THE PAN-EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES.

There are still shortcomings in **High Nature Value** area identification in Western Europe (two thirds of the countries completed this), and Central Europe (about one quarter of the countries completed this), while even more problems are identified with proper management of HNV areas. In this regard Estonia seems to be a good example, while in other countries only a smaller proportion of these areas are under biodiversity-sensitive management. The situation is even worse in other regions. Only some work has been done in HNV identification in South East Europe, while in Central Asia only Kyrgyzstan, in Eastern Europe only Russia and in the Caucasus only Georgia seem to have delivered results in this field. As for management, Georgia can be mentioned as a good example, where a substantial proportion of the HNV land is under proper management while in other countries progress is still limited.

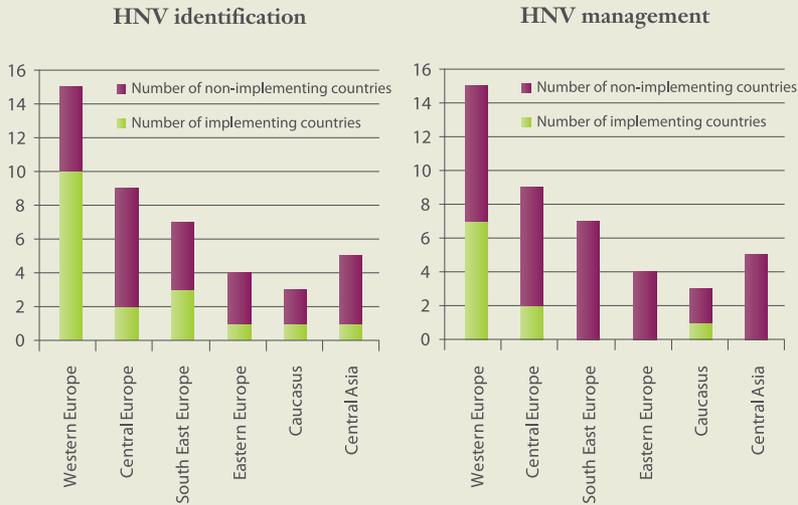


FIGURE 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYIV SUBTARGETS ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF HNV AREAS AND PUTTING A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF THESE AREAS UNDER BIODIVERSITY-SENSITIVE MANAGEMENT.

With regards to the identification of **Pan-European Ecological Network** Central European countries lead in implementation (almost all countries completed), while there is also significant progress in Western (two-third of the countries completed) and Central Asia as well as Eastern Europe (half of the countries completed). The Caucasus and South Eastern Europe are lagging behind.

As for the conservation of core areas of the PEEN, in Western Europe two-third of the countries, in Central Asia less than half of the countries, while hardly any countries (except for Cyprus, Lithuania and Georgia) from the other three subregions have realised this Kyiv subtarget. There are efforts for the integration of the PEEN into all major land use and planning policies as well as for the operations of the relevant sectors in one third of all assessed countries.

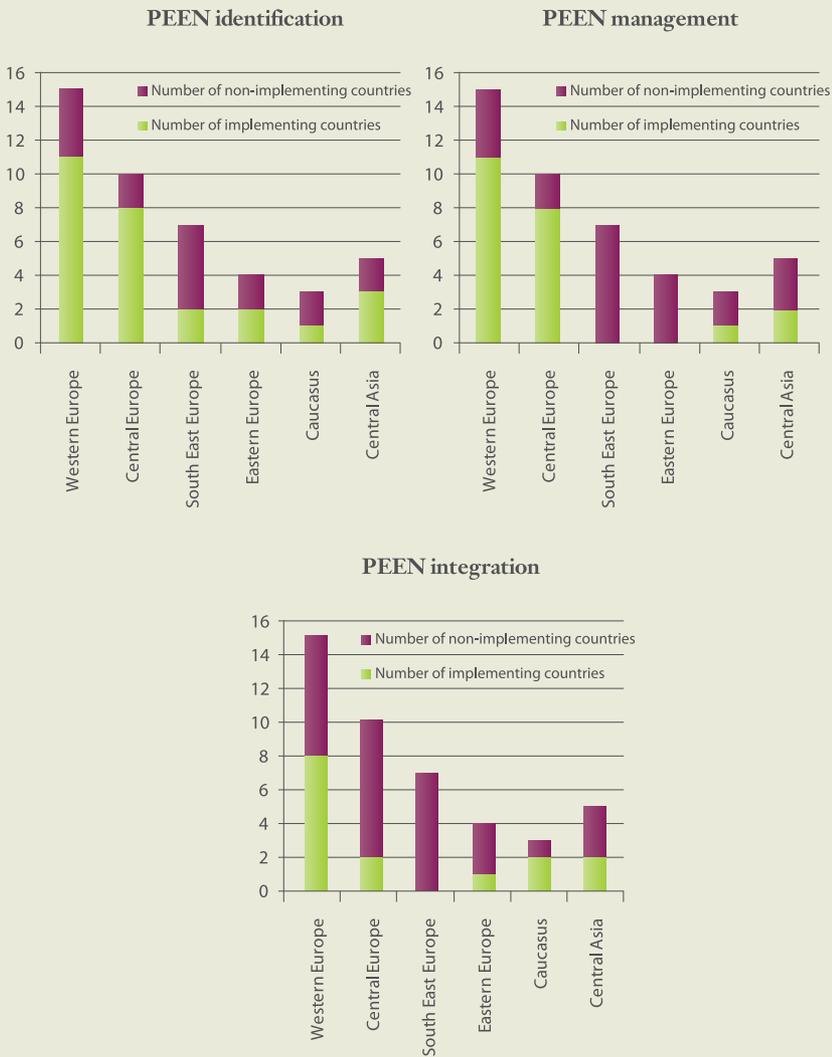


FIGURE 4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYIV SUBTARGETS ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PEEN, THE ADEQUATE CONSERVATION OF THEIR CORE AREAS AND GUIDANCE OF THE NATIONAL ECOLOGICAL NETWORK TO ALL MAJOR NATIONAL LAND USE AND PLANNING POLICIES AS WELL AS TO THE OPERATIONS OF RELEVANT ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SECTORS.

In two-thirds of the Western European and Caucasian countries have established **Partnerships with the finance and business** sectors in order to increase investments in biodiversity activities. At the same time, there are scarce initiatives from other subregions on developing partnership with the business for biodiversity conservation (e.g. none in South East Europe), although such examples are found in Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Russia and Uzbekistan.

Implementing National **Communication, Education and Public Awareness** action plans in line with the CBD's Global Initiative on CEPA is mostly found in Central and Western European countries, while other subregions have hardly made progress (exceptions include Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan).



FIGURE 5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYIV SUBTARGETS ON ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE FINANCE AND BUSINESS SECTORS TO INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN BIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES AND IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTION PLAN, IN LINE WITH THE CBD'S GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON CEPA.

Other aspects of nature conservation

The implementation of NBSAPs and the Kyiv Resolution, as well as the development of protected areas and Natura 2000 network provides a backbone of nature conservation and the sectoral integration of biodiversity in Pan-European countries. However, there are some other aspects of nature conservation which can significantly influence the success of conservation efforts and the state of biodiversity. Some of the most significant tools and shortcomings have been mentioned in the country assessments and are summarised below.

The proper application of Environment Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) can be important tools in preventing the destruction of ecosystems. On the one hand, the majority of the countries have integrated these tools into their environmental legislation (in the EU it is also part of the *acquis communautaire*). On the other hand, it is reported from several countries from all subregions that these tools are not applied appropriately and biodiversity destruction happens even if it could and should have been avoided. Moreover, in some countries SEA is even totally un-used (e.g. in Belarus and Turkey).

At the same time, a national biodiversity monitoring system still does not exist in several countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Lichtenstein, Moldova, Serbia, Turkmenistan and Ukraine). In other countries this monitoring tool exists, but due to lack of financial resources it is still not adequate (e.g. in Estonia, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey). Because of this biodiversity conservation planning is especially difficult in these countries. Thus national level actions are also needed for developing the institutional, human and financial capacities still before the SEBI 2010 indicators could be produced in several Pan-European countries.

The commercialization and production of GMOs can seriously threaten natural ecosystems, and this has been mentioned as a problem by several countries. For instance, the production of GMOs in Kazakhstan is uncontrolled, and can also be found according to EU legislation in several EU Member States. Several other countries allow only the import of living modified organisms, not the

production (e.g. Belarus, Montenegro and Turkey) or control its production through licences. While in the EU there are regulations on the permission procedure and the production of GMOs, some countries successfully manage to keep a moratorium on some GMO varieties (Finland, Hungary, Greece and Slovakia).

Similarly to GMOs, IASs can also seriously threaten natural and semi-natural ecosystems. In the field of fighting IASs a positive example is reported from Lichtenstein, Russia and Switzerland where IAS is banned. In Kyrgyzstan the Ministry of Agriculture, Government Agency on Nature Protection and Forestry and National Academy of Sciences created a so-called scientific-trade council which plays an important role in solving issues on invasive alien species.

In some countries the size of protected areas are relatively small even compared to the Pan-European average. However, altogether one third of the assessed countries have made some progress in enlarging the size of their protected territory. For the proper management of protected areas one fifth of the assessed countries lack the official management plans for the majority of the sites (e.g. Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Estonia, Georgia, Lichtenstein, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey). Similarly, for the conservation and re-

covery of threatened species many countries have adopted species actions plans. In other countries national action plans are lacking despite the clear need (for instance, in Georgia, Lichtenstein, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine). In other countries even if there are species action plans, their implementation is not efficient or delayed (e.g. in Bulgaria, Finland, Moldova, Norway, Romania and Spain), or their geographical scope is too small (e.g. in Montenegro).



Involvement of the civil society in nature conservation

The civil society and in particular NGOs can provide a valuable contribution to nature conservation and thus the protection of the Pan-European region's natural heritage. Their involvement has always been instrumental in forming

and implementing the PEBLDS, and their role could be further enhanced in implementation. However, their numbers and capacities significantly vary depending on their field of work and among the countries and the subregions.

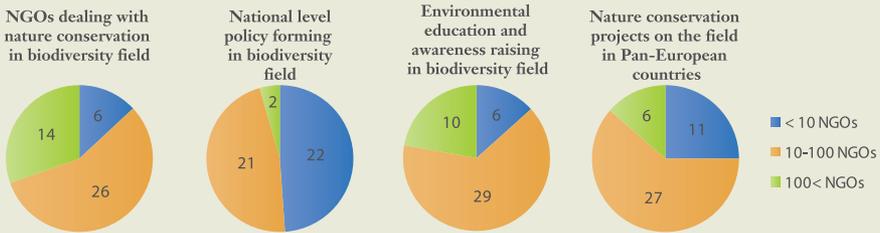


FIGURE 6. NGOs DEALING WITH DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF NATURE CONSERVATION IN PAN-EUROPE.

THE DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF NGOs DEALING WITH NATURE CONSERVATION IS <10, 10-100 OR 100+ OR <5, 5-25 OR 25+ IN THE CASE OF NGOs DEALING WITH POLICY FORMING.

It can be said that in 26 of the assessed 46 Pan-European countries between 10 and 100 NGOs per country are carrying out general nature conservation activities. At the same time in 22 countries less than five, and in 21 countries less than 25 NGOs per country deal with policy forming. There are only Germany and France, where more than 25 NGOs deal with policy forming. At the same time in about two thirds of the countries between 10 and 100 NGOs per country are engaged in environmental education (29 countries) or carry out nature conservation projects on the field (27 countries).

When looking at the subregional data, the Western European and Central European subregions show great similarities with a bit more than half of the countries have a medium number of NGOs (between 10 and 100) dealing with different aspects of nature conservation. Of course the size of country also correlates with the figures, in most cases explaining the lower or higher presence of NGOs. As expected, the smallest number of NGOs deals with policy forming, with several countries amounting to less than five organisations in more than one third of the countries within these two regions.

In the other four subregions the NGO sector has still lower capacities. As figure 6 shows, in general the Eastern European subregion has a higher number of NGOs, including Belarus, Moldova and Russia, while more than 100 NGOs work also in Armenia and Montenegro.

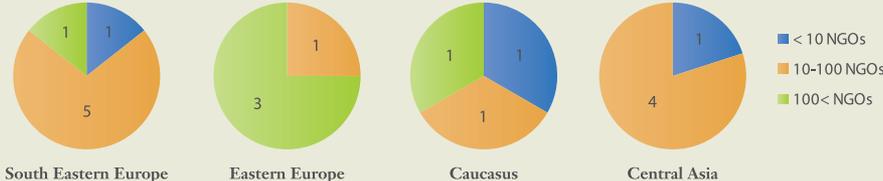


FIGURE 7. NGOs DEALING WITH NATURE CONSERVATION IN FOUR SUBREGIONS. THE DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF NGOs DEALING WITH NATURE CONSERVATION IS <10, 10-100 OR 100<.

Participation in policy making is much less common among NGOs, in all Central Asian countries there are less than five NGOs engaged in policy making processes on national level (figure 7). More NGOs seem to be active in this field in Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus.

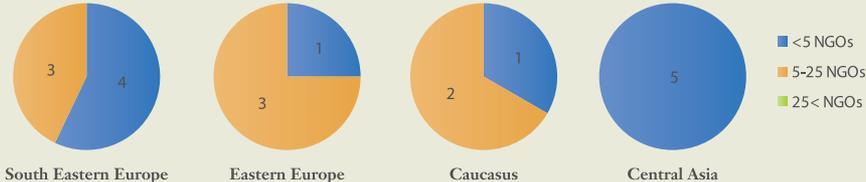


FIGURE 8. NGOs DEALING WITH POLICY FORMING IN FOUR SUBREGIONS. THE DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF NGOs DEALING WITH POLICY FORMING IN BIODIVERSITY FIELDS IS <5, 5-25 OR 25<.

In general, NGOs are more active in environmental education and awareness-raising, with most NGOs per country working in Albania, Belarus and Russia,

and the least in Georgia and Tajikistan. The national assessments also show that the level of environmental awareness in these subregions is mostly deemed low, with the exception of Albania, Belarus and Moldova, where it is assessed as moderate.

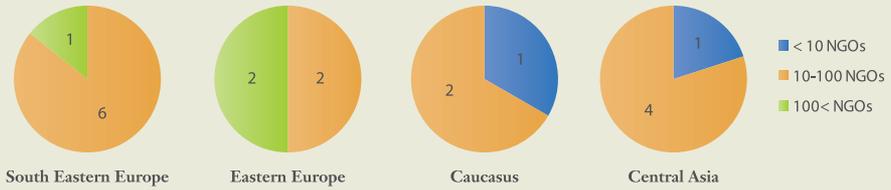
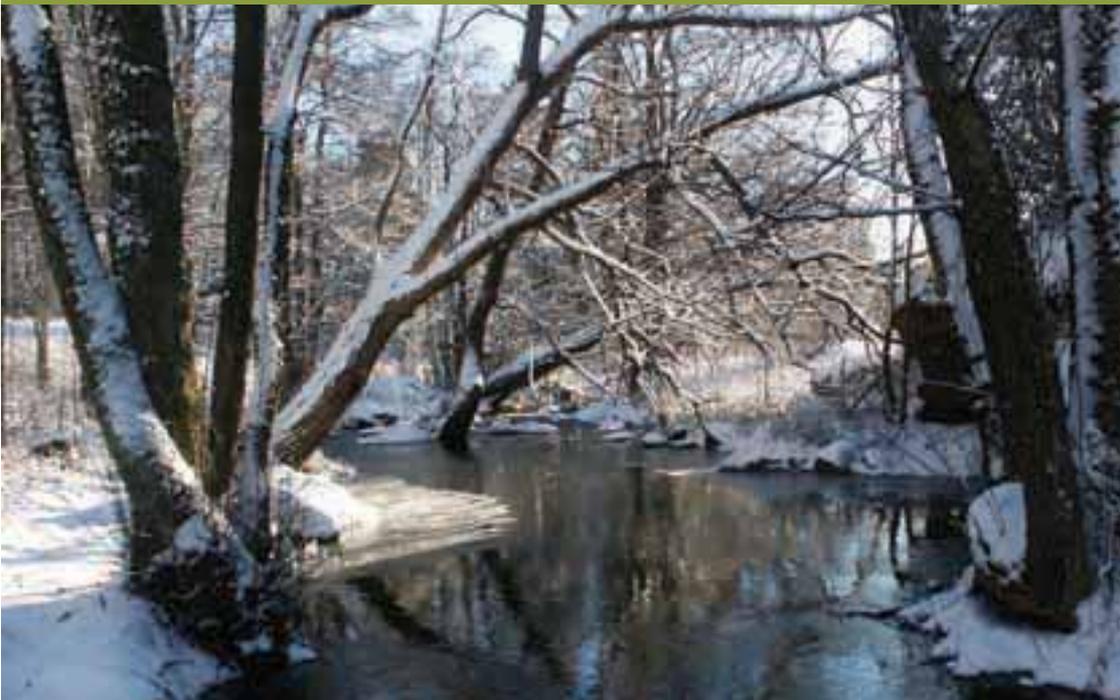


FIGURE 9. NGOs DEALING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING IN FOUR SUBREGIONS.

THE DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF NGOs DEALING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING IS <10, 10-100 OR 100+.

River in wintertime outside Linköping, Sweden (photo by Orwe Sleman)



There are also moderate capacities available for field projects in these four subregions. The level of engagement of NGOs in this field is in general between 10 and 100 NGOs per country except for all Caucasian countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Opposite trends can be observed in the Caucasus and in Central Asia in the engagement on policy forming and in the engagement on field projects. While in Central Asia relatively few NGOs are involved in policy making, they are more active in the field projects, in the Caucasus NGOs seem to be more active in policy making than in practical biodiversity conservation projects.

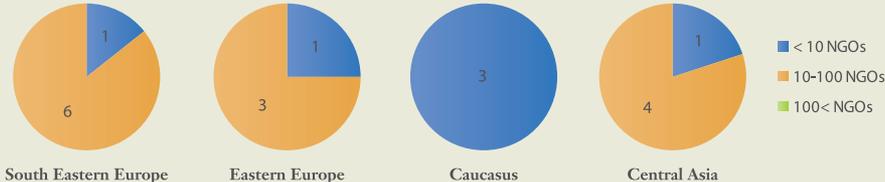


FIGURE 10. NGOs CARRYING OUT NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS ON THE FIELD IN FOUR SUBREGIONS.

THE DATA SHOW THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF NGOs CARRYING OUT NATURE CONSERVATION PROJECTS ON THE FIELD IS <10, 10-100 OR 100+.

The Baltic Sea (photo by Aneta Blaszczyk)



SUMMARY: FIELDS FOR PAN-EUROPEAN COOPERATION

The well-being of any society depends on healthy ecosystems that provide proper services. Therefore conservation of biodiversity rightfully should be the same level priority on the political agenda as socioeconomic issues. The assessment of 46 countries shows that in the Pan-European region this is still not the case.

In Western Europe the most significant threat to biodiversity is ever-increasing consumption of natural resources and land. All Pan-European countries are facing or will soon face the same socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity loss. The most urgent common interest of all Pan-European countries is to reveal these drivers and find holistic policy tools in international cooperation to change their course. Only this can stop biodiversity loss and assure future well-being of all citizens in Pan-Europe.

Increased commitments and efforts are absolutely essential on national level in basically all fields related to biodiversity conservation that are covered by this assessment. Pan-European and subregional cooperation can provide an added value through experience exchange and common projects. Involvement of NGOs on a national level to implementation of both national plans and international agreements can be one factor of success to biodiversity conservation. Another factor would be the development of human and financial capacities for the planning and implementation of activities in biodiversity-rich countries of the region.



ANNEX I. LIST OF ASSESSED COUNTRIES PER SUBREGION

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The Caucasus

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Georgia

Central Asia

Kazakhstan
Kyrgystan
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

Central Europe

Bulgaria
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Estonia
Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia

Eastern Europe

Belarus
Moldova
Russia
Ukraine

South Eastern Europe

Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia
Macedonia
Montenegro
Serbia
Turkey

Western Europe

Austria
Belgium
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Italy
Lichtenstein
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

Koli National Park, Finland (phot by Juho Tassula)



The national assessments that form the basis of the Synthesis Report are available at www.ceeweb.org/5th_bidi_in_eu/assessment

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