

Annual Meeting 2006

of the Central and East European Working Group
for the Enhancement of Biodiversity

30 September, 2006, Budapest

REPORT

The Annual Meeting 2006 was opened and chaired by András Krolopp, General Secretary of CEEWEB. The number of member organisations participating at the Annual Meeting is 18, represented by 27 persons.

The present members of the CEEWEB Network elect the officers (minute takers and certifiers, nomination and credential committees). András Krolopp, General Secretary goes through the agenda and explains the items, then the members adopt the agenda.

The following full member applicants present themselves:

1. SUNCE, Croatia
2. Holocene, Hungary

Sára Tripolszky from the CEEWEB Office reads the letter of intent of Anton Gazenbeek from Belgium, who wishes to become a supporting member.

Presentation of the Annual report

The General Secretary and the office staff present the Annual report of CEEWEB. András Krolopp reports on the work carried out in relation to the Global Environment Facility, the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, ANPED and the changes in the office. He also reported on CEEWEB activities like "Seven Sins", "CEEWEB Science" and "CEEWEB Watch", the website and the "Diversity" newsletter.

Klára Hajdu summarised the work on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which included the finishing of a project in South-East -European countries, the celebration of the International Biodiversity Day in Hungary and the preparation for the 8th Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

Ildikó Arany reported on the activities related to Natura 2000, including the preparation for the biogeographic seminars, legal transposition issues in Hungary, the CEEWEB Academy on protected areas management and Natura 2000 in August. She also spoke about the cooperation within the European Habitats Forum and the Biodiversity Working Group of the European Environmental Bureau.

Rita Francia covered the activities on rural development, speaking about the rural development project in Romania, the monitoring of the rural development plan in Hungary and the participation in the "Agriculture and environment" Advisory Group of the European Commission.

After the thematic areas, Dalma Földes reported on the networking activities within CEEWEB, such as the development of a networking activity plan and visiting several CEEWEB member organisations in 2006.

The Working Group chairs or members also reported on the WG activities.

After some questions, the members adopted the Annual report of CEEWEB. (Please see the separate Annual report.)

Presentation of the Financial report

Klára Hajdu presented the Financial report of 2005, including the eased balance-sheet and the simplified operating statement. She also presented informative data about the income and expenditure of 2005, as well as some data on the allocation of resources for 2006 and expenditures as of 31 August.

After some questions, the members adopted the Financial report of CEEWEB. (Please see the separate Financial report.)

Financial perspective for 2007

The General Secretary presented the financial perspective for the coming year, emphasising that the Core Funding from the European Commission is still dependant on the decision on the LIFE + instrument, and expectedly will be substantially delayed.

He also proposed a scheme for increasing the membership fee in the coming years. After some deliberations, in the afternoon the members voted for keeping the current amount of the membership fee and asked the Board and the Advisory Committee to work out a new scheme for the next AM.

Vote on new members

The members voted for the approval of all member candidates and thus SUNCE and Holocene became full members of CEEWEB, while Anton Gazenbeek became a supporting member.

Restructuring the organisation, election of officers

Klára Hajdu presented the reasons for the restructuring of the organisation. Due to a legal gap, which was created in 2004 (when the clause "except for international organisations" was forgotten from the amended law on associations), practically the members of the Board can only be Hungarian citizens. For this reason the following restructuring is proposed instead of the current Board, which comprises of the President, the Vice-President, two general members and the WG Chairs:

- New Board with three members, all of them Hungarians
- International Advisory Committee with three general members and the Chairs of the WGs.

The Board and the Advisory Committee have joint meetings and discuss all issues together, however, only the Board can participate in the decision-making.

Nominations for Board membership:

- Zoltán Demeter, Green Action, Hungary
- István Farkas, National Association of Conservationists, Hungary
- Anna Iványi, Nimfea, Hungary
- László Stoll, Holocene, Hungary

All of them accepted the nomination.

Nominations for Advisory Committee membership:

Accepted the nomination:

- Jelena Beronja, YRS, Serbia
- Petra Djuric, Green Action, Croatia
- Andrzej Kepel, Salamandra, Poland
- Katarina Klimova, BROZ, Slovakia

- Agnieszka Lopata, Carpathian Heritage Society, Poland
- Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany

Not accepted the nomination:

- Inga Racinska Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia
- Jüri-Ott Salm, Estonian Fund for Nature, Estonia

After two rounds of secret voting in the afternoon the members elected Anna Iványi and László Stoll into the Board, and Michael Meyer, Andrzej Kepel and Petra Djuric into the Advisory Committee.

Amendments of the Articles of Association

In order to make the Articles of Association more logical, to correct some language mistakes and to delete repetitions, the CEEWEB Office under the guidance of a lawyer made several corrections to the document, which does not affect the content. Klára Hajdu asked for a volunteer who would compare the old Articles and the amended Articles to check that all substantial changes have been approved by the AM. Marijana Rubic from SUNCE volunteered for this task.

Later Klára Hajdu presented the proposed changes of the Articles of Association, and the members agreed on the following amendments, such as:

- The restructuring of the organisation outlined above.
- Electronic AM can be convened by the General Secretary, with sending the proposed decisions by e-mail or fax to all members with a minimum seven-day deadline. The proposal can be considered approved, if more than half of the full members (50%+1) have approved by e-mail or fax. The members shall still convene personally at least once a year at an Annual Meeting.
- According to the amendments, the AM does not have to discuss the issue of membership fee annually.
- The AM shall elect only one minute taker and one certifier (instead of two) for making and certifying the minutes of the meeting.
- Now it has become the jurisdiction of the Working Groups to elect/dismiss their Chair. The Working Group decides about the joining to the WG, it develops its Work Programme, which is endorsed by the Annual Meeting.

The members unanimously adopted all the amendments of the Articles of association by open voting.

Adoption of the Work Programme 2007

The participants had worked on the Work Programme 2007 of CEEWEB on 29 September before the AM. At the AM the members looked through the document, discussed the outstanding issues and unanimously adopted it by open voting. (Please see the separate Work Programme of CEEWEB for 2007.)

Long term strategy for CEEWEB

Michael Meyer proposed the development of an internal and an external strategy for CEEWEB. The internal strategy would be used by the CEEWEB Office and would not be published. It would serve as an "emergency plan" in case the CEEWEB network does not function and it would give the CEEWEB staff the directions in all thematic areas. The external strategy would determine the future directions of work in thematic areas for the whole Network, developed by the Network. While the Board, the Advisory Committee and the Supervisory Committee could work on a first draft, it could be later discussed at the AM and the completed document could be put on the website.

Though the members and the CEEWEB Office generally agreed with the proposal, there was some confusion about the internal and external strategies and more participants questioned the need for an internal strategy.

After some discussions the participants also agreed that the strategy should be developed in the most democratic way, which also includes personal discussions at the next AM.

The AM unanimously adopted the following proposal: the AM gives a mandate to the Board and the Advisory Committee to discuss a Strategy for the whole CEEWEB Network, and they shall have prepared a first draft by the end of the second Board-Advisory Committee meeting.

Travel reimbursement at the AM

Considering the decreasing participation during the four-day meeting in Budapest, and that some members have not stayed until the AM though they have indicated so in the registration form, Michael Meyer pointed out a previous decision: the next time travel reimbursement will only be provided for those, who stay until the end of the AM.

Closing of the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was closed on 30 September by Michael Meyer, outgoing Vice-President of CEEWEB.

The Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB) is an international network of NGOs in the Central and Eastern European region. The mission of the network is the conservation of the biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.