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## CEEweb Narrative Report 2018

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 organisations from 17 countries, who actively work in the CEE region. While covering a broad range of European and regional policies in pursuing its mission, CEEweb especially focuses on Natura 2000, green infrastructure, tourism, EU budget and related advocacy and awareness raising actions. The work of the network is guided by the CEEweb Board led by a new president Peter Olajos, former green politician and MEP.

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

### **Natura 2000 and biodiversity funding**

CEEweb was actively advocating for good implementation of Nature Directives. During the autumn it launched a massive online communication campaign for strengthening LIFE funding in the post 2020 financial period involving its members.

On 24-27 September CEEweb organised together with EUROSITE the CEEweb Academy titled 'Europe's biodiversity beyond 2020 - Tackling the challenges to achieve targets' focusing on topics like private land conservation, Natura 2000 and adaptive management plans, wetlands and climate change, the value of ecosystem services, nature-based solutions in adapting to climate change.

We continued building non-formal group of supporters, the Friends of Natura 2000 with currently over 50 people from various sectors and countries.

### **Water policies and Natura 2000**

CEEweb organised a roundtable for Polish stakeholders on water and Natura 2000 in Szczecin in November.

CEEweb also participated in the EUWater Conference in Vienna, Austria in September

Linked to the fitness check process of the Water Framework Directive CEEweb launched a social media campaign and reached out to stakeholders in autumn after the first results of the assessment process are published.

## **Green Infrastructure**

CEEweb participates in the Interreg project “[TRANSGREEN](#) - Integrated Transport and Green Infrastructure Planning in the Danube-Carpathian Region for the Benefit of People and Nature” together with 10 Partners from Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania (with CEEweb member Milvus), the Czech Republic and Austria. The project started on 1 January 2017 and lasts until 30 June 2019. The aim of the project is ensuring ecological connectivity in areas where linear infrastructure (motorway and railways) developments are planned. CEEweb is the leader of Work Package 5 focusing on policy integration, as well as Pilot Area Leader for the Hungarian-Slovakian-Ukrainian pilot site under Work Package 4. The project aims toward producing integrated policy measures for the transport sector in the Carpathian region and also for the production of an EIA training package for the same. CEEweb is also involved in a related project called ConnectGREEN, which is concerned with the integrated development of ecological corridors.

## **Cooperation in European forums on biodiversity and green infrastructure**

We were continuing to manage our European Green Infrastructure Practitioners’ Network and Learning Alliance on LinkedIn sharing best practices, case studies and news. CEEweb was also working on expanding its Green Infrastructure hub on [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org), integrating Green Infrastructure to water, health, spatial planning and agriculture and advocate for the inclusion at different sectoral meeting, bilateral discussions and events. It was also collecting case studies on how green infrastructure contributes to improving health.

## **Climate change and agriculture**

We organised a roundtable for farmer organisations in June about climate friendly farming in Hungary together with our member National Society of Conservations - FoE Hungary.

## **Sustainable Tourism**

CEEweb participates in the Interreg project “[INSIGHTS](#) - Integrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies” with 9 other partners from the Danube region. The project has a two and a half year duration starting from 1 January 2017 and running until 30 June 2019. The primary goal of the project is to develop integrated tourism strategies that not only make a region more attractive to tourists but also protect its natural and cultural heritage. As a knowledge provider project partner, CEEweb is primarily involved in the development of state-of-the-art approaches in sustainable tourism through the promotion of eco-conscious and healthy lifestyles amongst visitors and hosts linked to the sustainable tourism offer.

In 2018 CEEweb for Biodiversity continued its work as a knowledge provider partner, published the “[Collecting state-of-the-art good practices](#)” document, contributed to another thematic works and mentored 2 piloting partners at transnational meetings. Next to our tasks in the project we took part in external events and conferences (e.g.: [5th European Ecotourism Conference](#), Tbilisi) to share more information about our achievements and collect more knowledge from another external experts.

## **Sustainability proofing the EU budget**

CEEweb co-led the European [People's Budget](#) campaign, which brought together dozens of European organisations from various sectors calling for sustainability proofing the post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF, the EU Budget cycle) through various sustainability proofing instruments. In January-February CEEweb participated as an expert in the MFF subgroup of the European Multistakeholder Platform, which developed a policy proposal recommending the sustainability proofing of the future EU budget. We launched a joint statement about integrating sustainability in the future MFF, which is signed by dozens of organisations as well as Members of the European Parliament. In May we organised a conference together with Green Budget Europe about sustainable development and the MFF. In autumn we will continue our advocacy actions addressing the national ministries and the European Parliament based on the legislative proposals published by the European Commission in May.

## **Awareness raising and communication**

Go Wild! Stay cultured.

During the summer we launched the [Go Wild! Stay cultured](#). International Nature and Culture Photo Contest within the European Year of Cultural Heritage –2018. We encouraged everyone to share photos showing their interpretation of culture and nature connections e.g. how culture is inspired by nature or what natural places have a value for culture. Sponsors, including CEEweb member BROZ have offered prizes altogether in the value of 1500 EUR. The deadline for submitting photos was the 18<sup>th</sup> November. CEEweb's website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts were the main communications channels used, along with relevant online portals and social media accounts. After the public voting and the selection of the winning films by the jury the winners were announced in December.

## **Networking**

CEEweb enhanced cooperation with SDG Watch Europe through getting elected in the Steering Group, and continued cooperation with BirdLife Europe, European Environmental Bureau, Eurosite, FOEE, IUCN, WWF DCP, WWF policy office, HAND, Justice&Environment, Wetlands International and EUROPARC CEE.

## **Fundraising**

In order to guarantee CEEweb's financial sustainability the office team were constantly following the upcoming funding opportunities. In special, we have submitted in 2018:

- a proposal for Operating Grant to the European Commission for 2019
- an EEA proposal

- An International Visegrad Fund proposal
- Central European Initiative
- Heinrich Böll Foundation proposal
- several EUKI proposals
- 2 DEAR proposals
- LIFE action grant
- Several DTP-Interreg proposals
- 3 Horizon2020 proposals

We have included members inter alia into these applications, namely Balkani Wildlife Society, Brod Ecological Society-BED, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, Latvian Fund for Nature, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Milvus Group, Sunce and more.

### **Human resources**

Changes in CEEweb staff included the resignation of Erzsebet Gergely, who was succeeded by Csaba Mezei as General Secretary. By the end of 2018 all staff members of the past years at least announced departure therefore the team had to undergo a gradual and complete renewal. CEEweb hired new Interreg project coordinators, communications officer, office manager, a financial manager (and two policy officers in the beginning of 2019) and thus the staff includes eight full time and two part time employees. We had several interns and volunteers from various countries (Italy, Hungary, United States, UK, India, China) assisting in our projects.