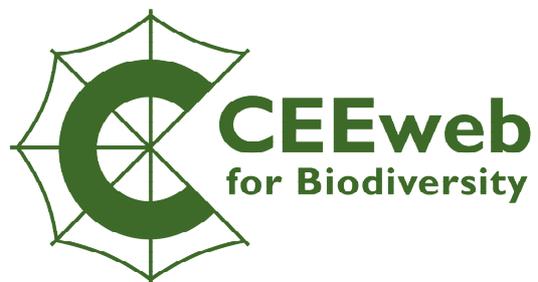


Electronic Newsletter of CEEweb

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Dear Reader,

The new year brings many challenges and new opportunities as usual. The discussions on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework will be crucial for providing the necessary funds for safeguarding ecosystems and their services, but it is just as important, how these funds will be spent. The ongoing conceptual preparation of the 7th Environmental Action Programme will therefore decide how much the EU's environmental agenda is going to the right direction.

But the right approach is not only indispensable in the overarching policy processes, but also in the specific cases. Therefore we pay particular attention to the issues of stakeholder involvement and eligible costs of future LIFE projects, avoiding previous mistakes in future Natura 2000 financing, as well as to the scope of the EU initiative on no net loss of ecosystems and their services, just to name a few.

Please take a moment to look at the current issue of our electronic newsletter, and visit our upcoming events in Brussels. We are greatly interested to exchange ideas with you in order to advance European environmental policies and implementation!

Enjoy reading!



Klára Hajdu, General Secretary

EU POLICY ISSUES

The 7th Environmental Action Programme

The European Commission adopted the Roadmap for implementing the “Resource Efficiency Flagship Initiative”, which aims for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the EU. While the Roadmap – if all the actions are fully implemented – could contribute to mitigate the negative environmental impacts across the European Union in relative terms, it cannot reduce the total environmental pressures due to the rebound effect. This is the main critique of CEEweb towards the Roadmap, pointing out that it does not include the effective tools and incentive schemes to reach the environmental objectives. While the Roadmap does not provide for an overarching environmental strategy by itself, the EU Environmental Action Programmes (EAP) are serving that aim.

Despite the initial disagreement on the necessity of a new EAP after the current one is about to expire, the consensus seems to have been reached among the Member States, the Commission and the Parliament, that there should be a 7th EAP. This provides a last and important opportunity to develop holistic and effective environmental policies, which can truly deliver the environmental objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Otherwise environmental degradation is expected to continue, undermining economic activities, competitiveness and human wellbeing at the same time.

Read more about the 7th EAP and read CEEweb’s assessment of the Roadmap:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/sustainability/7theap/>
http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Roadmap_RE_CEEweb.pdf

No net loss of ecosystems and their services – how far can we reach?

The EU set the ambitious goal of proposing by 2015 an initiative „to ensure there is no net loss of ecosystems and their services (e.g. through the compensation and offsetting schemes)”. It is clearly the easiest way to approach the no net loss concept in a limiting definition: to focus on direct conservation losses and offset them through ecosystem restoration. But how can we tackle the indirect conservation losses of development projects? The increasing pressures and drivers that emerge? A new highway does not only destroy the ecosystems on the construction site – it also generates traffic and thus contributes to climate change, it also makes remote areas more accessible and contributes to rural depopulation, as well as to changing agricultural practices and land abandonment. CEEweb aims to focus also on these aspects, in order to ensure that the concept of “no net loss” contributes to maintaining and restoring ecosystem services on EU and on global levels – as originally aimed in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Read more on CEEweb’s work on the no net loss initiative:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/biodiversity-policies-and-conventions/eu-level/nonetloss/>

Commission proposes new LIFE for 2014-2020 – biodiversity losing out

Among the few nature conservation financing tools, the EU LIFE-Nature programme has been the most successful instrument contributing significantly to the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy and international obligations. This successful tool ceases to exist in 2014 as it has been until now. The *Commission proposal* (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/about/beyond2013.htm#proposal>) for the new LIFE for the period 2014-2020 projects fundamental changes. The most important ones are that the EU co-financing rate will be up to 70-80%; a sub-programme will be designated to fighting climate change; and large-scale so-called Integrated Projects will be introduced. At the same time, also some unfavourable changes can be expected: the VAT and permanent staff costs would be ineligible, and there would not be differentiated co-financing rate for priority species and habitats.

The proposal – if it remains as it is now – will affect most negatively the countries submitting the most LIFE projects targeting priority species and habitats including Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia. Greece has prepared a *study evaluating the Greek LIFE projects and possible effects of the new LIFE proposal* (http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/LIFE-Assessment_Greece.pdf). Civil organisations, including CEEweb took a position on the position expressing their concerns about the Commission's proposal on the new LIFE.

Join us if you think that the new LIFE should be improved! Contact us to learn more about our opinion and experiences.

Read the joint *NGO position* (<http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/NGO-position-on-LIFE-2014-2020-v-22-Feb-2012.pdf>).

Financing Nature

Natura 2000, the guardian of the EU's biodiversity, preserves more than 1000 protected sites. Besides ensuring the conservation of natural values, Natura 2000 sites have additional benefits: they are estimated to bring at least 200-300 billion EUR/year, which means every Euro invested into them brings 30-50 Euro in addition. However, like many other things in life, it does not come for free – adequate financing now and in the future essentially determines the prospect of Natura 2000 and the habitats and species to be conserved.

To provide lessons learnt from the recent financial framework, CEEweb collected and analysed sixteen case studies from five CEE countries. Read about the success of the Polish Operational Programme's Axis V in implementing effectively 150 conservation cases from 'only' 90 million EUR, an innovative taxation system in Bulgaria supporting biodiversity in the value of 250.000 EUR, and the cooperation among various stakeholders in Lithuania and Slovakia for the sake of biodiversity.

Read more about financing biodiversity:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/working-groups/natura-2000/resources/cases/>

Boreal biogeographic process on Natura 2000 management

Last year the European Commission started a new biogeographic process on the management of Natura 2000. The reason behind the idea was that as the Natura 2000 designation is soon completed, the main focus should be shifted on enhancement of the conservation status of Natura 2000 species and habitats, and to assess whether the actual management of sites enables favourable conservation status (FCS). Besides achieving FCS, the aim of the process is to achieve coherence in Natura 2000 management, monitoring and reporting across the EU. Thus, the need for sharing expertise and experience and strengthening trans-boundary co-operation are also among the main objectives.

This process can make a crucial contribution to appropriately managing Natura 2000 species and habitats and thus to conserve European natural values. Thus CEEweb closely follows up on the process and coordinates NGO input from the new MSs on behalf of the European Habitats Forum. The boreal biogeographic region is the first in process, the boreal Seminar is expected to take place on 28-29 May.

Read more about the process:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/biodiversity-policies-and-conventions/eu-level/biogeographic-process-on-natura-2000/ngo-input-to-the-new-biogeographic-process/>

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Triumph or default? - possible outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference

The world is facing emerging global environmental as well as social challenges. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in June 2012 aims to address these very complex issues. So far, unfortunately not much interest from UN governments has been shown towards the event, which poses a huge obstacle to achieve its desired and very essential goals. Therefore, it is crucial now that decision-makers start to get involved immediately and contribute to reach global agreement, since only real and ambitious commitments can guide humanity out of the current environmental, social and economic crises. CEEweb, along with other NGOs is advocating for strong commitments on reducing resource use, ensuring social justice and transforming production and consumption patterns for the transition towards sustainability.

Read more at:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/work-areas/priority-areas/biodiversity-policies-and-conventions/global-level/>

Shoot Green - The First International Green-Go Short-film Contest and Festival

Three organizations, CEEweb for Biodiversity, Diverziti Association and Greenpeace Hungary decided that it was time to turn film making green. As a result, Green-Go was born to raise awareness on actual environmental and conservation issues and to inspire people to realize their ideas on the screen in green. As a reply to the contest call, we received in three categories more than fifty different shorts from eight countries from almost all continents. If you also want to check out through youngsters' animation and vivid pictures what will happen if we do not conserve our forest biodiversity, how we should create community gardens or what a fridge can tell about resource use, visit the festival's web page on greengofest.eu.

PUBLICATION

Borrowing services from nature – Methodologies to evaluate ecosystem services focusing on Hungarian case studies

During formulating and implementing policies, policy-makers should fully consider that natural and socio-economic systems work together inseparably. For developing proper decisions, the newest publication of CEEweb would give a helping hand. This bunch of findings from different scientific institutions reveals proper measures and models to evaluate natural values, as well as how their integration can serve appropriate basis for making right decisions and their possible environmental and social consequences.

Read the publication at:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/2537/new-ceeweb-publication-for-helping-to-develop-proper-decisions-for-nature-and-for-humanity/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Conference: How to achieve the 'restoration targets' - Opportunities and challenges for Public-Private Partnership: Building on the Experiences of the Extractive Industry

27 March, Brussels

The Conference co-hosted by Global Nature Fund and CEEweb will follow up on the global and European targets on restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020. This event will bring together government representatives, decision makers from EU institutions, private sector and civil society in order to look into new ways of utilizing public-private partnerships to contribute to this ambitious goal.

Read more about the event:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/events/2012-03>

Possibilities for integrating land management into the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the 7th EAP – Conference on the Visegrad experience

27 March, Brussels, Balassi Institute

Green Infrastructure, land use and the assessment of ecosystem services are high on the agenda now, acknowledging the fact that unsustainable land-use practices are one of the main causes of biodiversity loss. CEEweb's project titled as 'Conservation of Natural Heritage of Visegrad Countries Through Saving Biodiversity In The Landscape' has aimed to focus on these issues and assessed the possibilities and shortcomings of protecting national green infrastructure elements in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Based on national examples it is our goal to offer recommendations for relevant and effective EU and national policies.

The closing conference in Brussels will present the outcomes of our assessment with their relevance to the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the 7th EAP. The event will bring together public officers, policy makers, NGOs, players from the academic world from Brussels and the Visegrad countries - active in the field of land use - to discuss experience and inspire new ways of thinking for a sustainable land management in light of various EU initiatives. The conference will be held back to back with the opening of the '**Mirror to the world**' (<http://www.tukorbenavilag.hu/introduction>) exhibition, which largely reflects on our actual topic and further questions on sustainability.

Read more:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/2478/possibilities-of-land-management-integration-into-relevant-eu-policies/>

Mirror to the World - Hungarian environmental culture will be introduced in Brussels!

27 March – 23 April, Brussels

Sustainable development and human nature are the themes of the "Mirror to the World" exhibition, which - thanks to the invitation of the Balassi Institute in Brussels - is going to travel abroad now for the first time, after a three-year-tour in Hungary. The one-month interactive exhibition, which was created by ZOFI Hungarian Green Roots and Cellux Group, will be held on the occasion of Earth Day and can be seen in Brussels from March 27 up to April 23.

The "Mirror to the World" exhibition is an interactive adventure tour along the path of sustainability discovering issues about overpopulation, climate change, food miles, water footprint by asking questions like 'How many kilometres does our breakfast travel?' 'How big is our ecological footprint?' or 'What will we do for the sake of our future?'. The answers will now be

presented in Brussels, using the educational tools that can be found in Hungary; and showing how drama pedagogy can be used in environmental education and in shaping outlooks. The organisers are also planning to provide a taste of Hungarian culture, through presentations, wine tastings and distinctive Hungarian flavours.

Further information:

<http://www.tukorbenavilag.hu/introduction>

Workshop- Doing business in a resource constrained world: possible solutions within the EU policy framework

March, Brussels

The upcoming workshop in Brussels aims to provide a platform for businesses and NGOs to share ideas and policy proposals related to the challenge of resource scarcity and biodiversity loss in relation to business operation. In order to preserve competitiveness and respond to the changing environment, the right policies should create the right incentives for businesses and the public alike. The workshop will also identify possibilities for business-NGO cooperation and finding common goals and interests.

Read soon more about the event:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/events/2012-03>

Conference on Achieving Global Justice in the Green Economy

15 March, Brussels

Global debates up to Rio+20 have been stressing the importance of global social equity; however, no concrete proposal has been developed so far to realize this aim. Therefore, this event gathers experts from different fields to share their ideas and to find joint agreement on how to implement the fair share of the natural resources worldwide.

Read more at:

<http://www.ceeweb.org/event/achieving-global-justice-in-the-green-economy/>

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