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Public benefit report on activities in 2011

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 69 members from 18 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 within 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 three members, and the International Advisory Committee comprising three regular members as well as the WG Chairs.

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 2011

Global and Pan-European cooperation for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development

Global processes

The Rio+20 Conference in 2012 can be a milestone in achieving a global deal for transition to green economy, where ecological limits and social concerns need to be addressed. CEEweb provided input into the preparations through sending comments to the UNGA members before the Rio+20 debate in June, participating at the UNEP regional consultation meeting in September and it is drafting comments to the draft official conference outcomes.

As a contribution to the International Year of Forests CEEweb developed the TEMATEA issue based modul on forests to support the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Besides CEEweb prepared a submission on Innovative Financing Mechanisms (IFMs) for biodiversity on the sustainability aspects of IFMs to the CBD Secretariat.

Advocating for Pan-European cooperation in resource and land use

CEEweb has been active for many years in the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, being an observer member in its Council. In 2011 CEEweb prepared a proposal for the June PEBLDS Council meeting for increasing synergies among Multilateral Environmental Agreements in a holistic approach linked to resource use and land use, two main pressures behind biodiversity loss. The policy proposal received positive reactions from various governments with the good potential to turn into real action on Pan-European level.

Besides CEEweb provided input to the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Astana in September, highlighting the need for resource capping for a transition to a green economy and sectoral integration focusing on water at a roundtable.

Supporting European biodiversity policy formulation

Working with the Hungarian and Polish EU Presidencies

CEEweb organised an NGO consultation meeting for influencing the work of the Hungarian EU Presidency related to biodiversity conservation in January, and prepared NGO recommendations and thematic positions on resource efficiency, Natura 2000 financing and Green infrastructure. It also provided assistance to the expert workshop on Innovative Financing Mechanisms organised by the Hungarian

Presidency in March. CEEweb also prepared recommendations to the Polish Presidency reflecting on the most important issues from biodiversity and sustainability point of view.

Post 2010 Biodiversity Policy formulation

CEEweb formulated position on the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020 together with the EHF and lobbied for the strong endorsement of the Strategy in the Council through written positions as well as bilateral consultations before the June and December Environment Council meetings.

Green Infrastructure and land use

CEEweb channelled its coordinated position and national experiences to the expert Working Group on Green Infrastructure of the European Commission, and started a project with its members from Visegrád countries on assessing the national situation and providing recommendations for national and EU level.

In October an expert workshop was organised in Hungary, where different proposals for addressing land use also in light of EU policies were discussed.

Climate change and biodiversity

Results of UNFCCC COP16 in Cancun were evaluated, and CEE NGO position prepared on it and disseminated among EU level and national decision makers, as well as towards the public through different media channels.

National level activities are still ongoing. Based on the work done in previous years, national level policy work started with members in five countries to lobby for ecosystem based climate change adaptation and mitigation. CEEweb also started national level discussions with the help of its involved members to lobby for using the wilderness approach also as a way for addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Following up on last year activities, multi stakeholder seminars were organized in two microregions in Romania on ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, where possibilities for climate friendly land use and spatial planning were discussed.

CITES Working Group

Monitoring wildlife trade in CEE

The CITES WG continued to monitor the internet commerce of CITES-listed species in CEE countries based on the CEEweb methodology developed in 2008. The results will be presented in autumn.

“TAKE A STAND” project

The CITES WG initiated strategic cooperation with CITES Management Authorities in CEE countries in order to better articulate CEE positions at global and EU CITES negotiations, and started to prepare the first meeting to take place in November.

Natura 2000 Working Group

The CEEweb Natura 2000 WG met in July to discuss relevant policy issues, such as designation, management, green infrastructure and land use, as well as ongoing and planned WG activities.

Representing CEE positions at European level

CEEweb is regularly represented in the EC Natura 2000 Management Working Group and the Subgroup on Management of Farmland in Natura 2000 by its members, attended the Nature Directors Meeting in Hungary, and the meetings of the European Habitats Forum. CEEweb members participate in all EHF subgroups dealing with specific topics. It prepared a bilateral meeting between the European Commission and CEEweb members on biodiversity and Natura 2000 related topics scheduled for November.

Financing Natura 2000 and ecosystems

CEEweb participated in the online consultations on Natura 2000 financing and Life+ organised by the European Commission and called for sufficient funding for Natura 2000 and biodiversity in a targeted way and in the context of the CAP reform and EU budget through written positions.

It started a new project to collect good and bad examples on Natura 2000 financing and provide recommendations for MSs and the Commission when preparing the national Prioritised Action Frameworks and financing regulations.

Management of Natura 2000

CEEweb followed up the discussions on the biogeographic type seminars on Natura 2000 management and prepared a preparatory meeting for Baltic NGOs and other Natura 2000 WG members in November. With its Polish member, Naturalists Club Poland CEEweb started a pilot process on involving NGOs in Natura 2000 management planning.

Emerald seminars

CEEweb followed up the preparation on the biogeographic type seminars on the designation of the Emerald network in the West Balkan and prepared a preparatory meeting for Balkan NGOs and other Natura 2000 WG members to share experiences scheduled for the end of October.

Rural Development Working Group

Channelling CEE positions on the Common Agricultural Policy

CEEweb took part in the debate on the future of the CAP through the EEB Agriculture WG and by participating in the online consultation on the CAP post-2013 in January and September and formulating positions towards Commissioners and MSs before and after the publishing of the CAP proposals in October.

Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG)

The STWG started to prepare a methodology on assessing national tourism strategies from sustainability point of view, which will be tested in a pilot country in 2011.

Policy Working Group

The CEEweb Policy Working Group had its 6th meeting in May, where the energy quota proposal was discussed as a possible policy tool to deliver the aims of the EU Resource Efficiency Flagship Initiative. The Board and International Advisory Committee endorsed the policy tool in July as a way to achieve resource cap and address the related drivers behind biodiversity loss.

Resource Cap Coalition

The Resource Cap Coalition (RCC) kicked-off in 2010 with the primary aim to advocate for limiting resource use towards decision makers. CEEweb organised a Green Week satellite event in Budapest in May to reveal the policy context of increasing resource efficiency, challenges and opportunities of implementation and the need and possible alternatives for limiting resource use.

The policy options for addressing resource use are being discussed among RCC members.

Awareness raising

CEEweb launched Green-Go Fest, a competition for short films on consumption, agriculture and forest together with Diverziti association and Greenpeace Hungary. The best films will be presented in December in Budapest at a film festival and all videos will be available on the festival's webpage.

It organised three forums on the results of the TEEB study and integrating ecosystem services into decision making in Hungary, addressing the business, decision makers and young people.

It published the proceedings of the Green Week satellite event on resource efficiency and resource use limitation.

Capacity-building, networking and communication

Capacity building

The staff of the Policy Office participated in a team building and training on assertive communication in August, and they continued the individual and team performance evaluation and bilateral feedbacks within the Policy Office.

Networking

Policy Office staff organized local visits to 12 member organizations to strengthen cooperation and provide trainings and discussions on CEEweb policy and NGO proactivity and ways to increase success in the NGO field. The set up of the National Focal Point system started.

Internship programme

The internship programme continued in 2011. One intern from the University of Georgia supported the Policy Office in summer, and seven additional Hungarian interns helped the work of the Policy Office throughout the year.

Communication

CEEweb kept members updated with EU and national policy developments through the mailing lists and the CEEweb website (www.ceeweb.org). We issued two 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 Twitter and Facebook. The restructuring of the CEEweb website started.

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.