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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Group of Experts on
Protected Areas and Ecological Networks
/
Groupe d'experts sur les zones protégées
et les réseaux écologiques**

4th meeting/4e réunion
18-19 September/septembre 2012
Council of Europe/Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France

**Reports and Contributions by Governments on the establishment of the
Pan-European Ecological networks (PEEN)**

**Rapports et contributions des Gouvernements sur la mise en
Œuvre du Réseau écologique paneuropéen (PEEN)**

*Compilation prepared by
The Directorate of Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity*

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1. Armenia / Arménie

Report prepared by: Ms Hasmik Ghalachyan, Ministry of Environment Protection

On the establishment of National Ecological Network in Armenia and on implemented works to join PEEN.

The following works were implemented on the establishment of National Ecological Network in Armenia and on joining PEEN. RA Government N 21 protocol decree of May 21 “On the recruitment of natural monuments approved list, adjustment of protection zone areas and 2010-2012 years projects of land separation” was developed and approved.

Two new National parks were founded. “Lake Arpi”, “Arevik” and 4 State reserves: “Jermuk hydrological”, “Hanqavan hydrological”, “Zikatar” and “Zangezur”. For this purpose the following decisions were developed and approved: RA Government decree N405 of April 16, 2009 on establishing “Lake Arpi” National Park, and on approving the charters of “Lake Arpi” National Park and “Lake Arpi” National Park state Non Commercial Organization. RA Government decree N 1209 of October 15 on establishing “Arevik” National Park, on approving Charters of “Arevik” National Park and “Arevik National park” State Non-Commercial Organization.

RA Government decree N 1063 of September 17 on establishing “Jermuk hydrological” and “Hanqavan hydrological” State sanctuaries and approving their charters. RA Government decree N 1187-N of October 15 on establishing “Zangezur” state sanctuary and on making amendments in RA May 30, 2002 N 926 decrees. RA Government decree N N 380-N of April 8 on establishing “Zikatar” State sanctuary and approving “Zikatar” State sanctuary’s description of borders, size of the area and on approving the charters and making amendments in RA September 26, 2002 N 1587 decree.

Area sizes and borders of a number of Protected Areas were clarified and approved:

- By RA Government decree N 500-Ն of 23.04. 2009 on approving “Khosrov Forest” State reserve 2010-2014 management plan and borders description.
- By RA Government decree N 684 of 18.08.2009 on approving “Jrvezh” forest-park border description and size of the area.
- By RA Government decree N 324 of 31.03.2011 on approving “Goravan sands” State Sanctuary border description and plan.

Establishing plans of “Gnishik” and “Khustup” State sanctuaries are carried out within the framework of Developing protected areas system in Armenia UNDP-GEF medium- sized project.

Within the framework of the same project works on developing new law on “Specially protected nature areas” is carried out and development works of legal acts on ensuring the enforcement of new RA law on “Specially protected natural areas”. Within the framework of “Protected areas work plan” UNDP/GEF. Supporting Country Action on the CBD Programme research on the distribution of targeted species of biodiversity, reveal of representation of targeted species in Protected Areas and mapping have been carried out throughout Armenia. By the financing of KfW bank the establishment of biosphere reserve on the basis of “Shikahogh” State reserve in the southern Armenia is being implemented.

Within the EU Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats Republic of Armenia submitted an application to the secretariat of the Convention to grant “Khosrov Forest” State Reserve European Diploma of Protected Areas /first in the region/. During the meeting of the “Group of specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas” that took place in February 2012, in conformity with the procedures an appropriate report was submitted, which was discussed by above mentioned experts and as a result the application was approved unanimously.

In April 2012, a workshop with the participation appropriate group of specialists of EU and stakeholders to award “Khosrov forest” state reserve European Diploma for Protected Areas was organized.

The project on the “Establishment of national ecological network of protected areas in Armenia” is included in the list of submitted projects (6 point) for GEF-5 Funding under STAR Allocations in the GEF-5 “National Portfolio: document. Within the framework of the project, “The implementation of a program of identification of the potential Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs) of the Emerald Network in Armenia for 2009-2011” works have been carried out to establish Emerald Network in Armenia.

2. Croatia / Croatie

Ecological networks and connectivity

Report prepared by: Ms Ana Štrbenac, M.Biol., M.Sc. (Mng. of Protected Areas)

The great biodiversity of Croatia is at the same time a valuable asset and a significant conservation challenge. Large carnivores which inhabit Croatia: grey wolf, brown bear and Eurasian lynx, reflect fully such a state of play. These animals not only need vast areas for a living, but also a prey base that is often an object of human interest, such as game and livestock. Social context should also not be forgotten; fear, superstition and related human attitudes are deeply rooted since medieval time.

On the verge of the accession to the European Union, the responsibility of Croatia to preserve this valuable part of biodiversity becomes even more significant. The transboundary feature of large carnivore populations also requires strong transboundary cooperation and management. In 2007, Croatia's Government promulgated the Ordinance on ecological network that, amongst other, designated sites important for conservation of all of three large carnivores. During the preparation of ecological network, lot of efforts has been invested in site selection that will enable adequate representativity and connectivity of important part of large carnivore habitats.

The need to maintain integrity of large carnivores' habitats, as well as habitats of other mammals, was already recognised in the beginning of 2000s. Namely, during last 10 years Croatia has built the major highways connecting inland and coastal part of the country. These roads are mostly concentrated in the large carnivores' distribution area and the prospects of their constructions represented imminent threat from a very start. However, due to efforts of Croatian experts and understanding of relevant institutions, the impacts have been mitigated as much as possible. Tunnels, viaducts, green bridges and other green infrastructures were constructed so to ensure sufficient roads permeability.

In addition, as one of the results of the environmental impact assessment procedure, the monitoring of highways impact was prescribed as one of the obligation of investors and in broader sense this was also one of conditions of the European bank that ensured loan for highways construction. Croatian experts have monitored animal crossings for years, along with human disturbance and other features that could give an insight in crossings effectiveness and subsequently improve their functioning. Furthermore, based on the Nature Protection Law, Croatia adopted a specific by-law on wild animals' crossings, to legally support effective conservation. Several lessons have been learnt so far. Fore mostly, structures where animals can cross the roads are important, animals use the ones properly placed and constructed and a set of standards need to be followed; EIA, inspection during construction, monitoring the use, monitoring the mortality and form of legal protection.

Habitat loss and fragmentation is one of the major threats to European's biodiversity and networking through protection of areas and other green infrastructure is the way forward to ensure maintenance of biodiversity in a good condition. Road crossings in Croatia are one of the examples of good practice that could be applicable to other situations where human interventions threat the species and habitats integrity. This is also a small, but important piece of national endeavours which contribute to achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as EU 2010 – 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets.

3. Republic of Moldova / République de Moldova

Report prepared by: Ms Veronica Josu (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova) and Dr Alexei Andreev (BIOTICA Ecological Society)

1. Initiatives/projects implemented during the last 5 years

Development of Manual on creation of ecological networks; 2010 (BIOTICA Ecological Society, supported by National Environmental Fund). The Manual (draft by-law) includes: 1) Lawful and normative basis for establishing of ecological networks; 2) Organizational principles - definitions of elements, territorial structure and structural subordination, planning and establishing order etc; 3) Forming of informational support; 4) Planning and assessing of territories (Core Areas and Zoning, principles and ways of designation and creation of corridors, requirements to corridor plantings, grassland reconstruction and designation of restoration areas); 5) Procedures of territorial planning; 6) Order of assessing of hierarchical level of eco-network elements and of setting up of these in the field; 7) Annexes: Requirements to description of GIS layers and Lists of (i) recommended species for planting in corridors and (ii) of aggressive and alien species unsuitable for planting during ecological reconstruction.

Management Scenario Development for the Unguri – Holosnita New Ramsar Site and Awareness Rising on the Ramsar Convention Wise Use Policy; 2007 (BIOTICA Ecological Society, supported by Ramsar Secretariat grant). Local sector of ecological network has been planned (primary designation of corridor elements, planning and zoning of Core Areas) and Management plan for Ramsar Site 1500 developed.

Common building of the future for the internationally recognized integral zone of the Lower Dniester and upstream”; 2009-2010 (BIOTICA Ecological Society, “Confidence Building Measures” program, supported by European Union under umbrella of UNDP-Moldova). Local sector of ecological network has been planned (primary designation of corridor elements, planning and zoning of Core Areas) and Management plan for Ramsar Site 1316 developed. Study and designation of Core Areas in Transdnestrria had been done and data incorporated in GIS of National Ecological Network (project described below).

Development of the National Ecological Network of Moldova as part of the Pan-European Ecological Network, with emphasis on transboundary cooperation; 2009 – May 2012 (BIOTICA Ecological Society under co-ordination of the International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN, supported by Norwegian Government). The overall goal of the Project is development of information-technological tools for creation of the National Ecological Network (NEN) integrating biological and landscape diversity concerns into the economic sectors, responding to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to conserve biological and landscape diversity in Moldova and embedding the Network in the framework of Pan-European Ecological Network.

The project provided with first assessment of connectivity of corridors of the international importance within Moldova limits. The next results are calculated:

- Dniester Corridor:
 - linear integral sectors – 337.6 km,
 - sectors of stepping stones – 113.1 km,
 - problem areas for planning – 178.3 km;
- Prut Corridor:
 - linear integral sectors – 465.6 km,
 - sectors of stepping stones – 191.6 km,
 - problem areas for planning – 26 km;
- northern Prut-Dniestrian corridor (approximately):
 - stepping stones only – 95.5 km.

Database sheets on highest plants, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, water invertebrates and vulnerable insects in the identified and probable 151 Core Areas of Moldova are prepared. Data coverage in major dimensions reached about 91% for totality of studied areas in Moldova and about 90% for identified core areas (about 26% for 62 Cores Areas in 2001, 30% for 82 Cores Areas in 2007). Approximate equality of these two figures demonstrates:

- (a) unbiased style of assessment – the recognized core areas are not identified due to better data coverage;
- (b) huge project contribution to knowledge about the most biodiversity-valuable sites of Moldova.

GIS of the National Ecological Network is created and developed. It incorporates the basic geographical layers of GIS (hydrological network, roads, settlements, forests, and grasslands). Thematic layers of contours include: biogeographical districts, landscape territorial units, Core Areas, NATURA 2000 habitats, geosystemic buffers, corridors, CORINE Biotops in pilot area, zoning of Core Areas in two Ramsar Sites. Thematic layers of the point estimates include palaeontological points, archaeological points and layers of biodiversity values for the all-taxonomical groups under considerations including total numbers of species and numbers of species of various conservational concerns.

Contours of probable Core Areas of the National Ecological Network were prepared as well as of those areas that could not be designated in this quality being attributed to geosystemic buffers of the NEN and, partly, may be further recognized as Core Areas of local ecological networks in administrative sectors of the NEN. It should be mentioned that all these contours were justified as possible aiming at maximal accuracy. GIS development was done at the work scale 1:50 000 with digital output at scale 1:100 000.

Assessment of the probable core areas in Moldova was carried out; now 113 Core Areas of National Ecological Network are recognised including 9 ones of international importance, 13 – of national and 91 – of local importance. Five core areas of the international importance are situated within three recognized Ramsar Sites, or site under considerations, or probable Ramsar Site; two other such core areas support outstanding plant species concentrations mainly of steppe origin; two areas besides high biodiversity maintain outstanding concentrations of archaeological findings.

The assessment is based on upgraded criteria system (created in 2001: Concept of National Ecological Network, BIOTICA Ecological Society) including with regard to:

- re-scaling of representative reference data set;
- corrected and updated Operational Lists of threatened species and ecosystems (plants, mammals, insects and bird species taking into account the current faunal changes and new findings in Moldova, endemic plant communities);
- incorporation of considerations on species of international lists (Bern Convention, Habitat Directive, Bird Directive, IUCN Red List, etc);
- NATURA-2000 habitats classification adapted to regional biogeographical reality and, following the classification, primary identification of habitats of European importance (126 units).

Ranging and analysis of possibilities to use lists of threatened species (Habitat Directive, IUCN Red List, Bern Convention, European Red Books) registered in Moldova in the criteria system of the NEN Concept were done for that, and the new criteria are introduced as the result.

Thus, criteria system and the NEN concept of 2001 are developed significantly; criteria system will be stable now that allows preparing the instruction on evaluation of core areas. Set of maps demonstrates, among other, the most significant diverse indicators (numbers of species: Plants – CR-VU under Moldovan law; Insects – CR-NT of IUCN Red List species; Amphibians together with Reptiles – of Operational List, Mammals – of Bern Convention, Birds - of Bonn Convention, Insects – of Habitat Directive Annex-II, Mammals – of Habitat Directive Annex-IV etc.

Final project outputs

Directory of the National Ecological Network Key Elements (Box 1) includes descriptions of 125 Core Areas in Moldova and in the cross-boundary zone in Ukraine.

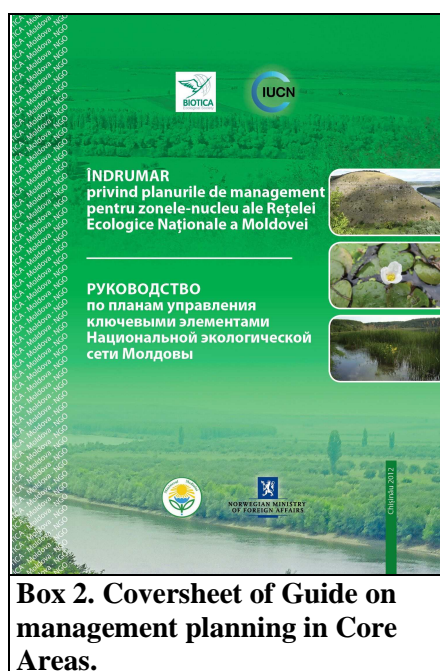


Box 1. Coversheet of Directory.

Nine Indicative GIS-maps had been prepared: **1.** Core areas of the National Ecological Network (NEN): major biodiversity values; **2.** Core areas of the NEN: target species; **3.** The NEN core areas in support of landscape diversity; **4.** The NEN core areas on the background of anthropogenic pressure upon environment; **5.** Pilot zoning of the NEN core areas; **6.** Pilot implementation of CORINE BIOTOPS classification within the NEN; **7.** Pilot identification of NATURA-2000 habitats in Moldova; **8.** Assessment of the integrity of major NEN corridors. **9.** Detailed map of cross-boundary eco-network sector at north of Moldova. These maps are approved for publication by relevant body of State Cadastre.

Guide on management plans for key elements of ecological network. The Guide (Box 2) is prepared incorporating important experience of BIOTICA's experts in biodiversity studies, management planning for Ramsar Sites, environmental law, knowledge about landscapes and agriculture, High Nature Value farmland and state of nature

conservation in Moldova as well as about state and obstacles of implementation of National program on establishing the National Ecological Network.



Box 2. Coversheet of Guide on management planning in Core Areas.

Information set for decision-makers. The set (Box 3) incorporates next brief sections: Importance of National Ecological Network, Economic justification of the necessity of ecological network creation (information about economic

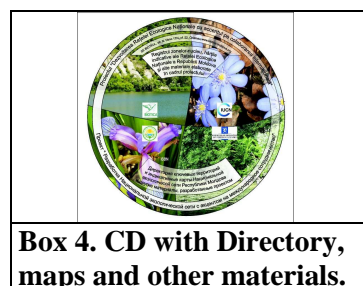


Box 3. Coversheet of Information set for decision-makers.

costs and losses related to creation or non-creation of the NEN; cost of 10-years ecosystem services was found three times more than expenses of the NEN creation, ecological

restoration and physical building corridors), Ecological

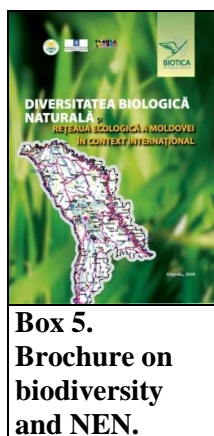
network and climate changes, notions on legal basis of National Ecological Network, list of Environmental Conventions to which Moldova is Part.



Box 4. CD with Directory, maps and other materials.

All these products (the Indicative maps based on GIS, the Directory of the National Ecological Network Key Elements, the Guide on management plans for key elements of ecological network, and the Information set for decision-makers) are published on CD-disc (Box 4).

A brochure “Natural biological diversity and Ecological Network of Moldova in the international context” has been published. The brochure (Box 5) is addressed to decision-makers and wide public aiming at more awareness about valuable biodiversity of the country in spite of its modest size and high level of transformation. Among other, the brochure includes: ranking of Moldova’s biodiversity among other European countries (medium level), explanation of economical value of biodiversity, notion of ecological network, brief on international legislation related to ecological networks and PEEN; etc.

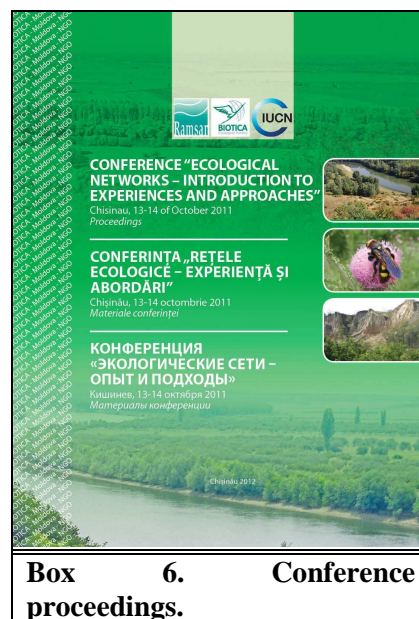


Box 5.
Brochure on biodiversity and NEN.

Brief of the Guide on management planning in Core Areas and the Project developments – a coloured booklet in English.

Collection of articles – conference proceedings (Box 6). Set of articles is published as the result of international symposium held in Chisinau (October 2011). It includes 13 articles of specialists from Moldova, 4 – of specialists from Romania, 6 – experts from Ukraine including 4 of them from boundary oblasts, and 2 articles from Russian Federation. As the result conference proceedings demonstrate very well the state-of-art in

development of Pan-European Ecological Network in North Black Sea region and Eastern Europe, achievements and difficulties in different spheres of relevant activities, methodology and planning approaches (“bottom-up”, “top-down” and some hybrid variants) with their advantages and shortcomings.



Box 6. **Conference proceedings.**

Project recommendations to Government. The recommendations presented to the Steering Committee at the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova.

2. Recent or on-going cooperation with neighbouring countries/transboundary initiatives

The project “Development of the National Ecological Network of Moldova as part of the Pan-European Ecological Network, with emphasis on transboundary cooperation” involved Ukrainian experts from Chernivetska oblast. Data-basing on highest plants, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles in probable 20 core areas of Ukraine was done for Ukrainian part of the PEEN cross-boundary sector at north of Moldova. One of these core areas has cross-boundary location.

Criteria for assessments of biodiversity in Cernivetskaia oblast were drafted basing:

- on the information in datasheets provided by the Ukrainian experts, on the one hand;
- using scaling of biodiversity data of the National Ecological Network of Moldova as the example for probable similar scales; and
- taking into account some special features of biodiversity in the area under considerations.

During the co-ordination meeting with the Ukrainian experts, these criteria were co-agreed and final assessment of the sites under considerations done. As the result it is revealed that Ukrainian part covered by map of cross-boundary sector of the Pan-European Ecological Network incorporates 13 Core Areas including those of the international importance – one, of the national importance – two and 10 – of the local importance.

Thus, applicability of methodology of the National Ecological Network of Moldova is successfully tested in a part of Ukraine.

A number of Core Areas along the Prut River were recognized as the target areas for cross-boundary cooperation of Moldova and Romania taking into account that ecosystem integrity and level of biodiversity are supported by both banks of the Prut River.

National program for establishing the National Ecological Network is set up through Government Decision (August 2011).

3. Main concerns and challenges identified at national level in relation to PEEN's main objectives

Lack of national financial capacity on the background of economic crisis and heavy drought of second part of 2011 – 2012.

Lack of mechanism for financing of Protected Areas System.

Lack of institutional capacity for implementation of National Ecological Network and adaptation to climate change.

Spread in governmental circles of idea of “sustainable economic development” at the expense of decreasing nature resources due to poor nature resource management and distorted market.

Pattern of European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument is low supportive for solving the crucial environmental challenges related to life resources - biodiversity.

Decreasing / disappearing support of European donors to activities in favour of biodiversity sustainability – conservation and wise use.

4. Proposals for the Draft Action Plan on the development of PEEN (to be discussed at the 4th meeting of the Group of Experts on 18-19 September 2012)

Ecologic networks / green infrastructure information system – contributing to development of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Methodology harmonization – cross-boundary issues.

4. Slovak Republic / République slovaque

Report prepared by Michaela Mrázová (State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic), edited by Jana Durkošová (Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic), 2012

Initiatives and project implemented during the last 5 years:

The Slovak Republic participated in the preparation of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) that was officially approved during the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Carpathian Convention in 2006 and after it took part in preparatory of the CNPA strategy and action plan aimed to cross-border cooperation among Carpathian protected areas.

The Slovak Republic cooperates with other neighboring countries mainly for harmonization within the shared protected areas. For instance the written agreement exists between the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and the Agency of Nature and Landscape Protection of the Slovak Republic (with annual protocols) as well as bilateral agreements between the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and national park administrations in Hungary (Aggtelek, Bükk, Duna-Ípoly, Fertő-Hanság) as well as with protected areas in Poland (Babiogorski NP, Pieninski NP, Zespół Parków Krajobrazowych) and with the Užanský NPP in Ukraine. There were common projects implemented at the bilateral scale.

The Trilateral Ramsar Platform „Floodplains of Morava-Dyje-Danube Confluence”, created in 19ties from the initiatives on NGOs now – mainly at the level of governmental bodies – coordinates activities within 3 bordering states.

There are several relevant projects and initiatives (according also to Weiß M. L., Streifeneder T.: National achievements and challenges related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, EURAC, 2011):

Slovak Republic - Rakúsko:

AKK Centrope – Implementation of measures along the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor and implementation in the region Centrope;

AKK Basic – Fundamentals for the creation of the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor

The **AKK Centrope** project seeks to further establish unrestricted passageways for wild animals, enforce trans-sectoral activities to secure ecological networks, and strengthen public awareness of the importance of undisturbed green areas and eco-friendly land consumption. Centrope, co-financed by the EU Slovakia-Austria cross border cooperation programme, is a joint initiative of the Austrian Federal Provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, of the Czech Region of South Moravia, of the Slovak Regions of Bratislava and Trnava, of the Hungarian Counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas as well as of the Cities of Bratislava, Brno, Eisenstadt, Győr, Sopron, St. Pölten, Szombathely and Trnava. The objective lies in the creation of a prospering European Region that exploits and focuses its economic, social and political assets as well as its linguistic and cultural variety in a joint effort to foster dynamic development. The activity focuses include research and training, economy and labour market, regional development, infrastructure and culture. The project **AKK Basic** aimed at re-establishing the wildlife migration corridor between the Alps and the Carpathians by first modeling the actual situation and then refining by planning and building green-bridges and improvements of the landscape connectivity.

Carpathians:

BIOREGIO Carpathians – Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians.

The **BIOREGIO Carpathians** project involving partners from all the Carpathian Countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and from Austria and Italy, the Ministers of the Environment of the Carpathian Countries are observers), starting in 2011 until end of 2014, aims at implementing the main provisions of the Carpathian Convention Biodiversity Protocol. In particular it aims at enhancing the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the biological and landscape diversity through a more effective harmonization of the management of the shared

natural heritage, habitats and species, as well as the joint preservation and promotion of the natural values of the Carpathians in a transnational framework.

The project builds on existing cooperation tools in the Carpathians such as the Carpathian Convention, providing multilevel governance and cross-sector integration.

The **Protected Areas for a Living Planet (PA4LP)** project has been launched as a tool to help governments to fulfill their commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Within the project, the WWF and Swiss-based MAVA Foundation have strengthened partnerships between governments, civil society, international and local community organizations in order to support delivery on biodiversity, climate change and poverty targets. In the Carpathian Ecoregion (one of five PA4LP-project areas), the following achievements can be highlighted:

- Operational regional Carpathian Network of Protected Areas
- Economic valuation studies
- Increased capacity of PA practitioners
- Involvement of local people through participatory management
- Online information platform *Carpathian Protected Areas Clearing House Mechanism* (CPA CHM)
- Development of *Carpathian Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool* (CPAMETT)

Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI), coordinated by the Slovak Republic, aims at improving and coordinating within a trans-Carpathian partnership (all Carpathian countries, national institutions and international organizations) the implementation of the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan in the Carpathian mountain region, which represents a major freshwater resource and is known for its great biodiversity and cultural richness. Its mission is to contribute to the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the Ramsar Convention and UNEP Vienna ISCC. On the basis of this MoC the CWI facilitates the collaboration between the two Conventions and their Parties in their efforts in conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Carpathian region and beyond, through local, national, regional and international activities. The Ramsar Convention Secretariat and UNEP Vienna ISCC work together on eight joint activities, which support the implementation of the Convention documents and protocols.

The Danube Basin

The Danube River Network of Protected Areas is a network of Protected Areas along the Danube, currently comprising 15 areas represented by different partner institutions (public authorities, public enterprises, NGOs). The Network cooperates in different fields of work that are important to all partners and where solutions depend on a transnationally coherent strategy.

The project “Establishment of Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the **Tisza River Basin**” addresses flooding, pollution, loss of biodiversity and the need for sustainable development in the Tisza River Basin. Establishment of Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River Basin, Integrated multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin. A major output is the development of a regionally owned Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Programme. The project “Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin” will result in policies promoting the optimal use of wetlands/floodplains and other habitat for flood mitigation, nutrient retention, biodiversity enhancement and social amenity value. Effective floodplain management strategies including the adaptation to increased flood events will be implemented. Both projects are closely linked to the activities of the ICPDR ad hoc Tisza Group.

Cross-border projects implemented in last years

Name of the project	Program	Period of implementation
Restoration of Natura 2000 sites in cross-border Bratislava capital region	LIFE+	2012-2017

The Danube River Network of Protected Areas - Development and implementation of overnational strategies to protect natural heritage of the Danube River	Program of International Cooperation SouthEast Europe	2009-2012
Integrated management of the biological and landscape diversity for sustainable development and ecological connectivity in Carpathians	Program of International Cooperation SouthEast Europe	2011-2013
Crossborder cooperation on management of the Ramsar site in floodplains of the Morava and Dyje Rivers	Cross-border Cooperation Program Slovak Republic-Austria	2009-2012
Revitalization of the Morava River: Action plan prepared according the tthe EU directives on water protection and nature protection	Cross-border Cooperation Program Slovak Republic-Austria	2010-2013
Biological research of wetlands in the Ipeľ River Basin according to the EU water framework directive and interest of nature protection	Cross-border Cooperation Program Slovak Republic-Austria	2009-2010

Main concerns and challenges at the national level for implementation of PEEN:

PEEN is the ambitious strategy to tackles the main issues at the Pan-European level. As such is not so easy to implement. In practice, countries pay special attention to their top priorities. In Slovakia for instance, priorities are wetlands, invasive species, and protected areas. The main challenges are capacities (time, personal capacities not only at the national level and financial resources). The core is motivation and involving other subjects that are even responsible for activities influencing biodiversity. For the next period, adequate financing mainly from EU funds is crucial.

5. Ukraine

Setting-up of the Pan-European Ecological Network in Ukraine (2007-2012)

Report prepared by Mr Grygorii Parchuk, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine

National Ecological Network of Ukraine as a part of the Pan-European Ecological Network is developed according to international requirements and national legislation, especially Laws on Protected Areas of Ukraine (1992) and on Ecological Network of Ukraine (2004). Within the regions (oblasts) of Ukraine the special coordination councils were established and regional programs and schemes for econet development have been elaborated and approved. Procedure for inclusion of natural complexes into the National Ecological Network is elaborated and sent to agree to the relevant ministries. To implement the National Programme of Ukraine for National EcoNet Development for Years 2000-2015 schemes of econet with identification and description of its structural elements (core areas, ecocorridors, buffer zones, restoration areas) have been elaborated for majority of provinces (oblasts), as well as large regions: Polesie, the Ukrainian Carpathians, the Dnipro River basin, the Dniester River basin, the Desna River basin, the Azov-Black-seas coast.

We created a lot of new protected areas, in particular: 2 strict nature reserves, 30 national nature parks, 276 reservations (or zakazniks), 227 natural monuments and 13 regional landscape parks. Total area of Ukrainian protected areas has been increased by 1% (now – 5.9%). Besides 2 marine reservations (2008 – 402,500.0 ha, 2012 – 38,500.0 ha) were established. Some created national parks have small areas (5-10 Th.ha). To enlarge areas these parks have to demonstrate good practice and close cooperation with local authorities.

In the framework of the Ramsar Convention International Sheets for 13 Ramsar sites were elaborated and sent to the Ramsar Secretariat in 2011, and sheets for 6 Ramsar sites were designated and sent to the Ukrainian Government for consideration in 2012. Transboundary Ramsar site “Stokhid-Prypiat-Prostyr” (Ukraine-Belarus) was registered in 2008. Previously, 33 wetlands of Ukraine were included into the Ramsar List.

Ukraine continued to establish transboundary biosphere reserves and protected areas. The Biosphere Reserve “West Polesie” (Ukraine-Belarus-Poland) was created in 2012. Biosphere reserves (as perspective parts of transboundary biosphere reserves) “Desnianskyi” near Russian border and “Roztochia” near Polish border were included into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2009 and 2011. Ukraine takes part in development of world heritage property “Beech Primeval Forests of Ukraine and Slovakia and Ancient Beech Forests of Germany” (2007, 2011). Moreover, there are transboundary biosphere reserves “Danube Delta” (Ukraine-Romania, 1998) and “East Carpathians” (Ukraine-Poland-Slovakia, 1998). Special interministerial agreement on the Lower Danube Green Corridor (Ukraine-Moldova-Romania- Bulgaria) was adopted in 2000.

To develop of Ukraine’s National Econet many projects were realized. Especially we received great results of CoE/ EU project on designation of the Emerald Network in Ukraine (2009-2011). Our scientists have selected and described 149 potential Emerald sites with total area of 43 290,0 km² or 7,2% of the total territory of Ukraine. Before official adoption assessment of Ukrainian proposals with biogeographical seminars is proposed. Designation of new potential Emerald sites is needed too.

WWF pilot project "Introduction of European Standards and Methods for Habitat Identification and Classification in Ukraine" (2009-2011) took place in the Ukrainian Carpathians. Ukrainian scientists with international partners learned principles and criteria of EU Habitats Directive, developed the Catalogue of habitats in Ukrainian Carpathians and Pannonia region, established special database for designation and classification of habitats, and established and organized training on methods for designation and classification of habitats types. Results of this project were published.

MATRA project "Implementation of the Ukrainian National Econetwork at the Local Level in Limestone Rocks and Hills Ridge Area in Vinnitsya Region" (2009 – 2010) aimed on public awareness and involvement of local communities into processes of nature conservation. As results inventory of flora and fauna and landscapes of 86 860 ha of lands was held and natural core areas

inside this lands were identified, and 149 local plans on spatial development of natural areas were developed.

Draft National Special Ecological Program on Development of Reserve Affairs up to 2020 is developed. It includes issues on creation and support of the representative and efficiently guided system of protected areas with enlargement of the Protected Areas Network of Ukraine up to 15% of total Ukraine's territory; realization of the special measures for saving and restoration of damaged ecosystems; ecological education, researches, trainings, recreational activities, public involvement, transboundary cooperation.