

Project Guide

European Programme

2005 – 2008



ROfE

Regional Office for Europe

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

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European Programme area

Introduction

This brochure outlines the five main objectives of IUCN's European Programme 2005–2008 and simultaneously highlights recent successes, ongoing projects and future activities of the IUCN offices within this region. Should you require additional information please contact europe@iucn.org or the Regional or Programme Office responsible for the activity.

IUCN's Programme in Europe stretches from Greenland in the West to Kamchatka in the East, spanning the whole of the EU, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and most of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This is IUCN's largest programmatic region and it contains two global biodiversity hotspots: the Mediterranean basin and the Caucasus. The region is also home to over a third of IUCN's membership and a significant proportion of the expert base for the specialist Commissions.

IUCN's European Programme is delivered by five offices which are located in Brussels, Tilburg, Warsaw, Belgrade and Moscow. The head office (or Regional Office for Europe), located in Brussels, is a meeting point where the IUCN Programme Office for Central Europe in Warsaw, the IUCN Programme Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade can disseminate information and strategies. Together we strive to meet our goals for a sustainable Europe by utilizing local expertise and the strength of the global IUCN network.

The IUCN European Programme goal for 2005–2008 is to contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – a political commitment made by European Heads of State and Environment Ministers.



Supporting IUCN in Europe and the EU

Objective 1:

Improved support framework for the global work of IUCN through the EU and other European partners; improved European membership services, including capacity building.

IUCN Regional Office for Europe (ROfE) will act as the nexus for information flowing into the European institutions from IUCN around the world (e.g. policy advice) and for information flowing out (e.g. funding opportunities or policy developments). This objective seeks to strengthen IUCN's links with its members and the key decision-makers across Europe and globally.

European Habitats Forum (EHF)

The European Habitats Forum (EHF) was founded in 1991 to promote the conservation of European species, habitats and landscapes, and to provide a co-ordinated approach for nature conservation NGOs working with the European Institutions. Since January 2003, IUCN ROfE has acted as the Secretariat for the group. The EHF currently consists of 14 members, including the largest, most influential European nature conservation NGOs, such as WWF and BirdLife International. The group works to positively influence European biodiversity policy and its implementation, particularly the Birds and Habitats Directives, and the establishment of the Natura 2000 network. Some of the activities that the EHF undertook in 2004 include: providing expert advice in the review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy; and lobbying to ensure the future availability of sufficient EU funds for nature conservation for the next financial period (2007–2013).

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Intergroup on Sustainable Development and Biodiversity in the European Parliament

IUCN, together with its Brussels-based member organization EBCD (European Bureau for Conservation and Development), runs the "Intergroup on Sustainable Development and Biodiversity" in the European Parliament, to which more than 100 MEPs (Members of Parliament) have subscribed. IUCN and EBCD, as the Intergroup Secretariat, organize briefings, excursions, conferences and seminars on topics surrounding the six thematic sub-groups: Agriculture, Fisheries, Maritime Affairs, Trade and Environment, Energy and Transport, and Forestry. Knowledge provided by the global IUCN network can thus support decision-making at the political level.

For more information, contact: europe@iucn.org

Policy advice and action



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The EU Liaison Unit of ROfE focuses on three principal activities; providing information; influencing the EU; and improving IUCN's position on the European stage.

Providing information to the IUCN network, the EU Liaison Unit primarily circulates calls for tender and proposal coming from the EU institutions, and advice on approaching the EU through its funding mechanisms. More than 50 calls for proposals and tenders are circulated each year to members or IUCN offices worldwide. Together with IUCN Headquarters, ROfE coordinates the submission of proposals by the Secretariat to major EU budget lines. This was a successful mainstreaming effort and in 2004, two IUCN proposals, for which ROfE provided technical and administrative support, were funded with a total budget of € 5.5 million.

With the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROfE published and distributed a booklet on "Accessing the EU" in the three official languages of IUCN. The booklet provides concise advice on the different funding mechanisms available and the tools that can be used to access them. In 2007 the EU will adopt its new financial perspectives, the budget

NGO capacity building for cross-border conservation in the Balkans

The Balkan Peninsula is considered one of the richest areas within Europe as regards natural habitats and biological diversity, with unique mountain areas, karst phenomena, lakes and rivers ranging from the Adriatic Coast up to the Dinaric Alps and Carpathian Mountains. Due to the political situation after the disintegration of former Yugoslavia and the poor economic conditions in neighbouring countries, the remaining natural assets are under severe threat and require support from both governmental bodies and civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important players on the environmental agenda but are usually not able to compete successfully for international tenders due to a lack of expertise in transboundary conservation, international fund raising and cooperation.

The IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade is actively building NGO capacity to run and manage their "green diplomacy", and offering a platform for the exchange of information and experience between local partners. By strengthening the capacity of NGOs to increase their cross-border cooperation, it is hoped that they will be able to increase their involvement in national and international projects and the transboundary management of the protected areas in South Eastern Europe. By assisting local NGOs, the project will also make contributions to the rest of civil society and local communities within the region which benefit from successful NGO work.

The implementing partners are international organizations (UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, OSCE) and donor agencies (e.g. DGCS, SDC) and non-governmental organizations (WWF and REC). Through the transboundary approach focusing on biodiversity and management of protected areas, the project includes local stakeholders to best guarantee its sustainability. Indicators for the success of the project are expected to be NGO applications meeting donor requirements in international tenders and the increasing interest of all stakeholders to participate in the exchange of information and experience.

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Influencing policy at the EU level

The European Commission is the driving force behind the development of EU policy and legislation and monitoring its subsequent implementation. Its activities are shared between specific Directorate Generals (DGs) and ROFE works primarily with those for Environment, Development and Aid (EuropeAid). ROFE is a member of an informal working group on development co-operation issues, together with various international NGOs, which meets regularly with representatives from DG Development. At the request of the EU, ROFE has been involved in different working and expert groups primarily within DG Environment which advise on the implementation of current legislation and the development of new directives.

The European Parliament is the elected representative body for EU countries and votes to pass the legislation proposed by the Commission. Together with the European Council it passes the EU's budget, approximately 100 billion Euros. The Parliament has a number of committees that meet to discuss different aspects of EU legislation and budget planning. The Liaison Unit actively works with Members of the European Parliament and these Committees to advise on biodiversity and sustainable use issues.

for the EU until 2013. The Liaison Unit will respond to the changes made in this budget and communicate the possible opportunities and limitations for IUCN and its members.

The EU Liaison Unit is influencing the EU through its working relationship with the European Union Institutions: the European Commission, the European Parliament and, to a lesser extent, with the European Council (see box above).

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Communicating nature

The IUCN Regional Office for Europe Communication Strategy focuses on delivering the five pillars of the European Programme 2005–2008 through ensuring that:

1. decision-makers change their behaviour as a result of IUCN European Programme knowledge and expertise;
2. IUCN European Programme is recognised as an amplifier for the work of its European members;
3. IUCN European Regional Office is identified as an innovative scientific authority within the Pan-European region;
4. IUCN European Communicators work together for coherence and consistency;
5. IUCN ROFE Brussels is the nexus for information on EU policies, programmes and funding opportunities for the IUCN network.

The primary communication tools that are utilized to meet these objectives are publications, web-based applications, events/workshops, and media outreach.

Recognising knowledge management and dissemination as one of its primary roles in

Europe, IUCN ROFE has developed tools such as its quarterly newsletter which is distributed to over 370 IUCN members and an additional 320 individuals and organizations across pan-Europe. Hard copy and on line versions are available both in English and French, and electronically in Russian. A regular insert entitled "Brussels in Brief" has been developed to provide a platform to explain the substance of environmental policy, as well as to highlight up-coming EU agenda items relevant to Europe and beyond.

Up to the minute information is provided to our members and environment stakeholders through web-based tools such as the Regional Office for Europe website www.iucneurope.org, Programme Office for Central Europe website www.iucn-ce.org.pl, Programme Office for the Commonwealth of Independent States website www.iucn.ru, and the IUCN membership portal. For the majority of decision makers within the region these are accessible tools that allow easy entry to all our resources.

Participating in events is a useful means of creating effective networks and sharing information. IUCN Programme has had a presence at: the Fifth European Programme in Kiev, Ukraine; Eighth Meeting of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy in Madrid, Spain; Biodiversity and the EU – Sustaining Life, Sustaining Livelihoods in Malahide, Ireland; World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, Thailand and the European Commission's Greenweek in Brussels, Belgium. Throughout these events IUCN has worked with the media to disseminate key messages.

For more information, contact: rofe.communications@iucn.org



Understanding the main drivers of biodiversity

Objective 2:

Improved knowledge of biodiversity change and effective conservation measures at landscape, ecosystem, habitat and species levels.

The IUCN activities under this objective aim to ensure that the best scientific information is made available to policy-makers and that the messages in that information are clearly communicated.

A pan-European Species Assessment

Building on over 40 years of world-wide experience in scientific research in this topic, IUCN and its partners are planning the first-ever comprehensive assessment of Europe's approximately 200,000 animal and plant species. The products of this assessment will be synthetic reviews of the status of the taxonomic groups identifying the major trends, threats and conservation actions; a European Red List of Threatened Species and baseline data required for the development of biodiversity indicators at the European level.

Red Lists are very important in Europe, as they are often used as the basis for setting national conservation priorities and in many countries form the basis for

nature protection legislation. Currently there are some 3500 different Red Lists and Red Data Books produced by national authorities and other organizations. However it is extremely difficult to compare these Red Lists as in most cases the methodology has been adapted to suit national reporting conditions.

In 2003, IUCN developed guidelines to assist the application of the Red List categories and criteria at the regional level, providing a tool that can be used at a European level. Together with SSC, ROFE has developed a proposal to undertake the most complete species analysis at a regional level yet attempted. The initiative which runs from 2005 until 2011 will assess the status of 11 taxonomic groups and will update these assessments after 2010 to identify if the biodiversity targets were achieved in Europe.

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iversity change

Freshwater fisheries issues in Central and Eastern Europe

Freshwater fisheries in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are in great need of reform in order to not only boost the economy but also contribute towards social development and ensure the conservation of natural resources. Although CEE countries are currently engaging in a shift towards sustainability, fish stocks and diversity are facing increased pressures from commercial and recreational fisheries. The problem is increased by insufficient control of illegal or unreported catches and poor enforcement of existing legislation. Other factors such as habitat destruction and pollution are also increasing the loss of freshwater fish diversity. To move towards sustainability there is a need to increase the level of research in this field and also to raise stakeholder awareness concerning the state of freshwater fisheries. These issues were also discussed in an IUCN overview report based on national reports from 19 countries of the region – *Freshwater Fisheries in Central and Eastern Europe: the Challenge of Sustainability*.

IUCN is concentrating on the involvement of recreational and sport angling communities and aquaculture industries through promoting an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and use. The current and future focus of the IUCN Programme Office for Central Europe, in close cooperation with the IUCN European Sustainable Use Specialist Group (ESUSG), is to review and develop the existing freshwater fisheries policies and practices in the CEE states and make recommendations for their improvement. Further planned activities include exchange of knowledge and experience between stakeholders in Western and Eastern Europe; support to multi-functional fish farming; and integrating biodiversity aspects into aquaculture and freshwater fisheries.

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Väino Väino



P. Lengyel

Important Plant Areas and species in Russia and the Caucasus

In April 2002, the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity approved the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) to be achieved by 2010. The Strategy provides a framework to guide plant conservation activities at global, regional and national levels. IUCN, on the basis of an MoU with Planta Europa, is implementing parts of the strategy in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The most important steps to implement within the strategy are to improve our knowledge of rare and threatened species in Russia and the Caucasus and to improve the extent of their protection. For example, analysis of where these species are found also shows that only 32% of Russia's rare species are conserved in strictly protected areas such as zapovedniks. In

particular, the identification and designation of Important Plant Areas (IPAs) is a priority for improving plant conservation. A project assessing plant diversity was carried out by IUCN and WWF in 1994 and identified large regions important for plants. In light of these findings, the programme for Important Plant Areas should determine concrete territories where it is necessary to establish protected areas to conserve plant species. Pilot projects for IPAs have been implemented in Belarus, Czech Republic, Greece, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

IUCN will assist parties to develop and implement their national biodiversity strategies and the targets agreed upon in the GSPC, especially in conducting a preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species and ensuring that 50% of the most important areas for plant diversity are protected. Other targets of the GSPC, in particular those focusing on capacity building, training and networking, are also being addressed.

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Oleg Maslovsky

Financing nature conservation

Objective 3:

Ensure efficient incentive frameworks for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use are available and understood.

Financial mechanisms are an important aspect of good environmental governance, either through the provision of funding and development aid or through the effects of financial policies on biodiversity. This IUCN European Programme objective therefore aims at increasing funding levels for nature conservation in Europe and to ensure that existing initiatives remain adequately funded, for example Natura 2000.

Within Europe, there will be a greater focus on the effects of EU policies and financial mechanisms on new and future EU member states and neighbouring countries. In these regions, great care needs to be taken to minimize the negative effects on biodiversity of the EU financial mechanisms such as the Rural Development and Cohesion funds, and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). IUCN is working both at policy level in Brussels and the local level in individual Member States to support full implementation of the EU's nature policies.

Business, biodiversity and banking



U.Riecken

The majority of the world's largest corporations are based in Europe, and they have a massive impact on biodiversity either through their activities within Europe or across the world. Increasingly these banks and corporations are looking to tackle this impact and find ways in which they can act more sustainably. This willingness to address the issue was highlighted at the 3rd World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, which featured significant involvement of major multinational corporations and financial institutions. IUCN is now working directly with banking institutions in Poland to identify case studies of small-scale sustainable businesses that would be suitable for financial support. Future areas of work will include identification of biodiversity investment opportunities, and working with the European Investment Bank and other large European banks to ensure sustainability of the projects they invest in.

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A Trust Fund for Russian Nature

Nature conservation needs long-term investment, whereas funds for projects are often available for only a few years. Moreover, funding levels often vary from year to year.

To make this situation more sustainable, the IUCN Programme

Office for Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States is working with the Russian government and the private sector to establish a Trust Fund for Nature, focussing on important nature areas such as Lake Baikal. In a Trust Fund, only the interest from the capital in the Fund is used, which would provide steady, long-term resources for conservation organizations and projects. Several large Trust Funds have been operating successfully out of Western Europe for many years, such as IUCN member "Frankfurt Zoological Society" in Germany. IUCN will explore further options for establishing Trust Funds together with its members and partners from the private sector.

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Financing Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the flagship of the EU's nature protection policy, with approximately 18% of its terrestrial territory under some form of protection. To date the implementation of Natura 2000 was funded through the LIFE Nature Programme of DG Environment, approximately €75 million per year. As implementation moves towards completion, the major task is now to ensure that sites are adequately managed and this is estimated to cost €6.1 billion per year across the EU. To increase the amount of available funding the Commission has proposed that from 2007, the costs of managing Natura 2000 should be integrated into the EU's other much larger funding programmes, in particular the Rural Development funds (DG Agriculture), the Structural and Cohesion funds (DG Regional Policy), and the Fisheries funds (DG Fisheries). IUCN is working with other stakeholders to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that adequate funding is guaranteed for Natura 2000 in the future. Also, as Member States apply for the large-scale funding mechanisms, IUCN has been and will continue to support IUCN members participating in national level decision-making processes to ensure that funding programmes include Natura 2000.



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Ecological footprint of Europe

The EU is the world's biggest trading block and, together with its Member States, by far the largest provider of development aid. Through its overseas regions and the overseas territories of some of its Member States, it also has huge responsibilities for the conservation of biodiversity worldwide. IUCN is working in very close co-operation with the European Commission, Parliament and Council in order to make sure the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially poverty alleviation through sustainable management of natural resources, are kept high on the agenda.



Ongoing IUCN activities towards EU Development Policy include:

- lobbying during the decision-making process regarding the budget and related financial instrument for 2007–2013;
- reviewing the methodology for mainstreaming environment into Country and Regional Strategy Papers;
- reviewing the Sustainable Development Strategy;
- proposing a strategy for conserving biodiversity in EU overseas regions and territories through a collaborative effort with the IUCN National Committees of France, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom;
- organizing a conference in 2006 on "Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Development Co-operation" together with the European Commission and some Member States under the umbrella of the Countdown 2010.

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Linking education, science, policy and

Objective 4:

National and supranational EU policies, multilateral agreements, processes and institutions are more supportive of biodiversity conservation and ecologically sustainable use.

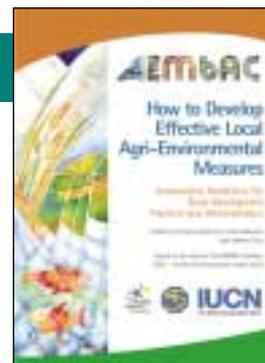
IUCN ROFE aims to integrate biodiversity concerns into the various European policy sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and development. For the current 25 EU Member States, these policies have to be better integrated into existing policy frameworks, whereas the countries acceding to the EU later have the opportunity to enact more proactive biodiversity legislation. Strengthening civil society's awareness and capacity to improve environmental governance, e.g. through the Aarhus Convention, will facilitate this process. Increased emphasis will be placed on governance issues concerning marine and freshwater habitats and species.

Agri-environment schemes

ROFE has started to actively participate in scientific research projects supported at the European level and has identified the need to ensure that project results be better communicated to decision makers. ROFE coordinated a three-year EU 5th Framework project, co-financed by the Nando Peretti Foundation, which aimed to develop a single methodology to aid the development of national agri-environmental measures within the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. This project drew together experts from 17 institutions in seven Western and Central European countries. Along with the scientific reports and articles that were outcomes of the project, ROFE developed a booklet explaining the methodology to policy makers and also held a conference in the European Parliament. This booklet is now being translated into other European languages and the methodology is being applied for example by the provincial government of Tuscany, Italy.

Without the right communication most of the scientific information that is urgently needed at decision-making levels will not be taken up by policy makers. In the future, ROFE will be expanding its involvement in these projects and will be looking to develop new mechanisms to bring scientific research into the policy arena.

For more information, see: www.aembac.org or www.iucn-ce.org



Knut Per Hasung



Arne Ader

Fisheries and marine issues in Europe and the EU

During the consultation to develop the 2005–2008 European Programme, IUCN European members identified fisheries and aquaculture as the most important issue to be tackled. As a response ROFE has increased its level of collaboration with the Fisheries experts within the IUCN network such as the Global Marine Programme and the Office for Mediterranean Co-operation based in Malaga, Spain. Additionally ROFE has been working with members including the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) on marine policy issues.



Afforestation guidelines

In the EU, many millions of Euros are spent on afforestation each year, often with negative environmental impacts. Frequently the chosen tree species are not adapted to the site conditions, and there is no or insufficient mixing of tree species to create a diverse habitat. On a pan-European level, afforestation and reforestation have become an interesting option for mitigation of climate change. This is currently an issue of much debate, as it is not a long-term option to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. However, afforestation and reforestation are taking place across Europe, and IUCN was asked by the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) to develop afforestation guidelines for decision makers. With this and other policy briefings on related topics, the IUCN European Programme condenses the knowledge from science and practice into policy-relevant documents, with the aim to improve environmental governance.



For more information, see: www.iucn-ce.org

Reforming the CAP: Agenda 2007

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) consumes almost half of the annual EU budget, with considerable impact on biodiversity both



Kaley Sepp

inside and outside of Europe. A first wave of CAP reform in 2003 has given more opportunities to Member States to grant payments for rural development and agri-environment measures. IUCN offered an organizational platform to agree on a common position for all NGOs involved in agriculture and food safety in Poland: over 30 organizations, from local nature conservation organizations to farmers' organizations. Thus, IUCN served to create a "single voice" of both environmental and social NGOs towards decision makers in this important policy process. IUCN continues to prepare the ground for much needed further CAP reform, in cooperation with IUCN members such as IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements). Future activities will focus on raising stakeholder and decision-maker awareness about the relationship between healthy food and biodiversity.

For more information, see: <http://iucn-ce.org/agenda2007/en>
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In the future, ROFE aims to have a greater influence on the development and implementation of EU fisheries and marine policies during 2005–2008. Major developments that will occur during this period include: a Marine Strategy and framework Directive for the Marine environment being developed by DG Environment; the ongoing need to mainstream biodiversity considerations into the Common Fisheries Policy; and an EU Maritime Strategy that will be developed by DG Fisheries over the next few years.



Jose Antonio Moya

ROFE will also be making significant contributions through projects to halt the loss of biodiversity in marine and freshwater ecosystems and to promote the sustainable management of fisheries and marine resources. For example, in February 2005, IUCN signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), which aims to promote joint activities to mainstream biodiversity considerations within the industry. ROFE will also assist in the development of a Red List of Threatened European Freshwater Fish.

For more information, contact: europe@iucn.org



Jose Antonio Moya

Managing our natural heritage

Objective 5:

Ecosystems are managed in a sustainable manner, reconciling social, economic and biodiversity objectives.

IUCN is working to increase the integration between resource use and biodiversity conservation primarily through the development of ecological networks and implementing the ecosystem approach. Within national administrations, IUCN is working to increase the influence of biodiversity considerations on national and regional land use and management policies and infrastructure projects.

The Green Belt Initiative



european
greenbelt

The 'Iron Curtain', running from the Barents Sea to the Bosphorus, divided Europe for almost 40 years. Most strongly expressed in Germany, it divided the country and the people with a barrier spanning 1400km. This barrier stopped human activity around the border zones, which gave ecosystems within the region a 30-year break.

The vision for the European Green Belt initiative is to establish an ecological network running the entire length of the former Iron Curtain that will act to highlight Europe's commitment to the sustainable development of its communities and the safeguarding of its natural heritage. This dual function of working towards sustainable regional development together with nature conservation is one of the initiative's key benefits. In this sense the initiative is also working with the major international transboundary agreements and networks of protected areas such as Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network. Europe is covered by nature conservation legislation, but as the continuing decline of species status shows, there is something missing in the implementation. It is hoped that the Green Belt will become an important tool for the implementation of the various networks of protected areas and international conventions.



The route of the Green Belt takes in a great number of important areas for European biodiversity, travelling through eight of Europe's 11 biogeographic regions and containing many protected areas (many with transboundary cooperation) that will form the core areas within this ecological network.

The initiative was launched in 2004 at a conference at the Fertő-Hanság National Park jointly organized, and with the financial support of, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). The meeting drew together specialists and national representatives from over 17 countries spanning the Green Belt to identify how the initiative could have most added value and what activities must be undertaken.

IUCN manages the secretariat for this initiative, together with organizations in the three main regions of the Green Belt: Fennoscandia, Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. A Programme of Work has been developed, with wide consultation with stakeholders, which establishes a clear set of time-defined



Andrew Terry

activities and targets and will form the backbone of the initiative in the coming years. The next major step is to map the entire route of the Green Belt to create a tool for identifying major gaps and focal areas. Also, specific projects are being developed for the different regions that aim to integrate sustainable development and nature conservation.

For more information, see:
www.greenbelteurope.net
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M. Schneider-Jacoby

IUCN Arctic Initiative

Arctic ecosystems and communities are extremely vulnerable, especially to the effects of climate change. Permafrost and permanent ice fields are melting thereby threatening vital habitats for Arctic animal and plant species. IUCN has developed an Arctic Strategy which has the long-term objective to develop an effective, financially viable IUCN Arctic Initiative that influences, encourages and assists Arctic countries, indigenous organizations and the private sector in their efforts to conserve the integrity and diversity of the Arctic and to ensure that the use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Through this Strategy, IUCN has developed an Inter-regional Programme of Activities that aims to facilitate the exchange of information and experience on conservation and livelihood security in the Arctic between federal, regional and local government institutions and civil society. By increasing the communication between stakeholders, the Programme will also foster strategic partnerships with NGOs and government agencies. On the ground, the Programme



Mikhail Stishov

aims to develop and implement model field projects in the Barents and Chukotka regions of Russia that will enhance understanding about the status of biodiversity and capacity needs to conserve biodiversity and sustain development. The main output will be bringing added value to the conservation of the Arctic through the analysis of global climate change impact on Arctic ecosystems and species, influencing policy, and the preparation and implementation of integrated conservation programmes and projects in the Arctic.

For more information, see: www.iucn.ru

Building partnerships for forest conservation and management in Russia



Canadian
International
Development
Agency

Agence
canadienne de
développement
international

Russian forests are of global importance due to their unique flora and fauna, their vastness as well as the abundant forest products and non-timber forest values. Unfortunately centralized planning, current political and economic instability and the recent shift towards a market economy are diminishing the efficiency of forest management. The situation is aggravated through society having limited access to information on the process of decision making in forest management and conservation.

To combat these problems, IUCN, in close cooperation with CIDA, implemented a project between 2000 and 2006, which aimed to create partnerships between governmental and social organizations and to draw different social groups into the process of decision making. The project focused on directly involving women and indigenous people. The development of public involvement was conducted in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kamchatka and other Russian regions. The component on protected areas was developed for the whole of Russia and implemented by experts in various nature reserves, national parks, including World Heritage Sites, and wildlife refuges. The non-timber forest products (NTFP) component, including the regional use of non-timber products, was implemented in Kamchatka and Sakhalin. The projects hope to increase governmental responsibility, enhance transparency in the decision-making process and contribute to an increase in efficiency of forest conservation and management in Russia.

For more information, see: www.iucn.ru



S. Shestakov



The Bug River Basin

The Bug river basin is found at the meeting point of three countries; Ukraine, Belarus and Poland. Its total length is 772 km, out of which almost 185 km of the upper course lie in the Ukraine and 363 km of the river constitutes a natural border between Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. The Bug river valley holds outstanding landscapes and biodiversity and is shared by one EU member state (Poland) and two non-EU member states (Ukraine and Belarus). The overall objective of the project is to develop a coherent ecological network along the Bug River and to secure the integration of the protection and management of the ecological network into the river basin management planning. Additional objectives include the strengthening of co-operation between institutions responsible for nature protection in the three countries, capacity building for integrated river basin management and for ecologically sound planning of water resource management.

For more information, see: www.iucn-ce.org



The Sava-River Floodplain

The disintegration of former Yugoslavia into the new states in South Eastern Europe has created many new political borders and obstacles to the harmonized management of natural resources in the region. However, nature elements such as mountain ridges or river streams provide opportunities to overcome these borders. The Sava River, which is the second largest tributary of the Danube in South Eastern Europe, is a good example of the potential for co-operation between neighbouring countries towards a better understanding and management of a common resource.

The overall objective of the project is to protect the unique ecosystems and biodiversity along the Sava River through the protection of floodplain landscapes and biodiversity as well as maintenance of retention functions of the floodplains. This requires transboundary co-operation and agreements between the Sava countries to designate and manage an ecological network of protected areas, buffer zones and corridors for habitat types and species of European importance. The protection of globally significant biodiversity and support of rural development through adjusting land use practices to the needs of the ecological network is based on the principles of integrated floodplain management and biodiversity conservation.

Based on this transboundary approach, the Sava River serves to increase political stability and transboundary management, to involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation, and to introduce the EU Water Framework, Birds and Habitats Directives into the region. The net result should be the harmonization of environmental management and the conservation of biodiversity in South Eastern Europe without frontiers.

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Development of a Caucasus Programme

Recognising the global importance of Caucasus biodiversity, IUCN started to develop a programme

for the Caucasus in 2005, and is carrying out its first project activities together with its members and partners. The launch of Countdown 2010 in the Caucasus serves as the platform to bring civil society, the private sector and governments on board for nature conservation. A first project in 2006 is focusing on the inventory and protection of Important Plant Areas (IPAs). In the medium term, the programme will provide assistance in the implementation and enforcement of international conventions and agreements at the national level. A further component of the programme is to raise awareness on the role of biodiversity in sustainable development, establish a monitoring system and information data base on biodiversity and update the national Red List and Red Data Books across the region.

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Ecological networks

Ecological networks are a planning framework for integrating biological and landscape diversity concerns into sectoral policies and practices. By establishing geographical and spatial priorities for economic development and biodiversity protection, ecological networks have become a tool for sustainable development. Ecological networks provide a suitable tool for meeting the different obligations established under international conventions and the 2010 target of halting biodiversity loss in Europe. IUCN has been active in the development of ecological networks for many years both at the national level, for example with the development of national ecological networks in the Baltic countries, and through the provision of tools and information to support the challenge of developing ecological networks globally. One of IUCN's activities is to develop a website to provide such information and to highlight examples of best practice. The website will function as an information resource for all actors involved in the development of ecological networks, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. It will also catalyse the creation of an international expert network through which partners actively working on ecological networks can contact each other and exchange information and experience.

For more information, see: www.iucn-ce.org



Livelihoods and biodiversity

Since 2000 the IUCN Programme Office for Russia and the CIS has been running the project "Building Partnerships in Forest Conservation and Management in Russia" supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The IUCN-CIDA project team has facilitated small sustainable NTFP business development within the local communities in the Russian Far East in

the Bystrinski Nature Park (World Heritage Site since 1996), the Koriak Autonomous District and Sakhalin. NTFPs are viewed as part of a local sustainable livelihood strategy, including tourism, cultural activities, hunting and herding. The project has provided business and legal training, consultation on small business and community-based enterprise development, and support for sustainability and monitoring programmes. Although community economic development is the primary goal, the project development and implementation is based on a participatory approach. Now more than a dozen small community-based businesses, mostly organized and controlled by native women, have started to work with sustainable NTFPs.

One of the important tools used to promote NTFP are trade shows and fairs. IUCN Russia in partnership with the Russian Federal Agency for Forestry and several NGOs held the First International NTFP Fair and Forum in Moscow in 2004. The Fair has now become an annual event and will provide a unique opportunity for small businesses from distant Russian regions, such as Altai, Kamchatka, Sakhalin and Magadan, to approach broader markets and to share lessons learned and concerns about the sector's development. The success of this initiative has spread to other regions, such as the Buriatia, Tomsk, Vladimir, Kemerovo Regions, which are also interested in implementing projects using NTFPs as a tool for sustainable community-controlled small business development. It is important to support preparatory and pilot projects in these regions to demonstrate to the decision makers and stakeholders the lessons learned and that NTFP-based businesses can generate substantial additional incomes for the poor and marginalized communities and individuals in the long term.

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COUNTDOWN 2010

Implementing Countdown 2010 at the regional and city levels

The 2010 biodiversity targets were set at the international level, but to succeed, action must be taken at all levels. Therefore the Countdown 2010 initiative is engaging with institutions from the local to the European level. Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands has become the first province in Europe to fully take on the global 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity by becoming a Countdown 2010 Region. This means that the region is taking active steps to integrate biodiversity action with the public authorities, trade and industry, agriculture and NGOs and is promoting a holistic approach to Brabant's nature, culture and environment. Specifically the region is stimulating active involvement of the private sector; giving weight to biodiversity in all European government policies; and investing more money in biodiversity research and, most importantly, mobilizing sufficient public interest to achieve the objective by 2010.

The city of Tilburg, within Noord-Brabant, has also become a member of Countdown 2010, and will incorporate efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and raise awareness into its activities.

Through the European Programme, IUCN is actively working towards the realization of the commitments made by Heads of State to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

The continuous loss of biodiversity poses serious threats to the health and quality of life of European citizens. Recognising these threats, European governments have committed themselves to a series of global and regional agreements aimed at halting this loss. The documents that are testimony to this political commitment are the EU Sustainability Strategy, the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity, the 'Message from Malahide' and the European Commission's Communication on Biodiversity.

These are serious commitments, made in good faith by European governments. But all of European society must join together if these commitments are to be fulfilled and the loss of biodiversity is to be halted. To achieve this joint goal, and to focus attention on its urgency, a number of organizations have posed a challenge to Europe: Countdown 2010. With the 2010 European and global commitment, we have a unique chance to strengthen nature conservation and ensure that economic development is sustainable across Europe.

Countdown 2010 is a broad alliance of actors, from all sectors that are working to achieve the 2010 biodiversity commitment through a clear goal and set of objectives. Currently the partners include governments, state agencies, international organizations, NGOs and private sector companies. By facilitating and highlighting the activities across many organizations, Countdown 2010 is also providing a strong added value to the partners' individual work. IUCN Regional Office for Europe acts as the Secretariat for Countdown 2010.

If your government, agency, organization or company wishes to join the Countdown 2010 initiative and contribute to the activities of this alliance – you can contact the Secretariat at the address listed below to become a partner and member of the Steering Group.

For more information on Countdown 2010 visit: www.countdown2010.net or e-mail: europe@iucn.org

www.countdown2010.net

The Regional Office for Europe (ROfE) is a branch of the IUCN global network. Along with offices and commissions around the world, ROfE links back to the President, Director General and Council of IUCN. IUCN is the world's largest and most important conservation network. The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

The World Conservation Union is a membership organization. The Union has a membership of more than 1,000 organizations, as well as 10,000 individual scientists and experts structured in six Commissions. The priorities and work of the Union are set by members every four years and subsequently coordinated by a professional secretariat with 1,000

staff in 62 countries. Members meet every four years at the World Conservation Congress (the Union's General Assembly) to express their views, guide the Union's policy and approve its programme. The last Congress was held in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2004. Members within a country or region often organize themselves into National and Regional Committees to facilitate cooperation and help coordinate the Union's work.

The six Commissions, networks of volunteer scientists and experts, are principal sources of guidance on conservation knowledge, policy and technical advice, and implement parts of the Union's work programme. The priorities and work of the Commissions are also set every four years at the World Conservation Congress.

For further information see www.iucn.org.