

Editorial

On 9 June 2009 ECNC's Bureau met in Peterborough, UK. During a joint meeting of the Bureau and the ExCom of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), the presidents and directors of ECNC and the EUCC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation outlining the first phase of the process to integrate the two organizations into a new-style ECNC. See page 6 for details.

During the 10th meeting of the Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) in Belgrade, Serbia, in May 2009, ECNC was formally accepted as a partner organization. The DAI develops and coordinates initiatives aimed at securing the long-term conservation and sustainable development of this region of South-East Europe. See page 4 for more information.

*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

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Europe's remaining wilderness requires rapid and effective support

27 & 28 May 2009, Prague, Czech Republic

The Conference on Wilderness and Large Natural Habitat Areas in Europe, hosted by the Czech European Union Presidency and the European Commission, was held in Prague on 27 and 28 May 2009. The conference was attended by over 240 participants from 40 countries, including officials of government ministries, nature agencies, conservation NGOs, academics, interested parties such as land-owners, and representatives from agriculture, forestry, business and other sectors.

Wilderness and wild areas are a vital part of Europe's natural heritage, and many of them are facing imminent threats that require rapid and effective response. Throughout Europe there is increasing awareness that the economic, social and ecological benefits (ecosystem services) derived from nature are essential for sustainable development.

ECNC was one of the organizations invited to attend the conference, which reflected on the importance of protecting wilderness areas in Europe. ECNC has experience in various activities and projects relevant to the conference's theme. One of these projects concerns the development of an ecological network in FYR Macedonia, which ECNC is implementing together with the Macedonian Ecological Society. Information on this project was disseminated at the conference.

The conference resulted in the 'Message from Prague', with 24 concrete recommendations concerning i.a. policy development, research,

awareness raising and partnerships that will create a wilder Europe, in both EU and non-EU regions.

For more information, including the full 'Message from Prague', visit the conference website www.wildeurope.org/



The conference participants focused on actions to preserve Europe's remaining wild areas. (Photo: Jürgen Kurlvink)

ECNC's cooperation with the Province of Noord-Brabant continues

The work programme for 2009 for the cooperation between ECNC and the Province of Noord-Brabant reflects the Province's aim of investing in the integration of biodiversity and economic development, contributing to the improvement of the living, work and leisure spheres, and raising awareness about biodiversity in society.

The main priorities of the work programme include increasing the awareness and involvement of citizens, and especially young people, in biodiversity and Countdown 2010 in their surroundings (through contacts with schools and activities such as Animal Event), integrating biodiversity into businesses in Noord-Brabant (for

instance, by exchanging information on best practices and the greening of industrial estates) and providing support to the Province in elaborating its climate adaptation policy.

This summer a seminar will be organized for leisure enterprises and their role in biodiversity. The economic perspectives of these enterprises depend on the quality and biodiversity of their business sites and the surrounding countryside.

ECNC also provides the secretariat for the Noord-Brabant Task Force on Biodiversity and Countdown 2010 and promotes initiatives aimed at involving citizens, youth, enterprises and farmers.

For more information: Peter von Meijenfeldt, Brabant-Europe Manager; vonmeijenfeldt@ecnc.org

Nature and Society

First Steering Committee meeting 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services for local sustainable development in the Western Balkans'

18 May 2009, Belgrade, Serbia

The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the project 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services for local sustainable development in the Western Balkans' (SEE-BAP) took place in Belgrade, Serbia, on 18 May 2009.

The SEE-BAP Steering Committee is composed of government representatives of the six participating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo UNSCR 1244), representatives of local authorities in the region and Europe, international NGOs, intergovernmental organiza-

tions, and the funder (the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs). It is chaired by ECNC's Executive Director and the Deputy Director of the Regional Environmental Center.

The project focuses on ten municipalities in the six participating countries. Actions include developing local biodiversity action plans with the participation of relevant stakeholders, with emphasis on sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Important aspects of the project delivery will be capacity building of local players through targeted training programmes and the funding of some activities to start the implementation of the plans.

During the meeting the project team presented the project goal, specific objectives and plan of activities. The discussion focused on how to create synergies with ongoing programmes and activities and avoid duplication of efforts in a region where many donors fund development and environmental projects. Particular attention was given to the coordination of activities with other relevant projects funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other donors in the Western Balkans. The discussion also covered monitoring and evaluation of the project and how to ensure that the processes it engenders will continue after project completion.



The SEE-BAP Steering Committee
(Photo: ECNC)

The presence of the government representatives allowed the project team to ensure that the project activities shall complement and be in line with the priorities of the different National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which are in different stages of development in the countries concerned.

For more information: Aysegül Çil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org

Dinaric Arc Initiative welcomes ECNC as a new partner

19 & 20 May 2009, Belgrade, Serbia

During the 10th meeting of the Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) at the IUCN SEE Offices in Belgrade, Serbia, on 19 and 20 May 2009, ECNC was formally accepted as a partner organization.

ECNC's Executive Director gave a presentation on ECNC's work and objectives, in particular its activities in South-East Europe. Aysegül Çil, ECNC's Programme Manager for Nature and Society, and coordinator of the project 'Biodiversity and ecosystem services for local sustainable development in the Western Balkans' (SEE-BAP; see previous article) presented the project and how it fits into the wider aims of the DAI.

The Dinaric Arc is a region of South-East Europe covering approximately 100,000 km² and over



6,000 km of coastline, encompassing the region facing the eastern Adriatic Sea, from the area of Trieste (Italy) to Tirana (Albania).

The Dinaric Arc Initiative was launched in 2005 and is a partnership of the Council of Europe, Euronatur, FAO, IUCN, REC, SNV, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO BRESCE and WWF. The DAI conducts projects and initiatives aimed at securing the long-term conservation and sustainable development of the region.

In particular, the Dinaric Arc Initiative aims to add value to the ongoing programmes and activities of all its partners, and put in place new specific actions, such as:

- the preservation of the wealth and integrity of the Dinaric Arc by establishing networks of protected areas and ecological corridors, and supporting initiatives for the conservation of its biological diversity and the sustainable management of its resources;
- the preservation and valorization of the cultural diversity and cultural heritage of the Dinaric Arc.

Albanian coastline.
(Photo: Annemarie Casey)

ECNC will contribute to the Dinaric Arc Initiative with its wide expertise and networks on biodiversity and sustainability in the fields of communication for biodiversity, business, finance and biodiversity, ecological networks, and climate change.

For more information contact ECNC's first DIA focal point: Aysegül Çil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

KYOTO project forges ahead

11 & 12 June 2009, San Sebastian, Spain

ECNC is a partner in the Knowledge Yielding Ontologies for Transition-Based Organization (KYOTO) project. The project will develop a system that can provide information to both experts and the general public in relation to biodiversity and other environmental subject material, and result in a search engine that has the capacity to learn from the user.

On 11 and 12 June, the KYOTO partners met in San Sebastian, Spain, to discuss progress so far and the steps to be taken in the near future. The meeting was hosted by the University of the Basque Country (Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea) at the Joxe Mari Korta Research Centre.

ECNC and WWF represent the 'users' in the KYOTO project. Our task is to test the tools and provide feedback to the technical partners, and deliver a data set that can be used by the system.

Prior to the meeting, the users provided the technical partners with a comprehensive list of species and habitats. These data were discussed during the meeting and difficulties were pointed out. The main difficulty was the lack of a consistent system of habitat classification. It was decided to use the EUNIS system for the time being. The work to be done by the users in the upcoming period was discussed.

WWF and ECNC did not participate in the main session on the second day of the meeting. It was agreed that they should start work on creating a scenario for the work discussed the day before. It is expected that the first deliverables will be produced by the end of August.

KYOTO is funded under the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

For more information: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, Senior Programme Manager (joneswalters@ecnc.org); Amor Torre-Marín, Project Manager (torremarin@ecnc.org); or Andrew Schrauwen, Senior Project Officer (schrauwen@ecnc.org)



ECNC Bureau and EUCC's ExCom meet for first time

9 June 2009, Peterborough, UK

On 9 June 2009 the ECNC Bureau convened in Peterborough, UK. The meeting was hosted by JNCC-Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The Bureau addressed various issues, including ECNC's Annual Report 2008 and the Annual Financial Report 2008, and the implementation of ECNC's Annual Work Plan 2009. It also discussed developments in ECNC's regional representation and possible priorities for the Work Plan 2010. The meeting welcomed the advice provided by ECNC's Scientific Council, including advice on how to tackle issues such as GMOs.

On the same day, and for the first time, a joint meeting of ECNC's Bureau and the ExCom of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC) took place. The meeting welcomed the important progress made with the integration process between the two organizations, and also noted the interest of

some other organizations to join the 'new-style' ECNC. The presidents and directors of ECNC and EUCC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation outlining the first phase of the integration process. The meeting also adopted a common vision and mission, and decided on the geographical scope of the new ECNC.

On 10 June the members of the ECNC Bureau visited the Great Fen project area in East Anglia. This is an ambitious plan for land acquisition and restoration works, involving nature conservation organizations, farmers and other local stakeholders. More information on this project can be found at www.greatfen.org.uk.

More information: Rob Wolters, Executive Director ECNC; wolters@ecnc.org



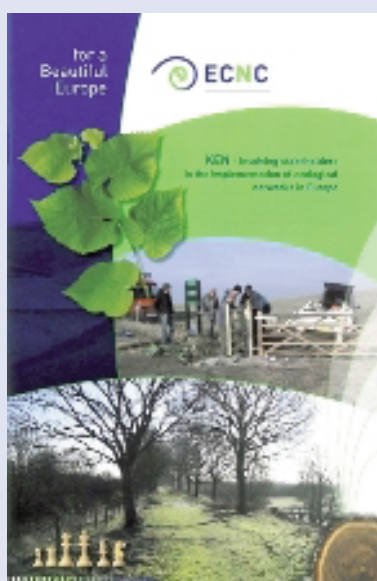
Signing the Memorandum of Cooperation. From left to right: Albert Salman, Director General EUCC; Sir Brian Unwin, President ECNC; Rob Wolters, Executive Director ECNC.

(Photo: ECNC)

New ECNC publications

Snethlage, M., L. Jones-Walters and A. Çil
Making the connection: Involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks. – ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

This brochure on involving stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks presents the main findings and recommendations of the KEN project: 'Knowledge for ecological networks – Catalyzing the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks in Europe'. The brochure can be downloaded from www.ecnc.org/ongoing-projects_30.html?action=detail&id=11



Mikos, V. and H. Wijnja *ELN-FAB: European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity.* – ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

This leaflet outlines the mission of the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) and some key outputs to date. The ELN-FAB was set up to provide a platform and facility for exchange of knowledge and practical experiences between farmers, policymakers, scientists, businesses and NGOs in order to help to optimize agrobiodiversity benefits and promote sustainable agriculture.

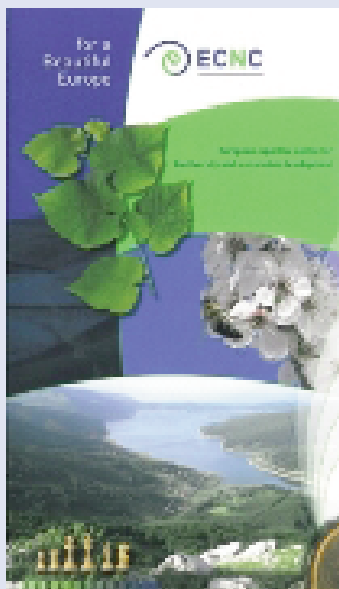
The leaflet can be downloaded from http://www.ecnc.org/ongoing-projects_33.html?action=detail&id=84&PHPSES-SID=146e8e105173d69dc0afa3bb0faa3fe5



Çil, A. and B. Delbaere (with contributions from the ALTER-Net partners) *Integrated research to support biodiversity policies: the ALTER-Net approach.* – ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

ALTER-Net is a partnership of 24 organizations from 17 European countries that jointly develop durable integration of biodiversity research capacity at a European level. During the first five years of its existence, the ALTER-Net has provoked a tremendous amount of cooperation between the 24 partners. This brochure presents the key products and outcomes of the project.





Wijnja, H. *ECNC for a beautiful Europe*. – ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

ECNC's brochure, presenting ECNC's programmes and activities, has been revised. The brochure can be downloaded from <http://www.ecnc.org/aboutecnc>

New issue of *Journal for Nature Conservation*

Volume 17, issue 2 of the *Journal for Nature Conservation* (published by Elsevier in affiliation with ECNC) was published in May 2009.

For further information, please consult: www.ecnc.org/publications/journalfornatureconservation?PHPSESSID=11daf7d4e9d421e9fe55b5b4c1b3685f



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ECNC Headquarters – Tilburg • PO Box 90154, 5000 LG Tilburg, the Netherlands • Tel.: +31-13-5944944
Fax: +31-13-5944945 • Email: ecnc@ecnc.org
WWW: www.ecnc.org