

Editorial

At the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe', held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October, Ministers reconfirmed their commitment to achieving the target of halting the decline of European biodiversity by 2010. ECNC was strongly involved in the Conference, including organizing or co-organizing three very successful side event seminars, and ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters co-chaired the Ministerial-NGO Biodiversity Roundtable, together with the Norwegian Minister of the Environment, Mrs Helen Bjørnøy. A detailed report on the Conference can be found on page 2.

Events such as the Belgrade Conference are important in bringing today's leaders together to discuss conservation issues and to take appropriate action, but we should not forget the leaders of the future, who will still face many challenges. As part of the SEENET programme, ECNC recently organized a poster competition for schoolchildren in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area. The competition was a great success and has raised awareness among schoolchildren of the importance of ecological connectivity. The winning poster can be seen on page 6 of this issue. ECNC's President Sir Brian Unwin and State Secretary Professor Nikola Ruzinski of the Croatian Government presented the first prize to Antonio Veres at the Belgrade Conference.

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*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

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Support to International Organizations and Policy Initiatives

Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' reconfirms its commitment to European biodiversity 2010 target

10-12 October 2007, Belgrade, Serbia

At the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe', recently held in Belgrade, Serbia, the Ministers adopted the Belgrade Biodiversity Statement, reconfirming Europe's political commitment to the European biodiversity 2010 target to halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010. The Ministers expressed their worries about the continuing decline of Europe's biodiversity. They will continue to invest in realizing the target in time.

ECNC was strongly involved in the conference. ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters co-chaired the Ministerial-NGO Biodiversity Roundtable on behalf of European ECO-Forum, together with the Norwegian Minister of the Environment, Mrs Helen Bjørnøy. Mr Wolters underlined – with reference to the EEA's Belgrade Assessment Report – the risk that Europe will not reach its biodiversity 2010 target if efforts are not stepped up. He appealed to the Ministers to give special attention to supporting countries and stakeholders in EECCA and South-East Europe in their efforts to conserve their – still rich – biodiversity.



Roundtable discussions.
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

ECNC organized or co-organized the two official PEBLDS side event seminars at Belgrade:

- European Ecological Network: putting the network into practice, together with the

Council of Europe, the SEENET focus group, the Netherlands Government, European ECO-Forum, and other partners;

- Regions and local authorities as champions for biodiversity 2010, together with the Province of Noord-Brabant, Countdown 2010 Alliance, the Governments of Croatia and the Netherlands, UNEP and other partners.



ECNC President Sir Brian Unwin leading discussions at the side event 'Regions and local authorities as champions for biodiversity 2010'.
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

On behalf of ALTER-Net, ECNC organized a side event seminar on the policy-science interface, in particular on how ALTER-Net could assist European governments and other stakeholders in implementing their policies and targets.

All three side events were very well attended, and resulted in clear interest and priorities for the future. Brief reports will be prepared for all three events.

On behalf of the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant, Dr Frank Petter, Mayor of Woudrichem and president of the region's local authorities biodiversity 2010 working group, presented Brabant's Countdown 2010 success story. His message to involve local and regional authorities more strongly in the development and implementation of

Training workshop 'Communicating nature conservation in the Balkan region'

20 & 21 September 2007, Macedonia

ECNC conducted a two-day workshop in September 2007 in Mavrovo National Park, FYRO Macedonia. The workshop, part of the project 'Communicating Nature Conservation in the Balkan region', aimed to assist key stakeholders, with the support of the Macedonian Ministry of Environment, in agreeing and establishing a collaborative platform for the ongoing management of the Mavrovo National Park. A first workshop was held in Mavrovo in June 2007.



The workshops aimed to contribute to the efficient management of Mavrovo National Park. (Photo: Mr Goce)

Rob Wolters, Executive Director ECNC, and the Park Director, Mr Oner Jakuposki, welcomed the participants. There was wide stakeholder involvement in the workshop, which was attended by over 40 participants from NGOs, public institutions, national and regional authorities, park management and local people. Mr Mile Jakimovski, Director of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, expressed his gratitude to the project team and his wish to continue into the final phase of the project, planned for next year.

ECNC Programme Manager Aysegul Cil built on the June workshop, emphasizing the objectives of this phase and that ECNC expertise would continue to be available to

assist the process of ongoing stakeholder participation and consultation as part of the management planning process. ECNC Associate Tom Kovacs and ECNC's Senior Programme Manager Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters worked together to pass on a combination of practical experience and knowledge of the park management planning process. They also conducted a series of exercises on creating a communication plan and developing a vision for the park. The focus was on stakeholder views and their prospective roles in the process. It was felt by all involved that the lessons learned in the workshop will provide an excellent platform for the future involvement of all sectors in the park and will greatly assist in helping the park to operate more efficiently in future.

This project is funded by the Norwegian Government.

For more information please contact Aysegul Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org



Participants delivered presentations during the workshop.

(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

Successful exchange visit to the New Forest

16-20 September 2007, New Forest, England

As part of the LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE project, members of the Dutch Agricultural Nature Conservation Association (ANCA) 'De Maashorst' visited the New Forest National Park, a small but very diverse national park in southern England. The ANCA has formulated a future vision for the sustainable economic development of the area 'De Maashorst' in the Province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands. In order to exchange knowledge and experience, ECNC and Bureau Ecoplan organized this field trip to the New Forest.



Ponies in the New Forest.
(Photo: Peter von Meijenfeldt)

The Dutch delegation was informed about the development and management of the area. They learned a great deal about grazing, initiatives and activities to stop dehydration and promote hydration, and experiences with regard to economic activities in and around the national park. Branding of the New Forest's regional products and image plays an important role. Because 'De Maashorst' encounters comparable challenges in its development the excursion to England was very useful and the Dutch delegation made some valuable contacts.

ECNC is technical coordinator and an active partner in the LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE project, which is led by the Province of Noord-Brabant. LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE is co-funded by the EU INTERREG IIIB Programme for North-West Europe.

For more information please contact Peter von Meijenfeldt, ECNC Brabant-Europe Manager; meijenfeldt@ecnc.org; visit the LIFESCAPE website: www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org

MEA-Scope Tool presented at final workshop

17-20 September 2007, Florence, Italy

Over the last three years MEA-Scope (Micro-economic instruments for impact assessment of multifunctional agriculture to implement the Model of European Agriculture) has been developing the MEA-Scope Tool. This tool is to assist policymakers in the European Commission in the ex-ante assessment of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform options, specifically, the impacts of CAP reform options on agricultural production and on non-commodity outputs.

During the final workshop, held in Italy in September 2007, the MEA-Scope Tool and many outputs from the seven case study regions were presented to the consortium members, interested participants of the scientific community, and representatives from the European Commission. The tool presents many opportunities, because it can show the impact of various policy scenarios on various non-commodity outputs through indicators such



as biodiversity, employment, income, nitrogen balance, area of extensive agriculture and ammonia emissions. These outputs are presented in accessible graphs and maps and will be available in the online webtool which will soon be available on www.mea-scope.eu

MEA-Scope is a Policy Oriented Research Project of the Sixth EU Framework Programme.

For more information, see www.mea-scope.org or contact Yuca Waarts, Project Manager; waarts@ecnc.org

European Ecological Network

The winners of the SEENET poster competition

ECNC is pleased to announce the results of the poster competition for schools in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area, organized by ECNC under the SEENET programme.

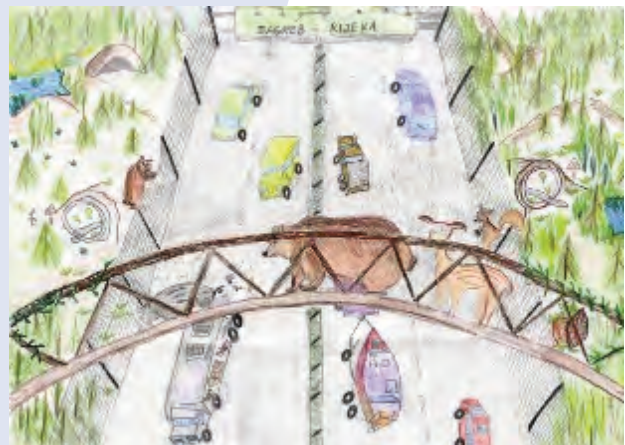
The SEENET programme works for the implementation of ecological networks connecting green areas to provide free movement of wildlife through landscapes that are also used by humans. The theme of the poster competition was connectivity: connecting nature with nature, connecting people with nature. The aim was to raise awareness among schoolchildren of the importance of connectivity for nature conservation.

Competition was fierce, and the judges were impressed with the quality of the submissions. The judges considered the criteria (relevance to the topic, understanding of connectivity in nature, originality and creativity) and awarded the prizes as follows:

- 1st prize: Antonio Veres (age 11) from Croatia (Os Augusta Cesarca, Zagreb, Il Ferencica 9a, class '5.a'), for his poster 'Ecoduct'
- 2nd prize: Olga Zaika (age 12) from Ukraine (Technical-Humanitarian lyceum â„– 129, 39 Penzenska Street Kryvyi Rih Dnipropetrovska oblast 50048), for her

poster 'Don't separate them!!!'

- 3rd prize: Laušević Pavle and Tufedžić Vojislav (age 9) from Serbia (Oslobodioci Beograda, Preradoviceva 3, 11000 Belgrade), for their poster 'Tunel za automobile a šuma za životinje!'



The winning poster by Antonio Veres: 'Ecoduct'.

The prizes awarded by the SEENET Committee (first prize 500 Euros, second prize 300 Euros and third prize 100 Euros) were given to the winners' schools, to allow the winners' classes to visit a national park in their country.

First prize winner Antonio Veres received his prize from ECNC's President Sir Brian Unwin and State Secretary Professor Nikola Ruzinski of the Croatian Government at a special ceremony held at the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' in Belgrade in October 2007.

To see all the winning posters, go to <http://poster.seenet.info/>

The award ceremony. (Antonio Veres second from right.)
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)



SEENET nears the finish line

The SEENET programme, which ends in November 2007, facilitates the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) in South-East Europe and the Black Sea region. The final Focus Group meeting, held on 25 and 26 September 2007 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, aimed to present the achievements of the programme so far, to brainstorm about possible follow-up actions, second generation SEENET ideas, and to evaluate the programme's elements.

In the past two years the SEENET programme has developed an extensive network of experts and knowledge of activities in the field of ecological networks in the region. A clearing-house mechanism was set up to distribute information and serve as a doorway to the world of ecological networks. The SEENET website received 5,000 visitors from the region, and the Focus Group warmly welcomed this result.

Opportunities have been provided for stakeholder groups to participate in national or international fora, events, training and seminars in the region or at EU bodies and institutions. The Focus Group evaluated two training seminars organized by the programme: spatial planning and ecological networks, in October 2006, and financing ecological networks, in April 2007. The programme also financed and co-organized nine national or transboundary meetings on ecological network related issues.



Communication materials have been developed on PEEN, and stakeholder involvement in ecological networks; sectoral brochures were published on ecological networks and forestry, water management, agriculture and road infrastructure.

The SEENET programme served as a messenger from the region to the international policy community and represented the region at several fora, e.g. PEEN Committee of Experts, EU Habitat Forum, PEBLDS Council and Bureau, Environment for Europe Conference, and CEMAT.

The Focus Group was very satisfied with the results of the SEENET programme.

The SEENET programme is funded by the BBI Matra fund of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Visit www.seenet.info for information, seminar outcomes, training materials and promotional and communication materials.

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Meeting of ALTER-Net Network Management Group

17 & 18 September 2007, Vienna, Austria

At its recent meeting in Vienna, the Network Management Group (NMG) of the ALTER-Net project focused on key outputs that will demonstrate long-term integration of all the work packages of the project. Three integration goals were identified in the previous meetings to ensure that the delivery of the products will provide durable outcomes beyond the project. This integration will bring

not only greater responsibility to each work package for the upcoming period, but also much inspiration for linking the work together.

ECNC's role in this period is significant. ECNC promotes the dissemination and transfer of



knowledge gained in this research network through effective mechanisms for integrating biodiversity research into the policy agenda. At the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, 10-12 October) ECNC organized a side event seminar on behalf of ALTER-Net. The seminar concerned the policy-science interface, and how ALTER-Net could assist European governments and other stakeholders in implementing their policies and

targets.

The ALTER-Net 'Network of Excellence' aims to create durable integration of biodiversity research capacity in Europe, and is funded under the Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

For more information: Aysegul Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society; cil@ecnc.org and www.alter-net.info

BioScore biodiversity impact assessment tool ready for testing

Halfway into the project duration, BioScore has now developed a prototype tool that will allow assessment of the likely impact of selected Community policy options on Europe's biodiversity. The tool basically is a database that integrates data on policy-related pressures with environmental variables and sensitivity of some 1100 species to changes in these variables.

The prototype database and user interface were discussed during the BioScore project meeting in September 2007, hosted by the European Forest Institute in Joensuu, Finland. In particular, how the tool is to be tested in three case studies is a challenge that will reveal what can be expected from it and what is needed to further improve its use for the European policymaker. Three case studies have been selected to demonstrate what will be possible with the tool:

1. a local case study on the impact of afforestation;
2. a Europe-wide assessment of the impact of improved air and water quality, focusing on eutrophication and acidification;
3. a Europe-wide assessment of the impact of short rotation woody crop plantations for biofuel production.

First results of these assessments are expected to be ready in March 2008.

The BioScore team has now also produced a first scientific paper on the BioScore methodology and results to date. This is

currently in its final stages; the next *ECNC Update* will report on where it has been published.

Finally, a BioScore leaflet has been produced for broader dissemination. You can download it from

www.ecnc.org/jump/page/537/Output.html

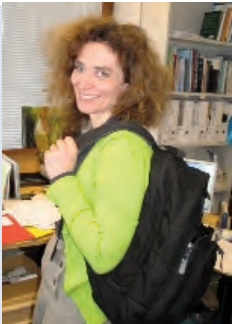
For more information: Ben Delbaere, BioScore Project Coordinator (delbaere@ecnc.org) or visit the BioScore website at www.ecnc.org/BioScore/index_529.html

BioScore project members at the meeting in Joensuu, Finland.

(Photo: Niina Jokinen, 2007)



Dr Eeva Furman joins ECNC Scientific Council



Dr Eeva Furman.

Last spring Mr Mark Felton of Natural England resigned from the ECNC Scientific Council. ECNC is glad to welcome Dr Eeva Furman of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) as his successor. Dr Furman is Research Manager of SKYE's Environmental Policy Research Programme. She has gained wide experience in the coordination and organization of several research and development projects in the field of environmental governance, in particular in science-policy interface, public involvement, environmental assessment and spatial planning. ECNC staff have been working with Dr Furman for some years now in the ALTER-Net Network.

Staff news

In August 2007 Angelique Beekes joined ECNC as Secretary. Angelique has experience in secretarial and assistant office management positions for various companies in the Netherlands.

Mark Snethlage joined ECNC in September as Project Manager in the Nature and Society programme area. Mark holds a Master's degree in Physical Geography (Landscape Science) from Utrecht University (the Netherlands). He has executed soil and land suitability surveys in Africa and South America. Mark was Policy and Campaigns Officer at Europa Nostra, where he coordinated policy campaigns to safeguard endangered cultural heritage.

New ECNC publications

Wijnja, H. and H.J.S.M. Vissers (Eds) (2007) *Conference proceedings, European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010*. – Tilburg, ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation and Province of Noord-Brabant, 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands.

On 15 and 16 February 2007, the international conference 'European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010' took place in the Municipality of Oisterwijk, the Netherlands. About 2000 people from 27 mainly European countries participated. This publication presents the proceedings of the conference.

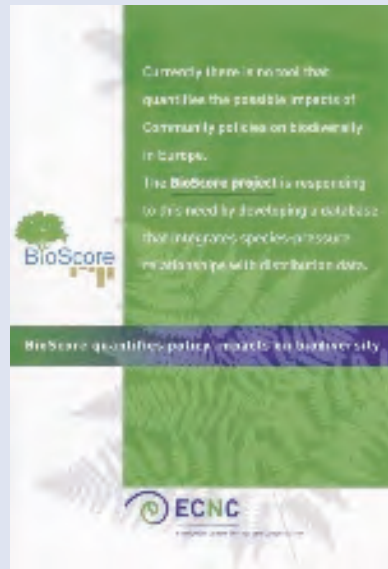


A leaflet has been produced for the BioScore project. The leaflet is intended for broad dissemination, and outlines the aims of the BioScore project and how these aims will be achieved. The leaflet can be downloaded at: www.ecnc.org/jump/page/537/Output.html

Together with UNEP-ROE, ECNC has produced a brochure on the achievements of PEBLDS since the 2003 Kyiv Conference: *Europe's Biodiversity Pan-European Efforts and Challenges: The catalytic role of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)*.

A brochure has been produced on the SEENET programme, describing the programme's aims and achievements to date.

There are new leaflets on ALTER-Net, focusing on what ALTER-Net could offer to governments, and on the European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative and the Task Force on Banking, Business and Biodiversity.



In addition, a new ECNC brochure has been produced, presenting ECNC and its aims and activities.

These publications are available on www.ecnc.org

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ECNC is a member of NatureNet Europe and IUCN - the World Conservation Union