



Annual Report
2007

Working for a Beautiful Europe

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This annual report can be downloaded from <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>, where you will also find more detailed information on *inter alia* ECNC's projects in 2007.

Messages

Message from ECNC's President and Executive Director

2008 is an important year for ECNC, being the fifteenth anniversary of our establishment. This merits some celebration.

ECNC was founded in 1993 as a European think tank for nature conservation by the widely respected Albert Klinkenbergh, who succeeded in translating his vision into reality by creating a truly pan-European centre. In his efforts to establish ECNC, he was supported by the Netherlands and Hungarian Governments, the Province of Noord-Brabant, the City of Tilburg, various other partners, such as IUCN and WCMC, and last but not least by Dr Antonio Machado, ECNC's first President and initiator of the process 'ECNC moving forward'.

And forward we moved. ECNC became a respected European Biodiversity Expertise Centre, which has initiated various innovations in nature conservation and built bridges between biodiversity interests and the wider interests of society and economy.

In 2007 ECNC generated many new activities at the interface of science and policy, and economy and ecology. We are especially proud of innovative projects in the fields of society and nature, climate change and biodiversity, business and biodiversity, and of our projects on ecological connectivity, biodiversity monitoring, communication and support to regional and local biodiversity processes.

ECNC is at the cutting edge of development and conservation. We will continue to support the review and implementation of national, subnational and EU policies, as well as pan-European cooperation and, in particular, the implementation of policies on the ground.

Europe is changing faster than ever, as are its nature and landscapes because of climate change, globalization, developments in agriculture and urban sprawl. The issue of biomass production looms large on the biodiversity horizon. Europe needs new ways to address these challenges and to establish practical partnerships in which the pursuit of common objectives is more important than endless

discussions on areas of disagreement. ECNC is ready for these new challenges.

As always, we are both most grateful to our partners and funders and in particular to the past and present staff of ECNC, whose professionalism and dedication have made these achievements possible over the 15 years of ECNC's existence.

Here's to the next 15 years!

Sir Brian Unwin
President

Rob Wolters
Executive Director

Message from the Chair of the Scientific Council

The speed and dynamics of ECNC's activities in 2007 were enough to sweep anyone off their feet. While some projects have been finalized, others have been developed and implemented. Since one of the major responsibilities of the Scientific Council is to monitor the scientific quality of tenders, proposals, output and ongoing activities, the high level of activity is a challenge. We are therefore happy to report that monitoring has been strengthened over the last year in collaboration with the Board and the Secretariat. Information briefings and the involvement of Scientific Council members in some of the current activities strengthen our understanding of ongoing processes, and thus lead to improved advice. As Chairman of the Scientific Council it is my intention to continue this development in step with ECNC's increasing activity level.

On the occasion of ECNC's 15th anniversary, and on the advice of the Scientific Council, a special publication on ECNC's achievements will be produced. We find this a good occasion to take stock of outputs and impact, and we look forward to presenting the results to you and to the public at large. ECNC's importance for – and impact on – policy processes is well known and acknowledged by the main stakeholders. With this publication we aim to reach a broader audience.

Dr Sjur Baardsen
Chair of ECNC's Scientific Council



Sir Brian Unwin

Rob Wolters

Dr Sjur Baardsen



1. Introduction to ECNC – What and who are we?

ECNC is an independent European Biodiversity Expertise Centre for sustainable development, based on a foundation structure. Our motto is 'ECNC for a Beautiful Europe'.

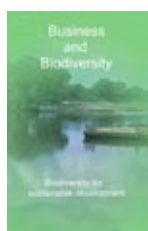
We promote the conservation and sustainable use of nature and biodiversity in Europe, because of their intrinsic values and their relevance to the economy and European culture. We seek to bridge the gap between science and policy, between economy and ecology. ECNC prefers to find common ground in interests and promotes new and effective approaches to and ways of conservation for sustainable development.

Programmes

We bring our mission alive via five Programme Areas, which generate a wide range of coherent project activities. These Programme Areas highlight the relationship between nature and people; address the business side of biodiversity; focus on ecological connectivity of nature and land uses; monitor changes in biodiversity; and combine international and European policies with regional and local realities and approaches. In 2007, ECNC explicitly began to address the issues of climate change and biomass production and its impact on Europe's biodiversity and landscapes. ECNC also specifically addresses European landscape issues, because the landscape is a basis and a reflection of economic development, culture and resilient biodiversity.

ECNC clients, partners and alliances

ECNC provides its expertise to various levels of governments, intergovernmental organizations, businesses and institutions working in financing, land use and research. We work closely with the NGO community. ECNC's Network, of 46 partners in 23 European countries, is an important pool of expertise and provides legitimacy



to ECNC's scientific aspiration. Via its coordinating role for various NGOs in the EC Biodiversity Expert Group (now replaced by the EU Coordination Group on Nature and Biodiversity), ECNC promotes civic society involvement in EU policies. Through its coordinating role on the science-policy interface in the EU ALTER-Net 'Network of Excellence', ECNC is strongly involved in linking science to relevant EU policies. ECNC and EUCC - The Coastal Union are working closely together to introduce, promote and apply new insights, innovative approaches and effective tools for biodiversity conservation, integrated coastal zone management and sustainability in Europe. We also prioritize the cooperation in the framework of the Countdown 2010 Partnership, in which ECNC has a leading role at the European and regional levels, together with IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and ICLEI-International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives.

Our outreach

Being firmly anchored in the worlds of policy, science, economy, and regional and local authorities, the outreach of our work is extensive. We strongly support EU and pan-European policies, and assist in translating them to realities of local and regional levels, land users and the private and banking sectors.

We reach the public with our work and by assisting our partners. ECNC's website attracts an average of 33,000 unique visitors per month (about 1,100 per day).

The daily keepers of the mission

The ECNC staff members are the daily keepers of ECNC's mission. Together with the President, Vice-Presidents, Chair of the Scientific Council and management, they are the true 'ambassadors' of ECNC.

2. ECNC in person

ECNC consists of four bodies – the Board (and Bureau), the Scientific Council, the Network partners and the Secretariat.

ECNC Board and Bureau

The Board is the highest decision-making body of ECNC and has overall responsibility for the operations of the foundation.

Board members

31 December 2007

President

Sir Brian Unwin KCB

First Vice-President

Dr János Tardy

Second Vice-President

Mr Ronald Loudon

Treasurer

Prof. Dr Jan Rammeloo

Secretary

Mr Rob Wolters

Members

Mr Carlos Martin-Novella; Prof. Valery Tikhomirov; Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano; Dr Sjur Baardsen (Chair of ECNC's Scientific Council); Prof. Dr Pantazis Gerakis; Ms Ivonne Higuero; Mr Eddie Idle; Prof. Dr Mustafa Kemal Yalinkiliç; Mr Bart Jan Krouwel; Mr Robert Lamb; Mr Giuseppe Raaphorst (Deputy: Mr Han de Groot); Mr Gábor Szilágyi; Dr Zbigniew Witkowski

Honorary Board members

**Prof. Dr Antonio Machado (former ECNC President);
Ms Nicki Goulandris-Kefala (former ECNC Vice-President)**

Observer

Dr Philip Buckley

Bureau members

31 December 2007

Chair

Sir Brian Unwin

Members

**Mr Eddie Idle; Mr Ronald Loudon; Prof. Dr Jan Rammeloo; Dr János Tardy;
Dr Sjur Baardsen; Mr Rob Wolters**

ECNC Scientific Council

The Scientific Council gives advice on matters concerning ECNC operations, with a special responsibility for quality control of ECNC projects from inception to evaluation.

In May 2007 Dr Mark Felton resigned from the Scientific Council. He was succeeded by Dr Eeva Furman of the Finnish Environment Institute.



Dr Sjur Baardsen,
Chair

Prof. Dr Ruslan
Butovsky

Dr Eeva Furman

Prof. Dr Jozef
Keulartz

Dr Julius Oszlányi

Mr Carlos Sunyer

ECNC Network partners

'One of ECNC's unique strengths is its wide Network of partner institutions, whose expertise and professionalism contribute critically not only to the quality of ECNC's work but also to its ability to operate in an international and multidisciplinary way.'

Sir Brian Unwin, President ECNC

The ECNC Network is a vast reservoir of knowledge, data and experience. Partnership to the ECNC Network is open to research institutions, reference

centres or conservation agencies active in the field of nature conservation in Europe.

In 2007 the Macedonian Ecological Society joined the ECNC Network, bringing the total to 46 partners in 23 European countries.

A full list of Network partners can be found at <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>.

ECNC Secretariat

The ECNC Secretariat takes care of the daily operations of the foundation, coordinates the ECNC programmes and maintains contacts with the other bodies of ECNC. The ECNC staff consists of qualified people of various nationalities and skills.

Back row from left to right: Andrew Schrauwen, Peter von Meijenfeldt, Ad Vlems, Astrid van Hemert, Mark Snethlage, Merijn Biemans, Rob Wolters, Frans Ghering, Ben Delbaere, Ronald Busio.

Front row from left to right: Hanneke Wijnja, Angelique Beekes, Yuca Waarts, Aysegul Cil, Ana Nieto, Wim Kerstens, Vineta Goba, Lawrence Jones-Walters, Glynis van Uden.



Dzintra Ailte (left) and Ágnes Bruszik (right)

Peter Nowicki

Gillian Heslop

Natasja Hulst

Grégoire Loïs

3. ECNC's 15th anniversary

ECNC has now been in existence for 15 years. In 1993, ECNC was little more than an idea, supported by a group of dedicated individuals and organizations, with ECNC's true founding father Albert Klinkenbergh in the driver's seat. Mr Klinkenbergh was one of the first people in Europe to recognize the vital importance of cross-border cooperation and of bringing together nature conservationists from all over Europe. ECNC quickly grew from a pioneer organization into a well-established organization that combines vision with realism. Focusing on both policy development and scientific anchoring in the pioneer phase, ECNC now has developed into a European Biodiversity Expertise Centre, with a strong outreach towards governments, the scientific community and the economic and land use sectors.



Albert Klinkenbergh.

ECNC develops and tests visions, strategies and policy advice, and over the years has also become increasingly focused on the implementation of visions and policies. For instance, ECNC developed a communication handbook, but also provided hands-on training to people working in practical biodiversity conservation. ECNC leads in the development of the European Ecological Network mapping, and also promotes on-the-ground cross-border ecological network pilots between countries and regions.

A vital component in ECNC's vision and approach is the conviction that only the active involvement of stakeholders, such as local people, farmers, fishermen and finance institutions, can ensure

a sustainable future for Europe's biodiversity. Biodiversity conservation should have an economic underlayer, especially in countries with few governmental grants and subsidies. This approach is reflected in our work on promoting pro-biodiversity businesses, branding of landscape images, and recommendations and input for the further development of the Common Agricultural Policy. ECNC has recently entered into even more complex work, including the impact of climate change on biodiversity, and the consequences of increased biomass production.

All this we try to translate to the realities of regional and local authorities in Europe – vital players in finding a good balance between economy and biodiversity.

Thus we are working on issues that are 'state of the art' in European and global policymaking. And 'we' in ECNC means two things: the international and dedicated group of people in ECNC's Secretariat, Board, Network and Scientific Council, and a strong partnership of countries, scientific organizations, international, national and subnational governmental organizations, and representatives of economic and finance sectors.

'A wonderful activity was started which later, under the operative leadership of Rob Wolters and the presidency of Dr Antonio Machado, followed by Sir Brian Unwin, materialized fully and grew up to become a Europe-wide recognized international organization. ... I am proud that I was an active participant in this uplifting process right from the start, under the first 11 years as leader of Hungary's official nature conservation body, and then as member of the ECNC Bureau and later as vice-president of the organization.'

Dr János Tardy, First Vice-President ECNC, Former Deputy Secretary of State for Nature Conservation, Hungary

ECNC's 15th anniversary: Flying free

In 1994, I was approached by Albert Klinkenbergh and Rob Wolters (then working in the Netherlands Government) to join ECNC as President. ECNC was in the process of establishment, and we spotted an emergent niche for an independent, policy-oriented institution, bridging the gap between science and policy, and able to manage inter-state projects in the best European communitarian style. The challenge was obvious, and ECNC initiated a long 'Moving Forward' process of statutory reform and reshaping of its organization and *raison d'être*. ECNC also made a bid for the first Topic Centre for Nature and Biodiversity of the European Environmental Agency. The result was that ECNC became a full partner of the consortium, led by the Natural History Museum in Paris.

When I stepped down from the Presidency in 2001, ECNC was running smoothly, but still had one problem to solve. The financial contribution of the Netherlands Government

was still over 50%, meaning that ECNC was not as independent as it should have been. Sir Brian Unwin, former President of the European Investment Bank, became President of ECNC: the right man in the right place! ECNC is now making its own way and is truly independent. It has become a crucial actor in European policymaking and implementation, and its prestige is based on a record of successes. It surely has a long life ahead. Knowing the team at the wheel, I feel optimistic that ECNC has a promising future.

*Dr Antonio Machado,
President ECNC, 1994–2001*



4. Highlights in 2007

In 2007 ECNC continued to undertake new activities at the interface of science and policy, and economy and ecology. This chapter highlights a number of important activities in 2007.

The involvement of society in biodiversity conservation including the participation of stakeholders – from policymakers to schoolchildren – is addressed by several ECNC projects, including:

- 'Communicating Nature Conservation in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia', which is building communication skills among national and regional authorities. In 2007 communication training workshops were held in both countries.
- Citizen involvement in biodiversity monitoring was targeted by the ECNC project 'Countdown 2010: Community Involvement in Biodiversity Assessment in Zagreb'.
- As a result of ECNC's efforts to promote the Countdown 2010 initiative in the Province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands, many cities and towns joined Countdown 2010.

In 2007 ECNC undertook various innovative projects on business and biodiversity, including biodiversity finance, such as:

- Working with entrepreneurs and financial intermediaries in Bulgaria and Croatia, ECNC assessed the potentials and constraints for pro-biodiversity businesses; the results were presented in a series of seminars.
- ECNC and RSPB, together with partners in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, commenced work on establishing Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units, to promote biodiversity enterprises. The project launched a project website, and elaborated a company assessment toolkit, a project leaflet and brochure for entrepreneurs, and a handbook.
- The achievements of the LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE project, led by the Province of Noord-Brabant with ECNC, include the establishment of innovative funding mechanisms for landscape and ecosystem services, branding schemes for biodiversity, and awareness-raising among children, farmers and local authorities.

'In recent years, ECNC projects have demonstrated that biodiversity investment can make significant contributions to economic, social and environmental welfare.'



Mr Bart Jan Krouwel, Director of Sustainability and Social Innovations, Rabobank, the Netherlands, and ECNC Board member

ECNC continues to play an important role in the establishment of the European Ecological Network:

- The ECNC-coordinated SEENET programme, providing tailor-made support to the development of ecological networks in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area, drew to a conclusion in November 2007. In 2007 the programme organized a training seminar 'Financing Ecological Networks', financed several meetings in the target countries on ecological networks, developed communication materials on stakeholder involvement, and brochures on ecological networks in various sectors.
- The ECNC-coordinated project 'Spatial Planning and Ecological Networks' conducted a first overview of spatial planning and ecological networks in the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Czech Republic and Spain.
- 'Knowledge for Ecological Networks' focuses on the role of stakeholders in the practical implementation of ecological networks in Europe. Country studies were commenced in the Netherlands, Estonia, Croatia, Switzerland and Germany.

ECNC involvement in activities related to monitoring and reporting on biodiversity include:

- The ECNC-coordinated project BioScore developed a prototype database containing information about ecological preferences for certain environmental variables, to assess the likely impact of selected Community policy options on Europe's biodiversity; a case study was carried out on how biofuels might impact European biodiversity.
- ECNC, as part of its role in the European Topic Centre for Biodiversity, played a significant part in the preparation for the European Ecosystem Assessment project – EURECA. The initiative will identify and economically value the services that ecosystems provide to European society.

ECNC coordinated several activities for ALTER-Net, EU's 'Network of Excellence', on the science-policy interface.

ECNC had a strong presence at the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, Serbia, October 2007). Activities included the (co-) organization of three official side events at the conference. ECNC's Executive Director co-chaired the Ministerial-NGO Biodiversity Roundtable, and presented the results of the Countdown 2010 Readiness Assessment on behalf of the Countdown 2010 Alliance.

For a more comprehensive review of project activities, please see Chapter 5 and <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>.



Activities in 2007 included promoting biodiversity conservation among society and developing programmes to involve young people.

5. ECNC Programme Areas in 2007

Nature and Society

Connecting people and nature

Socio-economic processes are today's main drivers for change in nature and biodiversity. Society's increasing need for space and natural resources places a great burden on the quality and quantity of our natural environment, and potentially jeopardizes its survival. However, these same processes hold the key to developing modern nature and biodiversity conservation strategies. Indeed, one of today's main challenges is to find innovative, inclusive and participatory approaches that reconcile the economic development that underpins Europe's current standard of living with the conservation and wise use of Europe's nature and biodiversity.

This is a relatively new Programme Area, established in 2001. It has contributed to the development and implementation of conservation policies that focus on the social and cultural context of nature conservation. This stimulates improved communication and stakeholder involvement.

Through various complementary activities, this ECNC Programme Area seeks to contribute to answers to the complex relations, tensions and possible synergies between nature and biodiversity conservation and society. Three key concepts provide an overarching framework to the projects developed in this Programme Area: understanding processes, communicating knowledge and engaging stakeholders.

With respect to understanding processes and engaging stakeholders, in 2007 ECNC started the coordination of a knowledge-generating project, together with partners from six European countries. 'Knowledge for Ecological Networks' (KEN) aims to understand the role of stakeholders in the implementation of ecological networks in Europe. This is essential for understanding the stakeholders' view and involves them in the process. A start was made on developing country studies in order to identify the current status of knowledge through a survey and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The potential for creating synergies and cooperation with another ECNC-coordinated research project, 'Spatial Planning and Ecological Networks' (see page 13), was also examined.

Several projects developed in the framework of the European target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 address the communication of knowledge and stakeholder engagement. ECNC actively promotes the key role of local and regional authorities together with their non-governmental and business partners in making practical efforts to contribute to this objective. The project 'Community involvement in biodiversity assessment in Zagreb', which ended in 2007, combined the latest insights into urban biodiversity from the social and natural sciences in order to raise understanding and awareness of urban biodiversity and to generate support for, and active involvement in, the 2010 targets among the urban population, NGOs and local authorities. The final project workshop on urban biodiversity was held in Zagreb, drawing participants from throughout the country. A photo competition for the general public was also held. Through the efforts on public awareness and community involvement in biodiversity and nature protection in the region, the city is stimulating local municipalities to increase their capacity for systematically integrating biodiversity into their local planning and policy implementation.



Television is one of the ways in which we can communicate information about projects.

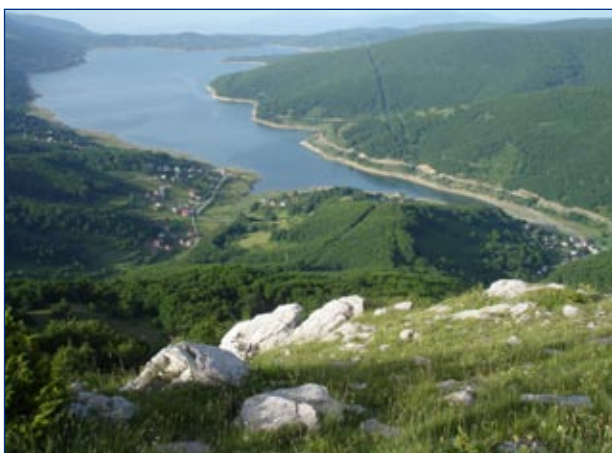
ECNC is oriented towards policy, towards networking and towards a holistic view of nature and society. ECNC contributes to discussions on fora for researchers, policymakers and broader society. These are the main reasons behind ECNC's successful impact on nature conservation in Europe.

Joint statement by the members of ECNC's Scientific Council

In 2007, ECNC actively participated in the 'Local and Regional Authorities in Biodiversity 2010' (LARA) project, coordinated by the Countdown 2010 Secretariat. The cities of Zagreb (Croatia) and Budapest (Hungary) signed the Countdown 2010 Declaration, committing themselves to concrete Biodiversity 2010 actions on local levels. Some districts in the Budapest region also joined Countdown 2010.

Within the framework of Countdown 2010, ECNC, together with the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), initiated 'Biodiversity works in the region', a project aimed at encouraging local and regional authorities in the Netherlands to build partnerships and to develop projects for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. By exchanging experience and best practices, this project aims to motivate practitioners at local and regional levels to integrate biodiversity objectives into their policies and practical delivery. A regional workshop was organized in 2007 to start building an active network of practitioners and to gather information for a national database on best practice biodiversity projects.

The project 'Communicating Nature Conservation' in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia made important progress in 2007. The project aims to build capacity among relevant national and regional authorities to communicate nature conservation benefits and objectives to all stakeholders. In 2007 the project entered its second phase, putting the communication



Mavrovo National Park (FYRO Macedonia).

Regions and local authorities as champions for Biodiversity 2010

At the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, Serbia, October 2007) ECNC co-organized a side event on 'Regions and local authorities as champions for Biodiversity 2010'. The side event highlighted the important role of regions and municipalities in implementing the European 2010 Biodiversity Target and furthering their actions under the Countdown 2010 initiative. These issues were addressed through presentations and a forum discussion. The proceedings of the event can be found at http://www.ecnc.org/6thMinisterialEnviro/Index_698.html.

skills learned in the first phase into practice in real situations. Communication training workshops were held in Macedonia in June and September 2007 and in Croatia in June. The skills learned were practised in the field, *inter alia* by applying them to two case studies: a communication strategy for Mavrovo National Park (FYRO Macedonia) and the protection of nature in the Neretva Delta (Croatia). In December 2007 the Croatian and Macedonian project partners travelled to the Netherlands for a mini-seminar and site visits to Dutch nature areas.

Business and Biodiversity

Promoting sectoral integration of biodiversity and biodiversity investment

The rapid economic development of the last century has brought benefits to humanity – but much of this development has been associated with a decline in the state of the environment and biodiversity. The concern for biodiversity is integral to sustainable development, competitiveness, economic growth and employment, and improved livelihoods. The decline and loss of biodiversity-related ecosystem services are creating a threat to the long-term interests of society.

During ECNC's 15 years of operation, this Programme Area has developed from a more scientific approach to globalization, economy and ecology towards the

actual integration of biodiversity issues in specific sectors, especially agriculture and the finance sector, and the development of appropriate financial instruments that are either innovative or specifically adapted to needs.

In 2007 the main orientations of this Programme Area were sectoral integration of biodiversity, and facilitating investment in biodiversity-related business. Work done in the framework of the European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative and the European Task Force on Banking, Business and Biodiversity, promoting biodiversity investments in Europe, yielded several new projects and moved existing projects up to full pace during 2007.

The project 'Promoting pro-biodiversity business opportunities in Bulgaria and Croatia' worked with entrepreneurs located in areas of high natural value and with the financial intermediaries who could secure financing for these business opportunities. During 2007 interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs and bankers in both countries to discover potentials and constraints for pro-biodiversity businesses; the results were presented in a series of seminars. A SWOT analysis in mixed groups of entrepreneurs and bankers was carried out, in order to determine the potential for pro-biodiversity business.

At the end of 2007, ECNC started a new project 'Promoting the business case for biodiversity in Europe'. Partnerships are being established with selected Swiss companies, with the aim of integrating biodiversity concerns into their operations.

In 2007, the Biodiversity Finance Clearing House Mechanism was developed on the ECNC website (see http://www.ecnc.org/BiodiversityFinanceC/Index_711.html). In addition, a European Biodiversity Finance Compendium was prepared. The Compendium contains a summary of the main policy initiatives and approaches towards biodiversity finance, a broad outline of various financial instruments and mechanisms developed for financing nature conservation activities, and an overview of the main institutions and initiatives involved in biodiversity finance.

In November 2007 ECNC President Sir Brian Unwin delivered a keynote speech at the EU high-level conference 'Business and Biodiversity' (Lisbon, Portugal). The conference resulted in support for the development of an EU Business and Biodiversity Initiative. Sir Brian Unwin suggested the establishment of a network of European 'business leaders for biodiversity' to actively support implementation of the initiative.

'I am very pleased to hear that our efforts towards developing the European Business and Biodiversity Initiative, for which the Lisbon conference was an important milestone, have borne fruit. It has not only resonated well with the conservation community and governments, but also, very importantly, with the business community, whose very strong presence in Lisbon was very encouraging.'

Mr Patrick Murphy, European Commission, Directorate-General Environment, from a letter to ECNC President Sir Brian Unwin

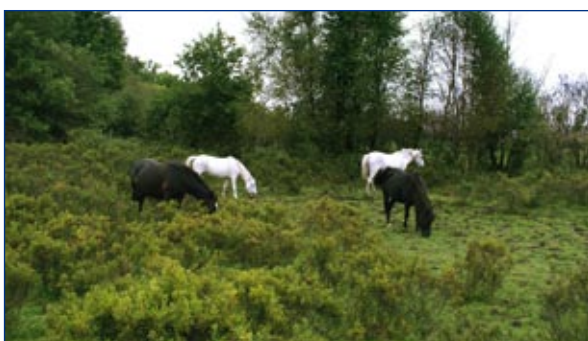
In the LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE project, led by the Province of Noord-Brabant together with ECNC, fourteen partners in five European countries work together and share experiences to come to new approaches for the long-term preservation of their landscapes. LIFESCAPE is implementing projects in the themes of enjoyment and learning in landscapes, exploring business opportunities, financing rural areas and involving local people and communities.



In 2007 LIFESCAPE continued to promote the rural landscape.

Outputs in 2007 were numerous and varied. Innovative funding mechanisms for nature conservation and

branding schemes for biodiversity were established, inventories for ancient woodland protection were made, and children, adults and organizations were informed about the values of their surrounding landscapes. Schoolchildren in France, Belgium, England, Germany and the Netherlands took part in a scheme in which they communicated with each other about the landscape they live in; this was done through 'travelling notebooks' that were passed from school to school. A group of Dutch farmers visited the New Forest National Park in England to learn about the development and management of the area.



Ponies in the New Forest.

During the LIFESCAPE Partner Forum in Frankfurt, Germany, ECNC organized a seminar on 'Banking and sustainable rural landscapes'. Project results were presented at the LIFESCAPE Final Event in Brussels in November 2007, where the LIFESCAPE book, *A European journey of our experiences 2004-2008*, was launched by Noord-Brabant's Regional Minister for Ecology, Mr Onno Hoes.

ECNC also worked on measuring impact on the environment, through the MEA-Scope project: the development of micro-economic instruments for impact assessment of multifunctional agriculture (part of the EU programme to implement the European model of agriculture). The MEA-Scope Tool will assist policymakers in the European Commission in the ex-ante assessment of the impact of Common Agricultural Policy reform options on agricultural production and on non-commodity outputs. ECNC developed the indicators used to quantify the non-commodity outputs of multifunctional agricultural land use, and reviewed the operability and performance of the MEA-Scope Tool with regard to key non-commodity outputs.

Opening up the biodiversity investment market in Europe

ECNC, together with RSPB and BirdLife partners in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, commenced work on the Biodiversity Technical Assistance Unit (BTAU) project in 2007. A BTAU was established in each country, pipelines of bankable biodiversity projects were identified, and the project website was launched. ECNC elaborated a company assessment toolkit, a project leaflet and brochure for entrepreneurs, and a handbook for identifying, developing and implementing pro-biodiversity projects. By promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, the project contributes to the European Biodiversity Target, and to the environmental, social and economic targets of the Lisbon Strategy. It is expected that the project will open up the biodiversity investment market in Europe.

European Ecological Network

Shaping the European Ecological Network

This ECNC Programme Area supports the establishment of the European Ecological Network through the development of regional networks in Europe, by building a knowledge base around the theory and practical implementation of ecological networks and by analysing the threats and opportunities arising from sectors other than nature conservation. The development of the Network is based on common objectives adopted by European states, and builds on the implementation of nature conservation instruments in Europe, in particular EU's Natura 2000 and the Bern Convention Emerald Network. The European Ecological Network provides stability and resilience to Europe's biodiversity and accommodates for ecological impacts of climate change. ECNC has been involved in aspects of the European Ecological Network for most of its existence and 2007 was no exception with work being carried out in a number of key areas.

Sixth Ministerial Conference a watershed for the development of a Pan-European Ecological Network

The Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, Serbia, 10–12 October 2007) was a watershed for the development of a Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN). ECNC co-organized a side event 'Connecting nature and putting the PEEN into practice', presenting where the main achievements in establishing the PEEN, focusing on stakeholder-oriented implementation activities and discussing ways to increase the realization of the two PEEN-related Kyiv targets. Ministers at the conference received a report from the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts for the Development of the PEEN: *The Pan-European Ecological Network: taking stock*. ECNC led the editing of the report, which reviews the implementation of the PEEN and informs ministers on the progress of work as a follow-up to the previous Ministerial Conferences. The report concludes that the concept of ecological networks has established itself widely as a framework to ensure ecological connectivity and has proven to be applicable at different geographical levels. However, the involvement of non-conservation stakeholders from sectors such as agriculture, water management, transport and infrastructure, and spatial planning in the establishment of ecological networks in Europe needs to be strengthened. The proceedings of the Ecological Network side event in Belgrade can be downloaded from http://www.ecnc.org/6thMinisterialEnviro/Index_698.html.

In response to the need for increased stakeholder involvement in the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) process, ECNC is coordinating two projects, looking across Europe at, respectively, the integration of ecological networks in spatial planning, barriers and solutions, and practical knowledge about the implementation of ecological networks.

The 'Spatial Planning and Ecological Networks' (SPEN) project recognizes that spatial planning is a decisive sector in the planning of land use in space and therefore in the implementation of ecological networks. It is the first comparative study of this nature in Europe and aims to fill the gap in research and to map the levels of interaction between policy in key sectors. In five countries it seeks to actively stimulate the involvement of spatial planning in the further development of ecological networks. In 2007 the five project partners began work on providing overviews of the situation in spatial planning and ecological networks in their countries.

The complementary project, 'Knowledge for Ecological Networks' (KEN), is described on page 9.

The programme 'Facilitating the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network in South-East Europe and the Black Sea area' (SEENET), which began in 2006, came to an end in November 2007. Involving all relevant stakeholder groups, specifically including non-conservation stakeholders, it did much to facilitate the establishment of the PEEN in the region. The programme was coordinated by ECNC, in cooperation with EUCC – The Coastal Union and Eurosite and various national focal points in the region. The SEENET website (<http://www.seenet.info>) provided information on funding possibilities for ecological network projects, a list of stakeholders in the region, a library with publications on ecological networks, calls for proposals for projects on ecological networks, useful links, lessons learned and important nature conservation and non-conservation stakeholder events. In 2007 a training seminar 'Financing Ecological Networks' was held in Istanbul to train representatives of local and regional communities and NGOs. In addition, in 2007 the programme financed several meetings in SEE countries on ecological networks. Communication materials were developed on stakeholder involvement in ecological networks, and sectoral brochures on ecological networks in forestry, freshwater ecosystems, agriculture, transport, and fisheries were published.

We highly acknowledge the contribution of ECNC/SEENET to the training which brought fruitful discussions and identified potential directions for development of further projects aimed at nature conservation in Ukraine.'

Ms Anna Guttova, Project Manager, Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative



SEENET reaches out to schoolchildren

Schoolchildren in the SEE region were asked to design posters to illustrate their views on ecological connectivity, resulting in a wonderful diversity of artwork, the best of which is now available in the form of a calendar for 2008. The competition winner received his prize at a special ceremony during the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe', in Belgrade.

In 2007 ECNC participated in the Project Steering Committee for the development of a Carpathian

Ecological Network, monitoring the project implementation process and giving guidance to the implementation; and ECNC continues to take part as a member of the expert group of a project to restore ecological networks across transport corridors in Bulgaria.

Over its 15-year life ECNC has been a driving force in the PEEN process. It has acted as the joint secretariat, with the Council of Europe, to the Committee of Experts for the Development of the PEEN and led or participated in several initiatives which sought to create spatial presentations of European Ecological Networks. There is a growing trend towards taking account of ecological connectivity in policy instruments at all levels.

Pan-European Ecological Networks continue to represent an important subject for present and future research and policy and ECNC will remain a key 'mover and shaker' in taking the agenda forwards.

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Monitoring the achievement of policy targets

This ECNC Programme Area deals with all aspects of relevance to reporting on the state of nature in Europe, from indicators and data collection, monitoring and assessments, to reporting and user feedback. Over the past 15 years ECNC has built up essential knowledge in monitoring and reporting on trends and impacts, and in translating this knowledge into applicable information for policymaking and business decisions at global, European and national levels.

Since the beginning of the millennium the European Biodiversity Target on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010' has sharpened national and international focus on the status of a range of habitats and species of European importance. The work of this Programme Area has therefore been particularly targeted on helping to drive achievement of the 2010 target.

2007 has seen an intensification in these Biodiversity 2010 efforts cross Europe. A key element has been the establishment of benchmarks against which progress can be measured; these should be designed

to allow the question, of whether the target has been reached at a European level, to be answered. At a policy level it is important that they be simple and easily communicated to a lay audience. To this end the European Environment Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme and ECNC are coordinating the SEBI2010 project – Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators. Based on the thematic framework provided by the 16 European ‘Headline Indicators’ for biodiversity, which in turn are derived from the Convention on Biological Diversity indicators, the SEBI long-list of over 140 indicators was rationalized into a core set of 26 at the beginning of 2007. Soon afterwards ECNC, through its role as consortium partner of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, made a first draft of the EEA Technical Report *Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010: proposal for a first set of indicators to monitor progress in Europe*. ECNC also led the development of the indicators for ‘public participation and awareness’ and for ‘financing biodiversity’ within the report. The report represented a major step in the SEBI2010 process and has provided the platform for an indicator-based assessment of progress that will be completed in 2008.

ECNC, as part of its role within the European Topic Centre for Biodiversity, also played a significant part in the preparation for the European Environment Agency-led European Ecosystem Assessment project – EURECA. Driven by the EU 2010 Biodiversity Target, the initiative takes up the challenge to identify and economically

value the services that ecosystems provide to European society. EURECA builds on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and links to the Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators project (SEBI 2010).

‘From the first, ECNC has been a dedicated partner in the successive consortia of the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity led by the MNHN. Some key words of ECNC’s contribution to the ETC achievements are: professionalism, commitment and partnership.’
Carlos Romão, Manager, European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity-

ECNC has continued to coordinate the three-year BioScore project, whose aim is to develop a tool to assess European Community policy impacts on biodiversity. This project brings together scientific knowledge, data and modelling skills with respect to species distribution and ecological preferences. ECNC believes that these preferences, or life history traits, may provide the key component to quantify the impact of individual pressures on species distribution and habitat composition in Europe, and therefore on biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides. In 2007 important progress was made in developing a first version of the database, bringing together information on some 800 species and their sensitivity to some 14 environmental pressures. This allows



ECNC coordinates initiatives in Europe in order to join efforts in reporting progress and helping to achieve the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity.

us to discuss with end users the preferred interface for tailor-made assessments. A folder outlining the results and potential applications of the project's assessment tool was published in 2007 and a case study has already been worked up in relation to the impact of biofuels policy on biodiversity.



BioScore brings together scientific knowledge, data and modelling skills concerning species distribution and ecological preferences.

ECNC continued its involvement in the ALTER-Net 'Network of Excellence'. This long-term biodiversity, ecosystem and awareness research network entered its third year in 2007 and has now begun to deliver a number of highly promising and useful outcomes. The further development of tools to support the science-policy interface was discussed at a workshop in Brussels, and a start was made on developing a communication strategy to support and guide communication activities. ECNC also contributed to the International Press Centre for Biodiversity Research.



ALTER-Net is establishing an infrastructure for integrated ecosystem research, combining ecological and socio-economic approaches, and emphasizing communication with stakeholders.

At the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (Belgrade, October) ECNC organized a side event seminar on behalf of ALTER-Net. The seminar concerned the science-policy interface and how ALTER-Net could assist European governments and other stakeholders in implementing their policies and targets.

'Long-term monitoring of biodiversity trends is essential to assessing the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing biodiversity loss and to providing the information policymakers need to make decisions. Through projects such as SEBI2010 and BioScore, ECNC plays a central role in monitoring trends in European biodiversity, and communicating findings to policymakers at international, national and local levels.'



*Carlos Martin-Novella,
Senior Advisor to the
Spanish Ministry of
Environment, and ECNC
Board member*

Ground breaking workshop takes forward monitoring in the Ukraine

In July 2007 over 50 scientists and researchers met for a two-day workshop in Kyiv as part of the ECNC-coordinated project 'Supporting public involvement in building capacity for Ukrainian biodiversity monitoring'. For the first time people active in biodiversity monitoring in the Ukraine came together to hear about the project and to listen to presentations about current progress in the field. The workshop was organized by ECNC in collaboration with Dr Vasiliy Kostyushin of the State Institute of Zoology, who leads for the project in the Ukraine. The delegates identified issues and barriers to change, began to form objectives for the future and agreed on the need for a coordinated strategy for monitoring across their country which has now been included in the project. The results of their discussions will significantly influence the national monitoring programme, currently being formulated as part of the project.

See also: www.ecnc.org/jump/page/622/Overview.html

Support to International, National and Subnational Biodiversity Processes

Assisting in implementing biodiversity policy commitments for 15 years

For a long time this Programme Area was at the heart of ECNC's activities, until policy support became increasingly integrated into the other, thematic, Programme Areas. Its focus illustrates part of ECNC's strength: being closely attuned to national, EU, pan-European and global policies and, in recent years, regional and local policies.

Throughout its 15 years of existence, ECNC has been at the forefront of European policymaking processes. For instance, ECNC:

- was the main author of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, under the lead of a preparatory committee of the Council of Europe;
- was strongly involved in the writing process of the EC Biodiversity Strategy, and its Action Plans, and seconded a staff member to DG Environment to assist in the writing and consultation processes;
- is part of the co-secretariat (together with the Council of Europe) of the Committee of Experts for the Development of the Pan-European Ecological Network;
- is a key partner in the IUCN-led initiative 'Countdown 2010'.

By providing practical, tailor-made support to the implementation of the priority targets of policies and action plans, this Programme Area promotes synergy between global and European actions on nature and biodiversity and provides support to international, national and regional processes and organizations.

'One of ECNC's most impressive strengths is the ability to stimulate policy developments, to provide in-depth analyses and concepts, to react to the demands of policymakers and to enrich political processes by scientific findings.'

Professor Dr Bernhard Müller, Director, Leibniz Institute for Ecological and Regional Development, Germany; ECNC Network partner

The European target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 was at the centre of ECNC's European policy support in 2007. A very important European policy event in 2007 was the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' (October, Belgrade, Serbia), where European Ministers and delegation heads reaffirmed their commitment to the European 2010 Biodiversity Target, through the Belgrade Statement on Biodiversity. 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 then Norwegian Minister of the Environment, and presented the results of the Countdown 2010 Readiness Assessment on behalf of the Countdown 2010 Secretariat.



Sir Brian Unwin, President ECNC, led discussions at the side event 'Regions and local authorities as champions for biodiversity 2010'.

ECNC (co-)organized three official side events in Belgrade:

- 'Regions and local authorities as champions for Biodiversity 2010', together with the Province of Noord-Brabant, Countdown 2010 Alliance, the Netherlands and Croatian Governments, UNEP, and other partners. This event was chaired by ECNC President Sir Brian Unwin.
- 'Connecting nature and putting the Pan-European Ecological Network into practice', together with the Council of Europe, the SEENET focus group, the Netherlands and Croatian Governments, European ECO-Forum and various other partners.
- On behalf of ALTER-Net, ECNC organized a side event on how ALTER-Net knowledge can assist European governments and other stakeholders in implementing their policies and targets.

NatureNet Europe – an alliance of ECNC, EUCC - The Coastal Union and the EECONET Action Fund – continued with its 'Beautiful Europe' initiative, through i.a. discussions with:

- EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) about an EAZA European campaign on large carnivores in 2008/2009. In 2007 ECNC joined the EAZA campaign, also on behalf of EUCC and the Countdown 2010 Secretariat;
- the European Commission on a new vision of nature and biodiversity conservation and with the initiators of the 'Wild Europe' initiative.

2007 – Year of the Dolphin

ECNC was involved in the EUCC-led Year of the Dolphin campaign, coordinating activities as part of the 'Beautiful Europe' initiative. ECNC assisted in building an alliance of government agencies, NGOs and the private sector for improved protection of dolphin populations. A seminar was held in the Netherlands, during which ideas and suggestions were exchanged on the themes of dolphins and fisheries in the North Sea, and whale watching. In collaboration with UNEP-CMS, EUCC, with support from ECNC, established a European Dolphin Fund to support activities for dolphin conservation in Europe and the Mediterranean.



ECNC provided input into the meetings of the EC Biodiversity Expert Group, also bringing views of other NGOs and providing ideas for the implementation of the EC Communication 'Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 ... and beyond'.

ECNC cooperated with the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant by:

- promoting the Countdown 2010 initiative towards a wide range of stakeholders in the region, resulting in many municipalities joining Countdown 2010;
- providing the secretariat of the Brabant Task Force on Biodiversity and Countdown 2010, and assisting in preparing its strategy and action plan and communication efforts;
- assisting the Province in preparing the international conference 'European regions as champions for Biodiversity 2010' (February 2007, Oisterwijk, the Netherlands) and delivering its proceedings;
- preparing a Brabant Business & Biodiversity Action Plan, and promoting biodiversity and Countdown 2010 among many businesses;
- assisting in public events to promote biodiversity to schoolchildren through 'Animal Event' at the Safaripark Beekse Bergen near Tilburg.

Support to wider European regional processes

In 2007 ECNC assisted the EU Committee of the Regions in drafting its Biodiversity Opinion, including the annex on promising regional and local biodiversity projects. ECNC had close contact with the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities while preparing input for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference and the Oisterwijk Conference. At the request of the Province of Noord-Brabant, for the Association of European Regions ECNC prepared a policy response on the EU Green Paper on Climate Change. ECNC was a partner in the Countdown 2010-led European project LARA – Local and Regional Action for Biodiversity, promoting involvement of European regions and local authorities in Countdown 2010.

6. Resources and communication

Social report

Over 2007 ECNC employed a total of 23 staff (21 in the Netherlands, one in Hungary and one in France). ECNC also continued to maintain its relationship with six associated partners (based in the United Kingdom, Canada, USA, the Netherlands and Hungary), two of whom were involved in project implementation.

2007 was the first full year in which the ECNC Secretariat worked under the new structure resulting from the midterm orientation process. From a human resource point of view, 2007 was relatively stable.

Monday mornings started with a staff briefing and information session. Several full staff meetings were held, addressing thematic issues. Staff members organized Food for Thought sessions, introducing relevant themes of projects.

The ECNC Board and Scientific Council provided guidance and advice to the ECNC management in implementing human resource and institutional decisions.

Recommendations made by the Scientific Council to further increase the potential of ECNC's human capital were taken up in 2007. The advice of the Scientific Council was also discussed during Bureau and Board meetings.

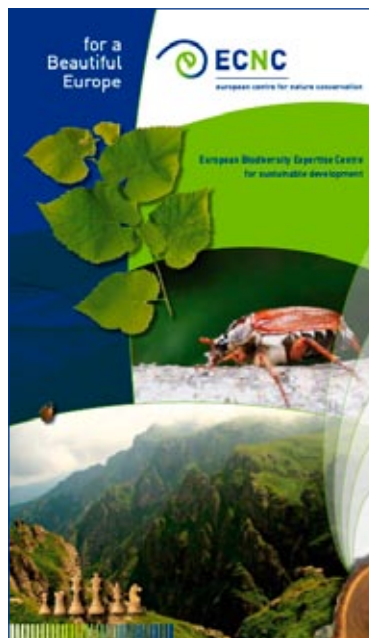
ECNC supported the other international partners of the European House for Biodiversity and Sustainability in human resource and office tasks and facilities; they, in turn, provided support to ECNC.

Information, communication and media

In order to further professionalize ECNC's information and corporate communication activities, in 2007 a communication strategy for internal and external communication and information was drafted in consultation with all ECNC staff and the ECNC Bureau. The document was welcomed by the ECNC Board during its meeting in November 2007.

A start was made on various actions in the Communication Strategy, including a new ECNC corporate brochure: *ECNC for a Beautiful Europe*, ECNC banners and project posters for display at conferences

and seminars, and ECNC project leaflets; see <http://annualreport.ecnc.org> for details. A 2008 calendar was compiled from entries to the SEENET poster competition for schools.



The new ECNC brochure.

To increase communication with interested parties and the public, in 2007 ECNC introduced the concept of briefs for thematic areas. The first brief to be published concerns ECNC's work and position on climate change and biodiversity (see <http://www.ecnc.org/jump/page/668/070507.html>)

The number of visitors to ECNC's website further increased to over 1,000 unique visitors a day (an average of 33,000 unique visitors per month).

Several ECNC project web sites were maintained in 2007, most notably the SEENET programme website <http://www.seenet.info>, which saw a strong increase in visitors in 2007.

Details of reports and other publications published in 2007 can be found at <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>

ECNC's presence at conferences

2007 was again a busy year as regards ECNC input to and presentations at conferences and seminars. ECNC staff were frequently requested to deliver speeches at international conferences or to facilitate workshops.



ECNC attended numerous conferences in 2007.

One of the biggest events was the Sixth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' in Belgrade (see page 17).

For further details see <http://annualreport.ecnc.org>

Financial management

ECNC's annual financial report 2007 was approved by ECNC's Bureau and certified by an auditor statement. The books were closed with a positive result, which allowed ECNC to increase its reserves.

Based on recommendations by ECNC's external and independent auditor, in 2007 important steps were taken to further improve ECNC's financial management and bookkeeping, i.a. in the fields of comprehensive time-writing and contract registration. These actions were based on an Administrative Organization (AO) strategic plan, developed in 2007.

In 2007, three projects were audited by an auditor assigned by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research.

ECNC's clients and sponsors

In 2007 ECNC's projects were financially supported by various organizations and institutions, without whom ECNC would not have been able to carry out its work.

BBI-Matra fund of the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Elsevier Science

European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment

European Commission, Directorate-General Research, Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development

European Environment Agency, European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity

EU INTERREG IIIB Programme for North-West Europe

Municipality of Tilburg, the Netherlands

Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment

Norwegian Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands

Rabobank Nederland

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