

Editorial

ECNC representatives participated in the conference 'Biodiversity protection beyond 2010' (27 and 28 April 2009, Athens, Greece), organized by the European Commission. The conference took stock of the current position in halting biodiversity loss by 2010 and considered post-2010 strategy. Ideas discussed at the conference were formulated in the 'Message from Athens', concerning the future biodiversity policy of the EU. A report on the conference can be found on page 2.

ECNC's Scientific Council has undergone a few changes recently. Long-term members Dr Julius Oszlányi and Dr Ruslan Butovsky retired from the Council, and two newcomers were welcomed: Dr David Green and Dr Zamir Dedej. The first meeting of the Scientific Council in this new line-up was held in Tilburg on 16 April; see page 7 for details.

*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

PAGE

In this issue

- 2 Biodiversity conference calls for a shake-up in EU biodiversity policy
- 2 Biodiversity is not only for grown-ups
- 3 European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity – Kick-off and first Steering Group meeting
- 4 First national workshop on ecological networks held in Macedonia
- 5 Towards a green infrastructure for Europe: integrating Natura 2000 sites into the wider countryside
- 5 ALTER-Net conference - the way forward
- 6 KYOTO project receives positive annual review
- 7 New set-up for ECNC Scientific Council
- 7 New ECNC publications

Biodiversity conference calls for a shake-up in EU biodiversity policy

27 & 28 April 2009, Athens, Greece

The EU high-level conference 'Biodiversity protection beyond 2010: priorities and options for future EU policy' took place on 27 and 28 April 2009 in Athens, Greece. The conference addressed the EU's possible future policy priorities and took stock of the results of the EU's biodiversity policy to date. European Commission President Mr José Manuel Barroso addressed the conference at the opening session, highlighting the importance the Commission attaches to biodiversity conservation in Europe.

A recent review concluded that the EU's political target to halt biodiversity loss in the EU by 2010 was unlikely to be reached and that substantial additional effort is required. The conference resulted in the 'Message from Athens', which calls for a shake-up in EU biodiversity policies and outlines an eight-point plan of action for biodiversity and nature conservation beyond 2010.

ECNC was actively involved in the conference and part of its preparations, focusing – at the request of the European Commission – on the theme of Business and Biodiversity. ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters chaired the working group which dealt with business and biodiversity, reported the results back to the plenary and participated in the Conference Forum. Rob Wolters stated that a paradigm shift is required for both the business sector and the biodiversity sector: 'The focus should be on implementing an inspiring new vision for Europe's biodiversity and ecosystem services, in which hope, confidence and true cooperation

and trust between sectors, institutes and organizations is at the centre.'

The conference was attended by leading scientists, politicians, economists and academics from all EU Member States and by representatives from civil society and business. The European Commission–DG Environment organized the conference under the direct auspices of EC Commissioner for Environment Mr Stavros Dimas.

For more information, visit the EC website <http://biodiversity-chm.eea.europa.eu/stories/european-message-athens-future-biodiversity>, or contact ECNC: Ben Delbaere, Head of Programme Development (delbaere@ecnc.org), Aysegül Çil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society (cil@ecnc.org) or Rob Wolters, Executive Director (wolters@ecnc.org).

EC President José Manuel Barroso addressing the conference in Athens.
(Photo: © European Communities, 2009)



Biodiversity is not only for grown-ups

Youth can play an important role in saving biodiversity. In the Province of Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands, children are being increasingly addressed when developing biodiversity activities. ECNC and the Province want to make children aware of the nature surrounding them and the positive influence they can have on its quality.

Children are reached via several events, such as the National Tree Festival and Animal Event. For these events, a special Biodiversity Stand has been developed, targeted at youth. The stand shows several aspects of biodiversity in an appealing and three-dimensional way.

Another way that children are being approached is by the development of the Kids Countdown 2010 Declaration. This was developed as part of the celebration of the 53rd National Tree Festival in the Netherlands, on 18 March 2009. It was signed by eight schools from the Eindhoven region in the Province of Noord-Brabant. By signing this declaration the kids and their teachers promise to undertake action in and around their schools to promote and enhance biodiversity. The children who signed the declaration during the Tree Festival received a €1,000 grant from the Province to support the implementation of their Biodiversity Action Plan.

After the Festival, all schools in the Province of Noord-Brabant were invited to sign the declaration as well.

For more information: Hanneke Wijnja, Communication Officer; wijnja@ecnc.org

The Kids Countdown 2010 Declaration.
(Photo: ECNC)



Business and Biodiversity

European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity – Kick-off and first Steering Group meeting

26 February 2009, Brussels, Belgium

The kick-off and first Steering Group meeting of the project 'European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity' (ELN-FAB), organized by ECNC, was held in Brussels on 26 February 2009. The meeting was hosted by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO).

The project, which geographically focuses on the 27 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland, aims to provide a platform and facility for exchange of knowledge and practical experiences across country and language bor-



(Photo: Saxifraga, Marijke Verhagen)



European Learning Network on Functional Agrobiodiversity

ders, between farmers, policymakers, scientists, businesses and NGOs, to enable fast and effective implementation of best practices in order to help to optimize agrobiodiversity benefits and promote sustainable agriculture.

The meeting brought together the project team and the Steering Group (which consists of scientists and policymakers from six European countries) to discuss the implementation of the project.

Following the introductory presentations given by project team members from ECNC, the background and aim of the project were discussed in detail. The schedule of project activities was also analysed. The project has a time frame of 12 months, divided into two phases. The first phase concerns the establishment of the secre-

tariat for the ELN, and the second phase will mainly focus on generating knowledge and communication between the stakeholders and finding funds for the period beyond 2009.

The project is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the

Environment (VROM) and will run until the end of 2009, although the intention is to expand the network in the long term.

For more information: Veronika Mikos, Project Manager; mikos@ecnc.org

European Ecological Networks

First national workshop on ecological networks held in Macedonia

23 & 24 April 2009, Dojran, Macedonia

The ECNC MAK-NEN project aims to develop a National Ecological Network (NEN) in Macedonia. On 23 and 24 April 2009, more than 30 key stakeholders and project partners met in Dojran, Macedonia for the first national workshop.

Organized by national project partner the Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), the workshop allowed the ecological networks concept to be presented for the first time to the representatives of all relevant sectors responsible for its successful future implementation, thereby making a first step towards the sectoral integration that will be necessary for effective delivery.

Themes covered during the workshop were:

- Biodiversity richness and why Macedonia needs an ecological network.
- Ecological networks – policy and practice in Europe and progress made in Macedonia so far.
- MAK-NEN project overview.

During a facilitated working session the participants generated ideas for the successful delivery of the NEN by identifying barriers and solutions for that process.

During the workshop a memorandum of understanding between the MES and the National Hunters Association was signed, a clear indicator that this is the beginning of a productive phase of cooperation.

The second day of the workshop was used to consider the delivery of the ecological network in practice by visiting some of its future sites: Belasica Mountain area and Monospitovsko Blato swamp.

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

For more information: Kristijan Čivić, Project Manager; civic@ecnc.org

Workshop participants visiting the habitat of the Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*) in the Monospitovsko Blato wetland area.

(Photo: ECNC)



Towards a green infrastructure for Europe: integrating Natura 2000 sites into the wider countryside

25 & 26 March 2009, Brussels, Belgium



Two ECNC-coordinated projects – Knowledge for Ecological Networks (KEN) and Spatial Planning and Ecological Networks (SPEN) – are breaking new ground in the approach to ecological network implementation. KEN aims to understand the role of stakeholders in the process; SPEN studies the interaction between spatial planning and ecological networks. Knowledge and experience gained by ECNC in these projects was shared during the workshop 'Towards a green infrastructure for Europe: integrating Natura 2000 sites into the wider countryside' (25 and 26 March, Brussels).

The workshop, organized under the auspices of a European Commission, DG Environment sponsored project, was attended by over 80 policymakers, researchers, NGO representatives and other stakeholders. It aimed to determine a Community response to recent developments in the field of ecological connectivity, and to identify actions that would be most effective at EU level. Speakers presented the results of initiatives aimed at improving ecological connectivity, and the participants assessed the need for strengthening the coherence of the Natura 2000 network and considered how ecological coher-

ence can be integrated into other policy sectors.

Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, ECNC Senior Programme Manager, presented the results of the SPEN and KEN projects (both funded by the Netherlands Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) and acted as rapporteur for one of the breakout groups. The results of these ECNC projects were significant in informing the discussion and the workshops which addressed topics such as: land use and ecological coherence; integrating green infrastructure into other sectors; and priorities for building a green infrastructure at EU level.

The results of the workshop are available at www.green-infrastructure-europe.org. Information on the subject can also be found at ECNC's website (www.ecnc.org) or at www.ecologicalnetworks.eu, both of which contain information about the KEN and SPEN projects.

For more information: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, Senior Programme Manager, joneswalters@ecnc.org

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

ALTER-Net conference - the way forward

4–6 March 2009, Leipzig, Germany

An ECNC delegation actively participated in the ALTER-Net final conference, 'Inter-disciplinary Challenges for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research', which took place from 4 to 6 March 2009 in Leipzig. This conference was organized by ALTER-Net (A Long-Term Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Awareness Research Network), which is co-funded by the EC's Sixth Framework Programme. Its mission is to improve the sustainable use, management and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems through the durable integration of European interdisciplinary research capacity and knowledge. ECNC leads the work package to develop a science-policy interface to

improve information exchange on biodiversity assessment.

The conference looked at the challenges facing ecosystem services and biodiversity from three different perspectives:

- Understanding the challenges.
- Changing our thinking.
- Providing solutions to the challenges.

In the coming years ECNC will continue its involvement in ALTER-Net, which will now be coordinated by the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA).

Following the conference, a research group meeting was held in Helsinki on 16 and 17 March 2009, coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). The meeting aimed at finalizing the ongoing activities on interdisciplinary research and exploring and developing further research areas in relation to policies outside Europe, predators and wildlife,

and integrated conservation and management. ECNC will participate in and take action on the further activities of these ALTER-Net partnership projects.

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



KYOTO project receives positive annual review

17 March 2009, Luxembourg

ECNC is a partner in the KYOTO project - Knowledge Yielding Ontologies for Transition-Based Organization. The goal of KYOTO is to develop a system that provides search and information access to large quantities of data and information for both experts and the general public in relation to biodiversity and other environmental subject material. When completed, the system will result in a sophisticated search engine that has the capacity to learn from the user.

ECNC is involved as the 'end user' and Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters of ECNC, together with the project leader and other key project partners, attended the project review meeting at the European Commission offices in Luxembourg in March this year. The project partners presented various aspects of the project, reflecting on issues such as collaboration within the project and with other related projects, progress, innovation and any problems that have arisen (and their solutions).

Dr Jones-Walters gave a presentation outlining ECNC's involvement in the project to date, reflecting in particular on the insights and progress achieved and the outcomes of the first user workshop held in Amsterdam in February this year. It was clear from all of the presentations that whilst KYOTO is a research project, it



is clearly breaking new ground and has the potential to create a valuable new time-saving, quasi-intelligent tool for use by biodiversity policymakers, researchers and practitioners alike.

The presentations were considered by a panel comprising representatives of the European Commission FP7 programme and invited experts in the field. The panel approved the continuation of the project and expressed its satisfaction with the progress and achievements so far.

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)

New set-up for ECNC Scientific Council

16 April 2009, Tilburg, the Netherlands

The ECNC Scientific Council met at the ECNC offices in Tilburg on 16 April. This meeting was special, as it was the first meeting of the Council in a new set-up. Three new members have joined the Scientific Council recently: Dr Anke Fischer of the Macaulay Institute in Aberdeen, Dr Zamir Dedej of the Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania, and Dr David Green of Aberdeen University, UK. David Green represents The Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), reflecting the current process of integration between ECNC and EUCC.

Dr Sjur Baardsen was re-elected Chair for the next three years and David Green was elected Vice-Chair. During the meeting the ECNC-EUCC integration process and the Scientific Council's role therein were discussed at length. Following a review of ECNC's current programme of work and some promising themes for future activities, the Council provided advice on issues such as bioenergy, GMOs and biosafety, local biodiversity action plans, green infrastructure, and island biodiversity.

For more information: Ben Delbaere, Head of Programme Development; delbaere@ecnc.org

From left to right: Dr Zamir Dedej, Mr Carlos Sunyer, Dr Eeva Furman, Dr David Green (Vice-Chair), Dr Anke Fischer, Dr Sjur Baardsen (Chair).
(Photo: ECNC)



New ECNC publications



A project leaflet has been produced for the MAK-NEN project (Development of a National Ecological Network in FYR Macedonia). The leaflet can be downloaded from http://www.ecnc.org/ongoing-projects_36.html?action=detail&id=63.

The project 'Impacts of climate change in South-East Europe' has produced three reports, which were published recently. The reports can be downloaded from <http://www.ecnc.org/publications/technicalreports>.

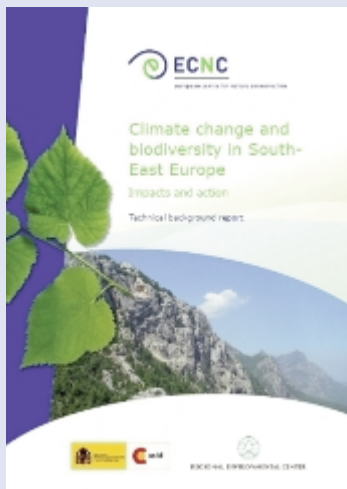
Nieto, A., H. Wijnja and L. Jones-Walters (Eds) (2008) *Proceedings of the Conference: Changing*

climate, changing biodiversity in South-East Europe; Belgrade, 18-19 June 2008. – ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation, Tilburg, the Netherlands.



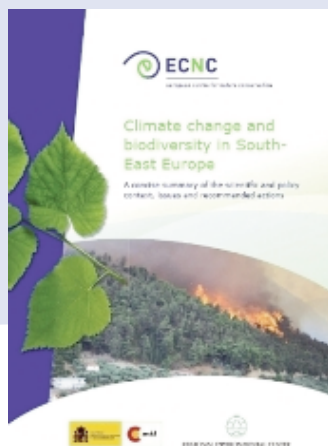
Laušević, R., L. Jones-Walters and A. Nieto (2008) *Climate change and biodiversity in South-East Europe – impacts and action*. – REC, Szentendre, Hungary; ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

The technical background report contains detailed scientific information about the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the South-East European (SEE) region, focusing mainly on five target countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). Practical, tailor-made recommendations to mitigate the effects of climate change on biodiversity and to increase the resilience of ecosystems in SEE are provided.



Laušević, R., L. Jones-Walters, A. Nieto and A. Torre-Marín (2008) *Climate change and biodiversity in South-East Europe: a concise summary of the scientific and policy context, issues and recommended actions*. – REC, Szentendre, Hungary; ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

This report is a summarized version of the background report, and is available in English and six other languages.



Delbaere, B., A. Nieto Serradilla and M. Snethlage (Eds) (2009) *BioScore: A tool to assess the impacts of European Community policies on Europe's biodiversity*. – ECNC, Tilburg, the Netherlands.

The final report of the ECNC-led BioScore project has been published. The aim of the BioScore project was to develop a cost-effective tool that is able to assess the impacts of Community policies on biodiversity. This tool complements the set of EU headline biodiversity indicators as well as European monitoring frameworks. The final report and the tool are available from www.bioscore.eu.



ECNC Update Volume 16, No. 2

ISSN 1388-0039

ECNC Update is the newsletter of ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation • Editor: Glynis van Uden • *ECNC Update* is freely available from the ECNC website (www.ecnc.org). Readers are welcome to reproduce this *Update* in whole or in part providing reference is made to the source.

Subscribers to the *ECNC Update* receive an email every time a new *Update* is issued. To subscribe, please send an email to Glynis van Uden (vanuden@ecnc.org).

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