

Editorial

At the end of 2006 a high-level delegation from ECNC visited European Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas and Director-General of the Environment Mogens Peter Carl. The delegation, consisting of ECNC's President Sir Brian Unwin, Vice-President Ronald Loudon and Executive Director Rob Wolters, informed Commissioner Dimas of the current situation of several ongoing activities in which ECNC is involved and exchanged views with him on a number of topics. A report on the visit can be found on page 2 of this issue.

In this issue we report on two of the new projects in which ECNC is involved. In the first of these, ECNC is participating in the establishment of Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units as pilot projects in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland. The project will highlight the opportunities and constraints faced by small and medium enterprises in managing biodiversity sustainably while achieving commercial viability. The second is an ECNC-led project in Ukraine that aims to enhance biodiversity monitoring by increasing public involvement.

The promotion of biodiversity was the focus of the recently held European conference 'European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010', held on 15 and 16 February 2007 in Oisterwijk, the Netherlands. A full report on the event will be included in the next issue of the *Update*.

*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

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High-level delegation from ECNC visits European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas

On 15 December 2006 ECNC's President Sir Brian Unwin, ECNC's Vice-President Ronald Loudon and ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters met with EC Commissioner Stavros Dimas in Brussels. Views and information were exchanged about NatureNet Europe's Beautiful Europe initiative, the preparation of the next Ministerial 'Environment for Europe' Conference in Belgrade, ECNC's proactive involvement in the Countdown 2010 initiative, and the preparation of the conference 'European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010'. Mr Dimas told the ECNC delegation that he was very glad to be informed about the various ongoing initiatives, and that he appreciates the Beautiful Europe initiative. He was also pleased to hear about the various Countdown initiatives addressing the regional and local levels, including the European 'Champions Conference', and the progress made in the Netherlands and the Province of Noord-Brabant.

Brabant embraces biodiversity 2010 target 20 December 2006, Waalwijk, the Netherlands

On 20 December 2006 two seminars took place that focused on implementing the Countdown 2010 commitment in Noord-Brabant, the first region to sign the Countdown 2010 declaration. Both seminars were organized by the Province of Noord-Brabant and ECNC as part of the B&E Partnership.

The first seminar 'Biodiversity works in Brabant' brought together 40 participants from regional and local governments, NGOs, expertise centres and other stakeholders. The seminar concluded with recommendations on how to increase efforts at the local and regional levels to implement the 2010 commitment.

Brabant's Regional Minister for Nature, Environment and Water, Ms Annemarie Moons, welcomed the results of the seminar and outlined the Province's policy on biodi-

On the same day, the ECNC delegation also met with Director-General of the Environment Mogens Peter Carl and Directorate B Director Ladislav Miko.

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Commissioner Stavros Dimas.

(Photo: © European Community, 2007)

versity and sustainable development. At the end of the seminar, the mayor and alderman of environment of the municipality of Waalwijk signed the Countdown 2010 commitment. ECNC's Executive Director Rob Wolters presented the new brochure *Biodiversity works in Brabant* to Ms Moons, Mayor De Geus and Alderman Van Groos of Waalwijk, and to Mr Van Hezik, the deputy chairman of the local authorities working group on biodiversity and Countdown 2010.

The first meeting of this working group took place in the afternoon of 20 December, chaired by Dr Frank Petter, mayor of Woudrichem. The meeting focused on priority activities for biodiversity 2010 in Noord-Brabant and decided to combine ambition with practical implementation. The working group provided input to the conference 'European regions as champions for biodiversity 2010', which was held in Oisterwijk,



Noord-Brabant on 15 and 16 February 2007, and will also call for high political priority for biodiversity in the light of the Provincial elections due in March 2007.

For further information, contact Peter von Meijenfeldt, Partnership Manager for the Brabant&Europe Partnership for Sustainability; meijenfeldt@ecnc.org

Ms Annemarie Moons receiving the new biodiversity brochure from Rob Wolters.

(Photo: Hanneke Wijnja)

Business and Biodiversity

Fifth LIFESCAPE - YOUR LANDSCAPE Partner Forum *13-15 December 2006, Oisterwijk, the Netherlands*

An interregional project such as LIFESCAPE depends on substantial interaction between partners in order to achieve its purpose, which is the development and dissemination of different actions at the local level in order to use landscape identity as a stimulus for economic development. The semi-annual Partner Forums are a significant part of the process to exchange experience, and take place in the five participating countries on a rotating basis.

The fifth Partner Forum, held in Oisterwijk (the Netherlands), had the particular purpose to test the results of the partner work (the 20 Transnational Key Actions – TKAs) through direct encounters with the persons at the local level working on similar endeavours. For this to take place, most of a day was devoted to four thematic groups:

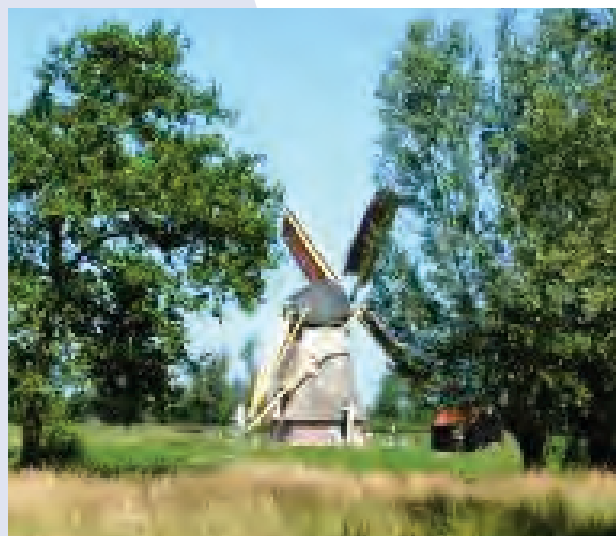
1. Using nature and landscape for teaching about the historical and cultural heritage.
2. Relating landscape and the urban character and local economy of villages and towns.
3. Linking landscape and human interests such as sports, art and culture.
4. Working within a landscape setting with persons requiring special care.

The task of the groups was to approach each theme from three angles: What is happening on the ground? What is the problem we are trying to solve? What can LIFESCAPE contribute?



The fifth Partner Forum opens the final period of the LIFESCAPE work programme, which will finish with a European event in April 2008. The focus of the remaining period is to finalize the individual Key Actions through the production of a common Toolkit to pass on to other local authorities and NGOs outside of LIFESCAPE. This Toolkit will also include the output of the three Poles, which have been an important centre-point for TKA interaction since the beginning of LIFESCAPE.

For further information, contact Yuca Waarts, Senior Project Officer; waarts@ecnc.org



Windmill in the southern Netherlands.

(Photo: Yuca Waarts)

Pilot projects for Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units (BTAUs) in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland

The BTAU project, which commenced in January 2007 under financing from the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission, will explore the specific link of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to society, economy, biodiversity and habitats. It will highlight the opportunities and constraints faced by SMEs in managing biodiversity sustainably while achieving commercial viability.

Pro-biodiversity business pursues four objectives: 1) conservation of biodiversity, 2) sustainable use of biological resources, 3) positive financial returns, and 4) equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of biological resources. Basically, a pro-biodiversity business strives to generate positive financial and biodiversity returns. Biodiversity business opportunities exist, primarily in sectors such as agriculture, eco-tourism and sustainable forestry. Companies active in the sectors that most impact on biodiversity are mostly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The latter constitute over 90% of all economic activity in the EU27 and even more so in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The message is that markets can work for biodiversity and sustainable use of resources but this will not be easy to realize. However, the market, properly managed by public policy, remains the best mechanism we have for managing scarce resources and improving livelihoods. Governments clearly have a role

to play, as do civil society organizations, but the challenge of biodiversity conservation is too important to undertake without the active involvement of the business and banking community.

The following objectives are to be promoted through the Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units to be established as pilot projects in Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland:

- identify, in a proactive manner, a pipeline of bankable biodiversity-related projects;
- harmonize concepts and procedures for valuation of biodiversity resources;
- strengthen formal and informal networks;
- establish operational networks of expertise;
- develop bio-tools kits and operational guidelines;
- provide training courses and make accessible information databases.

The principal role of ECNC is to prepare a toolkit for assessing pro-biodiversity business concepts and a Handbook for developing and implementing pro-biodiversity projects. The project is led by the RSPB, and other partners include the Hungarian Development and Trade Agency.

For additional information please contact Peter Nowicki, Programme Manager - Ecology and Economy; nowicki@ecnc.org

Scenar 2020 study published

The study *Scenar 2020 – Scenario study on agriculture and the rural world* was published in January 2007. Scenar 2020 is about understanding change for the period until 2020. The study identifies the impact of the main driving forces on agriculture and rural regions, and draws far-reaching and differentiated conclusions on the challenges for European agriculture and rural areas. Scenar 2020 provides a thorough basis for discussions on the future of agriculture and rural regions in the EU for the coming years. The study identifies major opportunities and challenges for agriculture and rural areas, including the impact of new products such as renewable energy, new opportunities on world markets as well as structural change and

changing environmental conditions in parts of the EU. The evolving situation in the labour and land markets will play a major role in agricultural change and its regional dimension.

This twelve-month study was carried out by ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation, Landbouw-Economisch Instituut, the Leibnitz-Zentrum für Agrarlandforschung, Leibnitz Institut für Länderkunde, the Central European University and the European Landowners Organisation.

The study can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/reports/scenar2020/index_en.htm

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

Kick-off meeting of a biodiversity monitoring project in Ukraine

7 December 2006, Kyiv, Ukraine

The kick-off meeting of the ECNC project 'Supporting public involvement in building capacity for Ukrainian biodiversity monitoring' took place in Kyiv in the Aarchus centre of the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine, the Academy of Science (Institute of Zoology and Institute of Botany of Ukraine) and NGOs (National Ecological Centre of Ukraine and ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation).

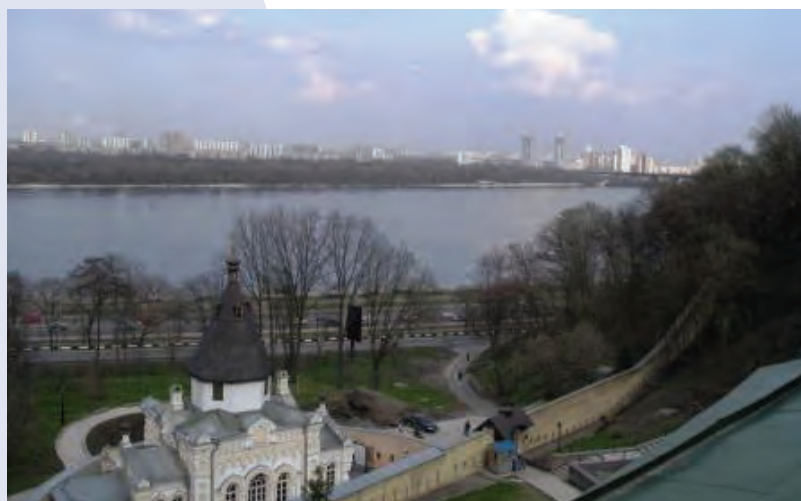
Ukraine does not have a state system for biodiversity monitoring, although to some extent there is monitoring of some taxonomic groups of species in the most advanced protected areas. However, most of this is not coordinated, is not widely communicated and does not involve a wider range of stakeholders. The current project will tackle this issue by enhancing Ukrainian capacity in developing biodiversity monitoring by increasing public involvement, as it has been proven to be a successful and cost-effective tool to help achieve the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The results of this project will provide inspiration and guidance for best practice across Europe.

At the meeting the objectives of the current project and its importance at the European scale were presented. A national monitoring programme will be developed that will ensure that activities are harmonized and that monitoring results serve a range of needs,

from policy requirements to awareness raising. At the meeting special attention was given to the construction of such a monitoring programme in accordance with European initiatives, such as the SEBI2010 initiative (Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators).

The participants showed great interest and enthusiasm and believe that this project will help them establish the basis for an effective and coordinated biodiversity monitoring programme in Ukraine.

For further information, contact Ana Nieto, Project Manager (nieto@ecnc.org), or visit http://www.ecnc.org/jump/page/SupportingPublicInvo/Index_621.html



View of the Dnepr river and modern Kyiv from the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra (Monastery of the Caves). (Photo: Ben Delbaere)

Staff news

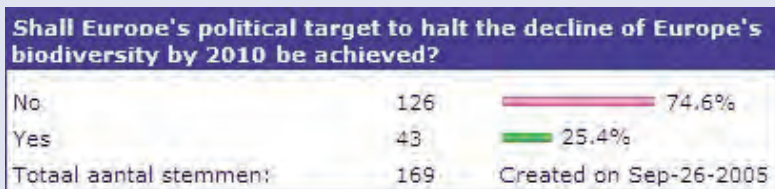
On 1 January 2007 Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters joined ECNC as Senior Programme Manager – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks. Lawrence has a Ph.D. in conservation management. He has been involved in ECNC's work for several years, among others in the SoBio and BIOFACT projects and as a contributor to the ECNC publication *Communicating nature conservation: A manual on using communication in support of nature conservation policy and action*. Before joining ECNC Lawrence worked at English Nature (now Natural England) as Area manager for North and East Yorkshire, and Head of Advocacy and Partnerships.

Announcement of vacancy

ECNC is looking to recruit a Programme Manager – Business and Biodiversity. For full details, please consult www.ecnc.org

Focus on ECNC's online poll

On the ECNC website there is a regular poll on issues concerning nature conservation. Recent polls have covered topics such as 'Is there a need for connecting protected areas?' and 'Loss of biodiversity would severely affect the enjoyment of life of Europe's citizens'.



The current poll is: 'Human activities are the main cause of global warming, hence of recent high temperatures'. What is your opinion? Let us know – go to www.ecnc.org and join in (you can find the poll on the left-hand side of the ECNC home page).

New issue of *Journal for Nature Conservation*

Volume 15, issue 1 of the *Journal for Nature Conservation* (published by Elsevier in affiliation with ECNC) was published in January 2007.

For further information, please consult:

http://www.ecnc.org/JournalForNatureCons/Index_36.html



ECNC Update Volume 14, No. 1

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).

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