

Editorial

ECNC has become an associated partner in the EU's SPECIATION Network, which will train young scientists in the biological disciplines needed to understand the evolutionary origin of biological diversity. ECNC's contribution will show how biodiversity knowledge provides support to policymakers and conservation. See page 2 for details.

In September Mayor Ruud Vreeman and Aldermen of Tilburg Municipality, ECNC's home town, visited ECNC and Eurosite. The delegation was particularly interested in ECNC's activities related to business and biodiversity. See page 2 for a report on the visit.

ECNC organized, together with Alterra and with support of the Dutch and French governments, an international workshop on ecological networks, held in the Netherlands on 1 and 2 October. The preliminary results of two ECNC-coordinated international ecological network projects were reviewed. The projects address the links between spatial planning and ecological networks and ecological network implementation through stakeholder involvement. The workshop findings will contribute to existing European processes addressing ecological network planning and implementation. See page 4 for further details.

ECNC's Annual report for 2007 is now available. In the interests of the environment and sustainability, this year it was decided to publish the Annual report on the ECNC website only (see <http://www.annualreport.ecnc.org>).

*On behalf of the Editorial Team
Glynis van Uden*

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Support to International Organizations and Policy Initiatives

Mayor and Aldermen of Tilburg visit ECNC

12 September 2008, Tilburg, the Netherlands

Mayor Ruud Vreeman and Aldermen of Tilburg Municipality visited ECNC's headquarters in Tilburg on 12 September 2008. They were welcomed by ECNC's Executive Director, Rob Wolters, who presented ECNC's work, with a focus on the city of Tilburg and the Dutch Province of Noord-Brabant. The delegation from Tilburg Municipality spoke to the staff members of ECNC and Eurosite.

The Mayor and Aldermen were very interested in ECNC's work, including activities on business and biodiversity as part of corporate social responsibility, urban biodiversity and sustainable development, and the impact of climate change on municipalities. The importance of the presence of European organizations in Tilburg for Tilburg's international profiling was stressed. This is especially relevant, as Mayor Vreeman wishes to focus more on the international strengths and opportunities of the city of Tilburg.

During the meeting Eurosite's Director, Gernant Magnin, presented Eurosite's

work, including work on cities and Natura 2000.

The visit was considered very successful and positive by all involved.

For more information, contact Rob Wolters, Executive Director ECNC; wolters@ecnc.org



Left to right: Gernant Magnin (Eurosite), Jan Haming, Rob Wolters (ECNC), Marieke Moorman, Noud Derks, Mayor Ruud Vreeman, Ben Delbaere (ECNC). Kneeling, front: Joost Möller. (Photo: Hanneke Wijnja)

ECNC to train students in SPECIATION: an EU Marie Curie Initial Training Network

The SPECIATION Network started in September 2008 with the goal of training nine young scientists to Ph.D. level in the biological disciplines needed to understand the evolutionary origin of biological diversity. This understanding is critical to the proper management of biodiversity, especially at a time of rapid environmental change. The collaborative Network involves participants from the University of Sheffield (UK), University of Jyväskylä (Finland),

University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and University of St. Andrews (UK).

The approach is to use powerful model systems for investigating the mechanisms of speciation and related ecological processes, applying modern techniques from theoretical modelling, quantitative and behavioural genetics, molecular ecology and environmental genomics to these questions. Students

will receive advanced training through their projects, through institutional training programmes, through workshops and conferences organized by the Network and through secondments to non-academic institutions that represent both end-users of the research and potential employers.

ECNC will contribute as an associated partner in the Network, providing an

educational experience beyond typical Ph.D. studies. The students will learn from ECNC's day-to-day practice how biodiversity knowledge provides support to policymakers and conservation.

For more information see:
<http://speciation.group.shef.ac.uk/itn/>
 or contact Ben Delbaere, Head of Programme Development;
delbaere@ecnc.org

Nature and Society

'Communicating nature conservation' in South-East Europe: final phase successfully completed

The last phase of this project, funded by the Norwegian Government, was finalized in September 2008. The main objective of the last phase was to strengthen the capacity in communicating for nature conservation by training the trainers in South-East Europe, with a special focus on Croatia and FYRO Macedonia. These trained partners acquired the skills needed to train fellow conservationists from public and non-governmental bodies working in the field of nature conservation. In this way the project achieved its aim of extending the knowledge and capacity in the country as well as beyond the project.



Samokov, FYRO Macedonia.
 (Photo: Mark Snethlage)

Following a refresher course in April 2008, which focused on acquiring and further developing the skills to train fellow conservationists in communication and facilitation, two in-country training workshops for 30 participants each were held. The first was held from 13 to 15 May 2008 in Paklenica, Croatia, and the second from 8 to 10 July 2008, in Samokov, FYRO Macedonia. During the two workshops, the basics of communication and facilitation for multistakeholder groups were taught through a number of lectures combined with facilitation group exercises. (See the *ECNC Update* for July 2008 for more details.)

The participants have expressed their satisfaction with this programme and consider the skills and techniques learned to be very useful. This project has not only strengthened the capacity of conservationists in Croatia and FYRO Macedonia, but it has also created a network between the two countries, and the park managers who were actively involved in the project activities. The ECNC project team has received positive feedback from

national coordinators and would like to continue with this kind of on-the-ground communication project in the future.

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

Neretva Delta, Croatia.
(Photo: State Institute for Nature Protection, Croatia)



International workshop 'Ecological Networks: From Spatial Strategy to Implementation'

1 & 2 October 2008, Oisterwijk, the Netherlands

About 70 participants from 18 European countries gathered in Oisterwijk, the Netherlands, to attend a two-day workshop aimed at taking stock of recent advances in the research, planning and implementation of ecological networks, and formulating clear recommendations to policy-makers. The workshop was organized by ECNC in cooperation with Alterra and was supported by the Dutch and French governments.

The preliminary results of two international ecological networks projects, coordinated by ECNC and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (ANF), were presented during the plenary session.



Mr Robert Flies, European Commission DG Environment, receiving a copy of the project portfolios from ECNC's Executive Director, Mr Rob Wolters.
(Photo: Hanneke Wijnja)

These projects address the links between spatial planning and ecological networks and the practical implementation of ecological networks through stakeholder involvement. The results were discussed during breakout sessions, which focused on finding innovative ideas to solve the bottlenecks identified so far. The results were officially presented to Mr Peter Bos (Ministry of ANF) and to Mr Robert Flies (European Commission DG Environment).

The recommendations of the workshop include: develop an appealing and challenging European vision on ecological networks, linking to spatial planning frameworks and taking into account the dynamics of society and land use; give a legally binding status to ecological networks at all geographical levels; ensure coherence between the planning and the establishment of ecological networks at all these levels (taking into account decentralization processes); adopt a stakeholder approach based on situation analysis and cultural settings; and create an ecological networks knowledge base with inspiring best practice cases including wider countryside applications.

The main findings and recommendations of the workshop will be widely disseminated and fed into existing European processes addressing ecological network planning and implementation, starting with the meeting of the Committee of Experts for the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (16 and 17 October, Strasbourg, France), followed by the International Conference on Biodiversity and Agriculture (4 November 2008, Montpellier, France).

For additional information: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, Senior Programme Manager – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (joneswalters@ecnc.org) or Aysegul Cil, Programme Manager – Nature and Society (cil@ecnc.org)



The workshop themes were discussed in greater detail during the breakout sessions. (Photo: Hanneke Wijnja)

Business and Biodiversity

BTAU Financial Instruments Workshop and Steering Committee meeting

16 & 17 July 2008, Hungary

As part of the Biodiversity Technical Assistance Units (BTAU) project, Vineta Goba (Programme Manager – Business and Biodiversity) and Rob Wolters (Executive Director ECNC) provided substantial input to two recent BTAU meetings in Hungary.

Rob Wolters chaired the BTAU Financial Instruments Workshop, held at the



BTAU project team members. (Photo: Attila Králl)

EBRD premises in Budapest on 16 July. Present were project team members Vineta Goba (ECNC), Zbigniew Karpowicz and Jack Foxall (RSPB), Attila Králl and Dénes Nagy (MME), Mira Dikova and Rouja Johnstone (BSPB) and Zenon Tederko (OTOP), as well as András Demeter (European Commission), Eszter Kovács (Ministry of Environment and Water, Hungary), Miklós Hulényi (BTAU Hungary banking expert) and Botond Vincze (Corporate Business Development Department of UniCredit Bank, Budapest branch). Mark Hughes of EBRD London participated via conference call.

The first set of actions undertaken by ECNC (such as meeting with the European Investment Bank and discussions during the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity), and the situation and needs of each BTAU

were discussed. ECNC then drew up and presented actions required to launch dedicated financial instruments to implement pro-biodiversity business projects.

On 17 July the BTAU project Steering Committee, chaired by András Demeter, met at Aranypony Fishponds enterprise, located south-east of Budapest. In addition to the project team members from the previous day, Jane Feehan (EIB), Halmos Gergő (Director of MME Hungary) and Levente Huszti (new team member and coordinator of BTAU Hungary) participated in the meeting.

The discussions covered the final draft of the BTAU Handbook, BTAU business plans, reports and updates from the three countries involved (Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland), project progress, operations and future of BTAUs post-2009, as well as a branding workshop and the possibility to create a specific 'pro-biodiversity business' brand. Jane Feehan informed the meeting of the EIB's increasing attention to biodiversity and the exploration of possibilities to launch a biodiversity and ecosystem services fund by the end of 2008.

The participants also visited Aranypony's visitor centre and hotel, fishponds and campsite, and tasted various Hungarian delicacies at the local restaurant.

The BTAU project is funded by the Directorate General Environment of the European Commission.

For more information: Vineta Goba, Programme Manager – Business and Biodiversity; goba@ecnc.org



Aranypony fishponds.
(Photo: Aranypony Zrt.)

European Ecological Network

New ECNC project: Development of a National Ecological Network in Macedonia

ECNC has started work on a project to boost the implementation of the national ecological network and awareness of the concept in FYRO Macedonia and to contribute to the country's efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity.

The Macedonian National Ecological Network project (MAC-NEN) was launched on 1 July 2008 and will run for three years, to 30 June 2011.

The main objective is to develop a National Ecological Network in Macedonia as part of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN). To achieve this, the project will:

- map ecological corridors and restoration areas of national importance in Macedonia and connect them with the existing core areas and buffer zones to provide ecological connectivity;
- promote the PEEN and ecological networks through the development of a

management plan for an ecological corridor for large carnivores, with special focus on the Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), involving key stakeholders (such as ministries, national institutions, landowners, forestry officers, national park management, local municipalities, local people);

- raise awareness about the newly prepared MAC-NEN amongst all stakeholders through a national campaign.

The project will be implemented in close cooperation with the Macedonian



Ecological Society (MES) as a national partner and with strong political support from the Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. Support is also being provided by the Council of Europe, which, together with ECNC, shares responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan on PEEN under the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution.

This 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: Dr Lawrence Jones-Walters, Senior Programme Manager – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (joneswalters@ecnc.org) or Kristijan Čivić, Project Manager (civic@ecnc.org) and www.ecnc.org/DevelopmentOfANation/Index_849.html

View of Mavrovo National Park.
(Photo: Aysegul Cil)

State of European Nature and Biodiversity

ECNC holds policy impact session at EURECO congress

15–18 September 2008, Leipzig, Germany

Within the framework of the ECNC-led BioScore project, ECNC held a session at the 2008 congress organized jointly by the European Ecological Federation and the Ecological Society of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The congress, held from 15 to 18 September in Leipzig, Germany, brought together some 1,000 ecologists from all over Europe on the theme 'Biodiversity in an ecosystem context'.

Although most of the participants and lectures could be categorized under 'hardcore ecology', it was striking how many connections were made in applied fields in relation to ecosystem services. ECNC's BioScore session, which focused on applications in terms of assessing policy impacts, attracted a

lot of attention, with over a hundred attendees.

BioScore partner Rob Alkemade, from the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, presented the GLOBIO model and its connection to BioScore. A further three presentations covered science–policy interaction on risk assessment, policy analysis and options study from the MACIS project on minimization of and adaptation to climate impacts on biodiversity, as well as the results of an assessment of CAP reform impacts on farmland birds in England and Wales. ECNC's Ben Delbaere, BioScore Project Coordinator, chaired the session.

All EURECO abstracts can be downloaded from www.eureco-gfoe2008.ufz.de.

European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity holds its last management meeting

16 & 17 September 2008, Tallinn, Estonia

On 16 and 17 September the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD) held its last Management Committee meeting in its current form. As from January 2009 it will continue with a renewed consortium for another five years.

The meeting, hosted by ETC/BD partner the Estonian Environment Information Centre in Tallinn, addressed the implementation of the last annual implementation plan. As it was the last meeting, the occasion was also used to hold a short brainstorm on the key achievements of the ETC/BD in the past four years.

The ETC/BD in particular made an impact on the development of the SEBI2010 process, on the creation of standards for EU reporting and policy, on collecting a full set of data on the location and boundaries of protected areas in Europe, and on strengthening biodiversity networks in Europe,

building online information systems, and contributing to the visibility of EEA reports. The Committee also listed a number of suggestions for possible improvement in the operations of the next ETC/BD.

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



The ETC/BD Management Committee.
(Photo: Carlos Romão)

Staff news

Ana Nieto, Project Manager, left ECNC on 31 July 2008. Ana joined ECNC in September 2003. She worked on various projects, mainly in the State of European Nature and Biodiversity Programme.

Amor Torre-Marín joined ECNC on 1 August 2008 as Project Manager in the State of European Nature and Biodiversity Programme. Amor comes from Spain, and holds a degree in Environmental Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Madrid. She has previously worked for the Spanish Ministry of Environment, as well as in

humanitarian rehabilitation operations in Central America, South-East Asia and Mozambique.

Merijn Biemans returned to ECNC on 11 August 2008 as Project Officer. Earlier this year Merijn spent several months with ECNC on a traineeship while completing his studies in Forest and Nature Conservation at Wageningen University (the Netherlands). Merijn is supporting the activities in two Programmes: State of European Nature and Biodiversity, and European Ecological Network.

ECNC Organizationally

Kristijan Čivić took up the post of Project Manager in the European Ecological Network Programme on 1 September 2008. Before joining ECNC, Kristijan worked at the State Institute for Nature Protection in his native country, Croatia. He participated in the establishment of the national ecological network in Croatia, and has worked on several international projects in South-East Europe related to ecological networks and stakeholder involvement.

Veronika Mikos joined ECNC on 16 September 2008 as Project Manager, mainly working in the Business and Biodiversity Programme. Veronika comes from Hungary. She holds a B.Sc. (Economics in Tourism and Hospitality

Management) from the University of Veszprém, Hungary, and was an Erasmus student at the Faculty of Business and Tourism, University of Lapland, Finland. Before joining ECNC, Veronika worked as a project manager and regional development manager in Hungary. She has experience in international project management, regional development and (eco)tourism development.

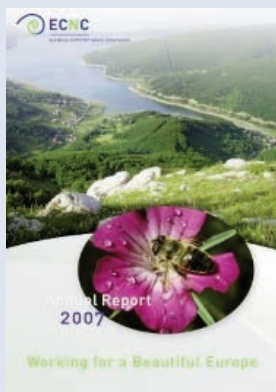
In September 2008 Lila Lesko joined ECNC as a volunteer, supporting activities in the Nature and Society Programme. Lila comes from Poland; she recently received her Masters degree from Leiden University (the Netherlands).

New ECNC publications

ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation, Annual report 2007

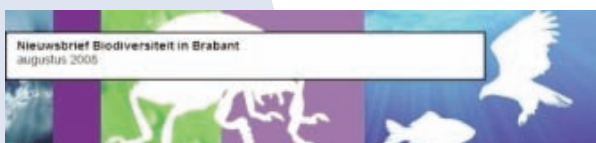
ECNC's Annual report 2007 was published in August 2007. Last year ECNC undertook a number of new and innovative activities, including studies on climate change and biodiversity, in addition to maintaining our active support for the implementation of the 2010 European biodiversity target. Important projects were also undertaken on communication for biodiversity conservation, establishment of ecological networks, the relationship between business and biodiversity, and biodiversity monitoring and reporting.

The Annual report, together with extra online information, is available at <http://www.annualreport.ecnc.org>



Nieuwsbrief Biodiversiteit in Brabant

The first newsletter of the MOLO Working Group on Biodiversity and Countdown 2010 in Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands, was published in August 2008. It presents news and developments related to biodiversity in Noord-Brabant. The newsletter is in Dutch and will be issued several times a year. The newsletter can be found at <http://www.biodiversitybrabant.nl/modules/nieuwsbrief/preview.php?id=5&domein=biodiversity> and <http://www.molo.nl/57601.aspx>



SPEN project partners Project portfolio: *Analysing the interactions between spatial planning policy and ecological networks to stimulate the involvement of spatial planning in the development of ecological networks.* – Tilburg, ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation.

This project portfolio was prepared as part of the Spatial Planning and Ecological Networks (SPEN) project, and was distributed during the recent international workshop 'Ecological Networks: From Spatial Strategy to Implementation', held in Oisterwijk, the Netherlands (see page 4). The portfolio presents the preliminary results of project activities, including an overview of most recent insights, concepts and approaches regarding spatial planning and ecological networks in Europe, and reports from the five participating countries: Denmark, Germany, Spain, Czech Republic and the Netherlands.



Compiled under the Knowledge for Ecological Networks (KEN) project, this project portfolio was distributed during the recent international workshop 'Ecological Networks: From Spatial Strategy to Implementation', held in Oisterwijk, the Netherlands (see page 4). The portfolio presents preliminary results from each of the project countries: Croatia, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



KEN project partners Project portfolio: *Examining how to stimulate partnerships and consensus-building among and between the stakeholders involved in the practical implementation of ecological networks.* – Tilburg, ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation.

ECNC Update Volume 15, No. 4

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.

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