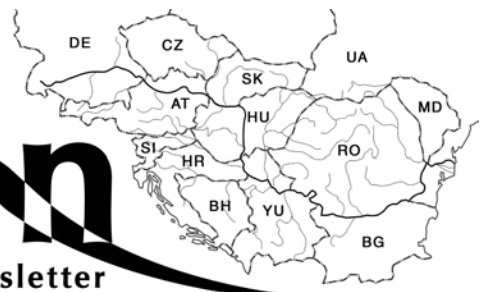




2nd issue
July 2003

Bulletin

The Danube Environmental Forum Newsletter



Dear readers,

People on different levels of our society search for possibilities to connect individuals and communities from different countries, trying to find common interests and needs of different cultures. Beside this never-ending quest of artificial linkages it may happen, that we neglect those natural ones, which were here for many years. Nature found tools for linking people, ecosystems, even natural processes long time ago – it formed rivers, which solder life in their catchments with life in catchments of rivers they flow in, and with life around and in seas or oceans. No man ever found so strong connection, which would influence so many cultures in similar way. Our everyday life depends on their water – its amount and quality. In spite of this man looks for its own linkages, often destroying this fragile natural heritage.

NGO community in the Danube Basin follows natural links formed by the river Danube and its tributaries and connects people dependent on Danube with effort to ensure effective and long-term protection of water. The DEF Newsletter, the 2nd issue of which you have in your hands, was initiated as the communication tool among NGOs in Danube countries to spread information on their activities. Current issue brings information on successful NGO projects along Danube, in which public participation plays a crucial role.

What is DEF?

Danube Environmental Forum (DEF) was created in 1999 as a Danube River Basin-wide platform of non-governmental, non-profit, politically independent, environmental organisations, in order to establish a common approach for the environmental protection of the Danube river. Since 1999 the DEF has also had observer status with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).

DEF development

Until now Danube Environmental Forum members have focused on strengthening co-ordination of NGO activities on the regional level. NGOs have expressed their strong desire to co-operate. The DEF Board, Secretariat and National Focal Points in 13 countries built mechanisms of an effective and functioning network, while involving DEF member NGOs in 13 countries in network activities. In last 6 months the number of DEF members increased to 110 NGOs.

Today, also due to the challenge of UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project, NGOs in Danube Region show that they are able to co-operate and co-ordinate their activities on a very high level. Further efforts of the DEF network will be oriented to strengthening the national networks, broader information dissemination concerning water pollution, the assessment of national needs for a special NGO publication on nutrient and toxic substances in waters. In this publication special focus will be given to possibilities how individuals and selected groups of stakeholders (agriculture, fisheries, forestry) could contribute to water pollution reduction. Publication will be finalised in winter 2003/2004 and will be published in 11 languages of Danube countries.

The last DEF Board Meeting, which took place on 24th and 25th March 2003

in Murska Sobota, Slovenia, demonstrated that NGOs are prepared to take further steps forward. Their work and cooperation will result in these NGOs becoming real partners to governments and in building up GO-NGO partnerships especially regarding WFD implementation. DEF members will use their skills and experiences developed after many years of practice in public participation (PP) activities to support the development and implementation of the Public Participation Strategy for the Danube River Basin.

In presence DEF develops its own PP Strategy, modified to suit the Danube River Basin Management Plan and taking into consideration other PP initiatives in the region (ICPDR, GWP, WWF). Regional DEF initiatives will be co-ordinated by the Board and Secretariat, within the network. DEF efforts are targeted at establishing effective co-operation with responsible representatives of state institutions, with a focus on partnerships in water protection at the national and local level. Each DEF National Focal Point will select and nominate a NGO representative with WFD implementation and public involvement expertise. This person will be in contact with responsible state institutions and will work on WFD implementation to national legislation as well as on adjusting EC Guidance on Public Participation to national conditions.

How Should the Public Participate in Danube River Basin Management Planning?

by Andy Garner, Environmental Specialist, UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project (16. 7. 03)

Which stakeholders should participate in what part of the Danube river basin management planning process and how? What type of participation is desired (information, consultation active participation in decision-making) and how can this be assured? The 45 stakeholder representatives (national governments, NGOs including DEF reps, WWF, GWP etc., private practitioners etc.) that participated in a UNDP/GEF Workshop on Public Participation held in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, April 200, on behalf of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) sought to answer these questions as input into developing a first Danube River Basin (DRB) Public Participation Strategy.

According to the WFD, appropriate public participation is required in the river basin management process. Further the official, EU Guidance Document on Public Participation in the WFD, suggests that public participation should be started now! Thus, the PP Workshop in April, worked to lay out the PP process needed in Danube River Basin planning.

The EU Water Framework Directive is the driving force in water management in Europe today. The Danube countries have agreed to a strict timetable to meet WFD requirements including, characterizing the Danube River Basin (DRB), identifying pressures and impacts, determining measures to reduce or remove the impact etc. all of which will be contained in a first Danube River Basin Management Plan.

At the workshop it was agreed that what type of participation needed depends on the nature of the respective tasks of the WFD. It also became clear that this Danube River Basin Planning process that is happening now until 2009 when the first Danube River Basin Management Plan is finalized, represents a great opportunity for various stakeholders (including DEF members and other interested partners) to get involved. The message at the workshop was clear: *Get involved now in order to influence the process!*

Environmental NGOs in the DRB, in most cases, have the best experience in involving the public (in some cases the only experience!) For example, it was due to a great degree, to the initiative of the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and the Global Water Partnership-Central and Eastern Europe, that the ICPDR placed Public Participation high on its agenda. Thus, the EU WFD implementation is an opportunity for DEF members and the overall

DRB NGO community to use this legal base to assure that stakeholders claim their stake, help to define the type of river basin they want, assure they gain the benefits they desire and in short, to optimize the management of this DRB.

Many would agree that ensuring the public's participation into water management activities is essential for achieving real improvements in water quality, for preserving or restoring freshwater ecosystems and for assuring that environmental benefits that the DRB can provide. Many NGOs, including those in the DEF network, are already actively working to get the public involved on the one hand and to assure that they can be involved on the other.

The PP Workshop participants confirmed that public participation is in fact needed at different levels: at the regional or Danube wide level, at the sub-basin level (e.g. Tisza, Sava, Drava, Prut etc.) at the national level and at the local levels. A major challenge is to assure the necessary inter-connections between the levels. Participatory processes established in Bulgaria for example, should somehow feed into those at the regional- Danube level. Just as participation in sub-basin processes (like the Tisza) can link to the local as well as national and regional levels.

Based on the PP Strategy, concrete activities that will be implemented beginning already in the Fall of 2003 and in part supported by the DRP, are being identified and prepared (for example those for the regional/ Danube level under the leadership of the ICPDR and reflected in the ICPDR PP Operational Plan.) Another implementation step being considered, as recommended in the DRB PP Strategy, is to support interested DRB countries

to develop national public participation implementation plans with concrete PP activities in line with the Water Framework Directive timeline (from 2003 until 2009). This national level process could start in 2004 with national stakeholder workshops to define the process at the national level.

The results of the workshop, background documentation as well as the subsequent draft DRB Public Participation Strategy are available on the DRP website: www.icpdr.org/undp-drp and then click on "Ongoing Activities" and then on "Activity 1.1.11 Public Participation".

For more information email the author at: andy.garner@unvienna.org

NGO trainings on wetland restoration and nutrient reduction

In spring 2003 DEF National Focal Points in 11 countries of Danube River Basin organised national Trainings on Wetland Restoration and Nutrient Reduction. The objective was to build NGO skills in wetland management and water pollution reduction and to disseminate information about the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project. Structure of the training followed the International training from autumn 2003. Content and exact objectives of the trainings were adjusted to national priorities in water protection in each country. For example in Czech Republic and Ukraine wetland restoration was identified as the main priority. On the other hand in Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina special focus was given to nutrients and toxins in waters and possibilities for their removal. Majority of countries tackled both areas. Together more than 340 representatives of NGOs, universities, local communities and media from Danube countries were trained.

Beside exchanging information and experiences, gaining new skills in water management and nutrient removal, there were common side effects identified by majority of National Focal Points. Active training discussions deepened the national NGO dialogue. The linkage to international training from autumn 2002 and awareness that NGOs in whole Da-

nube Basin work together towards reduction of nutrients and toxins in waters, brought higher importance to training objectives. In each country representatives of Global Water Partnership and International Commission for Protection of Danube River Basin as well as representatives of other state institutions influencing water policy in Danube countries were invited and in many countries also participated at the trainings. This initiative, being one of the activities of UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project, initiated and improved co-operation among NGOs as well as between non-governmental and governmental sector in 11 countries.

DEF International Training 2003

In autumn 2003 DEF will organise an international training for NGOs to build their capacities in the area of public participation within the WFD, and communication and media work, in order to ensure effective involvement of NGOs in these processes on both the regional and national levels.

Environment And Mining Industry In The Region

The regions of Central and Eastern Europe have been under particular pressure to adapt since the fundamental political, social and, above all, economic changes in the early 1990s. Numerous cities and regions – for decades the motors of economic development on account of their industrial base – are now confronted by socio-economic and ecological structural problems of a far-reaching nature.

In the countries of CEE and the Western Balkans, these problems are most evident in the heavy metal industrial zones and in mining areas. A complex political situation and negative business environment created conditions, in which the mining industry now finds itself in a very complicated and hard situation. In recent years, production in many mines has completely ceased resulting in a loss of markets which was the cause of their closure.

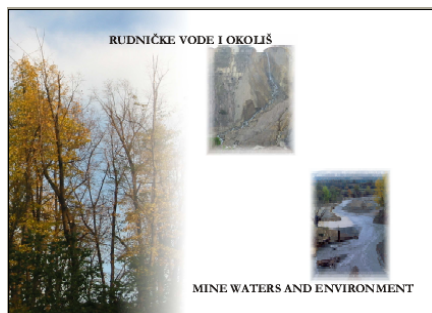
Environmental problems related to pollution by mine waters and mining activities are one of the aspects that require special attention. Short- and long-term pollution from both active and abandoned mines in the region is still one of the most serious threats to the water environment.

Additionally, years of poor management, financial strain and lack of environ-

mental consciousness have left a daunting legacy. The accumulated social, economical and environmental problems (health problems, unemployment, degraded, non-remediated mining sites, etc.) have neither an owner nor a solution provider. This observation is the result of two regional projects that revealed the close interconnection between environmental problems and the social and economic situation in industrialised areas.

One of the projects was an EC FP5 Project entitled Environmental Regulation of Mine Water in EU-ERMITE (www.minewater.net/ermite) that resulted with an overview of mine water issues in countries in Europe including Western Balkan countries. For each European country a comprehensive assessment of the legal, institutional, socio-economic and technical aspects of mine water management and regulation was made.

Another project is also the regional project entitled Involvement of Local Community in Mine Water Pollution Control (www.coor.ba/en/rec.html), which continues research on those aspects and includes the local community in the decision making processes. The project is carried out by the Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Development from BiH, and implemented jointly with partner NGOs from Macedonia and Serbia & Montenegro. As a part of the project activities and in order to rise awareness on environmental pollution caused by mine waters, a brochure entitles "Mine Waters and Environment" has been published (www.coor.ba/en/rec03.html).



The brochure includes information on mechanism of formation of mine waters, as well as scientific description of their impact on the environment. Furthermore, the brochure includes an assessment of the current state from all three countries involved in the project (BiH, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia).

The research activities of both projects confirm that countries in Europe, particularly those in CEE and West Balkan region, face the growing problem of a mining industry that causes environ-

mental and socio-economic problems resulting in national and regional disparities. Many of the communities believe that the way out is reorientation from mining towards other types of activities, mainly the development of tourism, agriculture, small scale industry, etc.



Dead Borska river polluted by acid mine drainage (right) and wastewater from battery factory (left), Bor, Serbia

From amongst the priorities recognised by those projects in the category of legal and policy development, the highest priority is given to the activities on elaboration of new sustainable development plans and spatial plans as well as to development of legislation, while in the category of treating technical priorities, the priority is given to activities focusing on the rehabilitation of contaminated areas and the treatment of mine waters. Beside these two categories, the documents also address the activities in the categories' institutional problems, information dissemination, education and scientific and research work, public participation and socio-economic aspects.



River Kiselica polluted by acid mine waters, Probištip Macedonia

The priority areas and actions identified through those projects should serve as a basis for future actions in the field of mine water pollution control. It is hoped that the recommendation contained in the reports will catalyse action and help improve the state of environment in the region.

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Promoting water efficiency in Bulgarian settlements

DEF members and partners in Bulgaria launched a number of events to promote water efficiency through water saving campaigns and events at the beginning of 2003. For this purpose the Ministry of Environment and Water – in cooperation with the Centre for Environmental Information and Education, the DEF focal point in Bulgaria – issued a full-colour brochure about water efficiency. The publication gives useful tips for the effective use of water by the households and relates some water-use statistics. The brochure was disseminated amongst the general public during the National Earth Day Campaign, launched in Bulgaria on April 22.

Water efficiency activities are also implemented by DEF partners on the local level: the Information and Sustainable Development Society and Ecomission 21 Century launched a joint one-year project to enhance water saving in the town of Lovetch.

One of the major problems in the town, situated by the Danube tributary Osam River, is the shortage of drinking water. For this reason the two NGOs, in cooperation with local stakeholders and Municipality of Lovetch, have planned a number of activities aimed at improving the effective use of this valuable resource. The key pilot activity is a technical improvement and renovation of the existing water pipe system in a Playskool in the town. The water pipe will be supplied with a pressure regulation mechanism which is expected to result in huge water savings.

The project partners have planned to announce the project results through education and awareness activities and a media campaign among the local community in order to turn this pilot activity into common practice. The target groups of the project vary from children to their parents.

Water efficiency in the Osam River Basin is the sustainable alternative of the construction of Cherny Osam Dam. Local nature lovers and NGOs have implemented a number of protests and public awareness campaigns to prevent the building of the dam, which will result in the destruction of valuable natural habitats.

In 2002 CEIE implemented a number of public awareness activities (public debates, publications in the media, public opinion research and dissemination of information materials) to promote cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternatives to Cherni Osam Dam in the local towns of Lovech,

Pleven and Troyan. Environmental NGOs' representatives consider that environmental and socio-economic factors should have priority over corporate interests in deciding whether to build the dam or not.

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Hot issues in the Danube Region in Germany

DEF National Focal Point in Germany and other NGOs put forward many proposals for improvement of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and on the use of better definitions because NGO community is not satisfied with the supplementary as it stands. For the public participation there was a "kick off"-conference, where local NGOs and others gathered together information in order to propose future co-operation. In general there exists a good network concerning the Water Framework Directive in Germany. The NGOs in Germany lay stress on bettering the possibilities of public participation and actively work towards this end.

Concerning the Danube itself there are four main topics of importance in Bavaria:

1. Preventing new hydroelectric power plants and dams in the free-flowing area between Straubing and Vilshofen. The Bavarian government does not accept the decision of the German government against the power plant. NGOs are still working on this issue and generating a great deal of public information and lobbying.

2. Natural flood control to achieve better flood control together with restoration of the floodplain areas and wetlands. There are very problematic plans of the government to install polders as technical measures to control flooding in certain areas, into which the water of the Danube can flow in the event of extreme flood-conditions, without permanent regeneration of the flooded area. We propose widening floodplain areas and laying dams back (Further information: "Flood control for the Bavarian Danube River Basin – A chance for floodplain ecosystems?", published in "Natur und Landschaft" 4/2003: 130-137. In German)

3. Restoration projects: we are active in several projects to protect and improve the wetland area of the "Donauried", a large marsh along the Danube between Ulm and Donauwörth, in particular taking measures to protect very precious wetland-meadows.

4. Public information about the ecological value of the Danube, the problems

associated with it and the measures necessary to its amelioration.

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Activities for public in Serbia and Montenegro

DEF Serbia and Montenegro takes part in the daily distribution of different environmental information by using a DEF S&M distribution list and a discussion list on the national NGO electronic network "Volvox" (volvox@recyu.org). In addition, the wider public has the opportunity to read all this information on the Web portal of the Ecological Resources Center www.erc.org.yu

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Activities in Slovenia

In the period from March to the end of May, the following promotional activities coupled with concrete actions have been carried out by DEF National Focal Point Slovenia.

On the 2nd of April a national training was held in Rače castle. The training was entitled "Wetlands – their Importance and Threat". Seven trainers, all specialists from different fields, were present covering eight different topics e.g. artificial snow and its effects on wetlands, river pollution and problems with sediments, the importance of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention and some other local examples. There were altogether 25 participants from ten Slovene NGOs who participated in the event. Amongst others, participants came from schools, local communities, from the State Regional Office for Nature Protection as well as representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Energy being present. For the occasion a book of abstracts was published, which is available also in main libraries and is mentioned also in the online catalogue COBISS-ID under the code 49928705.

We have established a good partnership and basis for co-operation with national representatives of Global Water Partnership, Ramsar and the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Energy, and with some local communities. All of the representatives, cited above, have also been invited to participate at various future meetings.

Lectures were given on wetlands, hedges and their importance for ecological farming for the benefit of schools,

hunting associations and farming societies. Moreover, we organised some guided tours for schools to various wetlands where flora and fauna were shown to pupils.

Recently the new issue of *Biota*, journal of biology and ecology, written completely in English, has been published.

To keep NGOs and others stakeholders informed about our activities we made some interviews, held a press conference, and published an article about problems in the Danube basin.

In future we intend to give more lectures and guided tours for schools and other interested parties because in our experience such education is of utmost importance. Along with the above-mentioned tasks, we will soon also be publishing the next issue of the *Biota* journal and this will be distributed among schools, together with postcards depicting some endangered animals in order to raise awareness of problems facing such animals.

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Opportunity for young people from Danube river basin

1st International Danube River Basin Youth Camp "Mura 2003" will be held in Slovenia on the River Mura (north-eastern Slovenia) from the 1st to the 10th August 2003. The camp will be designed for young people (+17) from secondary schools and universities within the Danube river basin. The camp will be free for participants. The only costs to participants are travel expenses to and from the camp.

Participants on the youth camp will work in six different groups, in the fields of botany, herpetology, odonatology, ornithology, water quality and ecological landscaping.

Each group will have a leader-expert who will work with the students in the field and in the laboratory.

Participants must be prepared for changeable weather conditions (at this time of year it is usually about 30°C), physical exertion and walking through mud and water with a lot of mosquitoes! Last but not least – a good sense of humour is essential.

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The Frog-lake protection program – an example for the public participation activities of the Club of Young Naturalists

The public participation activities of DEF National Focal Point are primarily based on theoretical and practical education, conducting educational exercises and organising within the sphere of nature conservation activities. Since our foundation (1979) our activity has been focused on the organisation of an annual series of presentations, primarily designed for the secondary school age groups, where there is a possibility to listen to and personally meet with renowned Hungarian experts. To date ca. 400 sessions have been held with over 9000 participants.

One example for our successful field studies is the Frog-lake (Béka-tó) Protection Program started in 2002, in which we strive to direct the attention of secondary school and university students to the importance of small lakes and the necessity of a stricter protection in those areas burdened by large numbers of tourists. The Frog-lake is just a couple of square meters in size and lies in the Buda mountains, near to one of Budapest's most popular tourist routes. In spite of its size it has a rich insect and amphibian fauna.

In Spring 2002 we decided to survey the lake, and organise actions and educational programs to ensure its stricter protection. During the preparations we planned those programs which could provide opportunities to disseminate information and organise field studies activities throughout the year. In the course of organising the members of FTK's working groups disseminated the program in universities, secondary schools and primary schools, and contacted teachers and students.

To date nine presentation sessions have been given either at the lake or in its surroundings (each month) and two 24 hour microclimate measurements have been made (one in each season). Participant for both types of field studies were from local primary and secondary schools. The 24 hour microclimate measurements attracted more people, for here the opportunity was given not only to take part in the presentation, but also to participate in the taking of measurements and in field work: this allowed participants to develop a stronger emotional bond to the lake and its surroundings.

We will use our results to make suggestions for the appropriate treatment of the lake and for its eventual protection.

Similar to the Frog-lake program we also run two other PP programs – one in the Órség National Park around a strictly protected sphagnum swamp and another in the protection and survey of an endangered crab species, the stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*). Those with further interest in these programs should contact FTK – Club of Young Naturalists.

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Environmentally Sustainable Flood Protection Measures for the Morava and the Becva Rivers, Czech Republic

The Morava River, with the Becva River as one of its main tributaries, is the only major tributary to the Danube which originates in the Czech Republic.

The catastrophic floods of 1997, during which almost the entire lowland areas of the Morava and Becva Rivers were inundated, invoked a serious discussion about the concept of efficient flood protection measures. Water authorities in the areas of the Morava and Becva Rivers have been suggesting building new large reservoirs and utilising the controversial, yet-to-be-ratified Danube-Odra-Elbe canal as new anti-flood measures.

On the other hand, the Union for the Morava River has argued that new large reservoirs and canals will have an extreme and largely negative impact on the countryside and environment, and that these measures will be very expensive.

For these reasons, the Union has compiled an alternative study called "Environmentally Sustainable Flood Protection Measures for the Morava and the Becva Rivers" suggesting the following provisions:

- Increasing the water retention capability of the areas along the Morava and Becva Rivers threatened with peak flows, especially in the spring areas of these rivers.
- Protecting the urbanised areas and major industrial and agricultural sites along the rivers by tailor-made anti-flood measures.
- Maintaining, or increasing, the water retention capability of the lowland along the Morava and Becva Rivers in the optimal way. Creating space for overflow.
- Improving the information system on run-off conditions. Enabling wider ac-

cess to information on run-off conditions in order to make flood forecasting and run-off adaptations possible.

- Compensating lost flood water storage space in the lowlands by measures improving the retention potential of the river basin and the lowland.

The tailor-made anti-flood measures have been prepared for particular sections of the Morava and Beca Rivers, taking both the costs and possible financial sources into account.

The shortened English version of the study and full Czech version of the study are available at www.sweb.cz/uprm/.

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Trilateral Ramsar Platform Meeting and Trilateral Conference on the Morava-Dyje Floodplains, 20th – 21st May 2003, Bratislava, Slovakia

2001 marks an important milestone for the co-operation between NGOs – Daphne (SK), Distelverein (A), Veronica (CZ) and the WWF DCPO – on the conservation and restoration of the Morava-Dyje Floodplains. A Memorandum of Understanding has been ratified by the environmental ministries of Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to establish the Trilateral Ramsar Platform (TRP), involving representatives of the relevant ministries and management institutions, to designate trilateral Ramsar site and prepare a trilateral management plan for the Morava-Dyje Floodplains. At the 8th Meeting Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention the substantial effort exerted by the NGOs

in this process was rewarded by the presentation of the Wetland Conservation Award 2002 and the Evian Special Prize.

With respect to the TRP goals, NGOs drafted the Common Objectives and Principles for the Trilateral Management Plan for the Morava-Dyje Floodplains as a preparatory document for the trilateral management plan establishment. This draft was discussed and commented on by the relevant national-level experts and subsequently submitted to the TRP for consideration. On the 21st of May, 2003 the TRP agreed on the common wording of the document, thus setting the scene for future management of the site. Though a further round of national-level consultation, and a final approval of the TRP, are required, the agreed goals and principles already give an efficient and comprehensive basis for the future common management strategy.

In connection to this process the 5th trilateral conference – “Planning the Future: Trilateral Ramsar Management Plan & Natura 2000” – took place in Bratislava between the 20th – 21st May 2003. In total 42 participants from Slovakia, Czech Republic and Austria were represented on the conference. This included representatives of ministries, regional and local governments, water management bodies, nature conservationists, wetland restoration specialists and NGO representatives. Amongst the presentations given, important information was shared on the goals and work of TRP, development of the Common Objectives and Principles for the Morava-Dyje Floodplains, development of a management plan for the Slovak Morava

Floodplain Ramsar Site, the Natura 2000 designation process in the area, using SAPARD funds for wetlands and natural grasslands management. Participants from Slovakia and the Czech Republic found particularly useful information focusing on the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in Lower Austria and on the use of EU funds to ensure protection and appropriate management of Natura 2000 sites. Further discussion found that it was necessary to define more precisely the focus and procedure of TRP in order to enhance its work and influence. The Natura 2000 designation process in Slovakia will need timely

and proper communication between local stakeholders to avoid problems with landowners as has happened in Lower Austria. As far as there are no specific EU funding instruments for Natura 2000 implementation except LIFE III, the EC should revise its funding in terms of further support of for Natura 2000 implementation and management.

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Current focus of DEF National Focal Point Ukraine

At the present time NGO movement in Ukraine works on the Sasyk lake problem. This problem is closely related with the Danube River, because the Danube-Sasyk channel cross-cuts the Stantsivsko-Zhebrianiivski wetlands, thus causing degradation of the Danube wetlands. These areas are included in the Ramsar list. What can be done in order to solve these problems with the Danube? A potential solution under the ecosystem present in Sasyk is restoration of hydrological conditions in the wetlands. Restoration could be carried out along the same lines as a sea firth would be restored. In this case the natural restoration (renaturalisation) of the Stantsivsko-Zhebrianiivski wetlands take place. We are lobbying this project and a program of events is already scheduled.

Large amounts of biogens, heavy metals etc. find their way into the Sasyk Lake via the Danube-Sasyk channel. Moreover, this channel flows through the Kiliisky region, an area dominated by rice paddies thus introducing agricultural waste into the wetlands. It should be noted that Sasyk is a closed reservoir. There is no flux with sea water, the channel is a combination of two types of water, differing in chemical and ion composition. Small regions in the upper part of Sasyk (Kohylnyk and Sarata) are being destroyed and municipal waste products from the towns on the banks of the river ends in water. All these contribute to extensive algal bloom in the water reservoir. This is further responsible for accumulation of toxic agents in the water, killing phenomena and degradation of quality of water, which is subsequently used for drinking and other purposes of the local population, etc. And this type of water discharges into the sea!!!

This autumn we start co-operation with the local population living around Sasyk lake (we have a preliminary agreement with the Heads of Village Councils), namely: through informative and educational work within the local communities and local decision-makers we will try to minimise damage to the Sasyk



Ms. Eva Viestová participating on Trilateral Conference

ecosystem (from local sewage and municipal waste products). The village councils are responsible for the legalisation of the village dump in the half-year period, for sorting out problems with the dung-yard and livestock burial ground.

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Public participation activities of DEF National Focal Point Croatia

In co-operation with the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office, Green Action is working on ecoregional protection of the Mt. Velebit and Lika region, through the Green Belt Velebit Project. Four small grants for local NGOs were launched: educational path construction in local villages Kuterevo and Kosinj, the opening of an Internet centre in Lovinac village, monitoring of endemic plants and birds and the production of map for regulation of climbing activities in Dabarski kukovi region.

We see these projects as an opportunity for local people and local government to include themselves more actively in nature protection and the promotion of sustainable development activities, as a main objective of a Green Belt Velebit Project.

Green Action is also working on a campaign against Project "Druæba Adria" which will export Russian oil through Croatia and increase oil-tanker transport through the Adriatic Sea, which we and whole green movement in Croatia see as a big problem that could lead to economic and environmental catastrophe. The public was invited to involve themselves and decide whether they want this Project to be launched, and we are currently organising the signing of a petition, even translated into Braille letters to give blind people opportunity to be involved.

Green Action celebrated the tenth anniversary of 'Green Phone', which indicates the continuing of the already well-established habit of our citizens to use this service to help solve community environmental problems. In Croatia there is a network of green phones covering almost the entire country.

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One day rafting along the Tara river, Serbia and Montenegro

Come and join us on this one-day trip into the heart of National Park Durmitor, from Sljivansko to Lever Tara (12 km)

In addition to the extraordinary natural beauty of the Tara canyon – the deepest

DEF Membership

How to become a Member

Membership is open to all NGOs in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Membership is possible via:

1) Any member of DEF may nominate a candidate for membership through a written notice sent to the Secretariat at

in Europe and probably the most beautiful in the world – on this gorgeous trip you will meet these contents:

- Ljutica – water percolates into the rocks from a highland region below the peaks of Mt Durmitor (alt. 1500 m) and after a seven-day underground voyage, the Tara River emerges into the Tara canyon at an altitude of 650 m, the strongest spring in Europe (at 1,000 l/sec during the summer time).

- The bridge on the river Tara, built in 1938, represents the most valuable architectural work of the 20th century in Montenegro. At 150 m high and 365 m long, rafting under its loftiest arch is an unforgettable adventure.

- The monastery of St. Archangel Mihailo, built in 13th century and renovated in 1998.

- Levera – a lodging on the former caravan road from Dubrovnik to Carigrad. There is also a shrine to the God Mitra, as well as a tumulus dating from the Bronze Age.

- After this exciting two-and-a-half-hour voyage, lunch will be prepared for all participants (lamb and potatoes prepared in a traditional way) with the most beautiful music – the babbling and murmur of the pure water of the Tara River.

Contact: Friends Of Tara River Society
tarafriends@cg.yu

Calendar of events

12. – 13. 7. 2003: Living Danube, Germany. **Contact:** ch.margraf@fa.bund-naturschutz.de

14 – 28. 7. 2003: International Working Camp in the "Zasavica" Special Nature Reserve, organised by the Environmental Movement of Sremska Mitrovica and the Young Researchers of Serbia. **Contact:** defyu@EUnet.yu

1. – 8. 8. 2003: 1st International Danube River Basin Youth Camp, Mura 2003, Slovenia. **Contact:** Milan.vogrin@guest.ames.si

least 60 days before the forthcoming General Assembly. The General Assembly shall decide upon admission to the membership.

2) New members can also be accepted by the DEF Board via email conference. A NFP should nominate the potential member. Potential members must complete the appropriate registration forms that are available through the DEF Secretariat. Organisations considering membership should contact the National Focal Point in their respective countries.

Membership to the DEF is free.

9. 8. 2003: A lecture on shipping with "Bund Naturschutz" on the last free-flowing section of the Bavarian Danube, both upstream and downstream of Degendorf. This will feature expert talking on the subject, and will be accompanied with music and readings. **Contact:** ch.margraf@fa.bund-naturschutz.de

12. – 22. 8. 2003 Visegrad workshop "Restoration of water in natural ecosystems of Carpathian Mountains", Nizne Repase, Slovakia, **Contact:** kravcik@changenet.sk

19. – 22. 8. 2003 International Conference "Water for Global Cooling", Levoča, Slovakia. **Contact:** kravcik@changenet.sk

11. – 14. 9. 2003 Festival "Days of Slavonian Forests", Nasice, Croatia. Within the festival, on 12th August the round table "Slavonian floodplain forest of Drava and Danube river basin" will take place. **Contact:** zelena-akcija@zg.hinet.hr

6. – 7. 12. 2003: International Danube congress, Germany. **Contact:** ch.margraf@fa.bund-naturschutz.de

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