

BIG WIN for DINARIC ARC

A high-level event on the Dinaric Arc ecoregion at the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity | **BONN, GERMANY**
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BIG WIN FOR DINARIC ARC EVENT AT CBD COP9

The 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP9) meeting in Bonn, Germany, will host the Big Win for Dinaric Arc high-level event. The countries of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion will share a joint vision of the ecoregion's values and demonstrate their continued commitment towards conservation of the ecoregion by delivering on CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) obligations. The governments of the Dinaric Arc countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia) recognized the need to strengthen transboundary cooperation, as an important framework for management of the ecoregion's unique ecosystems. The ultimate goal of the Big Win for Dinaric Arc event is to acknowledge achievements of the Dinaric Arc countries in building a viable and representative protected areas network and to provide a platform for future engagement of donors in fulfilling national commitments towards implementation of the CBD.

THE AUDIENCE

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Albania), Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Culture (Croatia), Ministry of Tourism and Environment (Montenegro), Ministry of Environmental Protection (Serbia), Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (Slovenia), The Federal Environment Ministry (Germany), Ministry for the Environment and Territory (Italy), Dinaric Arc Initiative partners, European Commission, donor agencies

OBJECTIVES OF THE BIG WIN FOR DINARIC ARC EVENT

The future protected areas network stretching across the six Dinaric Arc countries provides a practical basis for lasting cooperation, refugia for the region's rich biological and cultural diversity, and benefits for the growth of local and national economies. The main objectives of the Big Win for Dinaric Arc side event at CBD COP9 are to:

1. Highlight the biological and cultural importance of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion
2. Present Dinaric Arc countries' successes and challenges in establishing a national system of protected areas under the CBD PoWPA
3. Present key objectives of national governments in delivering on CBD PoWPA by 2012 (outlining country commitments)
4. Enhance regional cooperation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development issues
5. Strengthen engagement of Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) partners in meeting the national commitments under the CBD PoWPA
6. Provide a platform for potential donor agencies to finance the activities leading to fulfilment of national governments' commitments.

A UNIQUE WORLD OF NATURE AND PEOPLE, WHERE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE MEETS THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Dinaric Arc region of South-Eastern Europe, with a surface of approximately 100,000 km², is one of the most significant regions in Europe in terms of its conservation value. Its Dinaric Alpine mountain chain stretches along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, making the bone of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion, and hosting relatively large and intact forests. The Dinaric karst system is the largest one in Europe, and includes extensive cave systems, subterranean network of lakes and rivers with a diversity of invertebrates, fish, amphibians and reptiles. The region hosts healthy populations of large carnivores (bear, lynx, wolf, golden jackal), prey species. It is the most water-rich area in the Mediterranean in terms of its freshwater ecosystems. All this, together with its rich cultural heritage, makes the Dinaric Arc an exceptional region for ensuring conservation of its species and habitats.

The creation of a protected areas network would fill a crucial gap in a pan-European network stretching from France to Greece, ensuring refugia for threatened species and corridors for species' mobility. It is far from being complete, with particularly critical gaps such as lack of management plans, insufficient coverage of protected areas in some countries, lack of financial and/or human resources, insufficient social benefits of protected areas. A transboundary protected areas network is the key framework to protect and sustainably manage Dinaric Arc's natural world and resources.

DINARIC ARC INITIATIVE PARTNERS FOR THE BIG WIN

The Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) partners (WWF, UNESCO BRESCE, IUCN, UNDP, Council of Europe, FAO, UNEP, Euronatur, SNV) are calling for improved cooperation of national governments with DAI organizations and offering their assistance in implementation of national commitments towards meeting the objectives of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Initiated in 2005, DAI offers a broad framework of cooperation between partner organizations, with the aim to enhance the work of its members as well as local partners in conservation of the region's natural and cultural wealth, and sustainable management of the existing resources.

DEFINING NATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE DINARIC ARC

The national Ministries involved in nature protection in the Dinaric Arc countries have recognized the Dinaric Arc as an ecoregional basis for further strengthening of cross-border cooperation. A joint effort, consisting of mutual cooperation and sharing of experiences at the regional level, is needed for efficient delivery of the objectives of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, with the ultimate goal to create a well managed and ecologically representative protected area network. The Governments of the Dinaric Arc countries have agreed to sign national commitments leading towards the implementation of the CBD PoWPA. For the effective execution of these commitments, ie. key objectives in delivering on CBD PoWPA in a set time framework, the Governments will heavily rely on the interest of donors gathered at the Big Win for Dinaric Arc side event, as well as the important role of DAI partners as facilitators between the Governments and the donors.

CBD PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS

PoWPA is the key framework to achieving the objectives of the CBD and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by placing protected areas in the heart of governments' efforts to conserve biodiversity and achieve sustainable development. It has been adopted at CBD COP7 and it has historic significance as it represents one of the most comprehensive guidance to the governments on specific protected area commitments. The overall purpose of the PoWPA is to support the establishment and maintenance by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas.

TIME & VENUE

The side event will be held in **HOTEL KANZLER** on **29 MAY 2008**, at **19:30**.

THE HOST The Government of Slovenia, as the President of the European Union, and DAI partners, have joined forces in organization of the Big Win for Dinaric Arc high-level event, with the aim to gather key actors in the region to discuss the future of the Dinaric Arc and set the vision for this ecoregion.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION please contact: Dr. Deni Porej, Director of Conservation, WWF Mediterranean Programme Office. Tel: **+393.464.970.619**, dporej@wwfmedpo.org



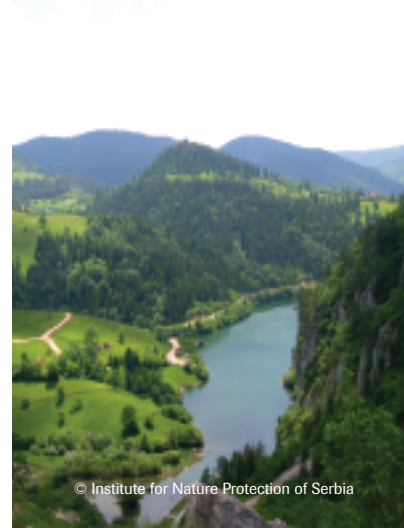
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