Natura 2000
Europe’s safety net for nature – and people

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Natura 2000: Myths

What is not true…

• “From Brussels for Brussels”
• Including land in a Natura 2000 site affects ownership of such land
• All economic activities will be limited
• Properties lose value as a consequence of Natura 2000 designation
• Hunting activities are forbidden
• Any new infrastructure is forbidden
• Everyday activities will have to undergo environmental impact assessments
Outline

About Natura 2000:
• Why Natura 2000?
• How does Natura 2000 work?

Implications for business:
• Challenges
• Opportunities
Our challenge
Working with WWF on solutions
Why Natura 2000?
Biodiversity provides crucial...

• Goods (food, wood, fiber...)
• Services (clean water, climate regulation...)
• Genetic reserves – our insurance policy
A global crisis

1000 x natural extinction rate

In Europe:

- 42% of mammals endangered, e.g. Iberian lynx
- 80% of Danube wetlands lost
- Collapsing fish stocks
How does Natura 2000 work?
Europe’s “Safety net for nature”

• Birds + Habitats Directives = **Natura 2000 network**
• Cornerstone of EU conservation policy
• Maintain species and habitats of European importance
• Does not necessarily restrict socioeconomic activities – in many cases requires them
Site designation

- Scientific assessment at national level
- Selection of sites of Community Importance
- Designation as Natura 2000 sites
Site management

• Avoid damage

• Positive measures, where necessary, to maintain and restore habitats and species
Site designation

Consequences of not selecting all Habitats Directive sites:
• No authorization of plans/projects or at high risk

Consequences of incomplete Bird Directive sites:
• Factual Bird Directive sites: legally no planning or impact possible at all – “full stop” for any investments or changes

Potential sites which may qualify (based on scientific evidence) are to be protected (precautionary principle)
Possible consequences

- Any EU-citizen or NGO may start an infringement procedure

- Risk of national courts to stop any activities/impacts started -- possible additional costs for delays in case of missing appropriate assessments

- **EU-court cases and judgements:**
  - Fines (e.g.: FR fisheries obligations C304/02: a lump sum of €20 million)
  - Penalty payments until full compliance (FR: €57.8 million/half year)

- Possibility to stop any Structural Funds of the EU-Commission for not respecting the Habitats/Birds Directives (e.g.: letter DE for Saxony)
Assessments
Assessments

• Natura 2000 assessment required for plans or projects likely to have a significant impact

• Focus on specific habitats or species protected

• Negative assessment: if no alternatives, the project may go forward if considered to be of **overriding public interest** of social or economic nature.

• If **priority habitat/species** present: project can only go forward if of overriding public interest for human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, for other reasons of overriding public interest.
Measures for avoidance

Corridor for migration to species of amphibia (stream and littoral)

The proponent suggests a generous bridging as a mitigation measure

- All individuals are able to continue migrating, no adverse impact occurs
Measures for reduction

Car traffic noise has adverse effects on birds (deterioration of the breeding success, disturbance, etc.)

- residual impact on individuals
  but not significant for the respective bird population on site
Baden-Airpark (DE): Positive EC opinion

Commission Opinion of 06/VI/2005

- Plan: New landing strip, renewal of runways, new buildings and change of runoff-water treatment
- Directly affected site DE 7214-804 - „Baden-Airpark“ -- with 225 ha one of the last continental dune complexes in the Rhine-valley;
- Priority habitat * 6230: Species rich Nardus grasslands
Baden-Airpark (DE): Positive EC opinion

Reasons:

A. Best alternative chosen (for nature conservation):
   • 7 alternatives were checked – the accepted variant has no negative impacts on adjacent sites but destroys a slightly larger area of the priority habitat.

B. Imperative reasons of overriding public interest:
   • Need proofed: passenger numbers increased by a third in last 3 years, major international connection, safety standards have to be met.
   • Part of the Trans-European Network for Transportation.
Compensation measures sufficient to ensure coherence of Natura 2000:

- Geographically as compensation is done in the same region
- The losses of habitats are both in quantity and in quality fully compensated by the creation of new occurrences/areas
Trupach (DE): A negative EC opinion

Commission Opinion of 24/04/2003)

- Plan: 140 ha planned industrial estate and business park
- Site DE 5113-301 – „Heiden und Magerrasen Trupbach“ (NRW) -- An 85 ha large complex of heathland and species rich nutrient poor hay meadows
- Habitats: 4030 dry heaths (all subtypes, 8 ha), *6230 species rich Nardus grasslands (11 ha).
Trupach (DE): negative impacts

🔹 Significant negative effects the result of the project:
  - Quantitative loss of habitat-area
  - Deterioration of the structural and functional integrity of the site
  - Mitigation measures are not possible

🔹 As a priority habitat (*6230) exists in the site Art. 6(4) has to be applied:
  - Alternatives
  - Imperative reasons of overriding public interest
Trupach (DE): negative opinion

Reasons:

❖ A. Existing alternatives:
   - 3 other areas suitable for new business parks
   - existing business parks include over 370 ha of still unused land
   - alternatives in adjacent communities/administrative regions exist (Member State affair)

❖ B. Imperative reasons of overriding public interest not given:
   - need not proofed: the assessment for the need of areas for industrial parks where too old (10a)
   - alternatives existing
   - local or regional reasons without major positive effects on economy in the country
• Austrian motorway builder
• Significant delays to S33 (Lower Austria), S18 (Vorarlberg)
• Led to significantly changed approach – thorough assessment and consensus *before* project starts
Opportunities
Compensation

EU funding measures through:
• Rural Development fund
• European Fisheries Fund

Support also through Structural Funds, LIFE+

Note: National programming determines to what extent these opportunities are used!
Rural Development

• Opportunities for nature- and landscape-focused development
• Tourism and recreation, nature-friendly business (e.g. high-tech, services), close-to-nature living
• EU Funds available for various activities (rural development, Structural Funds, nature conservation)
Example: Wachau (Austria)

- Upriver from Vienna
- Very strong tourism product focused on landscape
- LIFE project, Agri-environment, LEADER, Structural Funds
• Many farming activities are necessary to maintain Natura 2000 sites, e.g. mountain meadows

• EU funding available for many activities, e.g. for maintaining mountain meadows and wet meadows

• Good Farming Practice now required by EU law
Forestry

- Depends on habitat/species that are focus of site protection
- There may be no or few restrictions to forestry use
- EU funds available for forest-environment measures
Tourism and Recreation

• Depends on habitats/species that are focus of site protection
• There may be no or few restrictions to activities
• EU Funds available for forest-environment measures
Example: Greifswalder Bodden (Germany)

- Important resting and breeding area for birds
- Recreational area for sailing, boating, etc.
- Restrictions limited to a few weeks per year
Marketing

• Opportunities to promote premium, close to nature products and locations/real estate

• EU Structural Funds available for promoting Natura 2000-related marketing, infrastructure and training
Example: *Traditions of the White Carpathians*
- Patchwork landscape on Czech/Slovak border
- Juices, fruit products, meat, crafts
Natura 2000 can help maintain – or even create – environmental services of increasing economic value.

Examples: Pollination, drinking water, flood management
Natura 2000: *Preserving the web of life*
Thank you for your attention!

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