

REPORT

BIG WIN FOR DINARIC ARC high-level event

9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
Bonn, Germany
29 May 2008



June 2008

On 29 May 2008, in Bonn, six countries of the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion joined forces to protect their rich natural heritage by building an effective network of protected areas. This major commitment originates in the recognition that the natural and cultural wealth of the Dinaric region is a critical asset on which social and economic development can be based, and also in the awareness that protecting this natural and cultural wealth can only be achieved with close cooperation among the Dinaric countries.

Introduction

'I should speak now, but I am speechless. I regret that the rest of the world is not here to see what can be achieved in a region with heavy historic burden.' said Mr. Tamas Marghescu, Director of the IUCN Regional Office for Europe, in one of the closing speeches after the ceremony in which six government representatives of south-eastern Europe signed an agreement for joint cooperation on conservation and sustainable development of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion. Regarded as being one of the most important assemblies of the six countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia) in the last 13 years, the Big Win for Dinaric Arc event brought forward the importance of regional cooperation for establishment of a viable protected area system.

Hosted by the Slovenian Government, at that time also holding the European Union Presidency, and the Dinaric Arc Initiative partners (WWF, IUCN, UNESCO BRESCE, UNDP, Council of Europe, FAO, UNEP, SNV, and Euronatur), the Big Win for Dinaric Arc high-level event occurred during the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 9) in Bonn, Germany, on 29 May. Mr. Paolo Lombardi, Director of WWF Mediterranean Programme and the Chairman of the event, welcomed the governmental delegations, donors, representatives of international institutions and other guests by introducing the Joint statement and National priorities in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). The opening speech was made by Mr. Mitja Bricelj, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia, emphasizing the values of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion and the importance of transboundary sustainable management for ensuring maintenance of ecosystem services and sustainable development. The good will of the six governments was celebrated and welcomed by Mr. Jim Leape, Director General of WWF International, and Ms. Nandhini Iyer Krishna, CBD/UNCCD Liaison Officer of the CBD Secretariat. Mr. Matthias Machnig, State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany supported the achievements of the governments and Dinaric Arc Initiative, taking into account the past history of conflict in the region. 'Biodiversity conservation acts as a bridge towards cooperation across political borders', said Mr. Matthias Machnig.

Joint statement

H.E. Lufter Xhuveli, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Albania), H.E. Nevenko Herceg, Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Zoran Sikic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture (Croatia), H.E. Predrag Nenezic, Ministry of Tourism and Environment (Montenegro), H.E. Sasa Dragin, Ministry of Environmental Protection (Serbia), and H.E. Janez Podobnik, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (Slovenia) signed a Joint statement by which they recognized that a joint and coordinated effort is needed in efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas obligations, for safeguarding the Dinaric Arc ecoregion's exceptional natural and cultural values. The Joint statement of the six governments' representatives is a major highlight of this historic event at which 5 Ministers and 1 State Secretary agreed to mutual cooperation, exchange of experiences, and coordinated actions in sustainable management of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion.

'It makes this joint commitment of six countries a big win for biodiversity conservation in south-eastern Europe, helping safeguard the region's rich biological and cultural diversity and favouring the growth of national economies as well as providing a concrete basis for lasting regional cooperation.', stated Mr. Paolo Lombardi.

The six governments called upon Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) partners to facilitate necessary support in the delivery of national and regional priorities. Noting that DAI partners will follow the south-eastern European governments' example in strengthening joined efforts for conservation and sustainable development of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion, Mr. Tamas Marghescu, on behalf of all DAI partners congratulated the governments in making this crucial step forward in achieving transboundary cooperation in integrated biodiversity conservation. DAI partners have been working intensively on achieving greater cooperation between governments, international bodies and regional and international conservation partners. 'For WWF and the Dinaric Initiative partners this is a major milestone to build a representative and viable system of protected areas in the Dinaric Arc ecoregion.' concluded Mr. Paolo Lombardi. Dinaric Arc Initiative with its broad framework of cooperation has been active since 2005. Its goals are focused to conservation and sustainable development of the region, emphasizing transboundary cooperation and the importance of establishment of ecological networks in the region.



National priorities

At least 13 new protected areas and enlargement of 9 existing protected areas will be established in Dinaric Arc ecoregion of south-eastern Europe. These were the announcements of the six governments, presented together with a range of other national priorities with the goal of supporting the efficient implementation of the objectives of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and leading towards creation of a well-managed and representative protected areas network. "This protected area network will fill a crucial gap in a pan-European network stretching from France to Greece, ensuring shelter for threatened species as well as corridors for species' mobility," said Paolo Lombardi. The six governments acknowledged the importance of mutual cooperation and transboundary cooperation for generating benefits in the region.

Albania will enlarge the surface of its protected areas by at least 40,000 hectares. H.E. Lufter Xhuveli, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration, prioritized the establishment of the first marine protected area in Albania, and announced evaluation of the management effectiveness of the Albanian protected areas system.

H.E. Nevenko Herceg Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted the country's determination to preserve and improve its existing biological and landscape diversity. Bosnia and Herzegovina will establish five new protected areas in its central mountain region, and enlarge two protected areas.

'Having 1185 islands binds us to keep the islands' biodiversity and marine ecosystem as issues of high importance for the Republic of Croatia.', said Mr. Zoran Sikic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of Croatia. Croatia will work towards strengthening management of five marine protected areas, as well as the establishment of two new terrestrial parks.

Montenegro, a country that only recently obtained status of the Contracting Party to the UN CBD, committed to create two terrestrial and three new marine parks. 'Our often pristine nature, including rich biodiversity and specific landscape and cultural values, represents the greatest national treasure. On the other hand, economic growth and significant forest investments induced development pressures that have to be carefully balanced with the need to protect natural assets and resources. The overcoming of these challenges and obstacles will strongly depend on strengthening of the partnerships among relevant stakeholders.', said H.E. Predrag Nenezic, Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro.

H.E. Sasa Dragin, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia, presented national priorities of Serbia in the implementation of the CBD PoWPA, which apart from enlargement of the surface of Serbian protected areas, include evaluation of the protected areas' management effectiveness.

Slovenia has agreed to increase its protected area network in the Dinaric Arc ecoregion by 2,5%. The Slovenian Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning, H.E. Janez Podobnik, announced provision of technical assistance to the countries in the region, based on Slovenia's experience in the establishment and promotion of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI). Slovenia, as partly Alpine country, emphasized the importance of linking the region covered by Alpine Convention with the Dinaric Arc ecoregion.

Future for the Dinaric Arc

'The world is from this evening wealthier for one national park as the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed Una National Park today', announced H.E. Nevenko Herceg of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Generating a strong applause from the audience, this announcement delivered the first practical contribution to the Big Win event. In order to have more such practical inputs, and generally, to enable implementation of national and regional priorities of the six countries, Scientific and Technical Advisor of MAVA Foundation, Mr. Holger Schmid, called upon donor community to respond to the governments' quest for assistance. Mr. Schmid suggested the establishment of a donor coalition to implement the planned priorities of the governments. The Bonn event allowed UNDP to discuss GEF grants for Albania, Croatia, and Serbia before the event, making clear support for development of projects from these countries.

The Big Win for Dinaric Arc event radiated with a lot of positive energy and hope for an improved situation regarding nature conservation in the region. This event provided a valuable platform for potential donor agencies to fund the activities leading to fulfilment of the countries' priorities. It also showed that the governments are ready to unite their efforts in achieving the conservation and sustainable development goals. An additional effort needs to be taken by Dinaric Arc Initiative partners and donors to ensure safeguarding of the Dinaric Arc's vast natural and cultural wealth.



ANNEX 1: Joint statement

Joint statement

of the representatives of the Governments of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia, and the Republic of Slovenia

As the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Governments of the above listed countries recognize that a joint and coordinated effort is needed in efficient delivery of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas obligations. Transboundary cooperation between the Dinaric Arc countries in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, with the aim to create a well managed, and ecologically representative protected area network, is the key to safeguard the Dinaric Arc ecoregion's exceptional natural and cultural values.

We, the representatives of the Governments:

1. Recognize the specific natural and cultural values of the Dinaric Arc ecoregion and acknowledge the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas to be a valuable framework for conserving biological diversity and generating benefits to local and national economies.
2. Aim to further continue our activities towards implementation of national priorities leading to delivering on the objectives of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.
3. Support increased understanding of the relationship between the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the EU legislation on nature conservation.
4. Encourage mutual cooperation and exchange of experiences in protected areas management on the regional level.
5. Recognize the importance of regional cooperation to achieve transboundary sustainable management of the South-Eastern European region, including the Adriatic Sea, Dinaric Alps and Sava River Basin.
6. Recognize and support the need for sustainable use of water resources and protection of groundwater-dependent ecosystems by introducing sustainable integrated management principles in the Dinaric karst system.
7. Encourage the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Dinaric Arc through support for traditional activities in protected areas which contribute to biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods.
8. Call upon the Dinaric Arc Initiative partners (WWF, UNESCO BRESCE, IUCN, UNDP, Council of Europe, FAO, SNV, UNEP, Euronatur) and other interested parties to strengthen their cooperation with the Dinaric Arc countries and facilitate necessary support in the delivery of the national priorities.
9. Support evaluation of the contribution of protected areas to each country's economy and for the region as a whole.

ANNEX 2: National priorities of the six Dinaric Arc countries



National priorities of the Republic of Albania in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of the Republic of Albania recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration of the Republic of Albania will continue to work towards:

1. Enlargement of Llogora National Park
2. Enlargement of Bredhi Hotoves National Park from 1,000 ha to about 20,000 ha
3. Enlargement of Llura National Park from 1,000 ha to about 20,000 ha
4. Establishment of the Skadar Lake Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
5. Establishment of the Transboundary Protected Area (TBPA) Prokletije
6. Establishment of the TBPA Shebenik (Albania) – Jablanica (Macedonia) as part of the Green Belt Initiative
7. Designation of marine protected areas, including revision of regulatory and policy framework necessary to create a legal platform for marine biodiversity conservation
8. Strengthening institutions at national and regional levels, through assessing protected areas management effectiveness (RAPPAM)

**National priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina
in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc**

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of the Republic of Srpska, will continue to work towards:

1. Development of the list of natural habitat types in BiH
2. Production of a GIS map of identified habitats
3. Significant enlargement of protected areas network in Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishment of new protected areas:
 - Supporting the enlargement of Kozara National Park (NP) and development of a Management Plan for this NP
 - Supporting the enlargement of Sutjeska NP and development of a Business Plan for this NP
 - Supporting the process of establishment of protected areas in Prenj-Cabulja-Cvrstica-Vran area
 - Supporting the process of establishment of Bjelasnica-Igman National Park
 - Supporting the establishment of basic functions of Una NP
 - Supporting the establishment of protected area covering Lom and Janj oldgrove forests
 - Supporting the establishment of Jahorina Nature Park
4. Supporting the process of preparation of Red Lists of species in the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. Increasing the representation of karst habitats in the national protected area system
6. Supporting conservation of wetlands in BiH, especially peat bog communities in high Dinaric mountains
7. Accomplishment of valorisation of a number of small valuable areas, with the goal of establishment of new protected areas with appropriate IUCN category
8. Initiating the process of evaluation of threatened species in BiH territory, under the criteria in the Annex III of the EU Habitats Directive, with the goal of recognizing the appropriate Natura 2000 sites
9. Development of legal act on habitat types

10. Examining possibilities for transboundary cooperation between:
 - Sutjeska NP (BIH) - Durmitor NP (Montenegro)
 - Drina catchments (BIH) - Tara NP (Serbia)
 - Una NP (BIH) - Plitvice Lakes NP (Croatia)
 - Dinara Mountain (BIH – Croatia)
11. Improving intersectoral collaboration, harmonizing development plans and recognizing different types of sensitive habitats in BIH while including it in the process of spatial planning
12. Improving sub-national institutional cooperation on biodiversity conservation issues
13. Strengthening institutional protected area management capacity at the entity and the state levels



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA
MINISTARSTVO KULTURE

**CROATIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE**

**National priorities of the Republic of Croatia
in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc**

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of the Republic of Croatia recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia will continue to work towards:

1. Proclamation of the Neretva Nature Park and the Mreznica Regional Park
2. Developing Management Plans for 5 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): National Parks of Brijuni, Kornati and Mljet, Nature Parks of Telašćica and Lastovo Archipelago by 2012
3. Strengthening capacities of the 5 Croatian MPAs management bodies on issues related to MPA management, also, including some of marine protected areas at the SPAMI List
4. Improvement of a system of effectively managed and representative network of MPAs in the Mediterranean by 2012
5. Strengthening institutions at national and regional levels, through assessing protected areas management effectiveness (RAPPAM)
6. Ensuring stakeholder participation in management planning of protected areas based on the model successfully implemented in the Karst Ecosystem Conservation Project
7. Creation of a functional ecological network - system of protected areas and corridors in marine and coastal habitats (Natura 2000 marine sites)
8. Examining possibilities for creation of transboundary cooperation between Risnjak National Park (Croatia) and Notranjski Regional Park (Slovenia)
9. Examining possibilities for transboundary cooperation between Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia) and Una National Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
10. Transboundary cooperation between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in examining possibilities for protection of the Dinara Mountain



Montenegro
Ministry of Tourism and Environment

**National priorities of Montenegro
in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc**

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of Montenegro recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro will continue to work towards:

1. Supporting the establishment of the Prokletije National Park and the preparation of its Management Plan
2. Examining possibilities for the establishment of Transboundary Protected Area (TBPA) Durmitor National Park (Montenegro) - Sutjeska National Park (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
3. Development of sustainability indicators for Durmitor National Park (for example, indicators for carrying capacity)
4. Establishment of marine protected areas (Island Katici, Stari Ulcinj and Platamuni)
5. Establishment of basic functions of the Tara River Biosphere Reserve
6. Preparation of necessary steps for the development of NATURA 2000 network in Montenegro
7. Development of an institutional base for implementation of the CBD and capacity building

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**National priorities of the Republic of Serbia
in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc**

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of the Republic of Serbia recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia will continue to work towards:

1. Establishment of a Transboundary Protected Area (Biosphere Reserve) which would encompass Tara National Park and surrounding areas on the Serbian side, and several municipalities on the Bosnia and Herzegovina's side of Drina River
2. Development of a Management Plan for the future Tara National Park Biosphere Reserve with full participation of local communities
3. Declaring new protected areas within the Dinaric Arc region of the Republic of Serbia (Zaovine protected area)
4. Development of a Management Plan for Golija Nature Park
5. Sustainable development and conservation of waters and freshwater ecosystems, waste management in the Uvac River basin and its protection zone
6. Strengthening the institutions at national and regional levels, through assessing protected areas management effectiveness (RAPPAM)
7. Completion of an ecological gap analysis



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**National priorities of the Republic of Slovenia
in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc**

As the signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Government of the Republic of Slovenia recognizes the importance of efficient delivery of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas objectives in establishing an ecologically representative protected area network in the Dinaric Arc region.

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia will continue to work towards:

1. Promotion of regional cooperation to achieve transboundary sustainable management of the Balkan ecoregions (Adriatic Sea, Dinaric Alps, Sava River Basin), using the ecosystem approach, to ensure maintenance of ecosystem services and sustainable development
2. Providing technical assistance to the countries of the Dinaric Arc region in the accession period to EU in the establishment and promotion of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI)
3. Increasing the protected area network in the Slovenian part of the Dinaric region for 2,5 percent
4. Development of transboundary cooperation between relevant protected areas
5. Promotion of new types of protected areas governance (private - public protected area management)
6. Linking protection of the Alpine Convention region with the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion
7. Researching further the vulnerability of karst hydrological systems and ensuring sustainable use of water resources and conservation of terrestrial and subterranean biodiversity
8. Carrying out further awareness raising campaigns to demonstrate benefits of protected areas for local inhabitants and increasing public support for nature conservation

ANNEX 3: Agenda of the Big Win for Dinaric Arc high-level event

Venue: Hotel Kanzler, Adenauerallee 148, Bonn

Date and time: 29 May 2008, 19:30

Welcome and introduction. *Mr. Paolo Lombardi*, Director, WWF MedPO

Opening speech. *H.E. Janez Podobnik*, Minister, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (Republic of Slovenia)

Opening remarks. *Mr. Jim Leape*, Director General, WWF

Opening remarks. *Ms. Nandhini Iyer Krishna*, CBD/UNCCD Liaison Officer, CBD Secretariat

Opening remarks. *Mr. Matthias Machnig*, State Secretary, BMU

Dinner

National priorities of Albania in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc. *H.E. Lufter Xhuveli*, Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Republic of Albania)

National priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc. *H.E. Nevenko Herceg*, Minister, Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

National priorities of Croatia in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc. *Mr. Zoran Sikic*, State Secretary, Ministry of Culture (Republic of Croatia)

National priorities of Montenegro in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc. *H.E. Predrag Nenezic*, Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Environment (Montenegro)

National priorities of Serbia in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc. *H.E. Sasa Dragin*, Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection (Republic of Serbia)

National priorities of Slovenia in delivering on the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc and announcement of the Joint statement.

H.E. Janez Podobnik, Minister, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (Republic of Slovenia)

Signing ceremony (Joint statement)

Support by the Dinaric Arc Initiative partners. *Mr. Tamas Marghescu*, Director, IUCN Regional Office for Europe

Closing remarks. *Mr. Holger Schmid*, Scientific and Technical Advisor, MAVA Foundation

Closing remarks. *Mr. Paolo Lombardi*, Director, WWF MedPO

ANNEX 4: List of participants

	Name	Position	Institution	Email	Telephone
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