



WWF

ANNUAL
REVIEW

DCP

2014

PRESERVING THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE

Forests, wilderness, bears, lynx, wolves,
rivers, wetlands, sturgeons

WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme
July 2013—June 2014

© ALEXANDER IWANOVA

LESSONS FROM WATER, CHALLENGES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY



Andreas Beckmann,
Director,
WWF Danube-
Carpathian Programme

One lesson came in the form of water – lots of it, causing massive flooding in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. The extreme weather, with flooding giving way to droughts, cannot be pinned specifically on climate change, but fits the predictions of climatologists. The destruction wrought by the unprecedented deluge was certainly worsened by the poor state of ecosystems and poor river basin management. Coming just before the climate summit in New York, it was a poignant reminder not only of the challenges that climate change brings – these are real, and growing – but also that we need to work with nature, not against it, in responding to these challenges.

We also were reminded last year that finding solutions to these challenges will not be easy – and that they will require working together closely in order to ensure that the solutions yield net benefits. We saw that the current boom in the planning and construction of small hydropower plants across the region – ostensibly to produce renewable energy and address climate change – needs to be accompanied by clear guidance and regulation to ensure that gains in renewable energy are not outweighed by losses in ecosystem goods and services. Such regulation is needed not only to safeguard those goods and services, but also to facilitate and secure necessary investments.

Finally, we were reminded of the importance of the broader political framework for our work, i.e. an open and civil society. In Ukraine, we feared for the futures of our colleagues, partners and friends, and faced the prospect of being registered as a “foreign agent”; with the successful Maidan revolution, those fears gave way to new impulses for reform and opportunities, including the request of Ukrainian authorities to assist them in implementing ambitious EU environmental legislation. Meanwhile, in Hungary, the government took steps to restrict civil society, particularly the activities of environmental organisations, and significantly weakened nature and environmental protection.

Last year, we learned that a free and civil society cannot be taken for granted. With their sheer grit and determination, our Ukrainian colleagues showed us the value of this freedom.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas Beckmann'.

Andreas Beckmann



WE NEED TO DRIVE CHANGE – AND ALSO CHANGE OURSELVES



Dr. Orieta Hulea,
Conservation Director,
WWF Danube-
Carpathian Programme

Our region is very dynamic, with growing economies and increasing demands for natural resources that translate into higher impacts on already fragile ecosystems, like freshwater and forests. Facing these pressures are still weak and evolving institutions, systems of governance, and cultures that provide often poor protection for many of Europe's greatest natural treasures.

Last year we undertook a strategic review and re-focused our efforts across the Danube-Carpathian region to save its natural values, ensuring that they are available for the enjoyment and benefit also of future generations.

For this, we need to drive change – and also change ourselves. We need to innovate more – as we did last year with guidelines for hydropower as well as innovative financing and valuation. We need to shape laws and financial systems – as we have done securing protection for virgin forests or influencing the programming for use of EU funds. And we need to step up our efforts to mobilise people and support – as we did, not least with Earth Hour and sturgeons.

In doing this, and just as importantly, we will help shape the societies of our region, making them more democratic, more open and transparent, more dynamic and innovative, and ultimately also more sustainable.



© WILD WONDERS OF EUROPE/STAFFAN WIDSTRAND/WWF

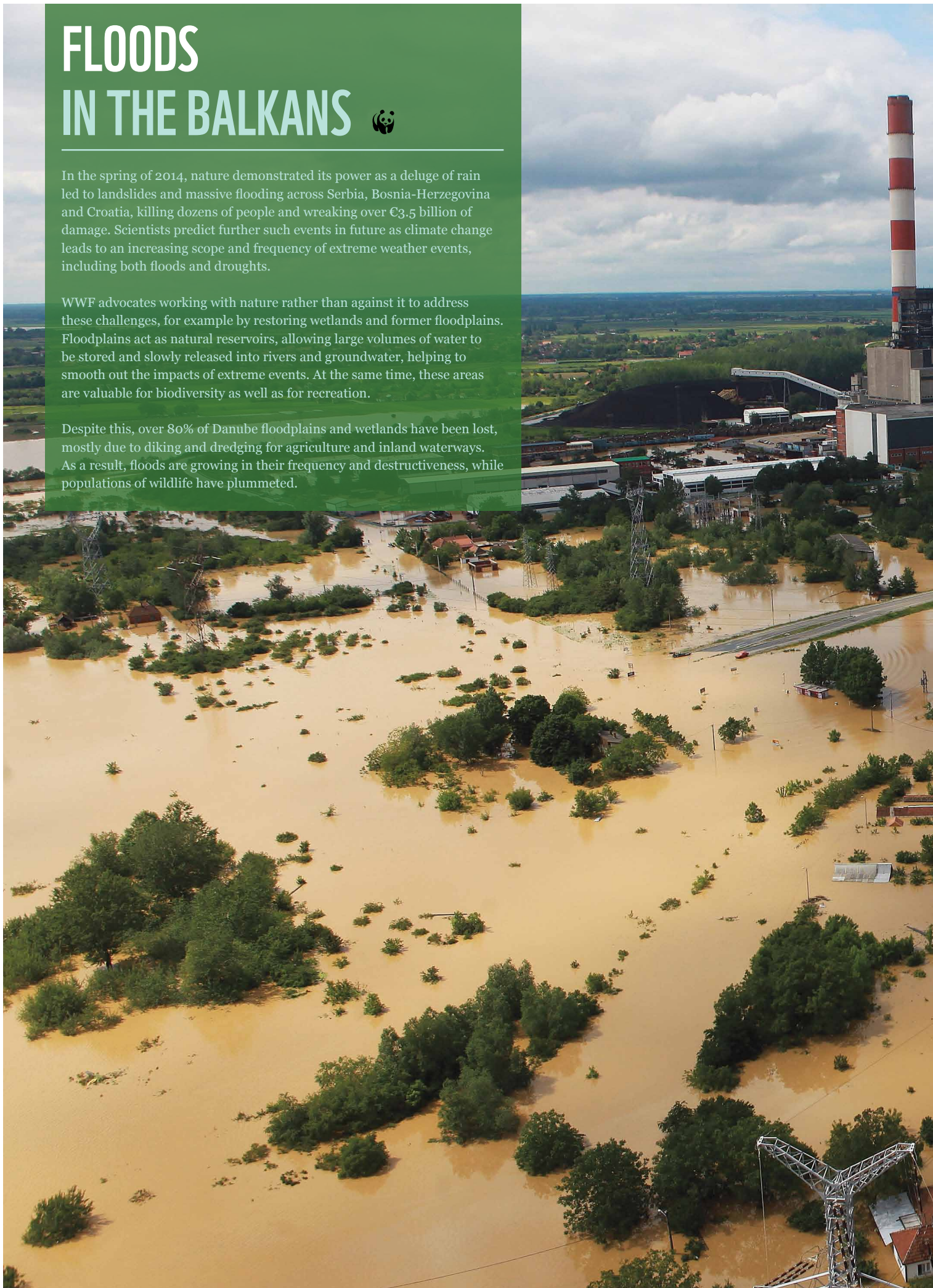
FLOODS IN THE BALKANS



In the spring of 2014, nature demonstrated its power as a deluge of rain led to landslides and massive flooding across Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, killing dozens of people and wreaking over €3.5 billion of damage. Scientists predict further such events in future as climate change leads to an increasing scope and frequency of extreme weather events, including both floods and droughts.

WWF advocates working with nature rather than against it to address these challenges, for example by restoring wetlands and former floodplains. Floodplains act as natural reservoirs, allowing large volumes of water to be stored and slowly released into rivers and groundwater, helping to smooth out the impacts of extreme events. At the same time, these areas are valuable for biodiversity as well as for recreation.

Despite this, over 80% of Danube floodplains and wetlands have been lost, mostly due to diking and dredging for agriculture and inland waterways. As a result, floods are growing in their frequency and destructiveness, while populations of wildlife have plummeted.





RIVERS AND WETLANDS



Laurice Ereifej,
Regional Head of Danube/
Freshwater, WWF Danube-
Carpathian Programme

6,600

HECTARES OF WETLANDS
RESTORED OR BEING
RESTORED
IN ROMANIA, HUNGARY,
CROATIA AND SERBIA
IN 2013-2014

Our experts had two difficult field seasons identifying spawning sites of sturgeons. But right on Danube Day, 29 June 2014, they finally managed to capture, measure, mark and release back to the river a young male Beluga near the Bulgarian town of Silistra.

Potentially damaging navigation projects on the Danube in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia are on hold, but pressure remains high and so are risks for sturgeon migration.

Hydropower development in the region still poses a major risk to freeflowing rivers. We need to ensure that the current boom in construction of small hydro plants brings net benefits in terms of renewable energy that is not outweighed by the loss in ecosystem goods and services.

We aim to preserve, restore or sustainably manage 2 million ha of freshwater ecosystems along the Danube and its tributaries by 2025, securing essential ecosystem goods and services, from clean water to flood protection, and strengthening resilience to climate change. Sturgeons survived the dinosaurs, but are now on the verge of extinction – we want to ensure that these remarkable fish survive in the Danube.

In 2013-2014 we restored more than 1,300 ha of wetlands in Hungary and Romania and started work on a further 5,300 ha in Hungary, Croatia and Serbia.

We made progress in addressing illegal catches of sturgeon. Our trainings for customs and enforcement authorities on illegal caviar trade contributed to the first major seizure in Romania of 4 tonnes of sturgeon meat and 80 kg of caviar. Our Danube expeditions revealed that sites on the Bulgarian side of the Danube are critical for sturgeon reproduction.

To strengthen the protection of valuable wetland areas, we supported the development of integrated management plans for the Morava/March-Dyje/Thaya rivers (shared by Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic), the Tisza River (Hungary) and the Lower Danube (in Romania and Bulgaria).

With partners from Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, we finalised a trans-boundary strategy for adapting to climate change in the Danube Delta. Measures include wetland conservation and restoration as well as opportunities for use of reed biomass as a source of renewable energy.

We launched campaigns to draw attention to threats faced by natural rivers in Romania and Bulgaria, and to implement guidelines for the development of hydropower across the region. In Romania, we secured a government commitment to designate “no go” areas for hydropower development, and prevented EU funds from being used to support small hydropower development. In Ukraine, we worked with local partners to halt construction of more than 500 small hydropower plants in the Carpathians.



An expert with Apostol – a baby sturgeon discovered during the WWF Danube expedition

GREEN ECONOMY AND POLICY



Irene Lucius,
Head of Policy and
Green Economy,
WWF Danube-
Carpathian Programme

We are advocating for a redirection of financial flows, including EU funding programmes, towards ecosystem restoration and conservation and away from investment in damaging projects. We need better enforcement of nature conservation legislation and integration with economic policies. Frequent changes in the governments, especially in Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine have impact on legislative processes and make working with the authorities difficult.

Central and Eastern Europe is the continent's hotspot for biodiversity. But how can we shift from an economic model that squanders natural capital to one that uses it as the foundation for inclusive, sustainable development? We are working to develop financial incentives for nature conservation and local development and to integrate biodiversity and environment into decision making, regarding energy and regional development.

We developed sustainability criteria for hydropower and wind energy in Austria, which we now plan to promote and apply across our region. Thanks in part to our efforts, EU funds will not support harmful small hydropower projects in Romania.

We advocated for priorities related to renewable energy and energy efficiency in the programming for EU funds in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary.

We successfully implemented four “payment for ecosystem services” (PES) schemes in Bulgaria and Romania that show how innovative finance instruments can create incentives for sustainable land management. The Bulgarian and Romanian governments as well as WWF colleagues from as far away as Thailand and Vietnam drew on our growing expertise in valuating ecosystem goods and services.

We supported the development of ecotourism as one solution for local development. With our help, the area of Maramures in northern Romania was officially recognised as an ecotourism destination and taken up in the tourism marketing efforts of the Romanian Ministry of Tourism.

We also supported the development of Protocols on Sustainable Tourism and Transport of the Carpathian Convention. With our support, green infrastructure elements, like green bridges, became obligatory for transport projects in Romania.

500+

**SMALL HYDRO PLANTS
HAVE BEEN DECLARED ILLEGAL
OR UNACCEPTABLE
BY REGIONAL AUTHORITIES
IN UKRAINE AFTER ACTION
OF WWF AND PARTNERS**

© WWF DCP UKRAINE



Small hydropower in the
Ukrainian Carpathians

FORESTS, WILDERNESS AND PROTECTED AREAS



Frequent political changes in Romania and Bulgaria have slowed progress on securing legislation protecting virgin and high conservation value forests and for designation of ecological corridors. And the pressure remains high from poorly planned development projects, including roads and ski resorts.

Costel Bucur,
Head of Forests &
Protected Areas
Programme,
WWF Danube-Carpathian
Programme



3,500,000

HECTARES OF FORESTS
ARE FSC CERTIFIED
IN BULGARIA,
ROMANIA AND UKRAINE

As much as half of the virgin forests in the Carpathian Mountains were lost in the past decade. We want to preserve virgin forests in key areas of the Carpathian and Balkan mountains, and ensure that at least 30% of all forest in the Green Heart of Europe region are sustainably managed through close to nature forestry practices and responsible management of High Conservation Value Forests. We also want to secure ecological corridors that are critical to the survival of bears and other large carnivores as well as other wildlife, and to preserve the exceptional, relatively untouched wilderness areas that are in the region, among Europe's last, including the Southwest Carpathians and the Danube Delta.

We identified over 46,000 ha of virgin and old growth forests in Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Slovakia in 2013-2014, bringing them a big step closer to protection. Through the Carpathian Convention, we also facilitated an agreement between all seven Carpathian countries on criteria and measures for protecting their virgin forests.

Over 3.5 million hectares of forests in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine are now certified according to the sustainability criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). We trained 300 people in responsible forest management and helped four forest management units and eight companies to secure FSC Chain-of-Custody certification.

Within the EU programming for the next financial period 2014-2020, we pushed for compensations to be paid to Bulgarian and Romanian forest owners for the restrictions they face in Natura 2000 sites.

The European Commission finally decided that forest swaps for valuable parcels of land on the coast or in the mountains are illegal state aid to Bulgarian business – a practice against which WWF and partner organisations have protested for years and encouraged the European Commission to investigate.

We created and published unique, interactive GIS platforms on forests and rivers in Bulgaria – www.gis.wwf.bg/forests/.

With the help of radio-collars, we identified 11 critical migration corridors for bears across the border between Romania and Ukraine. We worked with forest managers, hunters and local communities to secure these areas, which are critical to the long-term survival of the 500 bears in the area.

Green bridges will be constructed along the Lugoj-Deva highway in western Romania, mitigating the impacts of the road on the movement of bears between Apuseni and the southern Carpathians and providing an important precedent for similar road construction projects elsewhere.

We continued our long-term efforts to support protected area management and the development of local communities, focusing on selected locations in Ukraine, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, such as Podisul Hartibacului in central Romania, Balgarka Nature Park in Bulgaria, Karpatskyi National Nature Park and Gorgany Nature Reserve in Ukraine.



© WWF CANON/SANCHEZALopez

Brown bear and cub

BORN TO BE A LEGEND

Two hundred years after its extinction from the region, the European bison is once again roaming the Carpathian wilderness.

This year, a legend was born near the Romanian village of Armenis in the Tarcu Mountains – a baby bison. In May 2014, WWF and Rewilding Europe brought 17 European bison to the community, part of the largest-ever bison reintroduction in Europe. Later, we learned that Romanita, the strongest female in the herd, was expecting a calf.

The news spread quickly and the excitement was contagious as hundreds of supporters stormed social networks to become symbolic godparents and name the little bison. The youngster was finally named after Praslea, a brave prince from an ancient Romanian legend who saved princesses and slayed many dragons. The huge, hairy grazers are a symbol of Romanian national pride, with many ancient legends surrounding them.





EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We need to change people's behavior toward nature and encourage them to engage actively in achieving social change. WWF is developing innovative courses and cultivating a network of schools and school teachers across the region engaged in promoting environmental education and active citizenship.

1,450

SCHOOLS IN BULGARIA
AND ROMANIA
HAVE USED THE BLACK SEA BOX
EDUCATIONAL PACKAGE

Thirty-three school classes from 11 countries across the Danube basin shared experience and implemented projects for environment and active citizenship – part of the European Schools for a Living Planet programme of WWF and the Erste Foundation.

With the University of Bucharest, we developed and implemented a university course on education for sustainable development. Twenty-five students participated in the pilot course, which we plan to develop further and apply elsewhere.

We distributed Black Sea box educational packages to 1,000 schools in Bulgaria and 450 schools in Romania and trained 100 teachers to use them.

We cultivated the leadership skills of 35 young leaders from Austria and Romania through our Connect.Empower. Act initiative focused on training for environmental leadership and active citizenship.

Students participating
in the European
Schools for a Living
Planet programme



© ALEX SPINIANU

COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS



Vesselina Kavrakova,
WWF Bulgaria
Country Manager

Public perceptions of green issues in Bulgaria have evolved over the past decade. In 2014, polls showed that more than 70% of Bulgarians do not support further infrastructure development in Bulgarian mountains and along the Black Sea coast.



Ákos Fáth,
CEO,
WWF Hungary

Last year we successfully completed the restoration of a 3-kilometer long side arm as well as a natural floodplain forest on Liberty Island in the Danube. Besides enhancing opportunities for recreation and tourism, the project will help secure drinking water for the citizens of Pecs and Mohacs.



Bohdan Prots,
Ukrainian Carpathians
Programme Coordinator

As a first step toward protecting the brown bears of Maramures, between Ukraine and Romania, we identified their migration corridors. We identified virgin and old growth forests over an area of 70,000 ha within three UNESCO world heritage sites dedicated to beech forests. At the same time, we worked with local communities and groups to address threats from poorly planned hydropower development.



Magor Csibi,
Director,
WWF DCP/Romania

The highlight of this year was the reintroduction of the bison in Tarcu Mountains, which WWF undertook in cooperation with Rewilding Europe. It received a huge amount of media attention and a new wave of sympathy towards WWF.



Duska Dimovic, WWF
Country Manager for Serbia

We are working to establish a UNESCO Transboundary Biosphere Reserve along the Mura-Drava-Danube rivers. Protecting one of Europe's most valuable wetland areas – what we call the “Amazon of Europe” – it would be the first five-country

protected area in the world, shared by Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia and Austria. With our support, the Serbian government nominated its part of the territory for the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve in September 2013.

THE SUMMER SNOWFLAKE AND ITS BEACH 🐼

The Summer snowflake is a rare plant that is listed in the Bulgarian Red Book of endangered species. One of the few places that the snowflake is found is on Coral Beach, an area that, like the few other remaining natural areas along the Black Sea coast, has been the focus of intense development pressure.

In 2003, the Bulgarian Minister of Environment removed the Summer snowflake from the list of protected species and publicly announced the species extinct in Bulgaria. The snowflake disappeared on paper – opening the way for the development of Coral Beach into a seaside resort.

But botanists knew that the paper did not reflect reality. A handful of people joined forces to save Coral Beach. One of them was Atanas Roussev, a surfer and mountaineer. From a very young age, Roussev has enjoyed the outdoors and, as he says, has perhaps spent more nights in nature than in the city. To him, nature should be left as it is, intact, at least in some special places like Coral Beach.

Roussev has received threats and has been the object of media smear campaigns. But so far he and others have prevailed. In September 2014, the government reversed its policy and banned construction at Coral Beach.

Will the victory last? Roussev is convinced it will – the fact that construction has been held up for 11 years now thanks to people caring enough to take action is proof enough. "If permits are reissued, there will be a big scandal and we'll take the scandal as far as we can, no problem," says Roussev.





MOBILIZING SUPPORT

19,546,801

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH*

7,800

NUMBER OF MEDIA HITS*

*INCLUDES HUNGARY

© DORU OPRISAN



Earth Hour was observed
on 29 March 2014
in more than 330 cities
across the region

Time and again, we worked with partners to raise awareness and mobilise pressure to promote good governance and defend the natural treasures of the Green Heart of Europe.

More than 330 cities and towns and a string of ministries and major national media across our region observed Earth Hour on 29 March 2014, in what probably is the world's largest ever environment awareness raising event.

We also organized campaigns on freshwater and wetlands collecting 20,000 signatures in support of Romanian rivers. The photo exhibition we organized about our conservation work in 10 Bulgarian nature parks was seen by 200,000 passengers at Sofia Airport.

Our Living Danube Tour supported by Coca-Cola was launched in Serbia in May 2014 with a visit to Belgrade and three more cities. It will make at least 25 stops by the end of summer 2015, including in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Romania.

WWF IN UKRAINE: BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE

© WWF DCP UKRAINE



Andriy Bilokin (right)
and other volunteers
at the Maidan in Kyiv

In late November 2013, Ukrainians came out to protest against the reluctance of Ukrainian president Yanukovitch to sign an association agreement with the European Union.

Students, activists and people from all walks of life spilled onto the Maidan – the main square of Kiev – to show their support for a new, more democratic and less corrupt Ukraine. Andriy Bilokin, a long-time WWF volunteer who has organised several Earth Hour celebrations, was among the first on the square and stayed there for days. Together with friends he pitched an information tent to present materials how Ukraine would actually profit from EU cooperation.

The protest swelled. As many as 500,000 people came to Maidan as similar protests spread in other parts of the country. For months, and despite the bitter cold, the protests remained massive and peaceful until suddenly the Berkhut special forces came and all changed – people were beaten, abducted and tortured. A scientist from the Academy of Sciences, a colleague and friend of WWF staff, was abducted from hospital, tortured and left to die in a forest near Kyiv.

The Maidan movement eventually succeeded. President Yanukovych fled the country, opening the way for far-reaching political changes, including the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources has called on WWF's support to implement key pieces of EU legislation such as the EU Habitats & Birds Directives that the country has committed to implementing as part of the agreement.

Meanwhile, war and uneasy peace has settled over the East of the country. Many WWF staff and partners are collecting equipment and money to support troops and volunteers on the front line.

FINANCIALS

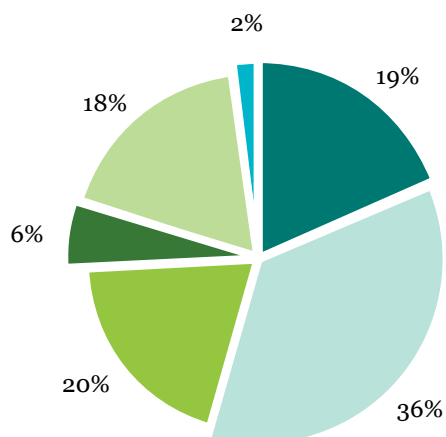
1 JULY 2013 – 30 JUNE 2014

'000 of EUR

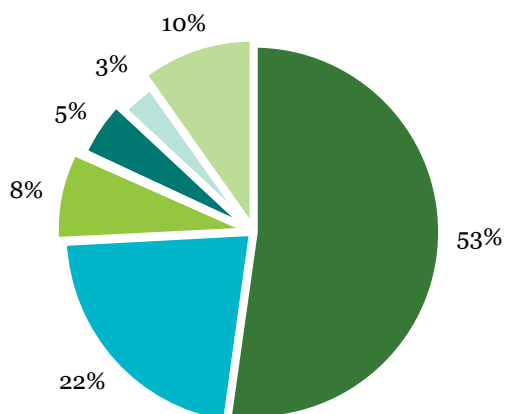
| Income* | | | Expenses | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| WWF Network | 944 | 19% | Forests & Protected Areas | 2 676 | 53% |
| EU | 1 831 | 36% | Danube & Sturgeon | 1 085 | 22% |
| Other Public Sector Donors | 998 | 20% | Policy & Green Economy | 378 | 8% |
| Foundations | 291 | 6% | Education for | | |
| Corporates | 899 | 18% | Sustainable Development | 230 | 5% |
| Individuals | 104 | 2% | Individual Fundraising | 157 | 3% |
| | | | Management, Office & Administration | 482 | 10% |
| Total | 5 065 | 100% | Total | 5 008 | 100% |

* cash flows

Income 2013/14



Expenses 2013/14



OUR DONORS

The work that WWF does to conserve endangered species, safeguard threatened habitats, and address environmental threats would not be possible without building strong and lasting relationships with a wide range of WWF offices, public authorities, private companies, individuals and other partners.

We deepened and extended strategic relationships with the private sector. Our long-standing partnership with IKEA, which we extended for another three years, gives us not only valuable support but also the market pull that we need to promote responsible forest management in Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.

The 7-year partnership that we launched with The Coca-Cola Company and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River will protect and restore valuable wetlands in 6 countries, and serves as a potent example for private sector engagement in water stewardship beyond the factory gate.

We also started working with Mondi, the international paper and packaging company, to promote sustainable forestry and landscapes in Bulgaria and Slovakia. And Ursus Breweries began supporting bear conservation in Romania. Last year we continued cultivating a base of individual supporters, through online and street canvassing, reaching 3,000 individual donors in Romania and Bulgaria.

The following provided financial support to WWF DCPO in FY2014

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ABOVE 250,000 EUR – EUROPEAN COMMISSION, SWISS COHESION FUNDS; **25,000 TO 100,000 EUR** – WORLD BANK, UNDP; **UP TO 25,000 EUR** – KFZ, MEDZINARODNY VYSEHRADSKY FOND, ÖKOLOGISCHER TOURISMUS IN EUROPA.

FOUNDATIONS 100,000 TO 250,000 EUR – REWILDING EUROPE; **25,000 TO 100,000 EUR** – ERSTE FOUNDATION, FOUNDATION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT, MAVA FOUNDATION.

CORPORATE PARTNERS ABOVE 250,000 EUR – IKEA; **100,000 TO 250,000 EUR** – THE COCA-COLA COMPANY; **25,000 TO 100,000 EUR** – GARANTI BANK, MONDI, URSUS BREWERIES SA; **UP TO 25,000 EUR** – COSMO BULGARIA MOBILE, EXPLORE TRAVEL SRL, GRAFFITI, GREENCAT, LAFARGE ROMANIA, ROEL-98, SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE EXPRESSBANK, SYNCRO SOFT, TITANIA COMEXIM SRL, TREND CONSULT GROUP.

OTHER WWF OFFICES ABOVE 250,000 EUR – WWF AUSTRIA; **100,000 TO 250,000 EUR** – WWF BELGIUM, WWF GERMANY, WWF INTERNATIONAL; **25,000 TO 100,000 EUR** – WWF NETHERLANDS. **OVER 3,000 INDIVIDUALS** IN BOTH BULGARIA AND ROMANIA.

Note: Donors and financial figures for FY2014 are provided only for the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and does not include activities e.g. of WWF Austria or WWF Hungary that are relevant to the Danube-Carpathian region.

WWF IN THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE

100%
RECYCLED



12

WWF is active
in 12 countries in Central
and Eastern Europe

90

WWF DCP
has 90 staff



5

The total budget of WWF DCP
last year was €5 million.

350,000

WWF has nearly 350,000
members and followers in Central
and Eastern Europe

The Danube is the most international river basin in the world, draining 19 countries on its 2,800 km journey from the Black Forest in Germany to the Black Sea. It is home to some of the richest wetland areas in Europe and the world, including the Danube Delta and lower Danube as well as the Mura-Drava-Danube corridor, the “Amazon of Europe”.

The Carpathian Mountains, arching across seven countries from the Czech Republic across Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, and down to Romania and the tip of Serbia, are one of Europe's last great wilderness areas – a bastion for large carnivores, with two-thirds of the continent's populations of bears, wolves and lynx, and home to the greatest remaining reserves of old growth forests outside of Russia and northern Scandinavia.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

How to contact us

WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme Office
Ottakringerstrasse 114-116, 1160 Wien, Austria, T: +43 1 52 45 470
office@wwfdcp.org, www.panda.org/dcpo, www.facebook.com/wwfcee, www.twitter.com/wwfcee

www.wwf.bg, www.wwf.hu, www.wwf.ro, www.wwf.rs, www.panda.org/ukraine

The WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme gratefully acknowledges core funding support from the European Commission in FY2014. All content and opinions expressed on these pages are solely those of WWF.