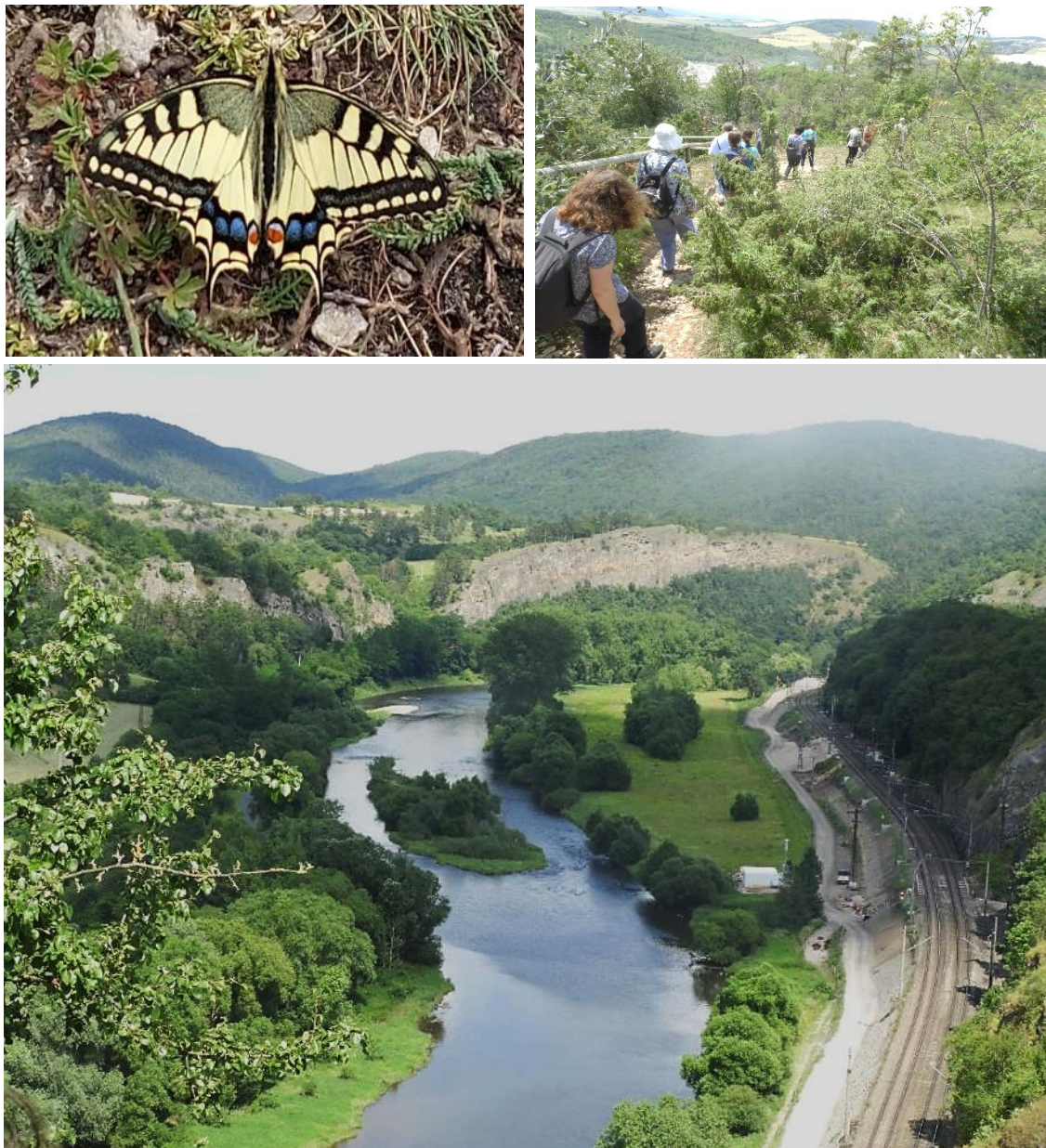


4th Natura 2000 Seminar for the Continental, Pannonian, Steppic, Black Sea and Alpine Biogeographical Regions

Seminar Report



25 – 27 June 2024
Prague, Czechia

Consortium Information:

Wageningen Environmental Research

In cooperation with:

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Terra Ecogest

Nature Bureau Ltd.

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Event: All presentations from the seminar and other information and relevant documents can be found at: <https://biogeoprocess.net/Continental-region/>

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1 Introduction

1.1. Context of the Natura 2000 seminar for the Continental region

The Natura 2000 biogeographical process was launched in 2011 by the European Commission. Its objective is to promote information exchange, networking, and cooperation on Natura 2000-related issues amongst Member States and stakeholders at the biogeographical region level. The process involves regular seminars in each biogeographical region (or group of regions) to discuss key conservation challenges and agree on a roadmap for cooperative action in the region(s) for the following years.

Member States in each biogeographical region often face similar challenges in managing Natura 2000 sites, habitats, and species. Therefore, the Natura 2000 seminars are intended to stimulate transnational exchanges and promote coherent management of Natura 2000 at the biogeographical region level.

The Continental, Pannonian, Steppic and Black Sea (CPSBS) biogeographical regions have been combined from the beginning; the first Natura 2000 seminar for these regions took place in Luxembourg, in July 2015. The second CPSBS Natura 2000 seminar was held in Strasbourg, France, in October 2018. Because of the partial overlap with topics (and territory) of the Alpine region, as well as the timing of the seminars, this seminar also included the enclosed Alpine region. These regions comprise the largest number of Member States, 16 in total. References in this report to the ‘Continental seminar’ refer to the seminar that covered all 5 above-mentioned regions.

The fourth Continental, Pannonian, Steppic, Black Sea and Alpine Biogeographical seminar was held from 25 to 27 June 2024. It was co-hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, the Faculty of Environmental Sciences of the Czech University of Life Sciences, and the European Commission. The venue was the Czech University of Life Sciences (CULS), in Prague. A total of 93 participants attended the seminar, covering all the Continental Member States except Croatia, plus experts from five additional Member States, representatives of the European Commission, or members of the BGP supporting team.

1.2. The three themes selected for the seminar

Prior to the seminar, three seminar themes were selected by the Czech ministry representatives, in discussion with the European Commission. As in all seminars organised for the Biogeographic Process, a [background document](#) was prepared to support the topics to be discussed, and help to frame the outcomes of the discussions. The three themes were:

- Theme 1: Protected area targets
- Theme 2: Restoration of grasslands
- Theme 3: Using OECM’s to safeguard biodiversity

Reports on the outcomes of these sessions were presented in plenary during the last day and summarised in this report. All presentations and background information from the seminar can be downloaded from the BGP website¹.



How would you rate the current progress of nature conservation efforts in the Continental(+) biogeographical regions?

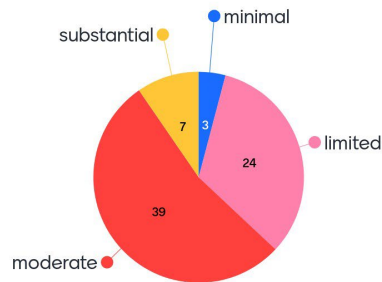


Figure 1: Asked for progress since the previous seminar, most participants rate it as moderate (54%) and limited (33%)

Where are you from?



Figure 2: In total 93 participants participated in the Continental seminar, which covers 16 Member States/

¹ <https://biogeoprocess.net/Continental-region/>

2. Opening and plenary sessions

2.1. Welcome and Introductions

The seminar was opened by the session chair, Frank Vassen (European Commission) on behalf of the three hosts, the Czech Ministry of Environment, the European Commission and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences of the Czech University of Life Sciences.

Mr. Michael Komárek, Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, CULS gave a short presentation about the activities of the University and Faculty of Environmental Sciences. The university was founded in 1906. The faculty of Environmental Sciences has around 2.800 students from 50 countries. Several of the priority research areas are closely related to the subject of the seminar such as biodiversity conservation, climate change and hydrology, protected area management, landscape planning, including EIA/SEA and spatial planning. Currently the Faculty is undertaking several large research projects the results of which will be presented during this seminar.

In his video message, **Mr. Humberto-Delgado Rosa, director of Natural Capital at the European Commission's Directorate General for Environment**, welcomed the participants to the seminar and thanked the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences for hosting the seminar. He stressed the importance of Biogeographical Seminars in addressing the current European challenges in nature and biodiversity conservation, particularly in reversing the decline of biodiversity. To this end, he highlighted the importance of attaining the targets set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, specifically the targets to increase the protected area coverage and the need to ensure restoration by fully implementing the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. He highlighted the challenges for the Member States in submitting their pledges, and praised Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and France, which have already submitted their pledges. He also underlined that the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy are in line with the global biodiversity targets of the CBD, adopted by the governments of 195 countries.

Mr. Ladislav Miko welcomed the participants on behalf of the Czech Ministry. He was especially pleased to welcome our colleagues from Ukraine, who are currently working on the transposition of EU nature directives as part of the preparation for Ukraine's accession to the EU. He expressed his satisfaction that the process of Biogeographical Seminars, which started several years ago, is continuing, as he considers it an important mechanism for ensuring the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, highlighting the uniqueness of the Natura 2000 network in the global context of effective nature conservation. He emphasized that biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are often perceived and discussed as separate issues, although they are closely linked and need to be addressed simultaneously. In addition to the environmental aspects, Mr. Miko also underscored the economic imperative of biodiversity conservation, noting that almost half of the world's GDP is linked to nature. He stressed the need to protect, restore, and use nature sustainably to ensure that Natura 2000 can continue to provide these vital ecosystem functions and services, which are essential for the green transition of the European economy. He welcomed last week's long-awaited adoption of the Nature Restoration Law, which reflects the need to address many issues beyond the areas protected within Natura 2000, stressing the need for participative engagement of a broad variety of actors, which is essential for effective nature restoration.

Mr. Frank Vassen, DG Environment, presented the status of the pledge and review process under the Biodiversity Strategy. The recently adopted Nature Restoration Law will impact the work on the status improvement target, given the strong overlaps between this target and the National Restoration plans under the new law. For the Continental region, protected area pledges received so far (as of 3 June 2024) are from Denmark (DK), the Czech Republic (CZ), France (FR), Germany (DE), Luxembourg (LU) and Sweden (SE). Czech Republic and France only submitted the protected area pledge, while the rest of the countries submitted both the protected area pledges and status improvement pledge. On behalf of the Commission Frank Vassen expressed his thanks to the Member States who have submitted and urges the other Member States to indicate when submission can be expected. He underlines the importance of this seminar in order to exchange views with Member States and stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities experienced during the pledge process.



Picture 1: Opening of the 4th Continental Seminar. Left: Ladislav Miko, of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic giving a welcoming message. Right: Mr. Humberto Delgado-Rosa, Director for Natural Capital (DG- ENV, EC) welcomes the audience through a video recording.

Mr. Theo van der Sluis, Manager of the BGP consortium, presented the topics and achievements from the previous seminar, held from 16-18 October 2018, in Strasbourg, France. 126 participants from 18 countries had attended the seminar which was centred around four themes:

- Improving the coherence between (a) site-level conservation objectives and (b) biogeographical level conservation targets and priorities
- Dealing with problems arising from differences between Member States in defining certain habitat types
- Integrated management: increasing the involvement of local land managers through integrated site management
- Selecting biogeographical level conservation priorities and measures.

At the Knowledge Market 18 projects in the Continental region were presented. During the excursion three different groups of habitat types were visited: grasslands, forests and rivers. All documentation on this and previous seminars is available at biogeoprocess.net

The latest developments in the LIFE Programme and its contribution to management and in particular the restoration of Natura 2000 sites and species were presented by **Mr. Jan Silva, ELMEN-EIGG**. The most important sub-programmes of LIFE are ‘Nature and Biodiversity’ and ‘Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation’. He outlined the different types of calls and indicated that there is significant competition for LIFE Funding; proposals that fail are either poorly prepared or have too limited

ambition. He noted that LIFE submissions now use a new IT-platform and briefly explained how this works. For questions on LIFE projects and submission you can always contact ELMEN-EIGG.

Mr. Peter Keil, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, showed how ecological science tries to assess trends in biodiversity. He highlighted important ecological ‘laws’ for designating protected areas as being; larger is better, the shape of the area matters and peripheral areas can sometimes be more important than inner areas which are more similar. For restoration of areas it is important to consider not only the local scale but to consider other spatial scales and large-scale heterogeneity.



Picture 2: Jan Sliva, from Elmen-EEIG, gives an update of the LIFE programme in the Continental Region. Right: The meeting hall at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague.

2.2. Session on the conservation status improvement target

Irene Bouwma (WUR) presented the current status of the improvement pledges for the four regions considered. For the Continental region, pledges received so far (as of 3 June 2024) are from Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Luxembourg (LU) and Sweden (SE). For the Alpine region, Germany (DE), Spain (ES) and Sweden (SE) submitted their pledges. As the Spanish pledges have already been discussed in two previous seminars, they will not be covered in this seminar. No Member States from the Pannonian, Steppic and Black Sea regions have submitted pledges so far. For each Member State the overall pledge is analysed on its completeness e.g. whether all Habitats Directive species and habitats in unfavourable status or bird species in non-secure status are included in one of the categories of the pledge (non-deterioration or improvement) and whether the 30 % target for improvement has been reached at the Member State level. In respect to grassland restoration 9 habitat types are covered by the improvement pledges and more than 13 bird species associated with grasslands such as the black tailed godwit, lapwing and corn crane are indicated for improvement. Overall conclusions are that the overall completeness varies considerably and that not all Member States reach the 30% target. In the pledges, there is a limited number of species and habitats for which Member States consider that deterioration cannot be halted.

Linda Solveig Hau Andersen (Denmark) presented on behalf of her colleagues the approach taken to develop the conservation pledge for Denmark. Their starting point was the status assessment from 2019-reporting to EU. For Bird species that National Red list was used to support prioritizing the bird species for improvement. From a political and budgetary point of view they could only pledge species

for improvement for which restoration actions were already foreseen or ongoing, or where it was expected that population will increase based on recent trends. Reasons for selection of 16 species for which deterioration is unavoidable were that population status of species is affected due to pressures outside Denmark or issues related to climate change, isolation, diseases, over fishery, hunting and atmospheric nitrogen deposition. Denmark intends to reduce the share of unknown assessments through better utilization and inclusion of data, e.g. improved methodology and use of citizen science data.

Daniele De Angelis (ISPRA) and **Francesca Pani (Federparchi)** presented the Italian approach to the status improvement pledge. First of all it was highlighted that for Italy due to the large number of species and habitats occurring the process is challenging (total of 349 species and 132 habitat types of HD and 324 bird pop. reported in 2019). This is one of the reasons why no pledge has been submitted so far. The other reason is that a parallel process is ongoing to identify the conservation objectives and measures by the regions for all SACs. As the actual implementation of the pledge is dependent on the measures formulated in this process the preliminary list developed for the pledge will be completed after this process has ended. The preliminary list developed by ISPRA uses four criteria being Vulnerability (includes the CE extinction risk criteria), Responsibility (includes National responsibility and Distribution), Feasibility (includes “low-hanging fruits”/LHF) and Reachability (includes LHF) which incorporate the three criteria developed by the EC. Based on the scores assigned for each species and habitats by experts a final ranking was developed (see figure 3).

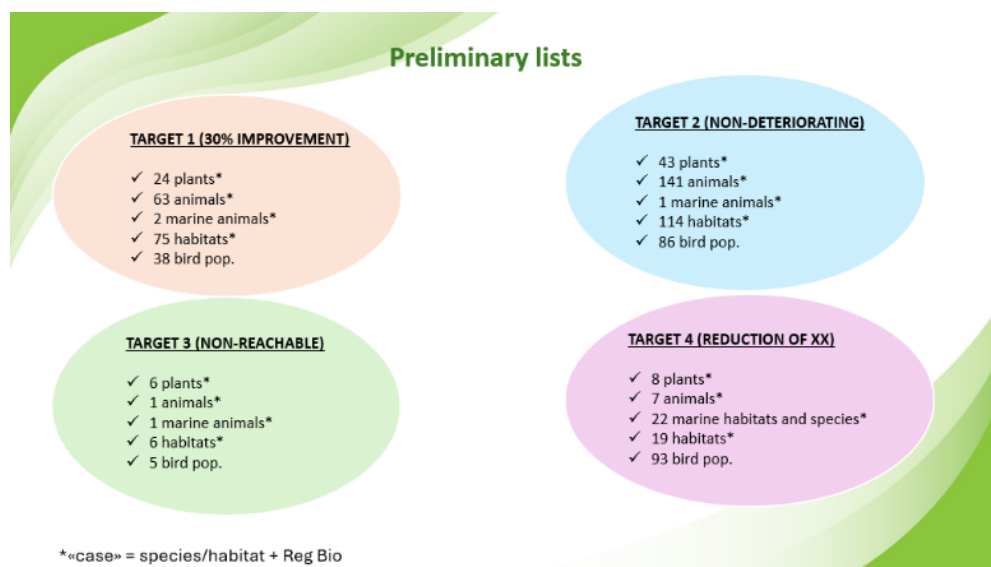


Figure 3: Overview of the preliminary list developed by ISPRA for the Italian pledge.

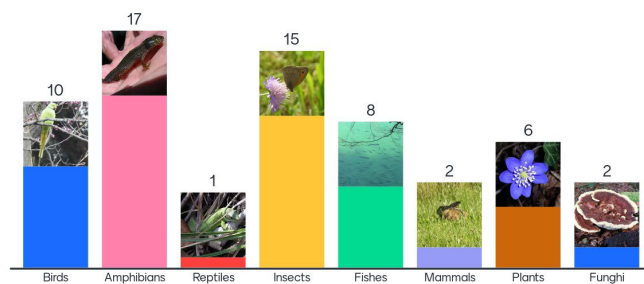
Lionel Wibail (Public Service of Wallonia) presented the approach of Wallonia for the selection of continental habitat types to be included in the Belgium pledge. The largest part of the continental region in Belgium is located in the Walloon region. Criteria used to select habitats for improvement where the following: 1) trends already positive in 2013–2018 2) important restoration & management actions in the past, 3) action plans already in progress or in development 4) synergy with the Water Framework Directive. He also underlined the importance of past and current Life Projects in order to achieve the improvement. He further underlined that it might be much more difficult to ensure the

achievement of several habitats which will be included in the pledge in the category of non-deterioration. Wallonia has included several habitats in this category which currently have negative trends and bending this curve will require considerable efforts. Wallonia foresees for only one habitat that deterioration cannot be halted being Buxus formations (5110) due to the occurrence of the box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*). Wallonia will take an active approach to improve resilience of habitat types to avoid negative impacts of climate change.

During the session on conservation status improvement participants were asked three Mentimeter questions to rate the progress of the conservation efforts, to indicate which species and habitats are in most need of conservation and how they assess the conservation pledge of their Member State (see Picture 1, 5 and 6).

Mentimeter

Which species groups require most conservation effort to improve their status



Mentimeter

Figure 4: Mentimeter poll: Seminar participants' perception about which species group requires most conservation efforts. Most rated were Amphibians and Insects.

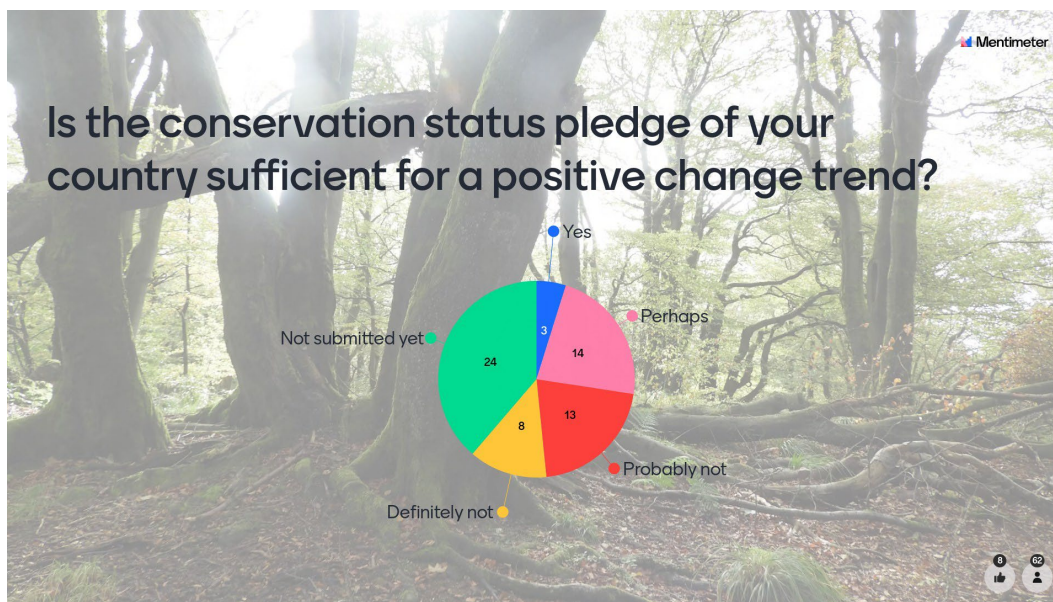


Figure 5: Mentimeter poll: Seminar participants' perception on whether the conservation status pledge for the country is sufficient to ensure a positive trend. Only a limited number of the participants indicated yes while the majority could not yet provide an answer as the pledge of the country has not yet been submitted.

3. Seminar theme discussions

3.1. Theme 1: Protected area target

Chair: Andras Krolopp | **Facilitator:** Theo van der Sluis

Objectives of the thematic session

The aim of this session was to take stock of progress so far. In the preparation of the seminar a number of questions were formulated which dealt with different aspects of the Protected Area pledge. Participants had the opportunity to select the topic and question of their greatest interest and discuss it in smaller groups with other participants. The questions are discussed in section 3.3.

Introduction and Presentations

Mrs. Mette Lund (EEA) presented the data on protected area coverage per Member State, both Natura 2000 sites as well as nationally designated areas². Based on the EEA analyses, the Black Sea and Pannonian regions are well above the 30% target, the Continental reaches the 30% target while the Alpine and Steppic Biogeographic regions are around 23% (see figure 6). The Natura 2000 network covers most of the protected areas, and is often overlapping with the national protection categories, but in some Member States a wide variety national protection categories predominate. A pledges dashboard has been developed by the EEA³ which is updated regularly. The pledges for protected areas received for these regions come from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Czechia, France and Spain.

Protected areas coverage by MS – per region

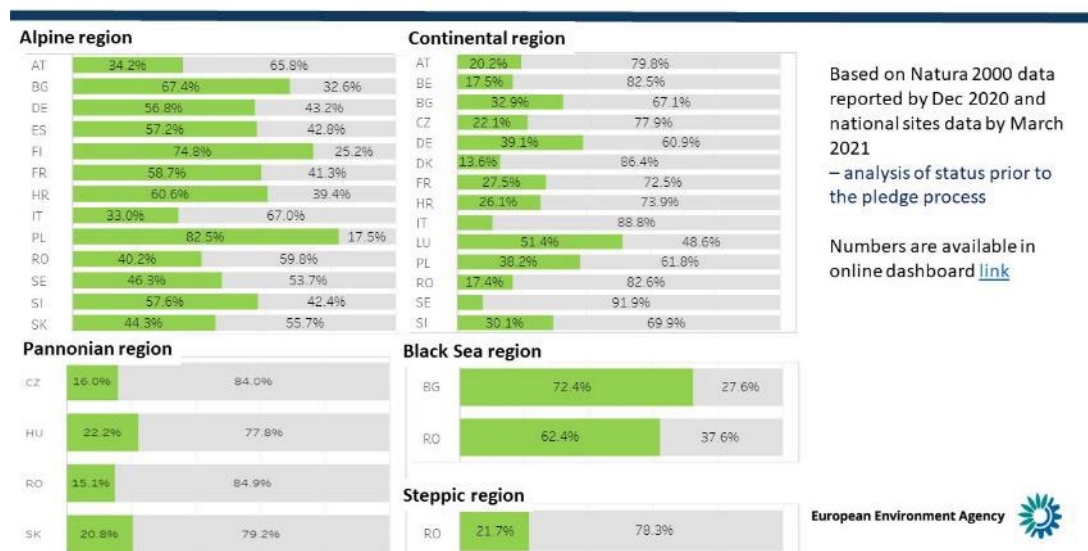


Figure 6: Overview of protected areas coverage in the five Biogeographical regions, presented by Mette Lund (EEA).

²<https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/terrestrial-protected-areas-in-europe>

³<https://www.eionet.europa.eu/news/cdda-data-collection-2023>

Eva Flinkerbusch (German Federal agency for Nature Conservation) presented the achievements for Germany so far. In Germany the pledge process is implemented at Bundesland level, and reported at the Federal level. In a first round of area pledges 16% coverage towards the 30% target was achieved. A second pledge round is planned for later this year, with parts of Man and Biosphere areas as well as landscape parks considered to raise the coverage.

Elisabeth Kirsch (Ministère de l'Environnement, du Climat et de la Biodiversité) presented the pledge from Luxembourg. They established the targets, and started working on the different elements, ranging from improving coherence (e.g. corridors for wild cats), extending some specific protected areas and ensuring legal protection. They focused on forest reserves, and protected areas (for agricultural habitats and riverine habitats). Strictly protected areas have already been increased since the pledge to almost 6%.

Eva Knizatková (Ministry of the Environment of Czech republic) presented on behalf of host **Petr Havel** who had fallen ill. The Czech pledge was recently submitted (June 2024). It notably includes Significant Landscape Elements, which are OECMs and which bring the protected area pledge for Czechia from 22 to 28%. Strictly protected areas will cover approximately 6%.

Piero Visconti and **Jutta Behr** (IIASA) showed results from the [NaturaConnect](#) EU Horizon-funded project. Their analysis aims to identify the best additional protected areas to reach the 30% target. For 646 globally threatened species less than 20% of their range is protected in the Natura2000 network. They noted that the protected area network in almost all countries consists of many small, fragmented patchy habitat. However, with modest area expansions large gains can be realised. A set of core rules has been developed as a quick guide to prioritise areas. They also incorporated climate change into the models for mapping future protected areas.

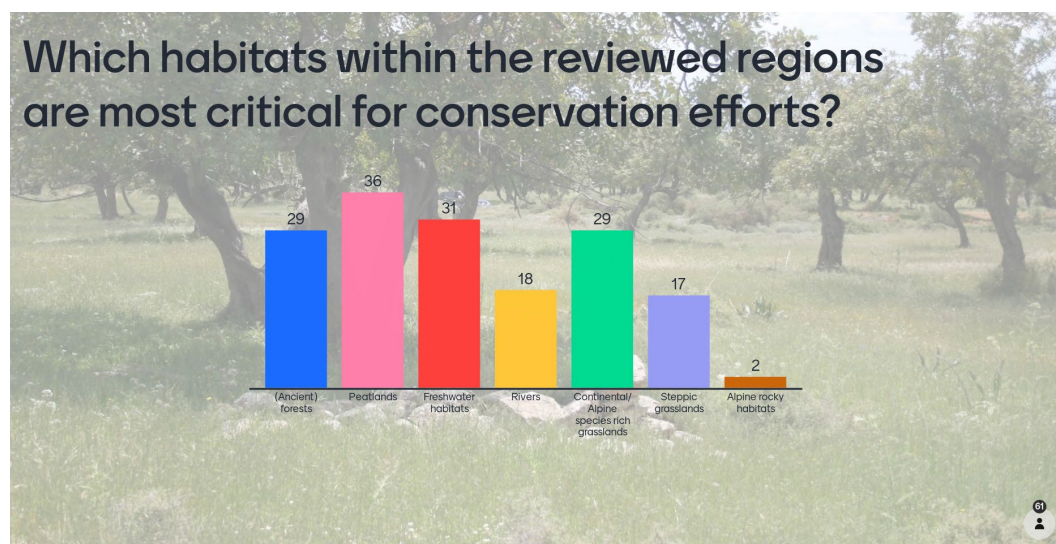


Figure 7: Mentimeter poll: peatlands and freshwater habitats are considered most crucial for conservation.

Dušan Romportl (Silva Tarouca Research Institute) presented an approach for setting priorities for species and habitat assessments for nature conservation. This is based on the DivLand project, which focuses on Czechia. They are developing models to assess potential biodiversity assessments across

taxa and functional groups, so that they can prioritise areas for conservation. In total they identified 8,500 km² of additional area for protection.

Jaroslav Krogulec (BirdLife Poland) presented the method developed during of a series of BGP networking events to identify SPAs that are the most important staging areas for migratory birds in the East Atlantic flyway. The method employed ranking both quantitative and qualitative criteria for selected bird species. Based on the scoring for these criteria sites were ranked for their importance. However, the availability of data was a key constraint in this approach.

Discussions on the protected area target

The groups discussed the following questions:

How do we overcome the barriers for the national pledge for protected areas (technical/ political)?

(11 participants, Facilitator: Luna Milatović)

At the beginning of the session, the group identified the main barriers in order to brainstorm solutions for overcoming them. In particular, the lack of political support to prepare or to implement the pledge was identified as one of the main barriers. In some countries, poor institutional capacity and the administrative processes which are required (analysing the data, filling the formats and sheets) hampered progress. Stakeholder resistance, insufficient communication between sectors, and lack of understanding of the importance of protected areas also caused difficulties.

During the discussions, a number of suggestions for overcoming these barriers were made:

- The EU Nature Restoration Law offers an opportunity for Member States to identify synergies between areas to restore and areas to protect
- Collaboration with other stakeholders (NGOs, academia) to compensate for a lack of capacity within governments
- Conduct inclusive protected area planning, involving communities and other stakeholders (learning from mistakes that were made in defining the Natura 2000 network)
- Apply for funding for institutional reform (e.g. from LIFE-IP programs)
- Provide incentives and financial compensation for stakeholders
- Communicate better the benefits of protected areas (positive framing) and the potential spillover effects to neighbouring areas
- Share best practices in the pledge preparation approach
- Clearer and stronger communication from DG ENV in relation to DG AGRI
- Partnerships with the private sector (possible use of OECMs?)
- Focus on improving the management objectives of existing areas, to improve their effectiveness
- Communicate synergies between biodiversity protection and climate change adaptation

How can we ensure that national pledges for protected areas will actually be implemented?

(9 participants, Facilitator: Paul Goriup)

It was generally concluded that implementation more depended on creating an enabling environment consisting of:

- Building capacity in the Ministries since all were under-resourced for the scale of the task, including experts in communication and economics;
- Adequate collection and analysis of data made available to the public and involving stakeholders at the earliest possible stage such as discussing PA commitments, proposals and boundaries, in order to build up trust and consensus.

What are best ways to finance the expansion and management of protected areas?

(9 participants, Facilitator: Paul Goriup)

Several participants described examples from their countries of how financial incentives are offered to encourage nature-positive land management e.g. in forestry and restoring disused land to create nature reserves. The main conclusions were:

- Instituting a system of long-term (20 – 30 years) incentives (financial and non-financial) to engage land users so that they can invest confidently and implement conservation measures effectively.
- Achieving a more equitable balance between CAP subsidies and payments for ecosystem services.
- There could be a greater use of environmental Trust Funds where revenues, levies and fines relating to benefits from and damages to ecosystem services could be deposited to enhance protected area management instead of being absorbed into general government budgets. Slovenia has such a system for forest management while certification, franchise and concession schemes are also widely adopted.
- England has recently introduced a system of payments for conservation known as Biodiversity Net Gain. Any development needing a planning permit must show a minimum improvement of 10% above the baseline biodiversity level of the site. If this target cannot be met on-site then the developer must make provision to fund improvements on other approved conservation areas in the region. This had led to a big market in biodiversity credits and landowners adopting “rewilding” measures.
- Protected areas could also benefit more from carbon credit revenues as well as investments from the private sector such as insurance companies and those seeking Environmental, Social and Governmental (ESG) recognition.

How to identify the best areas to improve the coherence and connectivity of the protected area network?

(12 participants, Facilitator: Barbora Chmelová)

There is an EU-wide emphasis on the area targets, but also a lack of a good definition of habitat connectivity/coherence and the respective indicators for connectivity. The MS do collect data on the current Natura 2000 sites, and habitat maps and monitoring data might be available. For network coherence the focus is on areas outside the current protected network. That raises questions:

- How do we describe areas outside the PA? There is a lack of resources and a lack of capacity for targeted mapping, despite its great potential
- Remote sensing is not a panacea: this works only for mapping of specific habitats, and at specific scales only
- Large amounts of digital data are being produced, but it’s practical use and uptake has to be enhanced (incorporated in policies, strategies, plans)

Transboundary cooperation is still limited, but rivers are logical natural corridors and this potential could be better realised to address conflicts of interests in landscapes. This requires scientific knowledge, but also socioeconomic pressures should be identified, and to some extent these should be accommodated.

How do we ensure that local communities benefit from the designation of protected areas?

(9 participants, Facilitator: Irene Bouwma)

It is important to consider who forms the local community. Further, it is not only a matter of income and finance, but it also depends on trust. It takes time to build relationships, so there needs to be a structure that enables building long-term relations. This means that the same people must be committed for a long time. There must be recognition of the role of the communities: both in terms of financial benefits as well as a relation based on equal partnership.

With regard to the financial benefits:

- Be creative in finding new sources of revenues for traditional forms of management
- If necessary, provide support to deal with paperwork associated with subsidies and project grants

How can we ensure that protected areas are effectively managed with clear conservation objectives and measures?

(11 participants, Facilitator: Csaba Mezei)

Adaptive management is essential because of rapidly changing circumstances (e.g. due to climate change). Sometimes site-specific objectives contradict the national (or EU) objectives. Therefore, from time to time it is necessary to revisit and update the objectives at all levels.

How to ensure good monitoring procedures for protected areas?

The stakeholders' quality and capacity is often declining, i.e. their professional thematic knowledge is not as high as in the past (e.g.: there are fewer young conservationists, rangers, local practitioners, contractors, volunteers, interns, botanists, etc.). To compensate for that we can make more use of citizen science, explore and adopt new (often digital) monitoring techniques and remote sensing. Also gamification can complement state-of-the art monitoring process (e.g.: apps to recognise animal or plant species, apps which also feed crowd-sourced data to the database for the benefit of monitoring).

We need to improve on knowledge and information exchange, to learn from each other, from different countries and EU institutions. This may also help to overcome policy incoherence and differences in monitoring procedures of countries. It was felt that the Directives sometimes pose barriers to ensure beneficial monitoring (it is difficult to modify site delineations in case monitoring results show the need).

How to identify the best areas for strict protection?

(12 participants, Facilitator: Theo van der Sluis)

The criteria were discussed, and participants felt that those of IUCN areas would qualify: in particular larger areas, with high biodiversity values, and preferably state-owned (which will make it easier to

designate them as strictly protected). Further, the areas should be ‘ecosystem based’, meaning larger sites which allow for natural processes to take place. Still, sites may also contain enclaves with e.g. farmland. An alternative approach is to have smaller sites surrounded by areas which are managed and protected under OECMs.

The management of these strictly protected areas should follow the conservation need. It should therefore either be non-intervention, or management particularly for conservation. Lastly, it is crucial that the designation is permanent, and cannot be changed after a review period, e.g. every 10 years or so as might happen in some countries.

There was some discussion also on the definition of ‘strict protection’. Some countries do have this in their legislation, and it may therefore differ from state to state, or differ from the EU definition. In fact, even the EEA’s definition used for the CDDA database seems to differ from the definition from the Biodiversity Strategy 2030.



Picture 3: Group discussions, break-out sessions on the Protected Areas pledge day 1.

3.2. Theme 2: Grassland restoration

Chair: Michael Hošek | **Facilitators:** Irene Bouwma, Theo van der Sluis.

Objectives of the thematic session

Restored grassland areas could both contribute significantly to the 30% protected area target and directly or indirectly to the species conservation status targets. In recent years, much experience has been gained with restoration programmes and projects for grassland habitats as well as species (e.g. the Multi-Species Action Plan for Lowland Wet Grassland Waders). This session aimed to discuss these experiences, with the aim to reach a common understanding on the following questions:

- What are the main pressures that affect biodiversity of grassland habitats?
- How climate change affects dynamics of grassland habitats and how it interacts with anthropogenic factors?
- What are the main principles of grassland habitats management and what scientific methods are used for their correct determination?
- How is grassland management implemented in order to ensure a long-term non-deterioration of grassland habitats and what are the main challenges?
- Which measures are both cost-effective and suitable to prevent grassland habitats from deterioration?
- Which successful projects were implemented for the restoration of grassland habitats?
- What opportunities are there for cooperative work and follow-up across biogeographical regions?

Introduction and presentations

Ivana Jongepierova (Czech Nature Conservation Agency) presented their experiences with grassland restoration in the White Carpathians (Bílá Karpaty) and Morava river floodplain. A total of 100 ha of abandoned meadows in the White Carpathians were cleared from shrubs and in the Morava floodplain 210 ha of open-canopy forests and pastures were restored. Restoration in both areas was made possible with the financial support of LIFE. Different methods to of arable land were undertaken to compare the effect of re-seeding meadows with regional seed mixture but also spontaneous germination. Overall the grassland restoration undertaken has been successful. Participants asked how much effort was involved in Lupin eradication (days, per ha); as this work was undertaken by volunteers the effort is not exactly known. Further questions related to the communication campaign towards stakeholders.



Picture 4: Presentation from Csaba Vadász, restoration results from Kiskunsági National Park in Hungary.

Kateřina Berchová Bímová presented the approach for eradication of invasive alien species from Šumava NP, in particular of Lupins which are a major threat to natural occurring grasslands. She explained the three-step approach taken to eradicate species in the area consisting of first mapping occurrence of Lupine in the Šumava NP to identify those areas where eradication is most urgent (priorities), secondly develop for each area a local management plans for action and third undertake longer term monitoring to evaluate the effects of the eradication. To eradicate invasive species enormous effort is required, hence a well-thought-out strategy is needed. Furthermore it is necessary to watch out for new outbreaks.

Csaba Vadász (Kiskunsági National Park Directorates) presented different approaches for steppe restoration in Hungary's Kiskunsagi Nemzeti Park. Long term research in the area show that many species do benefit from steppe restoration, but some plant species with limited dispersal capacity do not recover. Therefore reintroduction / seeding of plants is required. Furthermore post-restoration management overrides the effects of restoration methods: grazing proved to be a better way than mowing. To ensure species rich grasslands, the grazing pressure should be low. The knowledge of the shepherd is very important to ensure optimal grazing intensity as well as the type of animal used for grazing. As a result of climate change grassland species now occurring in grassland either shift towards forest steppe (H6260 towards 91N0, 91I0), and in some cases might disappear.

Liselotte Sjödin (Swedish Agricultural University) reported on the loss of pastures in Sweden due to land use change, from 30% in 1850 to 1% now. She elaborated on the experiences with different methods for grassland restoration developed in various projects. She underlined the need to support local farmers so they can continue managing the restored grasslands. This requires investments in machines, counselling and administration support, support for new fences and creation of a market for products from extensively used grasslands. Examples are the sale of free-range meat (Naturbeteskött) and local milk (Roslagsmjölk). Participants were very interested in the way products were marketed and how this success was achieved.

Sophie Pyckaert (Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Champagne-Ardenne) presented the LIFE Connexions -project which is currently ongoing in Walloon and France. The aim is restoring 5 priority Annex 1 habitats, as well as three meadow types and particular species. After restoring habitats (by mulching, shrub removal etc.) restoration methods include sowing or hay spreading. This is followed by mowing or grazing.

In the examples presented several restoration actions were taken on grasslands which are still managed by private landowners. For the Nature Restoration Law which aims to restore biodiversity in the agricultural areas these are the types of actions needed.

3/ Strategies for restoring open habitats



Figure 8: Sophie Pyckaert presented scientific monitoring results for restoration measures of various habitat types, grasslands and forests, comparing long-term change in species composition.

Discussion on grassland restoration

The groups discussed the following questions:

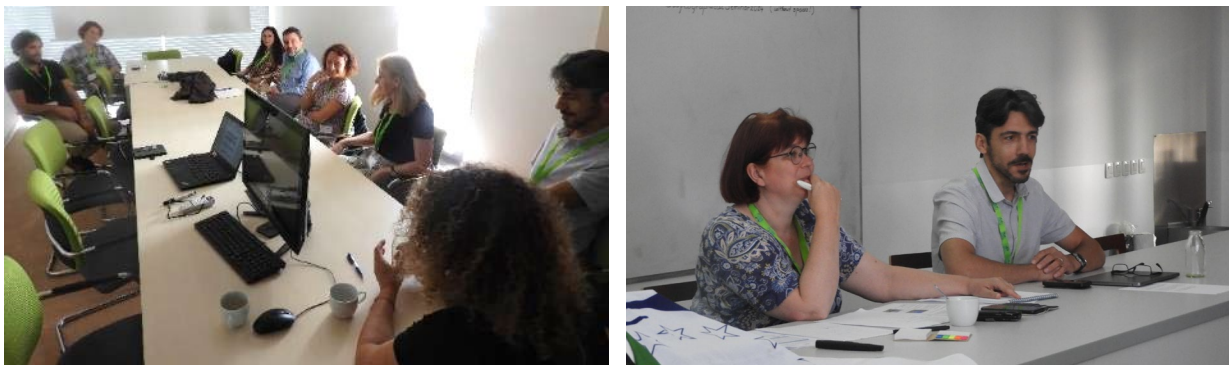
- Which successful projects were implemented for the grassland habitats restoration?
- Which cost-effective measures are suitable to prevent grassland habitats from deterioration?
- How can this management be implemented and what are the main challenges?

Each of the participants elaborated on the experiences with grassland restoration in their Member State. For project to achieve long term success a clear vision is essential. The restoration needs to be followed by management, for this the involvement of landowners and local stakeholders is essential. To engage with landowners requires considerable resources and staff which has the skills to discuss management with farmers. Often this requires that staff who undertakes this work should work in the

same area for a long term to generate trust and foster important contacts. It is a socio-ecological system, it requires sharing of knowledge, sharing information between all stakeholders, including learning from e.g. shepherds. In short, communication is essential to have also local understanding of -and possibly involvement in- restoration measures.

The most cost-effective approach is to maintain traditional management, so as to prevent grassland degradation. Second best is restoring traditional management, which requires an agricultural transition or new economic models to make traditional management attractive again. Labour costs are prohibitive, in some cases engaging volunteers might be an option. Also new marketing opportunities may work. One option is to create attractive market mechanisms for products produced from extensively managed grasslands to reduce the dependence on project funding and subsidies. An innovative example from Abruzzo (IT) is 'Adopt a sheep' or '[addotto una pecora](#)'.

Best results for restoration have been achieved with regionally sourced seeds; and new techniques such a fire management can be applied. Grassland restoration requires time, therefore restoration projects should have a long duration. Establishing contact with the Ministry of Agriculture and with the chamber of agriculture is required to increase knowledge amongst agricultural advisors to ensure uptake by the agricultural sector. Current agreements for CAP subsidies are considered too short.



Picture 5: Group discussions on grassland restoration. Right: Chair Michael Hošek, with facilitator Irene Bouwma.

3.3. Theme 3: OECMs

Chair: András Schmidt | **Facilitators:** Luna Milatović, Paul Goriup

Objectives of the thematic session

While still a novel approach, Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) provide an opportunity to complement existing protected area networks by recognising important areas that contribute to biodiversity protection while not being formally protected. This session aimed to consider whether OECMs are useful in the EU context, and if Member States are considering including them in their PA pledge. The objectives of this thematic session were to discuss and reach a common understanding around the following questions:

- What are the minimum requirements for the area to be declared as an OECM?
- Is there a legal status of OECMs or which legal, financial or motivational tools are used for their implementation?
- Is the concept of OECM actively explored and developed with the assistance of state authority institutions?

- Are there any examples of OECMs and what is their relationship with national nature protected areas designation schemes?
- What is the role of OECMs in the national pledges?

Introduction and Presentations

Mrs. Iva Obretenova (EC) opened the session by presenting the context in which OECMs are mentioned in EU environmental policy. She provided an overview of how OECMs are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) where this approach was first discussed. This was followed by a brief presentation of EC criteria listed in the Commission Staff Working Document on Criteria and guidance for protected area designations⁴, which specifies that an OECM can be counted towards the 30% target if the area is covered by a national or international legislative or administrative act or a contractual arrangement aiming to achieve long-term conservation outcomes; conservation objectives and measures are in place; and effective management and monitoring of the biodiversity in the area is in place. Mrs Obretenova concluded by saying that EC sees an opportunity in this approach and that several Member States are looking into how to apply the criteria in practice.



Picture 6: A practical example of green roofs at the University. Right: Conference dinner at Klášterní Pivovar Strahov

Mrs. Delphine Dupeux (European Landowners Organization) presented some of the existing challenges for reaching the 30% target in the EU and how OECMs can help. She explained that investing into OECMs provides an opportunity to solve issues at a governance level to improve management on the ground, especially given the amount of land that is privately owned in Europe. She noted that OECMs can provide a less restrictive option compared to existing land designations, potentially expanding the network of conservation areas through co-ownership, and allowing conservation and business model to coexist. One additional benefit could be that they can promote the exploration of emerging natural capital markets (such as carbon and biodiversity credits) rather than being perceived as barriers, as current designations often are. After presenting an overview of private land conservation tools (see slide 16) to incentivise long-term conservation, she demonstrated how ELO's Wildlife Estates Label⁵ could be a potential OECM designation.

⁴https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/criteria-and-guidance-protected-areas-designations-staff-working-document_en

⁵<https://wildlife-estates.info/>



Figure 9: In general the concept of OECMs was considered still vague, and confusing, but participants agreed that they may offer important opportunities to involve other actors.

Her intervention was followed by **Mr. Olivier Hymas** (University of Lausanne/Chair of the WCPA OECM Europe) who emphasised that the essence of OECMs is in recognising other stakeholders and their contribution to biodiversity conservation. He provided an overview of existing global and regional guidance, and opportunities that OECMs bring, including recognition of existing systems that deliver conservation (outcome-based approach), integration of local communities and the potential for countering 'greenlash', recognition of the contribution of rural communities, and diverse forms of governance. He highlighted the need for detailed European OECM guidance, but noted that all OECMs should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Hymas invited participants to a conference on OECMs in Europe⁶ in December this year.

Břeněk Michálek (Czech Society for Ornithology) described the potential for bird reserves of the CZO to serve as OECMs. These reserves are made on land bought by the CZO from citizen's donations, and the Strategic Plan sets out a total of at least 13 reserves by 2042. He listed the main restoration measures in place in these areas, and highlighted the importance of co-developing the reserves with people which creates the feeling of co-ownership of the area. He noted that several bird reserves overlap with existing Natura 2000 sites designated for a specific species which also benefits from bird reserve measures.

During the Q&A, participants noted that some of the shortcomings of protected areas that were mentioned during the presentations can be remedied by improved management of those areas and that while OECMs can complement the networks, they are not a panacea. It was also clarified that the identification of OECMs can be triggered by a variety of actors and that the focus should be more on social methods rather than just ecological ones.

⁶<https://ruralcommons.eu/>

Discussions on the OECMs

The groups addressed the following two questions:

Do you have actual / potential examples of OECMs in your country?

- Areas currently used for fisheries (including marine), forestry, military
- Rivers under Water Framework Directive, peatlands, soil protection zones
- Private land with willing owners, NGO nature reserves not already in Natura 2000 sites

Country examples:

- Belgium – biological high-value meadows with farmers, rewilding commitments in forest areas
- Hungary – voluntary zonal schemes with farmers in high-nature value areas
- Austria – similar agricultural schemes
- Sweden – areas set aside for conservation in private forests
- Germany – land bought for wilderness, like in BE
- Italy – hunting grounds
- France – mixed sectors – 5 pilot sites (IUCN FR)

What are the main obstacles for recognizing OECMs

- Lack of clear guidelines of what are and are not OECMs
- Setting minimum standards for OECMs
- Lack of national process for the identification of the OECMs
- Putting in place the necessary long-term incentives, financial / fiscal / non-monetary
- Putting in place the administrative system for reporting to EU
- Difficulty with defining long-term (many schemes up to 7 years)
- Reluctance from stakeholders, incl. fear of future formal commitments
- Lack of understanding what recognition of an OECM would mean for the landowner
- Risk of recognising OECMs but then they have no impact

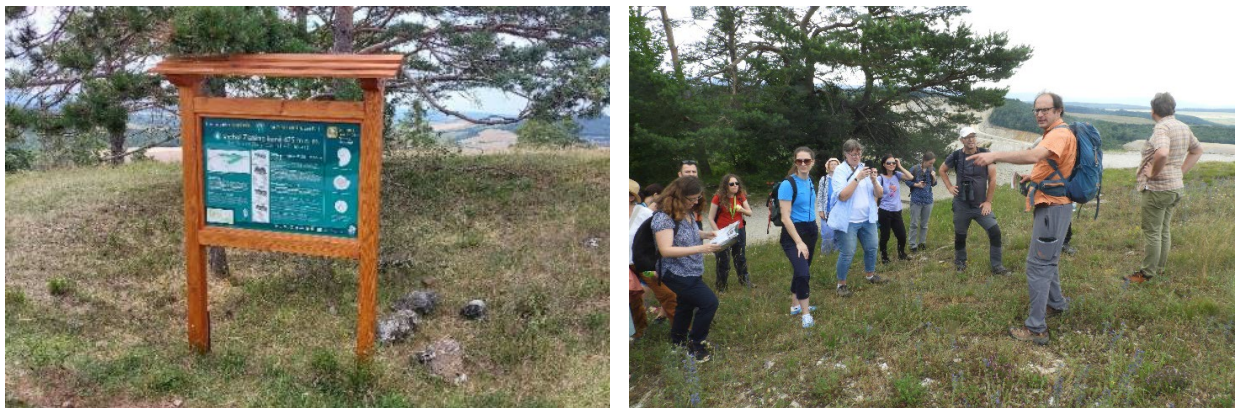


Picture 7: Participants of the field excursion (picture: Alexandra Tamchynova)

4. Knowledge Market

The knowledge market was held in the larger corridor adjoining the main conference hall. Some 15 projects or organisations presented themselves, and their activities (see for an overview Annex 2). Several brochures of their work and on the LIFE-programme were available. Most of the projects were LIFE programmes, but also state agencies, NGOs and other participants presented their particular project or knowledge tools to support protected area management.

There was a lively interaction between participants. At the same time, some people took the opportunity to watch in between the discussions an exciting European Championship football match, Austria-The Netherlands.



Picture 8: Field visit to the Bohemian Karst (Český kras)

5. Field Excursion

The field visit was conducted in two stages: morning and afternoon. The morning stage involved visiting the Protected Landscape Area Bohemian Karst (Český kras), which has a very high diversity of dry limestone flora and fauna. Participants could have a guided walk around the dry limestone grassland area (including to an active quarry area), or go underground to explore part of the 25km-long Koněpruské Caves, or Zlatý kůň (golden horse). In addition, the participants could enjoy the exhibits and information panels installed in the recently re-opened Nature Centre. This centre received some 100.000 visitors per year.

During the guided walk around Český kras lively discussions were held. The history of the site, which half a century ago consisted mostly of agricultural land, was important. Grazing was introduced at the beginning of the 21st century, to maintain the important calcareous grassland species. Discussions also focused on the definition of conservation status of habitats, how it was done in this area. Also, what makes it a particular habitat type, e.g. with the presence of 9 Juniper shrubs, does it still qualify as habitat type 5130, *Juniperus communis* formations on calcareous grasslands? Goat grazing was observed in the lower parts of the area near the mine, as part of restoration of natural values. Past mining casts have restored well, new activities are having much more impact on the landscape. Observing the grasslands, discussion arises on what habitat in good condition means, also in view of annual variations. Do we aim for 'good condition', or is sub-optimal also good enough?



Picture 9: Inside the Koněpruské Caves (NatureBureau)

In the afternoon participants went to Tetín, a small historically significant village overlooking the Berounka river gorge. The site is associated with the foundations of Czech statehood and has the remains of a castle built in the late 13th century by Wenceslas II. We walked along the top of a north-facing limestone cliff that is designated as an SAC with 6190 rupicolous Pannonic grasslands. Unfortunately, some of the cliffs will be damaged by the widening of a railway line in the gorge and post-construction recovery efforts are being prepared. Recently trees were removed from the rock faces for the benefit of dry rocky and grassland species.



Picture 10: Participants on excursion in the Berounka river gorge; the quarry (picture right: Alexandra Tamchynova)

6. Concluding plenary session and following steps

Theo van der Sluis, Coordinator of the **Biogeographical Process** presented upcoming activities under the Biogeographical process: two more networking events are being planned, both very relevant also for this audience: the online event on prescribed burning 10-11 September, and a hybrid event on Strict protection, a recurring topic also at this seminar. This latter event will be held in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions, probably in mid-November. More details will be given in the BGP Newsletter (expected in August), or the BGP website.

Frank Vassen, DG ENV, closed the seminar by summarising the main highlights of the past days. The seminar discussions once more highlighted the importance of regular interactions between the European Commission and Member States, to share ideas and discuss solutions or approaches for conservation. It also served as reminder to the Commission what actual concerns and problems there are, and it helped to facilitate a continued discussion with and between Member States.

The current pledge process continues and it is hoped that with the many good examples and the discussions at this seminar other countries will submit their pledge in the near future. This pledge has a purpose, it allows countries to define their priorities and plan measures to improved conservation of species and habitats currently in poor conservation status. This information is also required for the National Restoration Plans under the recently adopted Nature Restoration Law.

Even though the target to increase the surface of protected areas is not part of the required reporting under the NRL, the recently adopted **Nature Restoration Law** calls for actions to restore degraded species and habitats, often outside of Natura 2000 areas - some mechanisms will be required to ensure that that these investments produce sustainable outcomes. By the end of this decade some 20% of degraded ecosystem should have been restored.

The Commission urges the Member States to review which options they see for national schemes that might qualify as OECMs, the development of a dedicated EU Guidance document on OECMs is currently not foreseen. The Commission might however consider additional dedicated events on this topic.

The current contract of the Biogeographical process is coming to an end, this being the last biogeographical seminar in a series of meetings. However, the process will be continued as the Commission appreciates the importance of such exchanges.

The seminar was concluded with a vote of thanks from the Host: Petr Havel thanked, on behalf of the Ministry, the participants for their active involvement and input in the exchange. He thanked the Commission, as well as the Consortium of the BGP for the organisation of the event.

Frank Vassen thanked on behalf of the Commission the Host, in particular Petr and Barbora, but also Sylva and Tereza. They had made this a very well prepared event, with lots of interesting discussions and meetings. Small gifts were given to the Chairs of past days, and the Commission gave the Natura 2000 book to all Member States that have presented their pledge at this seminar, as well as the hosts.

Additional information: development of the roadmap

The roadmap should remind practitioners of the key issues and actions discussed in the biogeographical seminar process and stimulate new actions. The roadmap will identify possible lead organisations and a target timeline for some of these actions. A lead has been identified in some cases, and in others, the European Commission will propose a lead. The previous roadmap for the Continental Region is found [here](#). There is no roadmap for the Alpine region.

During the seminar, attendees could suggest through Mentimeter topics to be incorporated into the roadmap, 41 suggestions were received. For the road map we have used the Mentimeter and some ideas from the breakout sessions:

Pledge process

Several suggestions pointed to the need to complete the pledge and review process (9), in many cases linking the pledges to the Nature Restoration Law (9). There should be more exchange, and sharing of best practices. The Nature Restoration Law clearly needs more clarification on what is expected from Member States.

OECMs

Several suggestions pointed at OECMs (7), in particular the need for more guidance, through documentation or with dedicated events to discuss the topic more in-depth. Also the various forms of governance should be addressed and discussed further.

CAP and agricultural biodiversity

Several suggestions dealt with agriculture and its role in biodiversity, to stop the loss of biodiversity on agricultural land (5). But also funding from the CAP, role of farmers and the role of other land users (recurring theme).

Potential topics for networking events

In addition to the topics discussed at the seminar, the following have also been proposed for future networking events:

- OECMs, including governance aspects
- Indicators for specific habitat types with the aim of restoration.
- Improved monitoring for restoration measures.
- Communication with stakeholders.
- Marketing of products from restored grasslands; inventive approaches, labelling etc.

Annex 1. Continental Seminar Programme

Tuesday 25th of June 2024

Plenary opening session (Chair: Petr Havel/ Ladislav Miko)		
Time	Session, topics and speakers	Location
8:00-9:00	Registration of participants	Faculty of Environmental Sciences
9:00-9:40	Official welcome & introduction to the seminar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Komárek – Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, CULS • Humberto Delgado-Rosa – Director for Natural Capital (DG- ENV, EC) (video recording) • Ladislav Miko – Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic 	Conference hall
9:40-9:50	The Natura 2000 Biogeographical seminars and the pledge process – Frank Vassen (DG-ENV, EC)	
9:50-10:00	Report from previous seminar in Strasbourg hosted by France (Theo v/d Sluis, WUR)	
10:00-10:20	LIFE Programme and updates – Jan Sliva (ELMEN-EIGG)	
10:20-10:30	Biodiversity dynamics across a continuum of space, time and their scales – Petr Keil (Faculty of Environmental Sciences, CULS)	
10:30-10:45	Q&A	
10:45-11:15	Coffee break	
11:15-11:30	Conservation status improvement pledges: Where are we - inventory, overview, distance to target – Irene Bouwma (WUR)	
11:30-12:00	Approaches towards the development of the pledge on conservation status improvement from different Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denmark- Linda Hau Andersen • Italy –Daniele De Angelis (ISPRA) • Belgium – Lionel Wibail (Public Service of Wallonie) 	
12:00-13:00	Lunch	
Theme 1: Session on protected areas pledges (Chair: Andras Krolopp, The Nature Conservancy)		
Time	Topics	
13:00-13:15	Protected area pledges: Where are we – inventory, overview, distance to target – Mette Lund (EEA)	
13:15-14:00	Approaches from different Member States to the pledge process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxembourg – Elisabeth Kirsch (Ministère de l'Environnement, du Climat et de la Biodiversité) • Germany – Eva Flinkerbusch (Federal agency for nature conservation) • Czech Republic – Petr Havel (Ministry of the Environment) 	
14:00-14:30	Questions and discussion	
14:30-15:00	Coffee break	
15:00- 15:15	Scientific basis for identification of new protected areas NaturaConnect – Piero Visconti, Jutta Beher (IIASA)	

Time	Topics	
15:15-15:30	Comprehensive species and habitat diversity assessment – Dušan Romportl (Silva Tarouca Research Institute, CZ)	
15:30 -15:45	Migratory bird site selection methods for East Atlantic Flyway range countries- Jarosław Krogulec (Birdlife Poland)	
15:45-16:00	Explanation on breakout sessions	
16:00-17:30	Breakout sessions	
16:00 -17:30	Break-out sessions: designation and management of protected areas – how to implement in practice	Meeting rooms
18:00-20:00	Knowledge Market with informal dinner Presentation of LIFE and other projects	

Wednesday 26th of June

Excursion		
9:00	Departure of buses on a field trip	Grand Hotel International
9:00-17:00	Field trip to Protected Landscape Area Český kras Lunch will be provided by the organizers	
20:00	Joint Dinner Restaurant: Klášterní Pivovar Strahov, Street: Strahovské nádvoří 301. 118 00 Prague 1	

Thursday 27th of June

Theme 2: Restoration actions for grasslands in protected areas (Chair: Michael Hošek, EUROPARC)		
9:00-10:30	Examples of successful restoration actions for species and habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivana Jongepierová (Nature Conservation Agency of the CZ) Kateřina Berchová (Faculty of Environmental Sciences, CULS, CZ) Csaba Vadász (Kiskunság National Park Directorates, HU) Liselott Sjödin Skarp (Swedish Agricultural University, SE) Sophie Pyckaert (Consevaire d'espaces naturels Champagne-Ardenne, FR) 	
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break	
Theme 3: Using OECMs to safeguard biodiversity (Chair: András Schmidt, Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary)		
11:00-11:45	Definition and applications of OECMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iva Obretenova (DG-ENV) Delphine Dupeux (European Landowners' Organization) Olivier Hymas (University of Lausanne) 	
11:45-12:30	Experiences with OECMs in different Member States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Břeněk Michálek – Czech Society for Ornithology (ČSO) <p>Question and answers</p>	
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
Parallel break out sessions		
13:30-15:00	Theme 2: Restoration actions for grasslands in protected areas	Theme 3: Using OECMs to safeguard biodiversity
15:00-15:15	Coffee Break	
Plenary Session Chair: Iva Obretenova (DG-ENV)		
15:15-16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting discussion groups day 1 Reporting thematic working groups (Chairs of thematic groups) Next steps for the pledge process – Frank Vassen (DG-ENV) Interaction and discussion with participants Short evaluation – Mentimeter 	Conference hall
16:45-17:00	Closing remarks	
17:00	Closure of the seminar	

Annex 2. Projects at the knowledge market

No.	Organisation	Contact person	Subject
1	WWF	Arno Aschauer	
2	Swedish Environmental protection agency	Conny Jacobson	
3	NaturaConnect	Jutta Beher	NaturaConnect
4	Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Faculty of Environmental Sciences	Katerina Berchová Bímová	Elimination of invasive plant species in practice
5	OTOP/BirdLife Polska	Jarosław Krogulec	Selection of key SPAs supporting migration within the eastern Atlantic flyway
6	CINEA / ELMEN-EEIG	Jan Sliva	The EU-LIFE Programme
7	World Commission on Protected Area - Europe, NARROW, IUCN, University of Lausanne	Olivier Hymas	Biodiversa+ funded project NARROW
8	Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, Luxembourg	Elisabeth Kirsch	Luxembourg National Strategy for conservation and biodiversity
9	The Natural 2000 Coalition / Milvus, Romania	Tamas Papp	The successful recovery of the Western Romanian Saker falcon population
10	COP4N2K, Space4Environment, DG-ENV	Lucie Dekanová	EU-Grassland Watch
11	The Nature Conservancy	Andras Krolopp, Julia Boverhoff	TNC Freshwater prioritization tool to identify rivers of conservation interest
12	Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic	Alexandra Tamchynová	LIFE One Nature
13	Nature Conservation Agency, Czech Republic	Ivana Jongepierova	LIFE for Insects: Conservation of Selected Natura Insect Species in Transboundary Area (CZ-SK) of Western Carpathian Mts. Habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia
14	Nature Conservation Agency	Ivana Jongepierova	and LIFE Butterflies: Integrated Protection of Rare Butterfly Species of Non-forest
15	Biogeographical Process	Theo van der Sluis, Irene Bouwma	Work and activities under the Biogeographical Process; Natura 2000 and WENR

Annex 3. List of registered participants

Sorted by Country

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- Less presentations, more time for discussion (6)
- Good conference, well organised (3)
- Different set-up of discussion groups and or reporting (3)
- Better discussions, by a better representation of various stakeholders (2)
- Very good food (too much) (2)

The full list of comments was:

- More concreteness
- More discussions in groups, longer times for the workshops and less presentations, discussions better organized
- More interactive parts
- Less presentation more discussions
- More outside in nature, maybe an excursion to an OECM.
- Include other views, than just ecological view.
- Discuss common actions for particular habitats
- It was very good. Less food 😊
- Avoid monopolization of discussions
- More days, starting later and ending earlier
- Focus excursion on the principal themes
- More structured discussion needs more time
- During the breakout groups it would be good to ensure at least a few people present that have experience with the topic. To ensure a more guided discussion.
- Slightly more time for the breakout sessions and reporting/summary of these sessions
- Invite NGOs directly not through ministries.
- Invite more representative Persons of landowners and People who have to do the Work
- Big thank you to the organizers!
- Structuring break out group differently to get more into depth of issues. Maybe by using professional facilitators to help to connect dots and get beyond random collection of ideas
- more farmer and forest owners
- List of participants and e-mail addresses should be distributed.
- Let's think how to improve monitoring schemes
- More time for discussions and less for presentations. A few presentations in plenum should be kept.
- More inputs from outside of community
- Involve representatives from stakeholders and responsible state authorities
- Interdisciplinary approaches
- Not only 1 group of few people per topic/question. What is interesting is to compare emulations of a least 2 different groups. And possibly for ad-hoc groups based on discussions.
- More time to discuss OECMs between MS. It took time to gain trust. The discussion was cut when it was becoming very interesting.
- Collect presentations and papers in advance and distribute (to be able to have fewer presentations and more discussions).
- Sometimes selective summary of the contributions of Participants
- Be stricter to claim for the pledges realisation from the MS
- The food at this seminar was amazing. Best ever.
- No meat at the meals provided
- "In house" days were well organized, and the excursion was good!
- Dinner on the first day was minimalistic (still hungry afterwards) and extra water on the warm excursion day would have been good.