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STRA-REP (2004) 17 rev

**Committee of experts for the development
of the Pan-European Ecological Network
(STRA-REP)**

8th meeting
Krakow, 5-6 October 2004

Report

Document prepared by
the Directorate of Culture
and Cultural and Natural Heritage

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and joined the Secretariat in expressing the gratitude of the Committee of experts to the Polish authorities for their invitation to hold the meeting in Krakow.

The Chair recalled the main international events held since the previous meeting of the Committee of experts and stressed the importance of the theme of ecological networks, which was currently taken into account in the activities of numerous institutions.

The Chair informed the Committee of experts that the European Commission could not be represented at the meeting but assured the Committee of its willingness to collaborate on the setting up of the Pan-European Ecological Network and contribute to some of the activities carried out in that framework.

2. Adoption of the agenda of the 8th STRA-REP meeting and of the report of the 7th STRA-REP meeting

STRA-REP / Emerald (2004) 01 rev. – draft agenda revised

STRA-REP (2003) 17 – report of the 7th meeting, Dubrovnik, 14-15 October 2003

At the proposal of the delegate of Estonia, Item 5 of the agenda “2005 Draft work programme” was placed after Item 7. The agenda, thus amended, was adopted (appendix II).

The Committee of experts adopted the report of its 7th meeting held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in 2003 with a correction (Item 8. Other business) requested by the Netherlands delegation. The report would be posted in revised form on the Council of Europe website.

3. Information on the activities of the Council of Europe and of other Organisations within the process of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

STRA-CO (2004) 13 – report of the 8th meeting of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy / final report of the 3rd Intergovernmental Conference “Biodiversity in Europe”, Madrid, 19-21 January 2004

STRA-CO (2004) 18 – report of the Task Force meeting and the 10th Bureau meeting, Strasbourg, 13-14 May 2004

The Secretariat said that the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy was an instrument for implementing the Convention on biological diversity (CBD) in the European region and a forum for preparing the meetings of the Parties to the CBD. The Council for the Pan-European Strategy was also involved in preparation of the Ministerial conferences on “An environment for Europe”. The Secretariat said that the European Ministers responsible for the Environment had adopted the Resolution on biodiversity prepared within the Pan-European Strategy framework in Kyiv in 2003. The Ministers had recognised the importance of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) and adopted a specific Declaration on the theme.

The Secretariat told the Committee that draft action plans had been prepared in response to that Resolution, setting the objectives to be met for the effective implementation of the Strategy, in conjunction with international organisations and specialised agencies in the different sectors covered by these documents. The documents therefore reflected a desire for coordination and synergy between the activities carried out by international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

The Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (STRA-CO), meeting in Madrid from 19 to 21 January 2004 in connection with the 3rd Intergovernmental Conference “Biodiversity in Europe”, had discussed these draft action plans. The documents were to be finalised and adopted at the meeting of the STRA-CO Bureau on 25 October 2004. Consequently, the document submitted to the Committee of experts was a draft yet to be finalised.

4. Implementation of the work programme of the Pan-European Ecological Network in 2004-2006

- 4.1. Follow-up of the Kyiv Ministerial Conference “an Environment for Europe”: Pan-European Ecological Network Action Plan Proposal
STRA-CO (2004) 3 c rev. – follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Pan-European Ecological Network action plan proposal

The Secretariat said that the two objectives fixed for the PEEN by the Kyiv Resolution on biodiversity were as follows:

- “By 2006, the Pan-European Ecological Network (core areas, restoration areas, corridors and buffer zones, as appropriate) in all States of the pan-European region will be identified and reflected on coherent indicative European maps, as a European contribution towards a global ecological network.”
- “By 2008, all core areas of the Pan-European Ecological Network will be adequately conserved and the Pan European Ecological Network will give guidance to all major national, regional and international land use and planning policies as well as to the operations of relevant economic and financial sectors.”

The Secretariat presented the activities listed in the draft action plan for the PEEN and commented on the importance of the different initiatives. The draft action plan was geared to effectively implementing the two Kyiv Resolution objectives. It was also to contribute to the implementation, at pan-European level, of the programme of the Convention on biological diversity where protected areas were concerned.

The Chair stressed that it was not for the Committee of experts to adopt the draft action plan but it could make observations or comments.

The delegate of Estonia said that the draft action plan was for the period 2005-2008 but did not cover 2004. He stressed the importance of the lead country/countries for the action plans, but said that this role seemed somewhat vague and should be clarified.

The Secretariat agreed and noted that the concept might entail exchanges or secondments of officials, financing etc.

The delegate of Switzerland emphasised that the Pan-European Ecological Network had secured particularly substantial political backing, notably within the framework of the Ministerial conference “An environment for Europe”. In this connection he recalled the priority objective set by the Ministers, namely to produce, by 2006, a non-binding comprehensive and coherent indicative map. The map was to give an overview of the scale of the ecological networks and their relation to economic activities by sector in Europe.

The delegate of Estonia agreed with the delegate of Switzerland and stressed the importance of the synergies to be forged with the competent organisations. He placed special emphasis on the work already carried out by the Committee of experts, which had fuelled the original thinking behind the preparation of the PEEN’s draft action plan.

The Secretariat confirmed that the Committee of experts would indeed have an important future role in that context, and particularly for ensuring the active participation of national authorities in work to establish the PEEN so that the rich biodiversity present in all the countries involved in the Pan-European Strategy process was fully represented in the future Pan-European Ecological Network. The draft action plan mentioned a wide range of activities to be undertaken to establish the PEEN and the States should provide firm and adequate backing for that action programme.

The Chair asked that the Committee of experts be notified of the outcome of the meeting of the STRA-CO Bureau, which was to approve the draft action plan for the PEEN. The Secretariat promised to do so. The Chair expressed the wish that the action plan then be broadly disseminated at national level to all the bodies concerned, in order to set wheels in motion in the different countries.

- 4.2. Preparation of the contribution of the PEEN to the next Ministerial Conference “an Environment for Europe”: Project of preparing a PEEN Assessment Report with indicative maps, to be produced for the next EfE Ministerial Conference:

- 4.2.1 detailed preparation of the report on the implementation of the PEEN and the indicative map
STRA-REP (2004) 5 – presentation of the project

The Chair presented the document STRA-REP (2004) 5 setting out the project for preparing the indicative map and a Report on the progress of the PEEN. The documents were to be presented at the next Ministerial conference “An environment for Europe” to be held in Belgrade (Serbia and Montenegro) in 2007, subject to approval from the STRA-CO and the specific bodies responsible for preparing the agenda of that Ministerial conference.

The presentation prompted a wide-ranging exchange of views.

The delegate of Belgium favoured preparing a report of this kind to accompany the indicative maps. He said that the PEEN preparation process was at a turning point: new approaches were emerging and a central role should therefore be given to the project to establish the Pan-European Ecological Network within the range of initiatives in progress. He reviewed a number of fundamental concepts vital to the project and laid special emphasis on the transversal, cross-sectoral and transfrontier aspects of the Pan-European Ecological Network. Those aspects made the PEEN the leading Pan-European project in the area of biological and landscape diversity. All these aspects, combined with organised and structured information work and partnership, would have to be duly taken into account in the Report (see appendix III).

The delegate of the Netherlands also approved of the idea of the Report. The document would have to send out a clear signal to the Ministers, stressing that the Pan-European Ecological Network would be a key instrument for reducing loss of biodiversity. The assessment drawn up in the Report would also have to form a basis for the Network's future work programme. Finally, it was important for the document to highlight the constructive relations existing between the Natura 2000 Network, national networks and the PEEN.

The delegate of Tunisia raised the question of the enlargement of the PEEN to countries not participating in the Pan-European Strategy process, as maintaining biodiversity covered complex phenomena that might involve third countries. Consequently, a degree of flexibility should be introduced into the concepts so that the PEEN might be extended to the countries not participating as such in the Pan-European Strategy.

The delegate of Estonia thought that there should be two documents, an in-depth scientific report and a summary document aimed at the decision-makers. He also believed that the countries participating in the Pan-European Strategy process would certainly wish national achievements to be presented in the Report. Part of the Report would have to be devoted to those presentations.

The representative of the ECNC provided information on the design and technical feasibility of the PEEN's indicative maps.

The representative of the European Environment Agency and its European Topic Centre for the protection of nature and biodiversity spoke on the question of availability of technical data to be taken into account for the maps and the Report. She said that the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks were key components of the future PEEN. In addition to the technical data from those two networks, she

thought that it would also be necessary to include national data as well as the resources available from the CCDA (Common databank for nationally designated areas), which covered some 50,000 sites in Europe. She thought that the EEA could cooperate in an analytical assessment, but this would be less likely for a document that was political in essence.

The representative of UNESCO said that information on the nodal areas was available in many cases but that was not the case for ecological corridors.

The Chair summed up the various comments. He stressed that the PEEN had to be regarded as an instrument promoting sustainability for biological and landscape diversity. He concurred with the statement by the delegate of the Netherlands and said that the Report would have to emphasise the key conceptual aspects of the network. He backed the proposal of the delegate of Estonia that a full report and a document in more summary form be drawn up.

Regarding cooperation to be established with other organisations, he had held constructive talks before the meeting with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate General of Environment, with a view to the Commission participating in this exercise, and the response had been positive. Producing the Report and the indicative maps was an ambitious project requiring substantial financial and human resources. For that reason the European Commission, the European Environment Agency and its European Topic Centre for the protection of nature and biodiversity and also the ECNC should be partners directly involved in the process of preparing the maps and the Report.

The Chair said that, following discussion at the previous meeting of the Committee of experts in Dubrovnik in 2003, a preliminary survey was to be carried out by the Secretariat in 2005 to gather the national data needed to prepare the Report. The national data should also provide information not only on corridors but also all the other zones involved in setting up the PEEN.

4.2.2 Progress in the PEEN maps project in South-Eastern Europe STRA-REP (2004) 14 – Indicative map of the PEEN for South-eastern Europe

The representative of the ECNC reported on progress in preparing indicative maps for the PEEN in South-East Europe. She explained the methodology used to draw up the maps and described the partnerships forged with a view to gathering technical data. Preparation of the indicative maps for the Network in South-East Europe could be completed for the next meeting of the Committee of experts.

The delegate of Estonia said that he had been appointed in 2003 to represent the Committee of experts on the specific advisory body set up for this project and stressed that the process of preparing these maps was highly complex but had a strong practical bias.

The Chair thanked the representative of the ECNC for presenting this remarkable work and encouraged her to pursue it. He also thanked the delegate of Estonia for taking part in the work on behalf of the Committee of experts.

4.2.3 Draft format for national reports - Presentation by the consultant STRA-REP (2004) 11 – Procedure of reporting on the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network, Proposal of a format for national reports

The Council of Europe consultant, Mr Marc Roekaerts (Belgium) presented the draft model report which he had finalised and was to be sent to all the national delegations of the Committee of experts, in order to gather national technical data for the preparation of the Report on the PEEN's progress and the indicative maps.

When drawing up the model report, the consultant had established that, as a general rule, care should be taken to avoid duplicating reporting obligations imposed on countries as part of other processes.

For the nodal areas, the information gathered within the framework of existing reporting obligations for the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks should be taken into account, as coordination with the reporting obligations for Natura 2000 was desirable.

A number of delegations responded to this presentation.

The delegate of Belgium said that the name of the authorities managing the territory concerned would have to be indicated in the document. In Belgium there were other structures and approaches for ecological networks that could be mentioned in it. There was no network at national level in his country; networks functioned solely at regional level. There were management plans for the Natura 2000 sites, covering core areas, buffer zones etc. He also wished to have specific headings on education, training, awareness-raising and partnerships and wondered whether invasive species would be covered in this document.

The delegate of Switzerland pointed out that replying to the questionnaire was not an obligation for the countries, although it was desirable. He stressed that the document concerned above all data relating to the nodal areas and wondered whether such a questionnaire was geared to the global issue of ecological networks.

The representative of UNESCO backed these comments regretted that the questionnaire referred above all to nodal areas and mentioned the problem of evaluating the different components of an ecological network.

The delegate of Latvia agreed with the delegate of Switzerland and the representative of UNESCO and thought that information-gathering had to extend to regional level.

The delegate of the Russian Federation said that, in his country, the questionnaire would have to be adapted to specific situations that differed to those of other European countries: vast, unfragmented territories etc.

The delegate of Estonia mentioned the identification of areas and their proper conservation. He also thought that the questionnaire lacked any specific reference to national strategies, funding efforts and partnerships.

The representative of the European Environment Agency and its European Topic Centre for the protection of nature and biodiversity focused on the use of the questionnaire results and the link between the information gathered for the drafting of the Report on implementation of the PEEN and the accompanying map work. She thought it necessary to ensure that the information used for the Report was consistent with the approach used for mapping. She agreed with the points made concerning the regional level and thought that it would be useful to have information at that level. The Report should include sections "zooming in" on regional examples.

The Chair summed up the discussion and suggested that a degree of latitude be left to those drafting their countries' replies to the questionnaire and that the results of this work be assessed in terms of the flow of information it would generate.

4.2.4 calendar of the preparation of the PEEN contribution to the next Efe/PEBLDS Ministerial Conference

The Chair summed up the general discussion on the different points regarding preparation of the indicative map(s) of the PEEN and the Report assessing its implementation. He noted with satisfaction that the Committee of experts had expressed willing to prepare these key instruments for monitoring the Network's development, subject to approval from the STRA-CO. The work programme for the specific preparatory activities would have to be drawn up by the joint Secretariat

following the general guidelines and the approximate timetable proposed in the document STRA-REP (2004) 5 and in coordination with the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the institutional partners called on to participate.

- 4.3. Marine and coastal biodiversity – Follow-up to the Dubrovnik Symposium
 STRA-REP (2004) 4 – Follow-up to the 4th International Symposium of the Pan-European Ecological Network, Dubrovnik (Croatia, 16-17 October 2003)

The Secretariat informed the Committee of experts of the outcome of the Dubrovnik Symposium and possible follow-up within the programme of future PEEN activities. In particular he mentioned the findings of the survey of the participants aimed at identifying possible specific themes for this future work.

- 4.4. 5th Symposium of the PEEN “Pan-European Ecological Network in forests: conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management”, Krakow, 7-9 October 2004
 – Follow-up of the Kyiv Conference – Forest Action Plan Proposal
 – Aims of the Symposium and expected results
 STRA-CO (2004) 3 a REV2 – Follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Forest Action Plan Proposal
 ECE/CEP/108 – Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity
 Vienna Resolution 4 – Conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity in Europe

The Secretariat described the general context of preparations for the 5th Symposium of the PEEN focusing on the issue of conserving biodiversity in forest areas.

The delegate of Switzerland welcomed the holding of the Symposium, which was a logical follow-up to the PEEN's previous work and drew the attention of the Committee of experts to the importance of transition zones between forests and the surrounding areas, which often formed important corridors (ecotones).

5. Synergy efforts and co-operation with international institutions and national authorities

- 5.1 Co-operation with the European Commission: implementation of ecological corridors in Natura 2000 network

The Chair said that discussion was in progress within the European Union with the aim of implementing Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. This measure included preservation of landscape elements improvement of the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network and favoured migration and geographical distribution of species as well as genetic exchanges. Therefore this discussion and work would be beneficial to the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network. Moreover, the European Commission had expressed its willingness to contribute to the preparation of the indicative map(s) and the Report on implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network.

- 5.2 Co-operation with the European Environment Agency

Mrs Dominique Richard (European Topic Centre for the protection of nature and biodiversity) spoke in the capacity of representative of the European Environment Agency and stressed the Agency's interest in the activities of the Committee of experts. She mentioned the Memorandum of cooperation between the Agency and Council of Europe covering *inter alia* the setting up of the CCDA (Common Databank on Designated Areas) and the use of the Emerald Network's technical data. In response to a specific request from the Council of Europe, the EEA was also adopting a positive approach to cooperation on Pan-European Ecological Network activities.

Mrs Richard said that the Agency's role was to work on ecological indicators at Pan-European level, in follow-up to the Kyiv Resolution. She mentioned that the work programme for 2005 was in preparation and hoped that this future cooperation would be suitably reflected in the draft technical appendices now being finalised for the 2005 work programme.

5.3 Co-operation with UNESCO, Man and Biosphere Programme: presentation of the projects for the setting-up of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves and ecological corridors

5.3.1 Presentation by the UNESCO representative of the progress of the setting-up of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves (TBR), especially the TBR of Polesie (Poland, Ukraine, Belarus)

Mrs Jane Robertson Vernhes, representative of Unesco and the "Man and Biosphere" Programme (MAB Programme) in particular, presented the issue of transfrontier biosphere reserves. After reviewing the principles underlying the MAB Programme, its development and its role in promoting sustainable nature conservation policies, she mentioned Unesco's cooperation with the Council of Europe since the General Agreement signed in 1950, in particular the specific agreement on the MAB Programme, the Pan-European Ecological Network, the Emerald Network and the network of protected areas holding the Council of Europe's European Diploma. This cooperation was also visible in the Council of Europe's support for the creation of transfrontier biosphere reserves.

Mrs Robertson Vernhes then gave a more detailed presentation of the special characteristics of the Polesie transfrontier biosphere reserve, which stretched across the territory of one European Union member state - Poland - and two non-community countries, Belarus and Ukraine. It was a vast project of cooperation between the three countries, aimed at joint development of the biosphere reserve and a programme covering the many aspects of sustainable conservation and enhancement of the human and ecological potential of this territory.

5.3.2 Presentation of a contribution of MAB Poland to the PEEN: "Chain of Biosphere Reserves along rivers and other natural corridors in the East End of European Union"

Mrs Alicja Breymeyer, Chair of the Polish MAB Committee, presented Poland's biosphere reserves (appendix IV). She also presented plans to create a vast ecological corridor running from Rotterdam (Netherlands) to Odessa (Ukraine), via the Polesie transfrontier biosphere reserve. This European ecological corridor could generate numerous sustainable development projects, including in the tourism sector.

The representative of the European Environment Agency said that these two presentations were most interesting, particularly as the projects prefigured a PEEN map.

5.4 Co-operation with IUCN: presentation of the Green Belt Project

Mr Tim Christophersen, representative of IUCN, presented the "Green Belt" ecological corridor project, placed under the auspices of IUCN's "Countdown 2010" programme of activities. The project had emerged in Germany, in the zones previously covered by the iron curtain and the adjacent zones. These areas generally featured considerable biodiversity and formed a natural ecological corridor. The "Green Belt" network could be extended right across Europe, from north to south.

Besides serving as an ecological corridor, it could also provide a communication and marketing tool for nature conservation and sustainable development. It could also serve as a link between the Natura 2000 areas and the Emerald Network areas, transcending frontiers between European Union member countries and non-members.

The project would be presented at IUCN's World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in November 2004.

In reply to a question from the delegate of Switzerland asking to what extent the IUCN could contribute to the drawing up of indicative maps for the PEEN in South-East Europe now being prepared by the ECNC, the representative of IUCN said that the databases compiled under the Green Belt project could be used for that purpose. However, the national authorities were the owners of their respective data.

In reply to questions from the delegate of Estonia and the Chair of the Polish MAB Committee and a comment by the delegate of Russia, the representative of IUCN said that the "Green Belt" project was not exclusive. IUCN hoped to extend the concept to other regions of Europe, making it a real tool for establishing the PEEN and transfrontier cooperation.

5.5 National authorities' action for the implementation of PEEN and national ecological networks

5.5.1 Presentation of the Swiss ecological network by the Swiss delegation

The delegate of Switzerland gave a detailed presentation of his National Ecological Network, which had been developed in close collaboration with the canton authorities. It provided a strategic, dynamic vision of the landscape, with identification of the existing fragmentations, zones that were important for conservation and potential assets. The scientific report, including national network maps, showing its key components, the thematic maps and a simplified consolidated map, on scales of 1:500,000 and 1:100,000, would be published in December 2004. It would be Switzerland's contribution to the Pan-European Ecological Network. The national network study had made it possible to validate the provisional designation of potential candidate sites for the Emerald Network, of which an initial set were to be designated during the following year (appendix V).

5.5.2 Presentation by the Russian delegation of the ecological network in the Russian Federation STRA-REP (2004) 6 – Working Programme of the Biodiversity Conservation Centre contributing to the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network and Emerald Network in Russian Federation

The delegate of Russia presented the progress made in implementing the PEEN in his country. The concept of ecological network had been adopted by the Ministry, but the immense size of the expanses to be taken into account posed a specific problem. However, the PEEN was being implemented in some 30 administrative regions and its development was officially included in the regional development plans of several administrative regions. A detailed programme had been devised by the Biodiversity Conservation Centre (BCC) to foster development of the Network. The programme included projects aimed at relaunching the designation process for Emerald sites, as nodal areas of the PEEN, in each of the country's biogeographical regions (appendix VI).

5.5.3 Presentation by the Croatian delegation of the ecological network in Croatia STRA-REP (2004) 12 – Implementation of Ecological Network in Croatia

The delegate of Croatia presented the activities undertaken in her country as a contribution to the setting up of the PEEN and Natura 2000, within the framework of a LIFE-Third country project. The project was to be completed in June 2005, culminating in the identification of the different components that were to form national ecological network. At present those components covered some 32% of the national territory).

- 5.5.4 Pilot project for the implementation of regional and local ecological networks in Ukraine, report by the national authorities and the consultant
STRA-REP (2004) 7 – Rapport final de la première Convention de coopération entre l'Ukraine, la Région Wallonne (Belgique) et le Conseil de l'Europe
STRA-REP (2004) 8 – Rapport intermédiaire de la deuxième convention de coopération entre l'Ukraine, la Région Wallonne (Belgique) et le Conseil de l'Europe

Mrs Dominique Alexandre, consultant to the Council of Europe, presented the progress made on the pilot project launched in 2000 with the financial backing of the Ministry of the Walloon Region. The project was based on the work of the Ukrainian association "Green world of Podylla" and involved eight municipalities. Very substantial public information and awareness-raising work had been carried out, in parallel to practical activities aimed at conserving the region's rich biodiversity and mapping the different components of an ecological network.

The Chair expressed the satisfaction of the Committee of experts with the remarkable results achieved by this exemplary cooperation between the Walloon authorities, the Ukrainian authorities and the Council of Europe. He also expressed the Committee's thanks to the consultant for her very important contribution to these cooperation efforts.

- 5.5.5 Presentation by the Dutch delegation and ECNC on the PEEN and People Seminar held in The Hague in April 2004

The delegate of the Netherlands presented the results of the "People and PEEN" Seminar organised by that country's authorities in conjunction with the ECNC, in The Hague from 21 to 24 April 2004. The event had focused on three aspects: the PEEN and spatial planning, activities of national authorities, and transport and road infrastructures. The Seminar had highlighted the PEEN's importance as a framework for sustainable and socio-economic development. The involvement of all players was crucial in this respect, especially outside nature conservation circles (appendix VII).

The delegate of the Netherlands also presented a document published by the Netherlands authorities for the 25th anniversary of the Birds Directive.

- 5.5.6 Presentation by the French delegation of the study on "legal aspects of ecological corridors in Europe" supported by the French authorities

The Chair, speaking as the delegate of France, informed the Committee of the content of Mrs Marie Anne Bonnin's law doctorate thesis on the legal aspects of biological corridors. This important study should be capitalised on through its publication in the Council of Europe documentation series and its translation into English.

- 5.5.7 Other national presentation on activities for PEEN and national ecological networks.

The delegate of Belgium informed the Committee that a Standing Conference on regional development had been set up in Belgium to develop projects focusing inter alia on the concept of "principal ecological structure".

Following these presentations, the Chair thanked the different speakers and emphasised the great utility of these different activities for the effective implementation of the PEEN.

6. Strategic communication plan for PEEN

Presentation by ECNC of progress on the study supporting ecological networks in Europe
STRA-REP (2004) 13 – Progress report on Communicating

The representative of the ECNC presented the document STRA-REP (2004) 13 and informed the Committee of progress on the communications strategy on the PEEN promoted by the ECNC. In particular she reported on the findings of a survey carried out to obtain detailed information from a group of countries on the decision-making process in respect of ecological networks and gathering respondents' opinions on the PEEN and the general concept of ecological network.

The survey's findings were now being analysed. The communications strategy would be finalised by the end of 2004 on the basis of those findings, and the text would be submitted to the Committee of experts for approval. The ECNC was already exploring the possibilities of implementing the strategy in 2005.

The Chair thanked the ECNC for its work.

7. 2005 Draft Work programme

7.1 PEEN draft programme of the Council of Europe
STRA-REP (2004) 9 – Draft Work Programme of the Pan-European Ecological Network for 2005

The Secretariat presented the activities included in the Council of Europe's 2005 draft work programme for implementing the PEEN, which were funded from the Organisation's budget and, in some cases, by voluntary contributions.

The delegate of the Netherlands asked that the preparation of the 2006 Report and the indicative maps be included *pro memoria*.

The delegate of Russia asked that the draft programme of activities submitted by his country for developing the PEEN and the Emerald Network in Russia also be included in the programme *pro memoria*.

Following an appeal from the Chair for voluntary contributions, the Committee of experts approved the Council of Europe's draft work programme for implementing the PEEN.

7.2 Input of ECNC
document ECNC

The representative of the ECNC presented the document STRA-REP (2004) 15 and reported on the work already carried out on indicative maps for the Network, particularly the map covering European Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and the map for the three Baltic countries produced by IUCN. The map for South-East Europe was being prepared by the ECNC and well on the way to completion. Concerning the map for Western Europe, the representative of the ECNC thought that the European Commission would certainly wish to prepare a map showing implementation of the Natura 2000 Network in the 25 member states of the Union.

The representative of the ECNC raised the question in this case of exactly how many maps were to be prepared in time for the 2007 Ministerial Conference and what geographical areas were to be covered by them.

The representative of the European Environment Agency pointed out that the maps prepared had to be coherent. If the map for western Europe was limited to Natura 2000 and the Emerald Network, the resulting map would be different from the one obtained by indicating areas of national interest.

The Chair pointed out that the indicative map called for in the Ministerial Resolution had to show all the components forming the future PEEN. Consequently, he asked the delegations to make their country's position clear and send their proposals to the Secretariat. On that basis, the institutions tasked with carrying out the work would devise a methodology and prepare the strategy to be adopted by the Committee's next meeting.

7.3 Preparation of the 6th PEEN Symposium: Preparatory study on fiscal incentives for the conservation of biodiversity

STRA-REP (2004) 10 – using tax incentives to conserve and enhance biological and landscape diversity in Europe

The Chair recalled discussion at the previous meeting of the Committee of experts (Dubrovnik, October 2003) concerning land use. Following that discussion, it was thought expedient to prepare a study on tax incentives for conserving biodiversity. The task had been entrusted to Mrs Clare Shine (United Kingdom), consultant to the Council of Europe.

Mrs Shine presented her study, based on a Europe-wide in-depth survey of tools for implementing conservation policies and more specifically the kinds of tax incentives that existed in the different countries. The consultant pointed out that a wide variety of partners were involved in this sphere and explained the differences in the systems opted for by different countries. In most cases, preventing activities harmful to nature tended to take precedence over ecological work.

The Chair thanked the consultant for her remarkable work, which provided a good basis for reflecting on the future activities of the Committee of experts in this sphere.

The delegate of Tunisia pointed to the difficulty of putting an ecological value on real estate property and said that numerous tax incentives existed in his country.

The delegate of Switzerland congratulated the consultant on her excellent study, which filled a gap in PEEN activities and would be useful for later work, particularly in connection with discussions within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) where there was emphasis on the need for tax schemes in order to take the ecological value of sites into account. He thought it a good idea to consider holding a symposium on this theme whose proceedings might be followed up within the STRA-CO's activities.

The delegate of Estonia agreed with the delegates of Tunisia and Switzerland and noted that taxation was linked to the evaluation of land.

Mrs Shine pointed out that the economic evaluation of property was practised in all sectors and, consequently, taxation measures benefiting nature should not be more difficult to devise than others. International political declarations and undertakings increasingly recognised the importance of conserving nature in the long term. This positive development should therefore be used as a springboard for promoting economic and fiscal measures in favour of biodiversity and smoothing the way for such a policy in the different countries.

The Chair, speaking as the delegate of France, informed the Committee that discussion on the matter was under way within the French Ministry of the Environment, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. A report had been drawn up to assess the current situation and open up new avenues of action. Natura 2000 served as a vector, opening the way for this discussion and raising hopes of progress.

The Secretariat said that Mrs Shine's study should serve as the basis for preparing a specific symposium, in conjunction with all the bodies concerned, particularly in the fiscal and economic sectors. The symposium proceedings could result in the preparation of specific recommendations from the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to the member States.

8. Other documents for information

- 8.1 Official launching and presentation by Mr Rob Jongmann of the study “Ecological Networks and Greenways” (Jongmann and Pungetti)

Mr Rob Jongmann presented a publication prepared by a group of 34 experts, covering a number of experiments in Europe and the United States and reflecting the principles upheld by the Committee of experts in the area of ecological networks. The publication demonstrated the need to incorporate ecological networks (“greenways” in the United States) into all sectoral policies.

The Chair expressed the congratulations of the Committee of experts on this excellent publication.

- 8.2 Other documents (Series of the Council of Europe, etc...)
STRA-REP (2004) 2 – Follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Pan-European Ecological Network Action Proposal / Action of the Council of Europe contributing to the aims of the action proposal
Environmental encounters, No. 56 – Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium of the PEEN, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 16-17 October 2003

The Secretariat presented two documents published in 2004, namely the Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium of the PEEN held in Dubrovnik on 16 and 17 October 2003 and a compilation of the Council of Europe's different activities in various sectors that contributed to the setting up of the Pan-European Ecological Network.

9. Other business

The Chair appealed to all the national delegations for financial contributions, especially in view of the financing of the preparation for 2006 of the Assessment Report on the implementation of the PEEN and the PEEN indicative map(s).

The next meeting of the Committee of experts will be held in October 2005.

APPENDIX I

List of participants / Liste des participants
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APPENDIX II

AGENDA

Committee of experts for the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network

1. **Opening of the meeting by the Chair**
2. **Adoption of the agenda of the 8th STRA-REP meeting and of the report of the 7th STRA-REP meeting**
Document for adoption
 STRA-REP / Emerald (2004) 01 rev. – draft agenda revised
Document for information
 STRA-REP (2003) 17 – report of the 7th meeting, Dubrovnik, 14-15 October 2003
3. **Information on the activities of the Council of Europe and of other Organisations within the process of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy**
Documents for information
 STRA-CO (2004) 13 – report of the 8th meeting of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy / final report of the 3rd Intergovernmental Conference “Biodiversity in Europe”, Madrid, 19-21 January 2004
 STRA-CO (2004) 18 – report of the Task Force meeting and the 10th Bureau meeting, Strasbourg, 13-14 May 2004
4. **Implementation of the work programme of the Pan-European Ecological Network in 2004-2006**
 - 4.1. Follow-up of the Kyiv Ministerial Conference “an Environment for Europe”: Pan-European Ecological Network Action Plan Proposal
Document for information
 STRA-CO (2004) 3 c rev. – follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Pan-European Ecological Network action plan proposal
 - 4.2. Preparation of the contribution of the PEEN to the next Ministerial Conference “an Environment for Europe”: Project of preparing a PEEN Assessment Report with indicative maps, to be produced for the next EfE Ministerial Conference:
 - 4.2.1 detailed preparation of the report on the implementation of the PEEN and the indicative map
Document for adoption
 STRA-REP (2004) 5 – presentation of the project
 - 4.2.2 Progress in the PEEN maps project in South-Eastern Europe
 STRA-REP (2004) 14 – Indicative map of the PEEN for South-eastern Europe
 - 4.2.3 Draft format for national reports - Presentation by the consultant
Document for adoption
 STRA-REP (2004) 11 – Procedure of reporting on the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network, Proposal of a format for national reports
 - 4.2.4 calendar of the preparation of the PEEN contribution to the next EfE/PEBLDS Ministerial Conference
 - 4.3. Marine and coastal biodiversity – Follow-up to the Dubrovnik Symposium
Document for information

STRA-REP (2004) 4 – Follow-up to the 4th International Symposium of the Pan-European Ecological Network, Dubrovnik (Croatia, 16-17 October 2003)

- 4.4. 5th Symposium of the PEEN “Pan-European Ecological Network in forests: conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management”, Krakow, 7-9 October 2004
 – Follow-up of the Kyiv Conference – Forest Action Plan Proposal
 – Aims of the Symposium and expected results

Documents for information

STRA-CO (2004) 3 a REV2 – Follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Forest Action Plan Proposal

ECE/CEP/108 – Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity

Vienna Resolution 4 – Conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity in Europe

5. Synergy efforts and co-operation with international institutions and national authorities

- 5.1 Co-operation with the European Commission: implementation of ecological corridors in Natura 2000 network

- 5.2 Co-operation with the European Environment Agency

- 5.3 Co-operation with UNESCO, Man and Biosphere Programme: presentation of the projects for the setting-up of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves and ecological corridors

5.3.1 Presentation by the UNESCO representative of the progress of the setting-up of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves (TBR), especially the TBR of Polesie (Poland, Ukraine, Belarus)

5.3.2 Presentation of a contribution of MAB Poland to the PEEN: “Chain of Biosphere Reserves along rivers and other natural corridors in the East End of European Union”

- 5.4 Co-operation with IUCN: presentation of the Green Belt Project

- 5.5 National authorities’ action for the implementation of PEEN and national ecological networks

5.5.1 Presentation of the Swiss ecological network by the Swiss delegation

5.5.2 Presentation by the Russian delegation of the ecological network in the Russian Federation

Document for information

STRA-REP (2004) 6 – Working Programme of the Biodiversity Conservation Centre contributing to the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network and Emerald Network in Russian Federation

5.5.3 Presentation by the Croatian delegation of the ecological network in Croatia

Document for information

STRA-REP (2004) 12 – Implementation of Ecological Network in Croatia

5.5.4 Pilot project for the implementation of regional and local ecological networks in Ukraine, report by the national authorities and the consultant

Documents for information

STRA-REP (2004) 7 – Rapport final de la première Convention de coopération entre l’Ukraine, la Région Wallonne (Belgique) et le Conseil de l’Europe

STRA-REP (2004) 8 – Rapport intermédiaire de la deuxième convention de coopération entre l’Ukraine, la Région Wallonne (Belgique) et le Conseil de l’Europe

5.5.5 Presentation by the Dutch delegation and ECNC on the PEEN and People Seminar held in The Hague in April 2004

5.5.6 Presentation by the French delegation of the study on “legal aspects of ecological corridors in Europe” supported by the French authorities

5.5.7 Other national presentation on activities for PEEN and national ecological networks.

6. Strategic communication plan for PEEN

Presentation by ECNC of progress on the study supporting ecological networks in Europe
STRA-REP (2004) 13 – Progress report on Communicating

7. 2005 Draft Work programme

7.1 PEEN draft programme of the Council of Europe

Document for adoption

STRA-REP (2004) 9 – Draft Work Programme of the Pan-European Ecological Network for 2005

7.2 Input of ECNC

document ECNC

7.3 Preparation of the 6th PEEN Symposium: Preparatory study on fiscal incentives for the conservation of biodiversity

Document for discussion

STRA-REP (2004) 10 – using tax incentives to conserve and enhance biological and landscape diversity in Europe

8. Other documents for information

8.1 Official launching and presentation by Mr Rob Jongmann of the study “Ecological Networks and Greenways” (Jongmann and Pungetti)

8.2 Other documents (Series of the Council of Europe, etc...)

Documents for information

STRA-REP (2004) 2 – Follow up of the Kyiv Biodiversity Resolution: Pan-European Ecological Network Action Proposal / Action of the Council of Europe contributing to the aims of the action proposal

Environmental encounters, No. 56 – Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium of the PEEN, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 16-17 October 2003

9. Other business

APPENDIX III

M. Jacques STEIN,
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Mr le Président,

Je pense comme d'autres que nous sommes à un tournant en ce qui concerne l'idée de Réseau Ecologique Paneuropéen. Depuis 1995, les conceptions ont évolué, les expériences de terrain se sont multipliées, des approches nouvelles ont vu le jour et il devient nécessaire, vu les échéances qui approchent, de remettre l'outil REP à la plus juste place. Finalement il ne s'agit jamais que d'un effort bien nécessaire d'adaptation dans un environnement en évolution permanente.

Il y a évidemment beaucoup de choses à dire sur le sujet, mais je vais concentrer mon intervention sur quelques points qui me paraissent cruciaux, notamment dans le souci de passer de la réflexion et de la planification à l'action pour atteindre nos engagements et les enjeux qui nous attendent d'ici 2010.

1. Première question qui pourrait paraître anachronique mais qui a son importance :
Quel est l'objectif du Réseau écologique paneuropéen ?
En d'autres termes, à quoi et à qui va servir une carte indicative du REP ?

Il ne faut pas perdre de vue que le REP est un des plus importants domaines d'action de la Stratégie Paneuropéenne de la Diversité Biologique et Paysagère: le REP est donc un « outil stratégique », c'est à dire qu'il doit permettre d'avancer dans la mise en œuvre de l'une ou l'autre stratégie.

1- Le REP peut être un « outil de conservation de la biodiversité dans tous ses états » à l'intérieur du réseau, avec sans doute des effets collatéraux positifs sur le reste du territoire.

! Je crois que ce discours n'intéresse toutefois que « les intéressés », et sans doute pas le grand public, sauf à mener une vaste campagne de communication, ce qui manque encore bien souvent dans de nombreux pays.

2- Le REP peut être "un outil d'implication des acteurs de terrains concernés".

! Ce discours est plus intéressant sur le plan politique ; il nécessite une communication structurée ciblée vers les acteurs en question et la mise en place de structures adaptées.

3- Le REP peut être "un outil d'aménagement du territoire" indiquant aux aménagistes les zones dans lesquelles il est préférable de ne pas installer de grandes infrastructures de développement socio-économique.

! Ce discours intéresse aussi le politique mais avec le risque de voir le REP être réduit comme une peau de chagrin pour ne pas entraver le développement socio-économique!

Et le REP peut sans doute encore être l'outil stratégique de bien des stratégies.

En ce qui me concerne, tous les motifs d'installer le réseau écologique sont bons, du moment que l'objectif 2010, par exemple, peut y trouver positivement son compte.

Mais il faudra être très prudent pour « parler » aux Ministres de l'Environnement.

Alors, au-delà de ce qui est proposé dans le document « Suivi de la résolution de Kiev sur le plan d'action REP » (cfr. point précédent), le rapport à élaborer pour 2005 à Belgrade ne pourra pas faire l'impasse sur les aspects liés à la mise en œuvre concrète du REP.

Si on connaît plus ou moins bien les raisons majeures du déclin (vertigineux à l'échelle du temps) de la biodiversité : changements climatiques, espèce invasives, fragmentation des habitats et des populations, etc, et les réponses théoriques tel le REP, on connaît beaucoup moins bien les raisons pour lesquelles l'action, bien souvent, ne décolle pas, même si elle fait l'objet d'une stratégie (cfr. Le suivi de la résolution de Kiev sur le plan d'action REP); bref, on connaît beaucoup moins les raisons de la « non action » des acteurs inhabituels de la biodiversité.

Et c'est là, à mon avis, qu'il faut rectifier le cap.

On peut identifier au moins quatre raisons de non action que je voudrais vous rappeler (« Non action » bien souvent involontaire ou inconsciente.)

1. La biodiversité est un problème complexe

Complexe car les espèces qui constituent le patrimoine naturel ont le statut de « res nullius » c'est à dire de choses qui n'appartiennent à personne. Il n'y a donc pas de titulaire, gestionnaire « officiel » des espèces qui constituent le patrimoine naturel. Et ceci contrairement aux autres patrimoines matériels bâtis, artistiques, etc... Chacun a en outre sa propre perception de la meilleure relation Homme-Biodiversité. Ce qui atomise en quelque sorte la perception globale de la Biodiversité.

2. La biodiversité est un problème multiacteur

C'est ce caractère transversal de la biodiversité qui le rend multiacteur. Il ne suffit pas de le dire, il faut nécessairement mettre en place simultanément des structures qui permettent aux acteurs d'entrer en relation avec les autres acteurs, afin de dégager une approche commune globale de la prise en charge de la biodiversité.

3. Le concept de biodiversité est largement dénaturé et source de nombreuses confusions. Il est détourné au profit d'activités commerciales et publicitaires. Le public ne s'y retrouve donc plus.

4. La biodiversité, ça coûte toujours trop cher! C'est bien connu quand on accorde peu de valeur à quelque chose, c'est toujours trop cher".

Il faut donc aussi résoudre ces quatre problèmes, et il y en a peut-être encore d'autres, pour avancer de façon opérationnelle dans l'action. Et il n'y a pas de solution simple aux problèmes complexes. Il y a cependant deux fondements aux solutions possibles : la communication (et je mets là-dedans formation, information, éducation, publicité, etc...) et les partenariats semblables à ceux que nous essayons de mettre en place en Wallonie dans les Plans Communaux de Développement de la Nature, les Parcs Naturels, les Contrats de Rivières, les sites Natura 2000 et les territoires paysagers nécessitant une gestion appropriée. Je crois qu'il faudra nécessairement évoquer ces aspects dans le rapport 2007.

Merci Monsieur le Président de m'avoir permis de faire ces quelques commentaires.

APPENDIX IV

Mrs Alicja Breymeyer, Chairperson of Polish MAB Committee
(Poland)

Chain of Biosphere Reserves along rivers and other natural corridors in the East end on European Union

The 2003 MAB Bulletin of the World Network of the Biosphere Reserves lists of more than 400 Reserves functioning nowadays in 98 countries. About half of those are placed in Europe. In Poland we have 9 BRs, 3 of them are transborder.

The UNESCO 1970 General Conference formulated, for the first time, the need for 'undisturbed natural areas that every member-state should designate within its borders, biosphere reserves containing ecosystems representative of the main biomes, or important to that country for other reasons. These reserves would serve as centers for research.

The implementation of protection and management is possible by the particular spatial organization of the Biosphere Reserve which should be composed of the following zones: the "core zone", the "buffer zone" and "transition zone. The similarity of this scheme to PEEN model is obvious, in PEEN additionally the ecological corridors are applied. The core, or the central zone of BRs should be subject to protection ensured by the jurisdiction of a given country and it ought to include the representative examples of natural ecosystems belonging to one of the biogeographic provinces of the globe.

In 1980ties the regional organization called Euro-MAB was created; Euro-MAB organized international conferences every 2 years; the fourth one was held in 1993 in Poland, in Tatras and was devoted to "Mountain zonality facing global change". The first European transborder BRs were created in Poland and there were East Carpathians (Poland-Slovakia-Ukraine), Karkonosze (Czech-Poland) and Tatra Mountains (Poland-Slovakia).

Polish National MAB Committee have made particular efforts in relation to the Transboundary Biosphere Reserves. Main reason has a pure ecological nature. Crowded, densely-populated Europe has many valuable areas bisected by national borders, and it is clear to all that – where this is associated with distinct fragmentation of natural landscapes and ecosystems – the impact on their functioning and rational use is a devastating one. We have proposed that Transboundary Reserves be established, and gained very broad support for the idea.

The other, semi-political reason is very long history of border conflicts – these conflicts are repeated again and again. Do we trust in peaceful mission of ecology in this field? At least we believe that it is very good that the actions of ecologists themselves have brought into being the joint, rational care of large, internally-linked ecological systems that happen to have borders running through them.

In May 2004 Poland became the member of European Union; our East border with Belarus and Ukraine becomes the East border of EU. We understand that there is a time for activity of ecologists: the border area includes the chain of valuable natural ecosystems and biotopes connected by huge areas of forests and wetlands with beautiful border Bug river. The chain of Transborder Biosphere Reserves is organized in the region: East Carpathians (Poland-Slovak Republic-Ukraine, Roztocze (Poland-Ukraine), West Polesie (Belarus-Poland-Ukraine, Białowieża Forest (Belarus-Poland), Kaliningrad-Lithuania-Poland.

APPENDIX V

Mr Raymond Pierre LEBEAU,
Office fédéral de l'environnement, des forêts et du paysage
(Switzerland)

Instructions for use of the REN

Introduction and aims

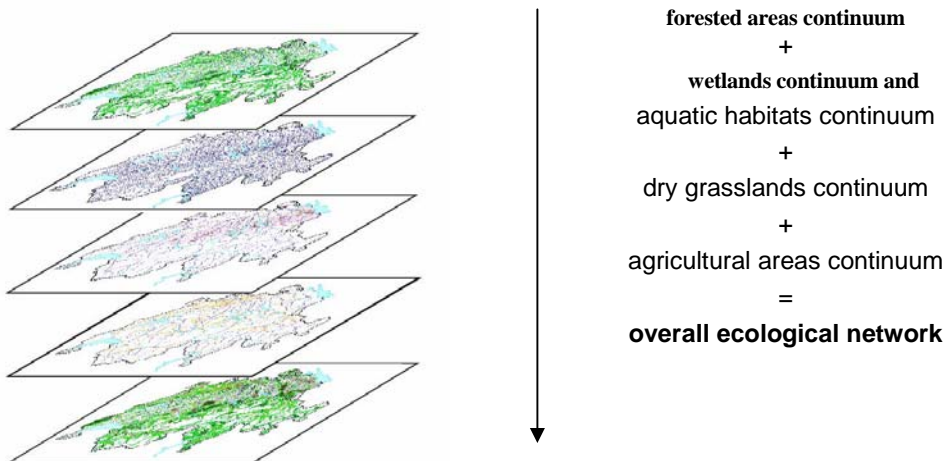
The national ecological network (*Réseau Ecologique National/REN*) was developed in close cooperation with the cantonal agencies responsible for nature and landscape protection. It consists of a technical/scientific report, presenting the country's landscape from an ecological perspective. With the aid of maps on a scale of 1:500,000 and 1:100,000, it indicates both habitat fragmentation and elements of connectivity, considering not only the current situation but also the potential of the landscape. This forward-looking and global vision provides a complete picture of Switzerland's major ecological networks. If this vision is to be realized, it needs to be applied and adapted in detail to the conditions prevailing on the ground.

As an approach supplementing the strategy for the conservation of important and threatened species and habitats, the REN is designed to provide a firm foundation for the objective of biotope regeneration and to facilitate a new kind of partnership between all parties engaged in activities that affect the landscape in any way. Particular mention should be made of stakeholders in the following sectors: transport and communication, agriculture and forestry, spatial planning, hunting, fisheries, and nature and landscape protection.

Methodological approach

The first step in the elaboration of the REN was to compile the data available from scientific and statistical sources, federal inventories and existing fundamental studies; these data sets were processed and overlaid on one another using a geographical information system (GIS). Subsequently, by applying a mathematical model, it was possible not only to identify those habitats that already serve a key function for wild plants and animals today, but also to designate areas that could be potentially valuable. Finally, these areas – known as “continua” – were validated by cantonal agencies and experts (i.e. the accuracy of the evaluation was checked).

The overall ecological network is the result of overlaying several specific networks.



Report and maps

The REN comprises two parts, published separately:

- 1** A scientific report including a map providing an overview of the main elements of the national ecological network and a simplified synthetic map (Environment series no. 373, SAEFL 2004).
- 2** A collection of all the REN maps on scales of 1:500,000 and 1:100,000 (Environment series no. 373a, SAEFL 2004).

Maps on a scale of 1:500,000

Overview of the main elements of the national ecological network (REN)

This map is the result of overlaying all the specific networks. In particular, it makes it possible to determine national landscape sectors with substantial habitat fragmentation.

Simplified view of the potential of the most important ecological networks and connecting elements

This map offers a schematic representation of the key components of existing and potential ecological connectivity – both within Switzerland and beyond the national boundaries. As a vision of a more political nature, it is designed to be integrated into efforts to establish ecological networks at the pan-European level.

Maps of specific ecological networks

These maps show the core and migration areas, continua and corridors for each of the five specific networks (cf. Figure on p. 1). The connectivity situation for each specific network is shown in additional maps on the same scale. As these permit the identification of areas with a good potential for wildlife migration, they can be taken as the basis for more detailed applications. This means that the cantons have at their disposal a complete overview of the situation regarding connectivity not only within their boundaries but in relation to neighbouring cantons.

Maps on a scale of 1:100,000

As they constitute the fundamental REN data, these maps provide the basis for the preparation of the synthetic maps on a scale of 1:500,000.

In addition, the data in cartographic form represent a valuable aid for the cantonal authorities, facilitating the analysis of initial project studies. Thus, the first indications of potential points of conflict can be obtained merely by superimposing the REN maps on the project plans. These maps also make it possible to set priorities and define the structure of regional networks, or to avert individual projects that would impair the functionality of ecological networks. Finally, they can also be consulted for the purposes of regional planning in the agricultural and landscape development sectors. It should be pointed out, however, that these maps – on a scale of 1:100,000 – are not sufficiently precise to enable priorities to be established in great detail. For this purpose, a more fine-grained picture of the elements of the ecological network would be required. Before the REN can be implemented at the regional and local level, these elements will therefore need to be defined in even greater detail.

REN: examples of applications

Choice of alignment for a road-building project

A variety of responsibilities have to be fulfilled by road-builders – seeking an alignment that is as far as possible ecologically acceptable, assessing the environmental impacts in general terms, and determining the integration and compensation measures required. The cartographic REN data provide important general information on wildlife migration routes and on the existing corridors in the area of countryside that the road is to cross. With the aid of the fundamental REN data represented in the form of an overview, the adverse impacts that a project may have on the functioning of ecological networks can already be assessed prior to the detailed surveys that are to be conducted by ecologists concerning habitats and animal and plant species of conservation interest.

The REN maps on a scale of 1:100,000 (converted to an appropriate scale, depending on the specific project requirements) are sufficiently reliable for use in projects of a general nature. In addition, they can be consulted for the purposes of detailed studies on environmental impacts, the definition of the necessary wildlife crossing structures, and measures promoting integration into the landscape, as well as in connection with measures designed to prevent accidents involving wildlife. Consideration is to be given to the REN data particularly in cases where decisions are taken on the construction and siting of a wildlife crossing. The procedure is described in detail in the standards issued by the Association of Swiss Road and Traffic Engineers (VSS): SN 640690a, 640691, 640692 and 640694.

Excerpt from VSS standard SN 640692:

Review of existing data

The following fundamental documents make it possible to determine priorities for the protection of wildlife and habitats:

- Nature and landscape protection inventories
- Wildlife corridors in Switzerland
- Red List of threatened species in Switzerland
- Directories (lists of species managed at the national level in Switzerland)/wildlife distribution atlases
- Biological surveys (habitats of special ecological value)
- Landscape development concepts (LEK), if available from the competent authorities, and similar documentation.

The [...] national network (REN) is also to be consulted as it can provide information enabling the most important elements of regional networks to be identified.

Spatial planning

In the context of regional planning or regional landscape development concepts (LEK), the REN helps planners to gain an overview of the ecological functionality of habitats extending beyond regional or cantonal boundaries. It also permits the specification of outline conditions for a planned project. In line with Article 13 of the Spatial Planning Act (RPG), the REN serves as a guideline for the integration into cantonal master plans of habitat connectivity for wild plants and animals. An example of the detailed procedure is to be found in Section 6.5 of the REN report.

Forests

One of the five priority goals specified in the Swiss National Forest Programme (WAP-CH, Environment series no. 363, SAEFL 2004) was “the preservation of biological diversity”. Specifically, forest flora and fauna and the forest itself are to be preserved as a near-natural ecosystem, so as to avoid the risk of a further decline in biodiversity. To enable this goal to be realized, the REN provides valuable planning aids by defining the core habitat and migration areas of forest continua, and the corridors used by forest-dwelling animal species. In view of the above-mentioned goal specified in the WAP, the ecological significance of enhancing the connectivity of forests and forest margins is increased, and this aim is further supported by the REN guidance, which coincides with the concerns of ecological compensation and landscape development.

Agriculture (ecological compensation)

In the context of the implementation of the Environmental Quality Ordinance (ÖQV), which encourages farmers to establish networks of ecological compensation areas, the REN serves as a guideline for the cantonal authorities, which are responsible for defining criteria and setting targets. Here, consideration should be given both to the needs of wild animal and plant species, and to special local and regional characteristics. Integrated into the REN are data from the study entitled “National Priorities for ecological compensation in lowland agricultural areas” (Environment series no. 306, SAEFL 1998).

Hunting, fisheries, lakes and watercourses

With regard to fauna, the REN is based on the report entitled “Wildlife corridors in Switzerland” (Environment series no. 326, SAEFL 2001). This publication includes a map of wildlife corridors of inter-regional importance, indicating points of conflict for the main inter-regional corridors for large mammals and areas of potential conflict with other types of land use. During the validation process, additional data from hunting and other wildlife specialists were integrated into the REN by the cantonal experts. It also became apparent that the network of waterbodies – given their significance for aquatic and terrestrial habitat connectivity – may be regarded as the backbone of Switzerland’s ecological network. This finding of the REN project should provide a further impetus for the development of measures to promote open spaces along watercourses.

Nature and landscape protection

Protected natural areas, biotopes of national and regional importance, and all other areas of high biodiversity represent core habitats, which make up a spatial system on account of the areas connected with them. Thanks to its integrated ecological approach, the REN makes it possible to formulate a coherent strategy for conservation and use, providing support in turn for the efficient implementation of programmes of action. These are designed in particular to restore degraded ecosystems and to safeguard biodiversity. Essentially, the REN is also an instrument that can be used to assess the environmental acceptability of projects with regard to their impact on the functionality of existing or potential elements of habitat connectivity.

APPENDIX VI

Department of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Natural Resources
in collaboration with Biodiversity Conservation Center and WWF-Russia
and compiled by N. Sobolev, A. Ptichnikov, and V. Krever
(Russian Federation)

The state of progress of Ecological Networks in Russian Federation by 2004

This report concerns the state of the Ecological Networks in Russian Federation by 2004.

The general goal of the creation of the Ecological Network of Russian Federation (RUSECONET) is to provide the ecological conditions necessary for the region's sustainable socio-economic development. So, the objective is to ensure an ecological integrity of the ecosystem cover and so promote native biodiversity as an obligatory condition of sustainable development on all levels and our common natural heritage.

Russian Federation implements RUSECONET as participant of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy. Russian Federation supports Emerald network establishment as observer in Bern convention.

The role of RUSECONET in the Pan-European Ecological Network is determined by the specificity of Russian ecological and socio-economic conditions. The basic situation with nature conservation in Russian Federation is different from Western Europe due to its size and relatively low impact on landscape. Major part of forests and natural landscapes are intact, especially in Siberia and Russian Far East. The natural heritage of Russia's peoples has not only national value, but also European and Global one. The efforts of Russian stakeholders to establish PEEN in Russian Federation will not be successful without significant international participation, because of the size of RUSECONET. The establishment of RUSECONET should be significant part of the East-West Pan-European Environmental Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The main scientific basis of the RUSECONET methodology is a linkage between native biodiversity, natural heritage, and sustainable development.

The overall RUSECONET target object is the Natural Frame (Backbone) of the Environmental Stability – a functionally integral complex of natural communities and areas keeping its ability for self-regulation due to its large size and ecological links between its components. Core areas are considered to be of highest importance (so called Nodes of the ecological network) if there are natural communities able to self-regulation in such areas. An essential condition of the ability of the natural community to self-regulation is co-adaptation of species filling up all kinds of ecological niches within community and being able to replace one another when their populations fluctuate in size. This is a property of intact or low disturbed natural communities with high level of the native biodiversity. The criterion of biodiversity nativeness is the presence of aboriginal rare species vulnerable to human impact but filling in ecological niches through all range of biotic and abiotic conditions within considered ecosystem.

Practical work on creation of Integrated Territorial Systems of the Nature Conservation had been started in 1970th as an implementation of the concept of geographical distribution of human population and productive forces and taking into account conservation and recreational purposes at regional scale. In line of territorial conservation its objective was to plan the set of Specially Protected Natural Areas (SPNA) representing the diversity of ecosystems and species. After improving such an approach by the concepts of Island Ecology, Landscape Polarisation, and Protected Areas System projects of ecological networks of modern type began to be developed from the 1990th.

The Ecological Doctrine of Russian Federation approved by Russian government undertakes the development of The Natural Reserved Fund on the base of the System of SPNA and another natural areas as well as the improvement of the integrity of natural ecological systems by preventing their fragmentation.

The Concept of Ecological Networks in Russian Federation is developed as the Concept of a System of Protected Natural Territories, having in mind that all the natural areas should be in fact protected by either legal norm. RUSECONET is planned on the Ecoregion-Based Approach and implemented with taking into account existing administrative borders as well as the need of transboundary ecological linkages.

Both state and private lands may be included in each part of RUSECONET. Forests, inland waters, most of other lands (except agricultural ones) are in state (federal) property, and agricultural lands are in private property.

There are two types of areas should be included into RUSECONET:

- SPNA of federal, regional, and local status created and managed in accordance with the legislation on specially protected natural areas;
- other Protected Areas (PA) with specific land use and conservation regimes managed in accordance with forest, land, water, and other legislations.

Core areas and their Buffer zones are protected as SPNA. Transition areas (Corridors) and their Buffer zones are usually protected as PA of other types. The town-planning legislation provides for econet implementation at the scale of administrative regions during establishment and realisation of regional development General Plans.

The Ministry of the Natural Resources of Russian Federation implements the state policy of establishment of ecological networks in Russian Federation, the Division of Protected Areas Legislation in the Department of the State Environmental Policy being its responsible section.

The Protected Areas Department of the Federal Service of Natural Resources Use Inspection supervises federal Protected Areas functioning.

Priority areas for RUSECONET development are:

- in threatened ecosystems of Global value with high biodiversity (Caucasus, etc).
- in heavily settled regions (Central Russian plain, etc),
- transboundary projects.



Fig. 1. Main projects of RUSECONET development (shaded)

The Ecological Network of the Central Russian plain (NGO programme “Heart of Russia”) is the most developed in Russia. Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) and Geocology Institute Ltd. in collaboration with its regional partners designed Draft Ecological Network of the Central Russian plain (Kaluga, Moscow, Ryazan, Smolensk, Tver, Tula, Vladimir, Yaroslavl oblasts and Moscow

City) by 2003. Currently there are more than 2 thousand protected areas within this region. The assessment of the state of SPNA in Moscow oblast being the most populated within the region showed target objects are in a satisfactory state within 126 SPNA from 146 assessed.

Oblast level projects carried out by local organisations and experts are crucial for the success of the Heart of Russia programme. Gradostroitel Ltd. and Geoecology Institute Ltd. developed the more detailed project of the Ecological Network of Moscow oblast by order of the Moscow oblast Government in 2001-2003. This document is used for decision-making in territorial planning within Moscow oblast. Several district econets have been developed in its turn by order of rayon administrations.

Ryazan State Pedagogical University in collaboration with BCC compiled Cadastre of PA of Ryazan oblast in 1995-2003 by order of the Ryazan oblast administration. In fact this document contains data on the regional econet. Local activists formed the Network of Natural Heritage Guardians taking care of several regional SPNA.

Regional administration of Protected Areas under State committee on Ecology for the Oriol oblast compiled the project of the Econet of Kaluga, Oryol, and Bryansk oblasts in 1998-1999. This project main structure is the large natural tract including "Orlovskoye Polesie" and "Ugra" national parks, and "Bryansky Les" and "Kaluzhskye Zaseki" zapovedniks. Subsequently WWF-Russia developed more detailed econet project for this territory.

Centre for Volga-Ural Econet (Togliatti City) co-ordinates the "Volga-Ural Econet" programme, being in realisation within Republic of Bashkortostan, Samara oblast, and Republic of Tatarstan since 1996.

WWF-Russia realises the project of the Ural econet in Republic of Bashkortostan. The president of Bashkortostan has announced plans to increase the area of SPNA by 1,9 million hectares. After WWF-Russia and regional experts had developed a scientifically proven plan for ecoregional econet the Bashkortostan government has adopted in 2003 the regional Concept of a System of Protected Natural Territories and reserved 191 thousand hectares for further SPNA creation.

Institute of Steppe (Ural branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) works on econet project for the Orenbourg oblast bordering Republic of Bashkortostan and Samara oblast.

BCC and Volgograd branch of the Russian Academy of Ecology developed the project of the Econet of the Lower Volga Region (Astrakhan and Volgograd oblasts, Kalmyk Republic) in 1998-2000. At the same time BCC and State Committee on Ecology of Nizhnyi Novgorod oblast with assistance of the Dront Eco-centre developed the project of the Econet of the Volga-Viatka Region (Nizhnyi Novgorod and Kirov oblasts, Republic of Mary El, Republic of Mordovia, and Chuvash Republic). State committees on ecology for eight republics and oblasts mentioned in this paragraph adopted corresponding parts of the econet project.

State Committee on Ecology of Nizhnyi Novgorod oblast, Dront Eco-centre, and Nizhnyi Novgorod branch of the Russian Bird Conservation Union had begun to establish Econet of the Nizhnyi Novgorod oblast several years before and currently effectively develop it further. Draft Econet of Nizhnyi Novgorod oblast is taken into account when ecological assessment is carried out. Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan for Nizhnyi Novgorod oblast envisages establishment of the ecological backbone on the 20 % of the total oblast size, i.e. further increase of SPNA up to 12 % of the total oblast size. Other part of the econet is expected to be kept without SPNA creation. Nizhnyi Novgorod branch of the Russian Bird Conservation Union take care of several natural sites of high conservation value applying of the Network of Important Bird Areas Guardians.

The Institute of Urbanistic has included Econet of Chuvash Republic into the District Development Plan of the Chuvash Republic in 2002.

WWF-Russia has started the project of Caucasus Econet should include natural areas in Russian Federation (Republic of Adygeya, Chechen Republic, Republic of Dagestan, Ingush Republic, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, Republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Krasnodar kray, Republic of Northern Ossetia-Alania, and Stavropol kray), Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Turkey.

WWF-Russia and regional experts developed a project of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion in 1998-2001 including Republic of Altai, Republic of Khakassia, Republic of Tyva, and parts of Altai kray, Kemerovo oblast, and Krasnoyarsk kray in Russian Federation, as well as corresponding natural areas in China, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia. Heads of involved Russian and Mongolian administrative regions have signed in 1999 Altai-Sayan Millenium Initiative including intension to co-operate in

biodiversity conservation and econet development. The econet plan has been approved by individual regional administration in Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

WWF-Russia and regional experts developed a project of the Econet of the Russian Far East including natural areas of Russian Far East (Primorsky krais, Jewish autonomous oblast, parts of Amur oblast and Khabarovsk kray). The project expects the development of international cooperation between Russian Federation, China, and Mongolia. In Primorsky kray documents for developing a PA system (including special Tiger Econet) have been approved. The Governors of Amur oblast and Khabarovsk kray officially declared their intentions to develop regional PA systems. The first in Russia ecological corridor (34,000 hectares) has been established as special SPNA category in Khabarovsk kray.

The president of Republic of Sakha-Yakutia established in 1994 the development of The Sacred Earth Network – the Republican Econet should cover about 20% of the territory of this Republic biggest in Russian Federation. WWF-Russia and regional experts have developed the econet plan basing on national traditions in resource use and conservation. The plan has been realised in general by the year 2000 and is in further development now.

The Sacred Earth Network of Republic of Sakha-Yakutia is a part of an extensive continuum of low disturbed natural communities, known as the Great Euro-Asian Nature Backbone including north and northeastern regions of European Russia, the Northern Ural, the north and central Siberia, and the Far East. BCC, Greenpeace Russia, Socio-Ecological Union, World Resources Institute, and its colleagues by Global Forest Watch Russia initiative carried out in 1999-2002 distant revelation of the Intact Forest Landscape within the Great Euro-Asian Natural Backbone. These researches showed that the human impact on these territories has drastically increased during the last years. The revelation of key natural areas and conditions of the natural backbone integrity, development of Econet projects, and submitting them to decision-makers is expedient there, as a minimum. The Great Euro-Asian Natural Backbone should be recognised the main complex object of the Northern Eurasia Ecological Network and unique Natural Heritage.

APPENDIX VII

Dr Jan-Willem SNEEP,
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
(Netherlands)

Presentation by the Dutch delegation on the PEEN & People workshop held in the Hague in April 2004

On the occasion of the Dutch presidency of the Council of Europe the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality organised a workshop called "PEEN and People" in the Hague, on 21-23 April 2004.

Thirty three participants from European nature conservation authorities, NGO's and research institutes convened during this workshop, to discuss concrete options for increasing the active involvement of relevant stakeholder groups in the establishment of PEEN.

Stakeholder involvement in PEEN was prioritized by the 5th Ministerial Conference "Environment of Europe" (Kyiv, 2003), which concluded that by 2008, all core areas of the Pan-European Ecological Network will be adequately conserved and the PEEN will give guidance to all major national, regional and international land use and planning policies as well as to the operations of relevant economic and financial sectors. The importance of this conclusion was underlined by the third Intergovernmental Conference "Biodiversity in Europe" and the 8th Meeting of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Madrid, 2004).

The Workshop PEEN & People aimed to bring together representatives of organizations and sectors which have an impact on PEEN (but so far are not strongly involved in the PEEN implementation); to assess the relevance and validity of the PEEN concept for these stakeholder groups; to illustrate a number of examples of the interaction and co-operation between stakeholders and PEEN; and to take steps toward improved co-operation and communication in order to stimulate the process of further elaboration and implementation.

The workshop focussed on the topics: PEEN and spatial planning, PEEN and the regional authorities and PEEN and transport / infrastructure.

After introductions on the development of ecological networks, communication and sustainable development and after introductions of several stakeholders many conclusions, statements and recommendations were made.

All the presentations of the Workshop PEEN & People are published on a CD-ROM by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

The proposed actions and activities should be included into the working programme of the Council of Europe.