

Green Agenda in the Western - Balkans

Report of the study visit to Brussels and Brabant

18 - 24 May 2008



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Introduction

From 18th till 24th of May 11 persons from the six countries involved in the Green Agenda in the Western Balkans program participated in the study visit to Brussels and to the Dutch Province of Brabant. The participants were either representing one of the NGOs involved in our Green Agenda project or one of the trainers teams involved in the Green Agenda. They were guided by Alexey Pristupa, intern at Milieukontakt and by Chris van de Sanden project manager for GA.

The study visit focused in regional development. Monday and Tuesday were spent in Brussels. During these two days the participants met with representatives of 3 Directorate Generals and with two representatives of Brussels based NGO umbrella organizations. Here they had a chance to meet with representatives in person, get introduced to the Brussels networks, to the jargon and the (financial) instruments involved in rural development.

On Tuesday evening we left Brussels and moved to Brabant. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday participants had a chance to visit with a host of individuals, businesses and government officials that highlighted the broad range of activities that are related to regional sustainable development.

The philosophy behind this study visit is that similar EU instruments as the ones that are currently available for Brabant in the future might become available for the countries in the Western Balkans. The Green Agenda structure that is now being developed could be used to push for more attention to sustainability in this process of regional development. In Brabant impressive funds are used, to some extent in undoing what was done during the years of rapid economical development, and to restore the old natural landscape. In the countries of the Western Balkans a lot of these landscapes are still there. With timely intervention, e.g. from partners involved in Green Agenda, the EU funds might be used for economic development of the Balkan region that is truly sustainable.

The report that you now have in front of you was made by joint effort of all participants in the study visit. Each participant wrote the report of one half day of the visit; you will find their names in the text of the report. The photos were made by Julijana Daskalov.

Study visits as a tool for Capacity Building in practice have a strong impact, much stronger than other tools, as training, coaching, advice, etc. Although difficult to measure we are confident that we will see results of this study visit already in the (near) future. This could be on the scale of activities that will be developed within individual GA communities. It could also be in the field of cross-border cooperation. And who knows, perhaps the initial seeds for a sustainability Western Balkans lobbying network towards EU might have been planted during this study visit. Whatever the outcome is, as organizers of this study visit we greatly enjoyed the atmosphere, energy and enthusiasm of the participants, we express our appreciation for all those who helped us in organizing the visit and last but certainly not least we heartily thank all the persons and organizations who hosted us.

Milieukontakt International

Chris van de Sanden
Alexey Pristupa

June 2008

Monday, 19/05/08

EEB – European Environmental Bureau

Place: premises of EEB
Time: 10.30 -12.00
Minutes: Milka Gvozdenovic

Boulevard de Waterloo 34/B-1000 Brussels/Belgium

tel.: +32 2 289 10 90 fax: +32 2 289 10 99

Email: eeb@eeb.org

Websites: www.eeb.org; www.chemicalreaction.org; www.newngoforum.org;
www.participate.org; www.zeromercury.org

Regina Schneider, email: info@eeb.org , Head of communication, Capacity Building, Membership Relations and Enforcement issues hosted the meeting.

The meeting started with an introduction of participants. Chris van de Sanden introduced Milieucontact's project Green Agenda for the Western-Balkans and explained the purpose of the study visit, expected meetings in the coming days and mentioning possible outcomes.

Regina Schneider presented EEB: the largest federation of environmental organizations in Europe, with over 150 members in all 27 EU Member States and several other European countries. These organizations range from local and national to European and international.

EEB's aim is to protect and improve Europe's environment and enable its citizens to play a part in achieving that goal, by promoting environmental policy integration and sustainable policies, particularly at EU level. The office in Brussels was established in 1974 to provide a focal point for members to monitor and respond to EU's emerging environmental policy.

EEB has an information service, working groups of EEB members, produces position papers on topics that are, or they feel should be, on the EU agenda, and represent their members in discussion with European Commission, Parliament and Council.

Ms Schneider explained in detail how EEB works, structure of organization (Secretary General Unit; EU-Policy Unit; Information and Communication Unit; Finance and Administration Unit), about annual plan, budget, five levels of membership etc.

EEB follows the process of legislation development and adaptation and has a strong lobbying system. Ms Schneider mentioned that although the number of around 17.000 lobbyist in Brussels is huge, some 90 percent of them are paid by the industry and of the remaining 10 percent only a very small percentages are those lobbying for environmental issues.

She explained how they influence decision makers in Parliament and mentioned some of the campaigns they did (REACH -Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals).



Ms Schneider mentioned that EEB has members from Balkan countries as well. Her colleague Mara Silina is coordinating DG Enlargement's project New NGO Forum (more information on New NGO Forum is available on the EEB web site).

Pieter de Pous, email: pieter.depous@eeb.org, Policy Officer, Biodiversity, Soil Protection and Water joined the meeting after Regina's presentation.

Mr de Pous was talking about his work in EEB and gave some examples on implementation of EU directives (examples from Rumania and Bulgaria where illegal building is taking place in protected areas and NATURA 2000 sites and example on implementation of Water Directive in Sava River region). He also gave examples in agriculture policy implementation within EU.

Mr de Pous said the EEB is preparing a data base with best practices examples, which should be on EEB's website in the near future.

A more detailed discussion developed, which helped in clarification of what was said and the participants of the study visit showed a big interest to share their experiences with representatives of EEB.

Due to the limited time we missed the chance to talk with a volunteer from Bosnia and Herzegovina in EEB, who was also present during the meeting.

At the end of the meeting participants from Balkan countries took the opportunity to give presents from their communities to the hosts. Upon leaving the building the participants had a possibility to take numerous publications exposed in hall of EEB premises.

*Lunch: Restaurant – Bar Montenegro
Rue Jourdan
1060 Brussels*

WWF / European Policy office

Time: 14:00 -15:30
Place: office of WWF/European Policy Office
Minutes: Aurora Dibra

WWF European Policy Office (EPO)
168 avenue de Tervurenlaan
1150 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 743 88 00 Direct: +32 2 740 09 31
Fax: +32 2 743 88 19
www.panda.org/eu

We were welcomed by Paloma Agrasot PAgrasot@wwfepo.org and her colleague Pauline Denissel PDennissel@wwfepo.org. Unfortunately Paloma's time was very limited; she had to attend another meeting and she left after about 15 minutes. Pauline was in charge of the rest of the meeting.

Our meeting with WWF/EPO came at the right moment as WWF/EPO is getting prepared to work in the Balkans. A few projects are in preparation by WWF's Mediterranean and Danube Carpathian offices. WWF has offices and/or partners in several Balkan countries.

WWF is working since 2005 in neighborhood countries in introducing EU and on influencing EU policies. They find themselves like interlocutors between countries and EU Commission. WWF does Capacity building of partners – this is important for their work and WWF has focal points in different countries.



Funding – WWF helps partners and supports them in preparing projects. They have worked in Black Sea (Turkey and Greece), Union for Mediterranean and Danube Carpathian Forum. WWF will work more with field partners and to do that they are starting their program in the Balkans.

Capacity building tools and policies
WWF prepared three training modules:

- A handbook to assess implementation of the action plans in the field of the environment
- Introduction to Effective

Communication, Campaigning, and Media

- Design and Management of Environmental Projects

EU working plan per countries

The project now is dealing with the translation and adoption of EU legislation and policies. WWF is dealing with Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia. Serbian project is on water/ dams and Natura 2000, a twining project.

Chris presented the office in Amsterdam and the methodology of Milieukontakt International in:

- Supporting environmental NGOs
- Capacity building

In introducing the participants it is good to mention that all participants in this study visit are involved in Green Agenda projects (to some extent similar to Local Agenda 21). In the GA project we selected NGOs in 6 different Western Balkan countries to develop a document and we invite the community to participate in the process; NGOs will involve also communities to do local actions and Milieukontakt will give support to the NGOs in attracting funds.

Some local actions in ecotourism and cultural heritage protection are identified based on real values of the communities.

Among the participants there are also 5 members from trainers groups so all 11 participants in the study visit either are trainer or they are member of one of the NGOs from the country. Chris introduced shortly the program and the aims of the study visit linked with rural development. The group would see in the Netherlands good examples of involving communities.

So our expectations from the meeting are:

- The participants get informed what is happening in Brussels and what they can transfer in Balkan Region
- things that might happen in the next 5 years.

Responses

The general context of EU policies and the large representation of NGOs could be presented in DG –Enlargement.

WWF is only facilitating the introduction to EU policies through small grants. It's helping to lobby and advocacy the pre-accession process of the neighborhoods countries.

EU context is important for the NGOs. It gives the opportunity for big changes in infrastructure. WWF promotes nature conservation in the region.

WWF intends to help countries to transpose the EU legislation in national regulations. (IPA - Instrument of Pre-Accession - process) IPA - funds in infrastructure help the pre-accession process etc.

The web site of DG for Regional Development gives the priorities for each country. Regional Development Funding is supporting projects in infrastructure and priorities of each country. Most of investments are done in waste water treatment, nature conservation, and big investments.

Also EU Commission is facilitating the dialogue between Ministries and in this process they are organizing Ministerial Meetings. In this phase the Commission is very keen to involve NGOs and the EU Commission is taking this very seriously.

Q&A

Chris – Q: How is EU Commission organizing the stronger involvement of NGOs?

A: In each DG is a desk officer per country – they fund the best practices in each country.

Adem – Q: What is the role of WWF in the instruments of pre-accessions?

A: We have not worked so far with this, we worked before and we hope to work in 2009. There will be a redefinition of the priorities. The definition will be done locally from EU delegation and government).

Adem – Q: is there a big space for involving the NGO-s

A: It depends on the countries. Regional Funding is more linked with the component three and they are funds to be used by the government.

WWF accession initiatives aim to build a net of WWF partners in EU member states. The most important are EU –acquis like agriculture, rural development etc. We are hoping that these NGO nets push the governments to act.

Funding for the pre-accession process is linked with Nature Conservation and Natura 2000 sites. The policy for pre-accession is happening in Turkey. We have a WWF office and also since the beginning of 2008 in the WWF office of EU and in Spain are supporting NGOs in initiatives for EU water framework directive to lobby, to build capacities etc.

Milka – Q: we have in our country a Natura 2000 project in process; we will see how it will go and what we can do in the future.

New NGO forum is a forum facilitated by the EEB. Linked to the component three and together to DG-Enlargement have the project to build a net of NGOs from candidate and potential candidate countries.

Contacts:

www. Danube Carpathian Program Office Andreas Beckmann - Vienna

www. Mediterranean Program Office – Deni Porej, Dporej@wwfmedpo.org MEDPO
Programme Director in Rome, responsible for WWF projects in the Balkans

DG – Regional Policy

Time: 16:00 -17:00
Place: DG – Regional Policy
Minutes: Aurora Dibra

Ms. Vassiliki KOTSONI (Principal administrator)
41 Avenue de Tervuren
1040 Brussels

Ms. Vassiliki KOTSONI is dealing with the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) and its objective on regional development.

Chris once again presents the group, MKI initiative and Green Agenda project. Rural Development is considered important for the communities in Balkan countries. DG Regional Development is working together with DG Enlargement with 5 components

1. Institutional building
2. Cross-border coordination
3. Regional Development
4. Human resources
5. Rural Development



The two first components are applicable for all candidate and pre-candidate countries. All the components are applicable for EU member states. The main objectives are to prepare candidate states to be member using the methodology that we are using for EU states. We had annual based investments for 7 years from 2007- 2009 and again from 2009- 2013 we will have heavy investments in the three sectors: Environment, transport and Business.

Things we learned discussing with Mrs. Vasiliki KOTSONI:

Assistance in Operational Programs in two directions
Infrastructure and soft programs

EU Commission together with EU countries worked to prepare a strategic coherent document; a seven years strategy, together with DG R and DG I. The main goal was to co-finance projects

The EU Commission approved within this Operational Program with the relevant country at the end of 2007 three projects in Turkey, three in Croatia and one project in Macedonia. The projects are linked with the three first components. Projects related to the environment are mostly environmentally friendly initiatives. The agreements are made between EU Commission and EU member states.

It is planned to involve NGOs to participate in sharing their opinion on the projects and on how their government is performing. It is evident that the quality of evaluation from NGOs is different and depends on the county.

In the frame of its Environment Program the EU is supporting Ministries of Environment to prepare projects, with technical studies in EIA etc. The three main pillars are

- Infrastructural projects
- Waste management projects
- Waste water treatment

We have technical assistance for the preparation phase of the countries for the EU standard and which belong to the operation we are supporting candidate countries to implement their projects.

The money offered to candidate countries is for starting the new strategies, the strategies learning by doing.

Some countries have seen difficulties in the process. The EU Commission is paying more attention with more advanced countries. We take in consideration projects on transport which is a priority, Nature 2000 sites to define by self, by learning by doing the right strategy to implement.

Visibility and publicity is considered important because people need to know and to learn how the EU policy is going.

Interesting question from Kosovo – in what kind of projects can Kosovo apply? Unfortunately the only possibility they have is to be partner a trans-border partner (EU country) and to apply for projects linked with transport. For soft project they could negotiate with DG Enlargement

Question from Nebojsa (Montenegro): Is it within the role of EU to define the Regional policies?

A: We are discussing with EU countries for Regions and we don't do it with candidate countries. With this category we are dealing only with the three first components.

Question from Chris (Netherlands): How do you see NGOs part within the EU initiatives?

A: For us the partner is the state, the ministry, we are preparing projects with them, we consult them and NGOs can be involved in the consulting process from the government. The government can take in consideration the opinions of NGOs during the preparation phase. During the implementation phase we involve NGOs in a monitoring board and we invite potential NGOs that can influence the government.

Question from Aurora (Albania). Albania is in the pre-accession phase and only transposed some of the EU directives. For us it is important to have within our local authorities' capacities to prepare projects in the frame of IPA.

Milka (Serbia) – we in Serbia are working with the project Natura 2000 site in our Region.

Julka (Macedonia) – what are your tips for us as NGOs? – NGO which has reasonable results should be taken in consideration from the state. Most of NGO-s in Europe are working with Water, Climate Change, water, waste management and are expecting some funds.

*20.00 - DINNER - Chez Leon
18 rue des Bouchers
1000 Brussels
tel. 02 511 14 15*

Tuesday, 20/05/08

DG – Environment

Time: 10:30 -12:30
Place: EEB office
Minutes: Luan Hasanaj

10.30 - back in the EEB office participants had a chance to meet with Ms. Dagmar Kaljarikova from DG Environment - desk officer for NGOs, Enlargement and neighboring countries. We were invited to speak about what they do in DG ENV, environment in the

accession process, regional cooperation in the field of environment, cooperation with/involvement of civil society etc. very good person.



First of all Chris informed DG Environment about the study visit participants and the countries where they come from. Also he informed her about the aim of the study visit and that the visit will have two parts; one in Brussels and the next one in the North Brabant, Netherlands. The goal is to have as better as possible information's for budgets that are available in the European Commission for countries from the Western Balkans.

The representative of the DG Environment presented the activities that they do and support such as support that they offer to environmental NGOs through REC.

After this, the discussions were focused on relations that REC have with different environmental NGOs in the countries where the participants come from. It was mentioned that unfortunately REC is having a kind of monopoly and we discussed possibilities for enhancing the cooperation between REC and other environmental NGOs.

Also in this meeting we discussed about the New NGO forum and the ways for participant NGOs to be member of this forum in the future.

At the end some of participants gave presents from their countries to Ms. Dagmar Kaljarikova.

*12.30 lunch at Rinascimento
14 rue Jourdan
1060 Brussels
tel. 02 534 75 20*

DG – Enlargement

Time: 14:00 -15:00
Place: DG Enlargement
Minutes: Adem Nikqi

Ms. Magdalena Ruda (Policy coordination Unit)
170, Rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels

One of the main visits during the study visit in the Brussels was the visit in the DG Enlargement held on 20.05.2008, to talk about the accession process in general and what DG Enlargement is doing in this, how NGOs can get involved etc.

The importance of this visit was based on our opportunity to have direct information from Mrs. Magdalena Ruda as a head of this directorate. We arrived in time and then Mrs. Ruda invited us in one of their meeting rooms where she started with short presentation.

As she said, there was a plan to have also some of her colleagues from different unites that will be very useful for us to have more detailed information in different fields. Anyway, she ensured us that she will send their addresses to Mr. Chris van de Sanden. Mrs. Ruda proposed to start from the financial aspects that are for sure one of most important aspects for the study visit group.



Mr. Chris van de Sanden proposed to do short presentation of the group from Balkan countries participating in Green Agenda project. He explained the program and presented participants individually and the countries where they come from.

After the presentation Mrs. Ruda started with information's about the new financial Instrument called IPA. Based on group structure that was from civil society representatives, her approach was more focused on civil society supporting strategy.

The strategy for supporting civil society under IPA will be through three stands:

- Civic Initiatives and Capacity Building
- People to People Programme
- Partnership Actions

There is the indicative budget of €130 million. From this amount 90 million € will support Western Balkans and other 40 million € are dedicated for Turkey.

Mrs. Ruda explained to us the main topics (fields) where the IPA budget will be used on different Balkan Countries. Based on requests and specifics of countries there are different ways that countries will use the investments for improving the Civil Societies Organisation's situation and development as well. Then she informed us for the budgets per each Western Balkan country from the IPA supporting program.

At the end she opened the floor for questions and comments from the participants. Adem Nikqi (NGO trainer from Kosova) had a question about the IPA support for civil society in Kosova that was not so satisfied based on needs. The answer from DG Enlargement is that there is a political reason that has impact on the budget for Kosovo.

Mr. Chris van de Sanden had the question related on the way of access in the IPA grants from the NGOs that are involved in GA project in Balkan countries that are participating in the study visit. Mrs. Ruda said that IPA is a financial instrument that will support civil society through their governments. She mentioned concretely the Albania and Montenegro programs.

At the end Mrs. Ruda promised us to send the power point presentation where we will have opportunity to see more detailed IPA support plan for Western Balkan countries. The visit has been considered very important from the participants from both aspects; the direct contact with DG Enlargement and the value of the information's got during the meeting.

19:30 Dinner in Hotel Artisan
Notel 42
5688 NB –
Oirschot, the Netherlands

Wednesday, 21/05/08

Visit to Green Delta project

Time: 9:00 -12:00
Place: Town Hall of Den Bosch ('s Hertogenbosch)
Minutes: Azra Kurmemović

In the Hall of Den Bosch we had a meeting with Mr. Marien Sonneveld. He presented to us the program for this day. He talked about branding in this region and said that they work on relationships city - country, which is lost.

He said that customers usually want to know about the products they use. They decided to use only products from this area; this can give needed information to the costumers.



After a short introduction Mr. Rob Brinkhof, who works for municipality joined us. He showed us all green areas in the town Den Bosch on the map, and presented Green Delta project.

After a short presentation, we went into the bus, to make a tour around nature areas in the city Den Bosch and to visit the Green Delta project.

We were in the part of historical city. Mr. Rob said that high value of this area is in open space. It is in the heart of the

city. Although the highway is near, this area is high valued. There are no too many trees, only cultivated grass for old race of semi-wild cows, which are brought back in this area. People can walk everywhere; there are no trails for walkers, because they didn't want to harm nature.

On this project their municipality is working with a few organizations. They are trying to involve people who want to work with them, because they can't to all the work on their own.

In next tree years they are planning to invest about 60 millions in this area. It is needed to make a new environmental management for this Green Delta project.

Interesting thing was when Mr. Rob told us about a man who owns a castle here. He was against these plans, but when they explained him what this can bring him, and how beautiful this place will be, he accepted to cooperate with them. This can teach how important it is to have good presentation and a transparent approach. The owner of castle is now planning to buy more land and to combine it with plans of the municipality. They are trying to make agreements with the current owners for management of the area and not to buy the entire space that is needed for the nature area.

Policy of municipality is to talk to people, explain them the overall interest and make them cooperate. They see their importance in making people interested for nature. They brought children in this area through school programs which is good thing.

People are now proud with this area, they have important bird species here, they have green area in the heart of the city and they can come here whenever they want.

So, we found out how important is good management, how important is cooperation between community and other organizations, and how important are green areas in the city. We saw that nature can be rebuilt, but we hope that we can still save our existing nature areas, so that we will not need to rebuild it.

Lunch in De Kleine Aarde

LEADER Programme

Time: 14:15 -15:00
Place: Meeting room in De Kleine Aarde
Minutes: Stavri Pillaha

Meeting with Mrs. Elisabeth Koch

Coordinator European Programmes / LEADER+

Province of North Brabant

After lunch with organic food in De Kleine Aarde, we had an interesting meeting with Elisabeth Koch. Mrs. Elisabeth Koch is the coordinator European Programmes / LEADER+ at the province of North Brabant.

She presented the work done through the LEADER program. The first program of LEADER was in 2000-2006. The new LEADER program started in 2007 and will go on until 2013. This program includes 31 areas, 3 EU countries and 6 provinces of North Brabant. LEADER is part of Rural Development Program and will experience the former program 2000-2006.

LEADER Program is a bottom up program aiming at:

- Cooperation between local actors.
- LEADER as a kind of laboratory
- Be innovative and experimental
- Initiate small scale projects
- Transferable knowledge to other areas.

LEADER cooperates between other countries. The funding of the projects is:

30% EU Funding

30% Public or co-funding

40% private co-funding (often volunteers are included in co-funding)

The name LEADER comes from French.

(‘Liaison **E**ntre **A**ctions de **D**éveloppement de l’**E**conomie **R**urale’. Loosely translated this means ‘cooperation for rural development’.

The heart of LEADER is Local Action Group that consists of some 20 people from different organizations (environment organizations, tourism organizations, public organizations etc.).

The rule is that public organizations should have no more than 50% representatives.

LEADER Program works in Agriculture, Recreation, Welfare, Cultural and nature heritage, Trade and industry Governance.

The group agrees for the projects and sent it to the Province. Local Action Group discusses and decides for the projects.

Important: How to sell local products in a kind of Branding; selling the products from the region by using joint symbols such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme.

The strength of LEADER:

- Bottom up process
- Stimulate projects close to the problems and gives best solutions.
- Policy comes from people because of LEADER
- Cooperation is a key issue.
 - Increases the local commitment
 - Creates institutional development.
 - Synergy with other regional development strategy

After the presentation of LEADER Program there were QUESTIONS:

Chris: I see there is similarity with GA. GA has the elements of working groups. Decision making as well is similar with GA.

Nebojsa:

1) How do you find the projects funds?

Answer: Through tendering. If somebody has an idea, he calls working groups secretary. He talks about the project idea. Then he/she goes to Action Group in a meeting and if agreed developed the project.

2) How to be part of Action Group?

Answer: Action Group is comprised of 20 people (different farmers but also local bank, local organization, chamber of commerce etc.)

Chris: Who decide to be member of Local Action Group?

Answer: Local Group by themselves.

Stavri: Action Group is volunteer group or not?

Answer: It depends on organization, some are paid some not.

Luan: Are the publications done integrated in Local Action Plans.

Answer: Yes, some of them are used in LEADER.

Aurora: How are the representatives of government and NGOs present in the meeting?

Answer: Everybody sits on his personal title. All are equal by personal title.

Chris: How is the meeting of the working groups organised? Who helps the working groups in the meeting?

Answer: Important is to have good chairman.

Mirjana: Is the Action Group responsible for rural development?

Answer: It was said at the beginning. All the projects must be rural development.

Chris: Is a website developed to communicate as we have in GA?

Answer: Yes it is a web site. But every member has also network to get experiences to exchange different action groups in Europe.

Luan: How is relationship between LAG and Media

Answer: We have to communicate with media. After any meeting which is nice for the press we invite media. Most of the groups do it at the end.

Luan: You mentioned that you have to work with farmers in the afternoon and in morning you run to Brussels. How much do you give feedback?

Answer: It depends on people. A simple question could have a long answer. We have to do contacts more with Agricultural Ministry in Holland too. We communicate through Ministry with Brussels.

Chris: You mentioned different contribution funds. How do you realize them?

Answer: It depends on the Region. 30% from Brussels is guaranteed. When you ask for public funds it takes a long time. We have some local Banks in Action Groups and use them. Related to private funds I mentioned the stork nests. We calculate every hour of volunteers and we present it as private contribution co-funding in proposal.

Candidate countries can take money from this program.

Nebojsa: How to create collaboration between Brabant and Balkan Countries?

Answer: It is difficult. If you want to do branding you see the book. Working together how to produce local projects. Another to develop tourism. In Holland there are areas that organize skating. An example is Santiago de Compostela; a place of pilgrimage in North Western Spain. (people meet together from different region/countries).

In internet you can find all Local Action Groups in Europe.

'De Kleine Aarde'

Time: 15:00 -16:00

Place: Guided tour at Sustainable Development Center 'De Kleine Aarde'
www.dekleineaarde.nl.

Minutes: Stavri Pillaha

Micheline Leemans (e-mail: j.leemans@home.nl) did a short presentation on sustainability where in general she mentioned: What sustainability is how to assure sustainability and the different ways of sustainability.

The Centre for Sustainable Development 'De Kleine Aarde' started in 1972.

In the centre there were examples of using alternative energy or saving energy such as solar energy, thermo isolation and other equipments such as a machine extracting energy from earth which in summer can reverse for cooling etc. The centre gives the message: consume what is very low for energy.

Saving water is important as well.
Consuming water is a global problem.

In the centre there is vegetable garden that functions without using pesticides, assuring biological growing. Families come together with children to see how the food is growing. The centre attracts parents and this is playing an important role for children education.



Reflections and brainstorm session

Time: 16:00 -17:00
Place: reflection and continued brainstorming
Minutes: Stavri Pillaha

The last hour in the afternoon was used for reflection and continued brainstorming.

Chris: Opening the discussion, mentioning to have some discussions where we are now and how things are going for all (in both Brussels and Holland)

Azra: I like more today than yesterday. It is more related to GA.

Aurora: There were routine to give information in Brussels. Two first days were more theoretical. More concrete information is important. I think we must have to do with contact person. Together with Macedonia we can do something. Today we had something we know. We can do something similar in our countries. GA is better to adapt some methodology during the implementation.

Adem: In Brussels we learnt Kosovo has to wait for IPA funds. We talked on results. I was happy we remember the visit. In general in Brussels was great. GA is something to implement. I am happy in general. I see important that Dutch people has done mistakes in environment looking towards economic development, which is a lesson for us.

Mirjana: I am impressed to see how it is investing and restoring nature development. I am surprised how farmers stopped activities to preserve nature. In Brussels good experiences. Interesting to go in those institutions for basic information. I think everything OK in Brussels.



Chris: I think as Elisabeth mentioned there is bureaucracy in Brussels.

Saša: Far all parts I enjoyed Milieukontakt visit for me the most impressive is EEB to influence in policies in Brussels. I compare in our countries how we can be part of a net to have a voice. Milieukontakt should help. Industrial lobby in Bosnia is strong. People are poor and need jobs. Corruption is high. They do not need to complain. We must not do the mistakes the western countries did. In den Bosch I was surprised the way to preserve nature. Saving energy is great also, but

I know my country is exporting energy. How to meet these people in western Balkan to influence in Balkan?!

Milka: I see some experiences to do something for project proposal. GA can not write project proposal for EC, there are no capacities in Serbia. We have to communicate how to influence. We should start some activities to invite people from European Commissions in GA. We can communicate with European Commissions directly. In national level NGOs are criticizing. It was mentioned also that New NGO Forum is not working.

Luan: We must communicate with our governments as well. On the other hand with the leaders of DGs. Sending letters to leaders in Brussels. First of all we have to be part of public debate.

Chris: How to address to national Level. How to address EU delegation, how to address to EEB and DGs and how to work in networking. I think you need to collect results and then to see what you can do.

New NGO Forum is great but from us it looks no good. How we can think that everybody profit than criticizing what they do.

Julka: Three points I liked: 1) I like we meet each others. 2) Ideas we gained here. 3) Concerning Brussels visit, we now know the people who are working in those buildings and how they work.

Toni: I am very happy. Visit in Brussels good idea. We have to implement EU projects. Information on EU, for people working there is good. For today I am impressed too.

Chris: What I like is initiative of people. This Sustainable Development Centre is an initiative of an architect. But as it was mentioned by the Centre: we can learn from you and vice versa. It was mentioned economic development we have is not sustainable. In longer future we have to see how to apply for funds. This study visit can be used in initiatives for funding.

Julka: We have to find big international funds.

Chris: Branding is good in some other countries. This kind of local groups must be open in Balkan too. Think how to use this visit for the future.

Luan: I am impressed. We do not know what concrete to do.

Adem: We must be more motivated to Milieukontakt. Thank you Milieukontakt. Also push us to think what to do, what to develop in future.

Restaurant 'De Negenmannen'

In the evening we had a meeting in Restaurant "De Negenmannen". The cook/restaurant owner is a member of the Regional Branding foundation. He serves several menus of consisting of only locally grown products, thereby assuring the 'short-supply-chain' (that is short distance between place where the food is produced and where it is consumed). He gave a short presentation on what was done for regional branding in Brabant related to local products and food as a way for rural development. We learnt also on the experiences and role of volunteers for rural development.

The chairperson of branding organization told as well the story how he as an entrepreneur of strawberry cultivation was involved in regional branding and how he collaborates with all entrepreneurs in the Region.

Thursday, 22/05/08

Farm-camping "Pergamahoeve"

Time: 09:00 -12:00
Place: Farm-camping "Pergamahoeve"
Minutes: Nebojša Babović

During visit to Farm-Camping "Pergamahoeve", presentations were held by Alderman¹ of Haaren Municipality and by the owners of the site.

¹ Eldermen – together with the Mayor form the 'municipality council' the local governing body that run the municipality. Eldermen competencies are similar to Mayor competencies in Balkan countries. Note that Eldermen (usually three) are elected by citizens, and Mayor is appointed by the Queen of the Netherlands.

Haaren

Dr. Jan W. Brenninkmeijer, Alderman of Haaren gave a brief presentation of his municipality. It is small municipality with 14.000 inhabitants and area of 6.000 sqm. They are living in 4 villages, surrounded by protected nature area "Het Groene Woud" ('The Green Forest') Majority of inhabitants, almost 70% are working in non-agriculture sectors. Main trends that are taking place in Haaren are: Ageing and shrinking of population, switch from cattle breeding to tree growing, growing scale of agricultural businesses, more civilians living in rural area and growing number of unused business complexes in rural area. Having this trend identified, the Municipality has developed a strategy, which will work in the following areas:

- Give locals the possibility to stay, by building proper and affordable houses
- Facilitate growing trees as one of the economic pillars
- Facilitate tourism and recreation as one of the economic pillars.

It was interesting to see that Municipality has recognized care for people and environment protection as their strategic objectives. Opposite to the majority of Balkan countries, care for development of the region was combined with care for people and environment. Haaren case has shown that 3P (People, Planet and Profit) concept is not just a trendy slogan, but a rather excellent opportunity for Balkans.

Pergama Land-Juweel (<http://www.pergama.nl>)

Farm-Camping Pergama was result of private initiative. Previously it was pure farm, but the owners decided to diversify its product from other farmers in predominantly agricultural area. Idea was to open tourism facility, and works to establishing a camp site were started in 1993.

Establishing of camp site was not simple, due to exhorting "battle" with local and province administration. As parallel with Balkan, it seems that innovative entrepreneurs have the same problems everywhere. Once established, the camp site required constant improvement, and owners were constantly striving to extension of their tourism offer. Apart from camping place, the farm offers rides in a hot air balloon and programs for urban children. As mentioned, education of urban children through their work on the farm was recognized as important part of their offer. Lot of tourists are urban families, which are coming to this place in order to show to their children something different than Playstation and concrete playgrounds. However, technology was not forgotten, and tourist has possibility to connect on net though wireless, or to watch TV via cable system. At this moment, Pergama has support of local authorities.



This case demonstrated that innovative entrepreneurs should be observed by authorities more carefully. Other important lesson was that innovation has to be followed by constant improvements. Importance of product diversification was also obvious, as we saw what competitive advantages of Pergama to other camp site are.

Regional Branding – “Het Groene Woud”

The most important event of HGW regional branding is annual regional festival where entrepreneurs are showing their products. It is also an opportunity to reconnect urban and rural areas and to create new ways of cooperation.

Main objective of regional branding is stimulation of local economy as response to increased globalisation and pressure of uncontrolled import. Its role is also in social cohesion of the region, and it adds value to products and services. It has to be stressed that HGW regional branding is following the concept of sustainable development.

Branding is not just creation of visual identity of products. It is a complex process which requires mobilization and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders from the region: producers, communities, companies, education and research institutions and both local and regional authorities.

Branding process in Green Forests was not finalized with creation of logo. Next steps that will be taken are:

- complete visualisation of regional identity – which would help to positioning of HGW on the global market
- Development of pilot programmes- In order to develop quality criteria for products & services
- Informal teasing of potential investors
- Creating of public-private partnership
- Organising of back-office supporting facilities.

There are three coherent tracks of branding. They are with:

1. Public administration
 - European experimental garden of sustainability
 - Improvement of inter-municipal cooperation
2. Entrepreneurs
 - Recruitment and bonding
 - Training courses
 - Chain management
 - Examples from elsewhere
3. Knowledge centre
 - Methods of cooperation
 - Branding and marketing
 - Economical significance
 - Benchmark

Example of Het Groene Woud, maybe could not be replicated to Balkan countries, but it is model which could be adapted and possibly implemented as part of broader action. It is certainly not project for Green Agenda program, but if there is similar initiative in our regions, GA NGOs could find its role in it.

Lunch at Pergama Hoeve

Kampina / Banisveld / Mortelen

Time: 13:30 -17:00

Place: Guided tour around Nature reserve “Kampina / Banisveld / Mortelen”

Minutes: Mirjana Bartula

The first location of the afternoon 22nd May study visit tour was Green Forest (Het Groene Woud) protected as National Landscape. Participants were informed about the area by Mr

Frans Kapteijn information officer at Nature Monuments Association – the largest private owner and manager of protected areas in the Netherlands with nearly one million members.

Green Forest is situated in the province of North Brabant, within the triangle formed by the cities of 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven and Tilburg and extends across 13,000 hectares. The area is characterized by a high level of landscape diversity that includes broad-leaved woodlands, country estates, heath land, brooks, meadows and hedgerows.

Part of Green Forest is Kampina, an old wet and dry heath land that was purchased in 1924 by the Nature Monuments Association. While walking through the Kampina participants had opportunity to see what manager is undertaking to get back the original vegetation as it used to be centuries ago, and to get rid of artificial monoculture vegetation such as *Pinus*. Ways of cleaning the fans / small pools by removing the waters and dredging the mud from the bottom in order to prevent eutrofication and overgrowing of free water was a worthy piece of information as well.



Afterwards participants were introduced to the restoration project at the location of Banisveld. It was a joint action of Nature Monuments Association and the North Brabant Landscape Foundation with the objective of encouraging a semi-natural woodland landscape on the Banisveld and restoring the nutrient balance and surface water systems. This included the removal of 40 centimetres of nutrient-rich topsoil from the entire 90 hectares of the Banisveld in order to expose the original sandy soil. Although costly, the operation was financed completely by the sale of the soil. The newly exposed soil, although

covered for decades by the tilled soil, proved to contain an unexpectedly rich store of seeds. From this seed bank emerged spontaneously many rare plants, including the Red List species bog pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*), marsh gentian (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*), bog club-moss (*Lycopodiella inundatum*), the royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), marsh St John's wort (*Hypericum elodes*) and common centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*).

The management of the area will be reinforced through the introduction of grazing animals such as Icelandic ponies and Blondes d'Aquitaine cattle that will help to ensure that a half-open landscape is retained. Public access has been restored, with the assistance of EU INTERREG funding, through the provision of a hiking track and a new bridge over the stream between the Banisveld and the Kampina. Wetland to wetland bridges, fenced roads and tunnels for cattle and wild animals were worth seeing measures of nature management as well.

However, the most instructive aspects of the Green Forest experience were ways of funding (Apart from membership fee, product selling /eg. Reed production/ and different sponsors such as banks, electricity companies etc., astonishing was information about income from lottery /30 mil per year/ they invented by themselves) and how a range of instruments, varying from spatial planning through management agreements to collaboration with NGOs, can work together within the framework of a strategic plan to produce demonstrable biodiversity benefits, recreational opportunities and an integration of agriculture.

Another part of the afternoon visit was Ecoduct Het Groene Woud. The idea of the ecoduct was created by Brabants Landschap, a regional organization (NGO) for management of large landscape areas. In 2005 the first ecoduct was opened in Brabant, which connects two nature areas – each with a small river valley – and creates an important link for animals like deer, badgers, martens, small mammals, etc. to move from one nature area to the other.

There are sand strips to help the ecologist track the migration of animals via the ecoduct. The project was considered having an impressive role in nature conservation, reconnecting two separated areas, rich in biodiversity both. Some comments were presented regarding the high costs and long time frame this project involved.

There were opinions that this project could have been done from the very beginning, in the same time when the highway was planned and implemented, if the EIA procedure would have recommend that aspect. The initiative for the construction was of a NGO and the ecoduct was co-financed by the Ministry of Transport, The municipality and the EU funds (EAGGF-Guarantee budget).

Belvertshoeve

Time: 18.30-19.30

Place: Belvertshoeve;

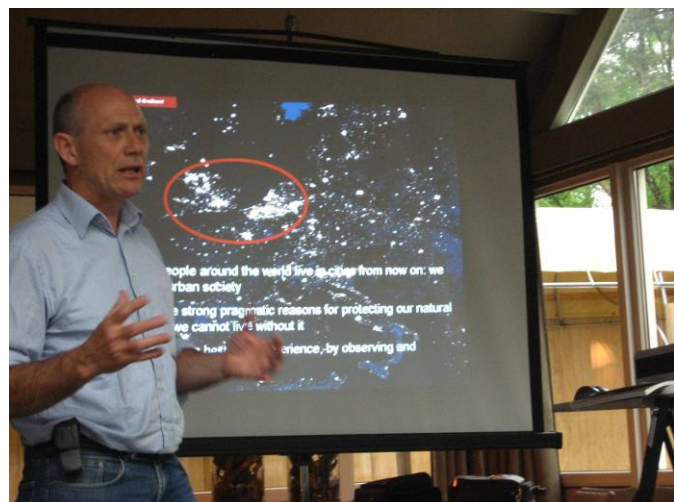
- Experience of the Interreg III – B project: “Landscape, your landscape”
- regional branding

Minutes: Mirjana Bartula

In small restaurant Belvertshoeve participants were informed by Mr Rob Maessen about lessons learned within the “Interreg III – B project Landscape your landscape”

The project involved 14 partners from five countries and 7 regions with Province of Noord-Brabant as Lead Partner. The project had 20 sub-projects, 4 themes (involving local people and communities, exploring business opportunities, enjoyment and learning in landscapes, financing rural landscapes) and a budget of 6.7 million euro (INTERREG IIIB).

Partners worked together for four years in order to explore new ways to profit from the rural landscape, while preserving its beauty and cultural and historical values. It was a project about using our landscape to bring people together to create added value and “quality of life”



Lessons learned:

1) We need to combine top down sense of purpose with bottom up inspiration, initiative and entrepreneurship

WHY?

There is no way that we could change the world by ourselves.

We are used to operate in our own sector or field of expertise, but need to focus more on building bridges, short supply chains, and cooperatives.

2) We need to work on awareness and education and provide easy access to the enjoyments of our natural environment

WHY?

Our intuitions about biodiversity are mislead and distorted, e.g.: "how could losing one particular species be so disastrous?"

3) The benefits of our ecosystems are ready available, but we need to demonstrate the economic and social values provided by ecosystem services.

WHY?

We still have the wrong ideas about biodiversity, e.g.: "protecting biodiversity cannot be combined with economic development!"

4) International cooperation is fun – let's have some more of it!

Dinner at Belvertshoeve

During the dinner time discussion on Regional Branding Initiative continued with a presentation from a strawberry producer from the region.

During dinner time the restaurant Belvertshoeve, run by people with social difficulties was represented by two waiters and one young boy who works in the restaurant and prepares himself for normal social life.

Friday, 23/05/08

Canal Zone Project

Time: 9:00 -11.00

Place: Visiting the Canal Zone and/ or other parts of the municipality of Oirschot

Minutes: Toni Stojmenovski



It was on the 23th of May when the group who participated in the Study visit felt like Dutch people. The whole group used bicycles to see the city and the surrounding area. It was an excellent opportunity to observe all benefits that the bicycles offer as means of transport as well as to see Holland as a country that worked hard to develop this means of transportation and recreation. The excitement of the group was bigger than the organizer's action and this contributed to even bigger socializing, interaction and networking of the participants.

This project Canal Zone, financed by the Local self-government Oirschot and the Ministry of Infrastructure of Holland and EU, as implemented by a local NGO with the business sector. The project began in 1996 and will last until 2010. The entire area where the water channel passes through has been designated as an ecologic area with many projects that are being implemented and the local government is planning a lot more until 2010 with possibilities to continue the project after 2010. The channel, which is 50m wide and 4m deep, is used for transport, irrigating, recreation and sport. Along the entire length of the canal are located bicycle trails which connect Oirschot with Tilburg and the city of Eindhoven. Gravel is taken from the canal which is transported on the waterway through the canal and reaches the Base for further treatment and for cement which is used in the construction industry.

Projects which are to be implemented in this area are construction of two water canals for wider use and drinking water which will pass near the sports centers. Also near the harbor, construction of a drawbridge is planned at the site of an old bridge which will enable flow of more traffic for bigger ships. At the last point of our trip by bicycle, the two representatives of DHV, a Dutch Engineering company showed and explained to us the problem with a new type of water pest, a water plant in the canal which multiplies uncontrollably and causes disturbance of the normal existence of the remaining species in the canal.

Jan Robben Strawberries

Time: 9:00 -11.00
Place: Visiting horticultural farm "Jan Robben Strawberries"
Minutes: Toni Stojmenovski

The strawberry farm of Mr. Jan Robben "Jan Robben Strawberries" was established in 1996. The farm is a family business of the Robben family. It is one of the most popular strawberry farms in the area of Oirschot and the wider area. According to the farm owner, the farm as a positive experience and the farm which functions well and has many British visitors.

Jan Robben was the first company in the Netherlands that got the 'Environment Label' (= Milieukeur) certificate for the efforts in the field of the environment and surroundings. In the foundation 'Milieukeur' consumers, manufacturers, retail, government and environmental experts participate.



This farm has a complete production process. It has 4 plantations on which we could see production of strawberries in various phases such as preparation of the soil from seedling to the harvest of the strawberries. The strawberries are packed on the farm and being sold as a branded product on the market in the area of Brabant (96%) and the remaining part throughout Holland. Apart from fresh strawberries for consumption, this farm also produces strawberry jam which is very popular in Brabant as well as throughout all of Holland. One can find strawberries from this farm in the most popular fruit markets in Amsterdam.

Apart from the family members who work in the organization of production, the farm employs other workers when strawberries are gathered from the middle of May to September. Apart from this farm in the area of Brabant, there are also 6 more strawberry farms.

Mr Robben's marketing strategy focuses on adding more value per strawberry, and not on trying to increase the size of the production.

Lunch at Spoordonkse Watermill

Evaluation session at "Spoordonkse Watermills"

Time: 14:30 -17.00
Place: Evaluation session – "Spoordonkse Watermill"
Minutes: Sasa and Suzanne

We formed three small groups and in each were participants from different countries. Our task was to answer three questions and make a presentation of our conclusions to the rest of the group. The questions were following:

1. What was the most important thing you learned during each session?
2. What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
3. What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months / that is until end 2008?

Monday May 19

EEB – Regina Schneider

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - learned how to lobby, influence decision makers, importance of networking
 - organization of EEB is really important, how many people working on what
 - Mrs. Schneider explained how EEB is working, talking about how they lobby for change of EU policies. There are 17.000 lobbyists working in Brussels, 90 % from industry and only 10 % from civil sector, out of those only small number for environmental sector.
 - EEB is a network of environmental organizations in Europe. How joining of forces can increase strength of NGOs and increase pressure on policy making structures. Synergy effect is very important
 - Networks are crucial in exerting influence on policy makers
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - Feel safer regarding lobbying, there is someone who can communicate our ideas and messages
 - Feel more secure when initiating and starting with new ideas.
 - Can communicate to GA NGOs to become EEB partners. There are not many partners.
 - We could use models of synergy and lobbying in our countries, regarding policy making on local level. Networking of NGOs and other stakeholders could be plus for us in creating healthy policies
 - We should make a stable network like EEB to influence local and regional policies, with MKI help. We have 18 NGOs in 6 different countries. This is already a net
 - They are the organization that can support our NGOs. Our NGOs should become partners of EEB
 - Synergy of NGOs on local level. Cooperation between environmental NGOs and other stakeholders

- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
- Send info to trainers and NGOs about EEB. We could send them documents and materials as well
- Develop training modules
- We missed Mara Silina, it would have been much more relevant as she has previous experience
- To start preparations for networking. In beginning by bringing all stakeholders together and do some courses for them on who is who in EU and who is doing what. Start of long term network creation
- Discussion mailing list to discuss network, maybe some seminars, trainings

WWF / European Policy Office – Paloma Agrasot and Pauline Denissel

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
- Not well prepared. They asked us, what we would like to hear
- Important to see their structure, nice new offices in Brussels. They are developing. They have a structure and funds
- Structure of WWF in region and who are contact persons in region
- They have really nice offices, furnished out of organic materials in a sustainable way, energy efficient
- They were not so much prepared, we could have used time better
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
- Training modules we got we can use for GA
- EU action plans are also relevant. Chris printed them, while WWF just mentioned them
- Very relevant because ladies from WWF were explaining about importance NGO –



- government dialogue. Approach of NGO – government partnership, can bring better results
- WE have contacts with them now. They will start to work in our countries and maybe we can cooperate. We need to check what kind of programmes they will do and how our NGOs can be part of it
- Possible cooperation with them.
- Importance of the

dialogue between public and civil sector.

- Creating network and encourage network to have contacts with WWF
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
- Send modules to trainers
- For new projects of WWF in RS and ME, we will inform and invite NGOs. Need to think which way and how. Would be good if our NGOs could take part

- Try to present EU environmental policies and practices to our 3 communities. They need a bigger picture for their plans, to see importance of including all stakeholders
- Now when we established contacts with them it may be possible to cooperate with them on the projects in the western Balkans.

DG Regio – Vassiliki Kotsoni

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - We cannot apply as we are pre-candidate countries
 - Visibility = publicity. As much as we are visible, media can be interested. And the other way around as well.
 - Programmes for candidate countries and potential candidate countries for EU. What is available for us and candidates. There is a difference between our countries, MK has more opportunities for financing, being a candidate country, the 5 others are potential candidate countries
 - Lady said a lot about environmental issues, we remember only cross-border cooperation, IPA and 5 components and we can apply only for 2
 - Meeting with high level officers. They have more information about policies in general, big picture.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - IPA: we can see how we can use it
 - We see opportunities to be part of cross border projects through IPA. This is really important, because we are even now creating a sort of network that will be important
 - EU supports cross-border cooperation and we already are a net of 18 NGOs, in 6 countries. We need to see how all DGs can help
 - We should see how to apply for projects at the delegations of the EU in our countries.
 - It is important to be a part of cross-border projects through IPA.
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - Follow the actions through EU delegations, through websites
 - Workshops to spread info
 - To be part in future cross border programmes. It is expected in next few months there will be tenders for such programmes. We should be part of that.
 - Encourage our NGOs to write project proposals, together
 - Check out delegations with capital C
 - We should apply to call proposals and encourage our NGOs to make cross-border projects.

Tuesday May 20

DG Environment – Dagmar Kaljarikova

Visits in Brussels were all quite similar. Useful meeting. We got answers from first hand. Thanks to MKI for this opportunity. We will continue this contact
We saw famous EU buildings and institutions and saw people with whom we can establish contacts

In general we got info on pre-accession process and IPA instrument

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - Willingness for cooperation somehow. That was not in every meeting the same, in other meetings there was more distance.
 - DG environment is very open and are looking for cooperation with NGOs. We discussed this for a long time, how NGOs can help and how cooperation could be established. Not only for project financing but also for their interest
 - General info on 5 components of IPA and for what we are eligible
 - We had a chance to lobby, as we could discuss REC and its monopoly on EU funds
 - Screening, opening chapters for negotiations, etc
 - We got important answers and information at very high level. We established a contact with representative of the DG. We had an open discussion that helped us to learn a lot.
 - It was interesting to meet those officials from the DG and to see a human face of European Commission, people with whom we can make contacts.
 - Lots of useful information such as pre-accession process, IPA instrument and its five components, eligibility of our countries to apply for certain projects, Civil Society Program.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - Doors are opened. Meeting was very short, we did not cover everything with Dagmar.
 - Opportunity for fundraising for projects
 - There were a lot of complaints about the role and behavior of REC in our countries; they were accused of having a monopoly on EU funds.
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - We as trainers can help NGOs to finding a way to apply for funds
 - To establish contacts with EC delegations in our countries and with regional environmental networks. It will be important for us to be part of communication channels between our communities and EC
 - To help NGOs to apply for grants for new projects.
 - To establish contacts with the EU officers in our countries.

DG Enlargement

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - Very useful meeting. We were informed about financing process and possibilities. Only MK could be really satisfied because they have more opportunities.
 - We were also informed about amounts per country, etc
 - Heard a lot about IPA before, but here it was explained more in detail at this meeting. Level of our knowledge was increased
 - Civil society facility: big programme of support for NGOs, level of funds per country
 - More detail on civil society instruments, relevant for us. Concrete sums that are available
 - A useful meeting at which we were informed about financing opportunities.
 - IPA instruments, its components, available funds, were explained to us in detail. We were informed about Civil Society Program which supports NGOs.
 - Lots of useful information such as pre-accession process, IPA instrument and its five components, eligibility of our countries to apply for certain projects, Civil Society Program.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?

- We need more cooperation with our governments because IPA money goes there directly
- Advocacy is needed, and also different kinds of cooperation to have access to this financing
- Opportunity for funding through cross-border programmes and through civil society facility
- Information about available funds.
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - To get informed especially our NGOs about IPA and about the DGs and other meetings that we had in highest levels of EU institutions
 - Facilitate project ideas and plan some future involvement
 - Start cooperation with EC delegations in our countries
 - Prepare concrete projects
 - Figure out how we can help our NGOs to apply for grants, especially because the EU usually gives money directly to our governments. So we need to find out how NGOs can directly access those funds
 - We should start to facilitate project ideas and to become involved in Civil Society Program

Travel to NL

Wednesday May 21

Town Hall of Den Bosch + Green Delta project

Less abstract, no formal meetings, no formalities

Taking photos at city hall is forbidden

Two tours, one by bus and one by foot

Lunch and dinner: we gained knowledge on typical NL lunch, which was surprising. And that the asparagus season is in May

We met Marien Sonnenveld for the first time

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - How to build or develop nature
 - How to protect environment when we increase economy
 - Learned how municipality is involved in maintaining and preserving the area, but also for recreation.
 - There are 3 things for regional branding, municipality, sustainable development, public participation. Not just make money but do it to maintain and preserve nature. We saw it, it was very attractive. Local government has good cooperation with community and local people to preserve the area
 - Planet people profit
 - Nice to see Den Bosch, and guided bus tour was very interesting in many ways. I learned what humans can achieve with technology: creating nature out of nothing. Also a bit surprised: why is it so important to NL people? The country is not so much bigger than Bosnia but there are 16 mln people there while we (BiH) have only 4 mln.. We did not reach that stage of development and industry. How to act in a way to prevent happening what happened in NL, so to maintain our nature and not have to build it up later on
 - We liked the guided tour by bus and learned how nature can be rebuilt. We learned how nature can be protected and how economy can be sustainable.
 - We learned how municipality is involved in protecting nature and making a sustainable development – make money with care for nature.

- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - Communicate with our people to avoid mistakes made in NL
 - Cooperation with all stakeholders is relevant
 - How we can replicate this idea in our country. Through GA we will have more cooperation with municipality, involving local people and local authorities as well
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - Promote concept of living close to nature. We have some trends that it is important to live in urban areas, but here people with a lot of money are moving to rural areas.
 - Check our urban plans and be pro-active
 - Facilitate and continue collaboration and dialogue with public participation: involve local people in concrete actions for nature conservation
 - To promote a concept of living where people are living nearby to nature, especially because we have a trend in our countries that people want to live in cities.
 - Milieukontakt could organize activities to engage people in preservation of nature.

De Kleine Aarde; LEADER+ project

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - How to make a sustainable place and promote our actions
 - Milka was not able to follow the presentation on LEADER+. It was a good presentation but she could not manage. It was not linked to the session but to micro climate in room
 - Very impressive and beautiful centre. Leader project was very important. It was mentioned that collaboration of many different communities and stakeholders was very important. Positive effect of such cooperation was visible.
 - Saw how people can save a lot of energy, if they want. Especially important in densely populated areas
 - Surprised a lot about the story regarding water. It seems NL has a lot of water but there is also a water problem
 - Gave me a broader perspective; I am used to some things and I think that's normal. But I realize that it is different everywhere
 - We learned that local actions and initiatives are very important.
 - Impressed by cooperation of many stakeholders and communities in Leader+ program.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - Local actions and motivation is more important for GA project
 - There might be more but we did not have time to discuss
 - Possibility to use similar project in our countries, of course Leader is an EU thing but we can use this concept in other programmes, where many different communities can cooperate with each other
 - To try to organize something similar in our countries.
 - Importance of 3 P's (Planet, People and Profit) concept that manifests sustainable development. One of "P" is often lost on the field.
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - Make a GA house, in 18 communities that we are working in to promote sustainable life and energy efficiency. Can promote our activities and use knowledge and experience from the two guided tours. To be run in a sustainable way. We can at least

promote a GA office, where visitors can come and see what we are standing for, seeing sustainable ways of living like energy efficiency

- Organise a project on local level, we can think how we can do this on a simple level. Educational centre where children can also come and learn
- To make a "Green Agenda" house like the one in De Kleine Aarde,

Diner in Restaurant "*Negenmannen*": using regional products, very nice. Chain from producer to consumer is short because of that approach. We have lots of milk and mineral water from other countries while we have our own milk and water. It is very applicable. Ethno-houses are very popular nowadays.

General lesson learned: multi-stakeholder process is not only a theory but is happening in real life.

Thursday May 22

Farm-camping "Pergama Hoeve"

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?

- Regional branding. Methodology and strategy of branding. Cooperation of municipality, community and businesses.
- Agro-tourism activities, visiting a farm. Presentation by owner and two sons. Branding could give opportunity to local people to do something to earn money and protect nature and add value to their products.
- Regional branding. How regional branding assists local entrepreneurs
- We learned about eco-tourism, regional branding, how to earn money and protect nature.



- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?

- Festival of cultural heritage activities. Could be linked to our GA activities
- Regional branding is an opportunity for GA in our country
- Creating a link with regional branding idea, people planet profit

- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?

- Agro-tourism and agro-business actions.
- Inform our NGOs and help them
- Smart chain between producers and consumers. Circle.
- Spread idea of regional branding, inform us about feedback
- We should work to involve tourism stakeholders in project
- To suggest our NGOs to promote eco-tourism.

Lunch with organic products, very nice

Kampina/Banisveld/Mortelen

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - Way how they money and budgets
 - Way how NGO was working, it was a private NGO. They earned a lot of money through for example lottery. New idea
 - Number of employees they have in their NGO is impressive
 - How land was managed on his own without government control and what kind of budget he had (very high)
 - Idea of lottery was impressive, but it could not work in Serbia I think
 - Reshaping of nature was impressive.
 - Could see how people work to build something and protect biodiversity in area.
 - We learned how nature can be rebuilt. Protection of biodiversity is very important.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - To do something similar in fundraising method
 - To recommend donation from people
 - How to involve people in such kind of activities in or near nature
 - Impressive – to invent a lottery in order to finance the work of your organization.
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
 - as trainers we can recommend these new fundraising methods
 - smaller action plans for protecting nature in our areas
 - evaluate the assets we have in our areas, how to add value of these assets
 - Fundraising in order to involve people in similar projects home.
 - To involve tourism stakeholders in Green Agenda projects.

Belvertshoeve; regional branding; Lifescape-your landscape

- What was the most important thing you learned during that session?
 - NL beers
 - Concrete way how to protect landscapes
 - INTERREG IIIB. Working in all regions of Eastern Europe, but in Balkans it was dark.
 - To see how they were acting with different target groups to create landscape and protect nature in urban areas
 - Presentation of owner/chairman strawberry, sweet, tasty and red strawberry. How this link is functioning between producers, distributors and consumers. How to add value to community
 - Learned about NGO activity at centre to help people with difficulties and how to be involved in daily life and be involved in the future
 - Really nice to see how your government is taking care about such children, really human
 - Impressive to see ESF funds invested in this for us innovative project dealing with adolescent problems. Wide problems, very huge. I like the way how the government started to deal with this. Open
 - How to shorten link between producer and consumer in that way that people consume locally produced food.
 - Subventions from municipality for this kind of projects.
 - How people with difficulties could be reintegrated into the society.
- What was the relevance of that session to the GA projects/processes in the western Balkans?
 - Activities with youth

- Possible cooperation between NGOs in cross border projects for products
- What concrete actions could you undertake during next 7 months?
- Recommendation to our businesses. In this community people were planting trees. This happens also in our commune, there are 3 businesses working with decorative plans, and maybe we can work with them
- Recommendation and tips for local authorities how to deal with people with difficulties and involve them in social life

Remarks Marien Sonneveld: What could you apply in your own country of the ideas that you saw and heard. Maybe you need some time for that at home, to think and consider. Maybe we can have e-mail contact later on, and share more information through that. I am impressed by your patience to do all these things.

If you give me another list of e-addresses we can have contact via e-mail if you like. What is the interest of this region to invite you here. There can be more to it. Rob Maaskant told you yesterday about cooperation, each country doing their own thing but with a common interest which enabled them to access bigger funds. I think there are such opportunities for your region as well. I would like to see such project in the future. You have something that we have lost, we can learn a lot from you in that sense. We have an interest to cooperate with you. Let's not decide in the next 15 minutes.

I can put some extra info on all these projects on my website. So you have a focal point where you can find all info.

Remarks of participants:

- Alexey and Chris did a great job. They made sure we are all here and in time, a lot of e-mails were sent.
- We learn how to be very good organizers, took care of all of us. Being on time for breakfast, not to be sick, etc. Thank you very much. Hope we did not stress you too much
- It is all true, thank you
- Wonderful experience, learned a lot
- Hell of a job, thanks. Fond of Alexey and his sense of humor
- You were great. I expected that Alexey would be older. Techniques and style and professionalism of giving us all needed services.
- Great job, thank you
- For me I can see it is the best experience. I thank all organizers, it was intensive, but very good. Many different issues, EU, international organizations, DGs, branding (for me very interesting).
- Pleasure to be here with all people. All of us liked Chris sense of humour
- Thank you Chris, Alexei and MKI. Visiting EU and NL, is my dream.
- Thank you, part of our team and we were part of your team. We were really one team, it was a good experience. Satisfied with extent and variety of visits
- Bicycles made me feel Dutch
- You gain something that is rare in study tours, really good team building within the whole group. We really appreciate the energy you share with us.

Thank you, it was great to have you here.

Annex 1 – List of participants for the study visit to Brussels and Brabant

#	Name of participant	Affiliation/position	E-mail	Telephone/mobile	County
1.	Saša Jovanović (M)	MKI – Bosnia & Herzegovina / Trainer, consultant	alkibijad@hotmail.com	+387 53 202 751; +387 65 643 773	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
2.	Stavri Pllaha (M)	Transborder Wildlife Association / Coordinator	natyranderkufitare@yahoo.com spllaha@yahoo.com	+355 822 44346 (243037); +355 692 053 596	<i>Albania</i>
3.	Aurora Dibra (F)	Eden Trainers Group	adibra@yahoo.com	+355 22 49 036; +355 69 215 7643	<i>Albania</i>
4.	Mirjana Bartula (F)	Nature Conservation Movement of Sremska Mitrovica / GA coordinator	mbartula@eunet.yu	+381 226 14300; +381 638 801572	<i>Serbia</i>
5.	Milka Gvzodenovic (F)	GA trainer team	milkag@eunet.yu ; milka@mis.org.yu	+381 11 311 1314; +381 63 270 566	<i>Serbia</i>
6.	Luan Hasanaj (M)	LIRIA / project coordinator	luanhasanaj@gmail.com	+377 44 282 923	<i>Kosovo/a</i>
7.	Adem Nikqi (M)	Training team Kosovo / trainer, facilitator	ademnikqi@hotmail.com	+377 44 152 354	<i>Kosovo/a</i>
8.	Toni Stoimenovski (M)	Regional Advocacy Centre Delcevo / project coordinator	tstoimenovski@sonet.com.mk	+389 33 411 727; +389 70 306 649	<i>Macedonia</i>
9.	Julijana Daskalov (F)	KOCKA, Training Institute / Trainer	julijana@kocka.org.mk foto@ekosvest.com.mk	+389 23 079 591; +389 70 244 488	<i>Macedonia</i>
10.	Nebojša Babović (M)	FORS Montenegro – Foundation for Development of the Northern Montenegro / project manager	nbabovic@forsmontenegro.org	+382 87 235 977; +382 69 318 965	<i>Montenegro</i>
11.	Azra Kurmemović (F)	Green Step – Zeleni Korak	azra_ul@hotmail.com	+382 69 850 479; +382 68 526 061	<i>Montenegro</i>
12.	Chris van de Sanden	Miliekontakt International, Amsterdam / project coordinator	c.vandesanden@milieukontakt.nl	+31 20 531 89 45	<i>Netherlands</i>
13.	Alexey Pristupa	Miliekontakt International, Amsterdam / intern	a.pristupa@milieukontakt.nl	+31 20 531 89 36	<i>Netherlands</i>

Annex 2 – Program for Brussels part of the study visit

Monday, 19 May 2008

10.30 - meeting at the EEB office - 34, Blvd. de Waterloo - 5th floor – meeting with EEB / Chantal de Meersman. Regina Schneider (Head of communication) will tell you who EEB is, what they do and how they do it. You can ask as many questions as possible.

Pieter de Pous who is dealing with agriculture, soil and water was away all this week in Slovenia but hopefully he will be able to join our meeting. EEB also has a volunteer in the office from Bosnia and Herzegovina

12.30 Lunch in Gallery
Rue du Grand Cerf 7,
1000 Brussels
tel. 02 511 80 35 (map attached).

14.00 - meeting at the WWF European Policy office -168 Avenue de Tervuren, 1000 Brussels (metro station Montgomery) (see map attached)
We will meet with either Paloma Agrasot or Pauline Denissel (who is on holidays this week). We asked Paloma to speak about - what WWF EPO are doing touching upon the accession, European Neighbourhood Policy and rural development, country specific programmes etc.

To go to the WWF office you take metro at Louise - direction Simonis, change at Art-Loi - line 1B direction Stockel and get of the train at Montgomery - look for the exit to Avenue de Tervuren II (even numbers). Montgomery area map enclosed.

16.00 - meeting at DG REGIO with Ms. Vassiliki KOTSONI (Principal administrator) - 41, Avenue de Tervuren, 1040 Brussels
She is dealing with the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) and its objective on regional development. She might also explain a bit what DG Regio does and how they work. We can walk from WWF office to DG REGIO

20.00 - DINNER TIME - it is booked in downtown -place called Chez Leon - 18 rue des Bouchers 1000 Brussels - tel. 02 511 14 15. Very close to the Grand Place. You can either walk to downtown or take a metro from Art-Loi to Gare Central.

Tuesday 20th May

10.30 - back in the EEB office to meet with Ms. Dagmar Kaljarikova from DG Environment - desk officer for NGOs, Enlargement and Neighbouring countries. You could speak about what they do in DG ENV, environment in the accession process, regional cooperation in the field of environment, cooperation with/involvement of civil society etc. very good person. DG Environment on the whole is NGO minded.

12.30 (or a bit earlier) lunch which is booked at Rinascimento - 14 rue Jourdan - 1060 Brussels. tel. 02 534 75 20 (see map attached)

14.00 - meeting at the DG ENLARGEMENT with Ms. Magdalena Ruda (Policy coordination Unit) - 170, Rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels - building is called **CHARLEMAGNE** to talk about the accession process in general and what DG Enlargement is doing in this, how NGOs can get involved etc. She told me that she may try to get somebody from their financial unit but it is not sure because next week most of people are out for missions. This meeting will not be much longer than 1 hour - so, you will be able to catch our 16:00 hours train at Gare du Midi.

>From your lunch place you take a metro at Louise - line 2 direction Simonis, get off the train at Arts-Loi (Kunst-Wet) and change for the line 1A (Herman-Debroux) or 1B (direction Stockel) - both are on the same platform. You get out at stop called Schuman and take exit towards Berlaymont. When you are on the street level you pass Berlaymont, cross the small street and enter Charlemagne building (see map Schuman). The lady will meet us at the reception desk - if not security will call her - extention is 65781.

PLEASE BE ON TIME FOR THESE MEETINGS.

Annex 3 – Program for Brabant part of the study visit

Study visits to Brabant – The Netherlands Exchange programme for NGO representatives from Western Balkans

Assigned by: Milieukontakt and Stichting Streekfestival Het Groene Woud
Execution by: Interactive Consult - Marien Sonneveld, in cooperation with local people
Datum: 16th of May 2008
Ref.: 08.101-12

Introduction and background information

Interest of Milieukontakt

Milieukontakt International coaches and trains local NGO's worldwide in capacity building, citizen participation and environmental issues. As part of the Green Agenda¹ training programme by Milieukontakt a group of NGO-representatives from several countries in the Western Balkans will pay a two-days' visit to Brussels. Next to it, the group will come to Brabant for three days to learn from experiences in rural development and regional branding. The group will consist of about 7 NGO-representatives and 5 NGO-trainers, and will be guided by Chris van de Sanden (mobile phone: 0644 – 594 936) and Alexey Pristupa (mobile phone: 0614 – 023 345) of Milieukontakt.

Interest of Stichting Streekfestival Het Groene Woud

The branding initiative in the "Het Groene Woud" area since their start in 2005 has been developing well. The next stage of development brings about new questions. The initiative takers like to get some feed back on their plans, get new ideas and exchange insights and experience. Moreover, they are looking for opportunities for trans-territorial co-operation.

Objectives of the study visits are:

- orientation at possible projects and approaches for rural development: seeing examples, getting inspired, learning from (best or worse) practices
- learning about integrated sustainable development and EU-instruments: how can nature & landscape projects enhance the regional economic development and at the same time stimulate citizen participation
- initiating ideas for possible projects "at home"
- noticing and exploring the chances of cooperation in international projects (probably co-financed by the EU), for example together with parties in Brabant.

To meet the objectives the study visits should not be limited to paying visits to several projects ("consuming information"), but should initiate exchanges. The aim is to utilise the opportunity to exchange ideas, talk about driving forces and recent, local developments and explore opportunities for cooperation.






The participants are expected to exchange their experiences with the visits and set up a draft action plan how to incorporate the gained insights and knowledge in existing or new activities at home. The participants together with some Dutch people can help each other in formulating concrete and reasonable first steps to start with (international) cooperation in regional/ rural development and branding.

¹ Green Agenda is an adaptation of the concept of Local Agenda 21, but with focus on improving and maintaining local nature and environmental values

Several Dutch and other West-European parties are interested in cooperation with (South-) East European countries at local levels (NGOs, municipalities, SME's etc.). This offers the participants a unique chance to extend their network and use international knowledge and experiences for rural development projects in their own countries.

Programme

In previous consultation with Chris van de Sanden we agreed upon a thematic approach:

1. city – countryside relationship, symbolised by: 
2. sustainable development in common (), and more specific: regional branding () 
3. participation and cooperation: citizen involvement and public-private partnerships 

The programme will be sent to the Balkan participants and to Dutch people, involved in one or more parts of the programme.









Tuesday, 20th of May – evening

Welcome to Brabant

0. **Arrival** from Brussels

Wednesday, 21st of May

City – countryside, integrated sustainable development

1. **Introduction** to sustainable rural development in Brabant;
overview and comprehension of the 3-days programme   
Marien Sonneveld
2. Visit to the **Green Delta project** of City of Den Bosch  
(especially the estuary of the river Dieze)
- preventing the very nearby nature areas from urban development, restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage, creating citizen involvement and participation of NGOs
Rob Brinkhof
3. **Lunch** (at "De Kleine Aarde")
4. Visiting **"De Kleine Aarde"**
- introduction to sustainable development and use of EU-funds 
- presentation and guided tour by representative of "De Kleine Aarde" 
- brainstorm and discussion about applicability in the Western Balkans *chaired by Chris*
Elisabeth Koch
5. Relaxation, probably some time for shopping or sight seeing in Boxtel
6. Dinner at **restaurant "De Negenmannen"** 
- dinner with local produced food
- presentation of the story behind local produce, food and involvement *Jos Hermans*
- informal discussion: how to relate nature and landscape with good citizenship via food & fun?

7. Visiting the Pergamahoeve for projects about **Regional branding**



- introduction to Branding of the Groene Woud-area
- new economic activities for rural development: agro-/ecotourism, home sold produce
- visiting farm/ campside
- cultural heritage, citizen participation, private-public cooperation

Jan van Herk

Jan Brenninkmeijer,
aldermen of Haaren

8. **Lunch** at the Pergamahoeve (with local produce)



9. **Kampina / Banisveld / Mortelen** - excursion to the heart of Het Groene Woud



- guided tour through the National Landscape
- seeing the nature assets of the region, which forms the basis for branding the region, visiting highly qualified nature & landscape spots

Frans Kapteijns

10. Arrival at the **Belvertshoeve**



- small restaurant, run by (young) people with social difficulties
- meeting/ talk with Frans van Beerendonk about social cohesion, regional festival

Frans van
Beerendonk

11. Experiences of the Interreg III-B project **Lifescape – your landscape**



- presentations how NGO's and local groups in five countries executed their own projects within one common theme: enhancing landscape and livelihood
- the project seems a perfect example how organisations in the Western Balkan could cooperate within the Green Agenda approach.

Rob Maessen

12. Dinner at the **Belvertshoeve**



Friday, 23rd of May

Practices of local multifunctionality

(travelling by bicycle, depending on wheather and participant's bike-abilities)

13. Visiting the **Canal zone** and/ or other parts of the municipality of Oirschot



- finding sustainable solutions for accessibility to the town, traffic problems, spatial planning, nature development and housing, stimulating recreation

Han Julicher, Bart Muskens

14. Visiting horticultural farm **"Jan Robben Strawberries"**



- innovation in sustainable agriculture/ horticulture
- entrepreneurship and marketing
- local cooperation between SME's in branding and economic development

owner/grower Jan Robben

15. Lunch at the **Spoordonkse Watermill**



- preserving cultural heritage combined with economic development (recreational activities: rambling, hiking, cycling and the restaurants business)
- visiting the restored mill, rambling/walking along the brook

Jeanne Dingemans

16. **Evaluation and follow-up**

chair: Chris v/d Sanden

- evaluation, lessons learned
- brainstorm and discussion how to apply and share the information at home

Contacts

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Marien Sonneveld

mobile phone

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e-mail

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sonneveld@interactiveconsult.nl

Annex 4 – Information sheets of participating NGOs



www.forsmontenegro.org

Berane ▲ Nikšić ▲ Pljevlja ▲ Podgorica

FORS Montenegro is a Regional Development Agency established on the initiative of employees of CHF International – being the greatest supporter of all our activities.

The establishing process for FORS Montenegro has been initiated by those directly involved in community development initiatives in Northern Montenegro i.e. members of CHF International as individuals, along with representatives of partnering municipalities, that displayed their initiative and identified the necessity of establishment of a body to coordinate and lead economic development activities in the region.

FORS Montenegro has taken up a highly significant role in implementation of development projects in the north of Montenegro. To carry out these activities, FORS cooperated with the other stakeholders in this region, such as: Government Ministries, Mayors of municipalities, Businessmen, representatives from agricultural, educational, cultural, tourism and health sectors, non-governmental organizations, etc. Through this valuable cooperation, FORS, began to gain the trust of the above-mentioned institutions, is being approached to provide consultancy services, or involved in the different development activities, principally in development and implementation of local community projects.

Since its establishment, FORS has implemented or commenced implementation of different activities, predominantly in the following fields:

- Regional positioning (setting up priorities, project identification, support in implementation, and implementation)
- Supporting community strengthening projects through economic development
- Surveys and analysis
- Other activities (participation in conferences, study tours, etc.)

FORS Montenegro tends to grow as an “organization that learns” through continuous education, getting introduced to European best practices, monitoring the community progress, and measuring results.

FORS Montenegro currently implements programs:

-CRDA- E Extension- Community Rehabilitation through Democratic Action
USAID / CHF funded program of local economic development

- FORS as implementator since 2006.
- 80 projects are in development, implementation or monitoring phase in CRDA –Ext
- 138 projects were completed in CRDA-E by FORS
CRDA-E Ext. target sectors are:
 - Tourism
 - Agriculture
 - Information/Communication Technologies
 - Administrative Capacity Building

-Reproductive health improvement

donor: European Union through European Agency for Reconstruction

partners:

- Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Welfare
- Reproductive Health Centres in Berane, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Nikšić,
- Local NGOs

Components of the project:

- 1) raising women's awareness about reproductive health in 13 municipalities of Montenegro
- 2) capacity building of employees in the reproductive health centers
- 3) providing of services.

Objective of the project is Improvement of reproductive health.

Final beneficiaries of the project are 114.847 women of all ages and about 10.000 men, adolescences in 13 municipalities.

-ESTABLISHING OF PRIVATE FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NORTH

Partner: SNV - Dutch Development Organization

Facilitation and establishment of PFOA in 4 municipalities:

Andrijevica, Berane, Pljevlja, Rožaje

-GREEN AGENDA

DONOR: Milleukontakt

Creation of environmental action plan for Mojkovac municipality

-Procurement of agriculture mechanisation to Roma/Egyptian/Ashkaly communitities

in the Northern Montenegro

DONOR: Government of Montenegro

Other implemented projects:

➤ Montenegro Preparedness Assessment

DONOR: Serbia Contingency Planning and Economic Security Program (SCOPES);
Funded by USAID implemented by Development Alternatives Inc, with CHF International and Booz Allen Hamilton as Partners

Green Step



Green Step has been previously known as NGO Kalimera, established in 1994. With new name it started its work in 2006.

Main activities:

- Environment protection and affirmation of sustainable development postulates;
- Promotion of ecological values;
- Environmental education;
- Strengthening of local- self government and initiation of joint projects.

Realized projects:

- Everyone for Tourism – Tourism for All;
- For Ecological Beach Tourist Reach (“Ekoloska plaza - turistima draza” in local language);
- Save Environment – Manage Waste;
- Our waste – Our worry;
- Eco Patrol – Ulcinj 2000;
- Salt-works Ulcinj – Heaven for Birds;
- Protection of South-East Part of Skadar Lake;
- Importance of River Bojana in Formation of Flora and Fauna;
- Co-organizers of the international symposium about protection of Skadar Lake;
- Organizers of events like: children’s carnival and distribution of tree plants in schools;
- Eco- classes held in Ulcinj schools;
- Organizers of international camps for waste cleaning;
- Co-organizers of regular events like Day of Tourism and Ecology;
- Establishment of Eco Patrol in Ulcinj;
- Project: Sustainable Development of Sasko Lake;
- Recycling projects

Donors:

- Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro;
- Ministry of Tourism and Ecology;
- Ulcinj Municipality;
- JP Morsko dobro;
- REC – Podgorica and Skadar;
- UNDP;
- USAID;
- OSCE



Nature Conservation Movement of Sremska Mitrovica

Nature Conservation Movement is among the oldest ecological nongovernmental organization in Serbia. The activities of the organization are connected with education and participation of citizens, especially the young ones, in the field of preserving and improving of natural values. Over the 40 years of its existence, Natural Conservation Movement has planted trees on 400.000 ha of waste land and a few million of seedlings in the cities, villages and parks.

For excellent results in the field of protection of Nature, in 1997 the NCM of Sremska Mitrovica was given to manage the Specila Nature Reserve Zasavica. It is the first nongovernmental organization in Serbia given to manage one protected area. In that way one of the basic assumptions of modern concept of managing through the cooperation with local people has been gained.

After the first three years of work the NCM of Sremska Mitrovica has successfully accomplished the programme for protection and development of the area, its presentation to the public, the cooperation with educational, scientific and expert institutions and it has provided the conditions for using this area through eco tourism.

NCM organises research and activity camps, as well as mini-seminars, and it also organizes fishing, recreation and amusement (sport fishing competitions, fishermen nights, various celebrations, theme nights, etc.) in Zasavica. They made a great contribution to breeding rare species of pigs and cattle (*mangulica swallow bellied pigs and podolsko bull*), as well as a successfully realized project of reintroducing the European beaver to Serbia. Apart from protection, NCM also maintains very successful cooperation with the local population through providing accommodation for visitors in local households, preparing food, selling homemade products and breeding rare animal species.

In the ten years of the reserve's existence, the number of visitors and income from tourism have increased ten times. In 2006 and 2007, NCM received the great award for Serbian tourism called the "White Angel", for contribution to protection of the environment and sustainable development of tourism and "Olive Branch" by Radio Belgrade, the greatest acknowledgement for a good deed done for the nature.

Main implemented projects:

1. Public awareness-raising stakeholder campaigns on nutrient reduction, control of toxic substances and protection of ecosystems, UNDP/GEF
2. Development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Zasavica, European Agency for Reconstruction
3. Creation condition for the return of the colony of herons at the upper part of the Valjevac pasture in the SNR "Zasavica", Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mirjana Bartula, MSc
Nature Conservation Movement of Sremska Mitrovica
Svetog Save 19
22000 Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia
tel/fax: +381 22/614-300
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web: www.zasavica.org.yu

Specila Nature Reserve Zasavica

The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica is situated in the South-East Europe, in the Republic of Serbia, on the territory of South Voivodina and North Macva, east of the Drina River and south of the Sava River.

Zasavica is both a wetland and a river, 33 km long, with 6 meanders and surface water quality in the basin, of the categories I and II. Zasavica river basin represents a stretch of special natural value and uniqueness, with more than 200 plant species some of which are protected and are listed in the Red Book of Serbian Flora. It is the habitat of 180 species of birds, 20 fish species and as many amphibians and reptiles.

As of 1997, Zasavica is a Special Nature Reserve stretching over a total of 1820 ha (category I natural property of exceptional importance), of which the area of 671 ha is under II degree protection regime, and the protective zone runs on for another 1150 ha.

The Special Nature Reserve (SNR) Zasavica with its surrounding represents an exceptional recess of preserved nature and diverse natural world, picturesque landscapes, intact primary natural values. The reserve has all features of river-pond-swamp area, which according to contemporary classification falls into wetlands and represents a unique natural entity, very significant for the preservation of biological diversity in this area, and thereby it also represents a very attractive tourist resource and potential tourist destination for certain groups of tourists and some selective types of tourism.

Since 2000, SNR Zasavica has been a member of the IBA register of territories of international importance for birds and a candidate for RAMSAR, with category IV (IUCN), and as of 2001 it is a member of the Europark Federation.

Project current:

Current projects: **GREEN AGENDA – „Joining forces for maintainable future“**. The aim of the project is to develop and implement GREEN AGENDA as a strategic document, primarily directed at maintainable management of the environment for the purpose of improvement of the life quality in the local community. Project is simultaneously implemented in Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo.

„Volunteering and social development in local environment“. The aim of the project is to raise consciousness of the young people in local environment about all the values of the civil society, and civil initiatives through volunteering.

„Mobility of the youth“ – The aim of the project is to raise consciousness of the youth about the universal freedom of movement, dialog and solidarity through the study visits to the youth of the District of Brcko.

„School in the nature – education about environment“ – the aim of the project is to raise ecological awareness of citizens of city of Zavidovići through the schools in the nature.

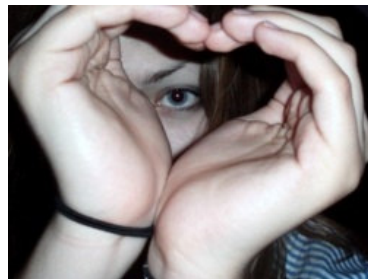
„Giraffe in the classroom 2008“ – main objective of



the project is ensuring of mechanisms with students of the lower grades of the elementary school to discover sources of the misunderstandings and conflicts with others, and to acquire skills and ways of how to solve these disputes, through experienced learning through games and relaxed atmosphere.

Partners

Municipality of Zavidovići
“Die Schule Meditation“ Lebensgarten (Germany)
“Eco centre Latinovac“ Latinovac (Croatia)
Milieukontakt“ Amsterdam (The Netherlands)



„Borovo youth group“ from Vukovar
Fondation for the Development of Democratic Rights (DemNet) from Hungary
Non-governmental organisation “Demokratija-Organizovanje-Napredak“ (DON) from Prijedor
“Center for Enviroment“ from Banja Luka
“Eko tim“ from Sarajevo
“Center for ecology and energy“ from Tuzla
OSCE BiH Office in Zenica
“Embassy of Local Democracy“ from Zavidovići
Fondation “Mozaik“ from Sarajevo
NGO “Tooper“ Doboj
Center for mothers “Plamen“ from Zavidovići
„Association of Romas“ Zavidovići
NGO “OLI“ Sokobanja (Serbia)
NGO “Treca Zvezda“ Aleksinac (Serbia)
SNIK „Atom“ from Zavidovići
U:G. „Ceker“ from Zavidovići
Local communal firm „Radnik“ from Zavidovići
Local community „Lovnica“ from Zavidovići
USP and Development agency Zavidovići
First Primary School Zavidovići
„Association of womens Romas“ Zavidovići
Second technical school SrZavidovići
High school Gimnazija Zavidovići
Second vocational school Zavidovići
KTV from Zavidovići
Hospital Dom zdravlja from Zavidovići

NGO “Sadnice Mira-Peace Trees“ Zavidovići, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ul. “Zlatnih ljiljana“ br.31-A;72220 Zavidovići
Phone/ Fax: 00387 32 863 466;
E-mail: sadnicem@bih.net.ba
Contact Person: Šćekić V. Milan



I.D.Card of the Organisation

We respect every form of life; we detest any kind of violence; we share everything with others; we are sympathetic; we are preserving natural balance of the Planet, we know how to love, we listen to others in order to understand them; we are useful; we are taking part to the development of the society; we know how to play, sing and have fun; we meet new people with joy; we learn new skills; we help people we love and people that need our help; we are willing to share our time, energy and resources with others; we believe in ourselves; we are open, flexible towards others; we are true diplomats of truth and love; we are self-confident and we make our own decision; we want justice, freedom, dignity and prosperity of the society; we give emphasis to the dialogue and tolerance in a family, work, to our and other countries; we successfully connect traditional and modern; be our friend.

Mission

Our organisation is voluntary-based, independent, non-political, non-profitable and non-governmental organisation of citizens that with its principles of understanding and practicing ecological, creative, tolerant and healthy relationship with nature, ourselves and other people, contributes to promotion of educational-communicative base for creating harmony within yourselves and with other people as well as nature.

Vision

Permanent affirmation, education and preservation of the environment as an essential and existential need of every individual, but also a very significant part of the culture of living of today as well as future.

We are dedicated

To teach people about healthy living and healthy environment together with practicing healthy, ecological and tolerant relationship towards nature, ourselves and other people regardless of the age, sex, race, language, religion, national or social background. We are teaching people how to preserve cultural heritage, tradition, life style and unity of different ethnic backgrounds. We are oriented towards the creation of ecological projects for preservation of environment, and cooperation with Organisations that have the same targeted objective, but also widening exchanging experience through seminars, counselling, education, self-education with the help of domestic as well as foreign experts.

Main objectives of the Organisation

We promote preservation of nature, in the same time we are helping people to understand diversity of all living creatures that live there. We inform and raise the level of conscience about endangered condition of environment and ecosystem in general. We promote the need for preservation of healthy natural environment, as well as the importance of leisure and recreation in the same, and all that for individual and the profit of community.

We educate young people about healthy life and healthy environment together with providing basis for international exchange of multi-scientific programmes on ecology in terms of deep structure and preservation of environment. We practice ecological and tolerant relationship towards nature, ourselves and other people regardless of the age, sex, race, language, religion, national or social background... We are teaching people how to preserve cultural heritage, tradition, life style and unity of different ethnic backgrounds. We learn, practice, follow, and supervise the development of harmony within ourselves, others, community and nature, but also we offer education on interpersonal acceptance, respect, trust and understanding, all that with one aim, to strengthen the will of an individual and group in whole. We improve knowledge, work, discipline, and transparency of truth and love.

Targeted groups

Every social, cultural, religious, age, race, language, national and other citizen categories. Most of our members are high-school and university students.



I love Zavidoviće!

Projects implemented

“Environment, health, development”- “Let’s play music to our waste”; Embassy of Local Democracy; March-May 2002 and 2003; The basic practical skills and knowledge of the lower grades of the local elementary schools are implemented.

“Environment, health, development” Publication **“State of the environment in the area of Zenicko-dobojski canton with the special view on the municipality of Zavidovici”** “Embassy of Local Democracy Zavidovici”; June, 2003.

“Eco camp Kamenica 2001, 2003, 2004”; “Embassy of Local Democracy Zavidovici”; July-August, 2001, 2003, 2004; Part of the working material for development of

project analysis for protection of wider area of mountain Tajan (Tajan-National Park)

“Volunteer Open Days- Eco village Latinovac 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007”; “Eco Centre Latinovac”- Latinovac and “Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights” Osijek (Republic of Croatia); Practically educated high school students-volunteers of our municipality discussing importance and advantages of voluntary work.

“Peace Trees’ Summer School- Vukovar 1999 and 2000”; Die Schule Meditation, Staeborg Germany; August, 1999 and 2000; Young people are qualified to act independently, to become the bearers of the activities, leaders and presenters and that with their activities they stimulate will and morale of the people around us, offering them our trust.

“Eco league of Zenicko-dobojski canton”; OSCE Office, Zenica and Citizen, 2004;

“Second Investment Fair Zavidovici 2005”; Municipality of Zavidovici, “Topeer” Doboj; “Association of independent businessmen” and “Peace Trees”; January, 2005. Meeting between non-governmental, governmental, public and business sector was organized, where through constructive talks, debate tables, presentations, presentation of projects, regulatory plans and plans of investments, are identified needs and possibilities of the region-Bosna river basin.

«Study tour to National Parks of Province of Brescia(Italy)»; “Embassy of Local Democracy Zavidovici”; May, 2005; Acquired practical knowledge and experience about organization and management of the National Parks and protected areas. **“Communication with citizens and participation of the citizens”**; OSCE of Bosnia and Herzegovina; December, 2005;

Project **“Organized community for better environment”**— pilot project Eco park „Đurića gaj“, supported by the EU (2006).

Project **“Local society initiative for the improvement of the environment on the local basis- SEAL”** – pilot project „, supported by the EU through CARDS ENR programme (2006).

And other less important ecological projects in the local community.