

EU FOR NATURA 2000 IN SERBIA

June 2021
Newsletter

The "EU for Natura 2000 in Serbia" project started in May 2019, with the aim to support the establishment of the Natura 2000 network. This network is a crucial instrument for biodiversity protection in the European Union, an ecological network of protected areas that are established to secure the survival of the most valuable species and habitats, promoting the protection of numerous ecosystems and ensuring that European nature systems stay healthy and resilient. It is based on the Birds and Habitat Directives, and its implementation is one of the requirements for accession to the European Union.

Photo exhibition "Natura 2000 in the frame"

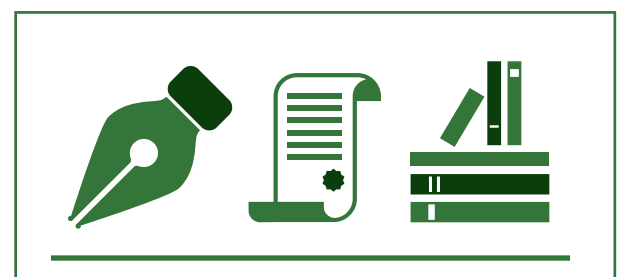
During March and April, a photo exhibition at Kalemegdan Fortress showed the 34 best photographs selected under the photo contest "Natura 2000 in the frame". Out of more than 1500 photos received during the photo contest, 3 winning and 31 best semi-finalists photographs were displayed at the exhibition. It aimed to show through these amazing photos the important biodiversity values and beautiful landscapes in Serbia and raise public awareness of the importance of nature conservation, diversity of flora and fauna, and benefits of the Natura 2000 network.



The exhibition was opened on 5th March by the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia H.E. Sem Fabrizi and the Minister of Environmental protection Ms. Irena Vujovic. Both of them expressed the importance of protecting nature in Serbia and highlighted their admiration for the fantastic photos. The authors of the three winning photographs, project beneficiaries, the media representatives, and other stakeholders were present during the event.

The photo exhibition was also shown at 2021 Mikser festival, organized from 26th to 28th of May.

Amendments to the Law of Nature Protection



The project has finished and published the Report on assessment of Serbian legislation with EU requirements for Natura 2000. This assessment was the baseline for preparing part of the amendments to the Law of Nature Protection for the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The legal experts have provided specific support to amend the provisions related to the Appropriate Assessment (AA) of plans and projects, which is a crucial topic to prevent adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites. A set of provisions were amended in that sense to include in the Law of Nature Protection all the requirements for a comprehensive and correct implementation of the AA. For other chapters of the Law related to the Ecological Network, amendments were also proposed to include requirements from the Birds and Habitats Directive.

"Natura 2000 in the frame" in TV show Mali Dnevnik

A team of young investigative journalists from the show "Mali Dnevnik" became interested in the exhibition of photographs "Natura 2000 in the frame" at Kalemegdan. Driven by the desire to find out how it came about that fantastic photos of natural beauties throughout Serbia can be found in Belgrade's centre, they set out to personally get answers to everything that interested them. As real little professionals, they talked to Marija Ristic, biologist and member of the project "EU for Natura 2000 in Serbia" and Violeta Milutinovic, one of the awarded authors.



Marija explained that the exhibition's goal was to show the beautiful landscapes in Serbia and the importance of protecting nature. She also invited primary school teachers to visit the exhibition with their students during a walkthrough of Kalemegdan, which was also done by sending invitation letters to all the surrounding schools.

You can watch the whole TV show "Mali Dnevnik" on this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtOCL4-Fh1w>

Working group meetings

The working groups of the project (WGs) were proposed as the mechanism to consult, share, standardize and agree on the interpretations of information and outputs developed by the project. They are intended to be a forum for cooperation and participation, streamlining communication between main technical beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project. WGs were established by the formal act of the Ministry for Environmental Protection, as the project's main beneficiary.

During April and May 2021, four working groups (Invertebrates, Vertebrates, Plants and Habitats and Birds) meetings were held. Members of the working groups are professionals from 15 different institutions. The objective of these meetings was to discuss the first achievements in the identification of the Natura 2000 network in Serbia - the fieldwork results and desktop analysis, the status of each species on the reference list, its distribution, and any information gaps. Also, to present and discuss the criteria established for selecting Natura 2000 sites (representativity, high-quality/uniqueness, high diversity, geographical coherence distribution, and species knowledge).

Bus campaign "Healthy nature for a healthy life"

"Healthy nature for a healthy life" was the slogan of a two-month bus campaign that the project launched in April 2021, in three cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Nis. A total of 16 vehicles were branded with fantastic photographs of nature in Serbia, driving accompanied by wolves, horses, birds, and beautiful landscapes, while their interior included a collection of panels containing exciting information about Serbian biodiversity.



As a part of the promotional campaign, a social media photo challenge was organized under the name "Take a picture of a Natura 2000 vehicle and win an award". This photo challenge addressed Instagram users and nature lovers to take a photo of a Natura 2000 branded buses and trolleys, with the best three authors receiving vouchers for technical equipment. The jury composed of the EU Delegation, EU Infor Centre and the project team selected and announced the three winners on the World Environment Day (5th June), once again intending to continue spreading the importance of nature conservation and the great biodiversity values that Serbia has.

You can see the winners of the Social Media Challenge on this link:
https://www.instagram.com/p/CPu0yd-qWi_/

Project "Conservation Action for the European Roller in Serbia"

The project is supporting the improvement of the conservation status of the European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) in Serbia by installing 150 nest boxes in 30 localities, in 12 different regions. Birds of farmland and grassland habitats have the worst conservation status in Europe, and the European Roller is one of the species whose population has declined due to agricultural intensification. It is a secondary-cavities nesting species that are not able to create its nest holes, except in loess and sand cliffs. The lack of suitable nesting sites seems to be the factor most limiting the recovery of its population, based on the experiences of previous conservation actions. It is also an action identified in the International Species Action Plan for the European Roller prepared and published by BirdLife International on behalf of the European Commission. With this activity, the project aims to increase the breeding success of the species in Serbia during 2021, through the increase of suitable breeding sites for the species and improve the status of the species in the region. Also, specific monitoring of the species will be carried on, obtaining new data records about specie's distribution and population.



The European Natura 2000 day

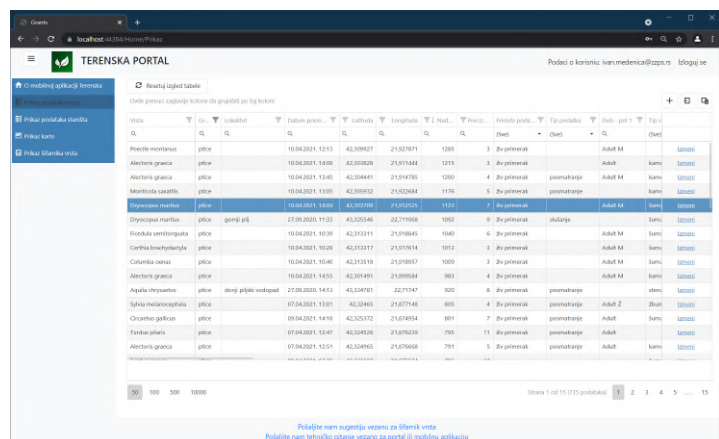
European Natura 2000 Day relates to the 21st May 1992, when both EU Habitats Directive and LIFE program were approved. This Directive together with the Birds Directive (adopted in 1979) became a base of the EU Natura 2000 Network of protected areas. This date is celebrated all over Europe to underline the importance of nature protection and the benefits of the Natura 2000 network.



During the EU Green Week, the project celebrated the Natura 2000 Day at the Botanical Garden "Jevremovac" in Belgrade. The event was organized with the presence of the State Secretary in the Ministry of Environmental Protection Jelena Tanaskovic and Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia Yngve Engstroem, as well as with the participation of numerous experts and professionals in charge of environmental protection. The project team presented some of the activities that were achieved during the implementation of the project, the development of the mobile and web application "Terenska", as well as the Natura 2000 film.

Web application "Terenska"

During the last year, the project has developed and put in the function the mobile app Terenska with the aim to improve data gathering in the field and data processing. This mobile app was put in function last summer, and more than 10.700 data entries have been collected since. All project experts who are in the field this vegetation season are using the mobile app.



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Monticola saxatilis	ptica	10.04.2021. 13:05	42.30532	21.52264	1176	5	Zu.prijava	poimnjenje	Adm. M
Dryocopus martius	ptica	10.04.2021. 14:04	42.30778	21.51025	1151	7	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
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Ficedula serripennis	ptica	10.04.2021. 10:38	42.31311	21.51845	1040	6	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
Certhia montana	ptica	10.04.2021. 10:38	42.31317	21.51914	1033	3	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
Certhia montana	ptica	10.04.2021. 10:46	42.31513	21.51857	1029	3	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
Alcedo gularis	ptica	10.04.2021. 14:05	42.30491	21.51664	963	4	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
Agreda rhyacalis	ptica	27.09.2020. 14:41	43.34761	22.71747	900	8	Zu.prijava	poimnjenje	Adm. M
Sylvia hortensis	ptica	07.04.2021. 13:01	43.30465	21.57148	888	4	Zu.prijava	poimnjenje	Adm. 2
Circus cyaneus	ptica	09.04.2021. 14:18	42.35332	21.67454	861	7	Zu.prijava	poimnjenje	Adm. M
Falco tinnunculus	ptica	07.04.2021. 12:47	42.34826	21.67229	793	11	Zu.prijava	Adm. M	Sam
Alcedo gularis	ptica	07.04.2021. 12:51	42.34945	21.67668	791	5	Zu.prijava	poimnjenje	Adm. M

The project is now developing the second crucial tool that will complete all the information systems established by the project for data entry and processing. This will be a web portal based on the methodology and design of the mobile app, but with functions that will help experts improve their handling of data, allowing them to view and edit uploaded data from the mobile app, input new data directly through the web portal, review, verify and preview data on the map, browse and analyse code lists, as well as export their data.

Currently, 159 experts from different national scientific institutions are registered for using these tools and most of them are using them on a daily basis.

Training seminars

Two trainings were organised, as part of the project's short-term training plan.

The first training seminar was held for two days in May 2021, dealing with the concept of Appropriate Assessment (AA) for plans and projects. It was implemented by the legal team of the project and it aimed to address this key issue of conservation and protection of Natura 2000 network, the purpose of which is to prevent negative impacts from plans and projects on Natura 2000 sites. Presentations were made on the relevant EU legislation, the existing national legislation and the proposals for amending the respective provisions of the Law on Nature Protection. Crucial issues addressed during the training sessions concerned the interplay between nature protection, EIA and SEA, as well as the implications of AA for permitting and planning procedures which generally have to respect the findings on considerable impacts on Natura 2000 sites and allow permits only in exceptional cases if there are negative impacts. The seminar was attended by 39 people from 10 institutions.

The second seminar held during the second week of June addressed the topics related to: the Natura 2000 designation process; field mapping methods, data gathering and management; how to implement the identification process, what tools are crucial for a good implementation, how to improve it, what are the main difficulties encountered by member states, and how it should be integrated with other procedures. This seminar was implemented by project experts, but also international experts with a profound background in the identification of the Natura 2000 network in their respective countries of Croatia and Slovakia. 53 people from 11 institutions attended the seminar.

Follow all the project activities on EU za Tebe platform
<https://natura-2000.euzatebe.rs/en/>



Happy
summer
holidays!