



UNEP in Europe

NEWSLETTER

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Francois Hollande to set France on new course after win

Mr Hollande - who polled just under 52% of votes in Sunday's run-off election - said he was "proud to have been capable of giving people hope again". Centre-right incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy is the first French president not to win a second term since 1981. Mr Hollande has vowed to rework a deal on government debt in eurozone member countries to try and promote growth. Admitting defeat soon after polls closed on Sunday evening, centre-right incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy wished "good luck" to Mr Hollande. Mr Hollande - the first Socialist to win the French presidency since Francois Mitterrand in the 1980s - earlier gave his victory speech in his stronghold of Tulle in central France.

He said he would push ahead with his pledge to refocus EU fiscal efforts from austerity to "growth". Mr Hollande will begin work on forming a new government on Monday and must act quickly to reassure other eurozone countries he is up to the considerable challenge he faces. He will have to implement the agreement made in November 2011 with "Ecologie-Les Verts", which provides for the following: closure of 24 nuclear plants by 2025; termination of MOX technology; and focus on energy policy, in particular efficiency and renewables. However, the next challenge for the newly-elected President will be the outcome of the Parliamentary elections in June.

Source: www.bbc.com



Iceland ex-PM Haarde "partly" guilty over 2008 crisis

On 23 April, former Icelandic PM Geir Haarde was found not guilty of negligence over the 2008 financial crisis that saw the island's economy go into meltdown. A special court in Reykjavik said Mr Haarde would face no punishment and his legal expenses would be paid for. But he was found guilty of one of the four charges: not holding cabinet meetings when things turned critical. Mr Haarde is thought to be the first world leader to face criminal charges over the financial crisis. Iceland's three main banks collapsed during economic turmoil and the failure of online bank Icesave hit thousands.

The collapse led to a dispute over compensation between the UK and Iceland, which remains unresolved. Some Icelanders have seen the trial of Mr Haarde as scape-goating, while others have argued that public accountability is essential following the country's financial collapse.

Source: www.bbc.co.uk



Collapse of the Dutch Government



Following Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's minority government collapse on 23 April over last-minute disagreements

about finding billions of euros in austerity cuts, the Prime Minister resigned. Mr Rutte, in effect a caretaker Prime Minister since his resignation, has agreed with the Dutch Parliament that early general elections will take place on 12 September. Since it came to office in October 2010, the minority government of Mr Rutte's liberal VVD party and the Christian Democrat CDA had been reliant on the support of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV). When Mr Wilders walked out of vital budget talks on Saturday (21 April), arguing that the proposals would harm pensioners and affect growth, the two coalition parties could no longer stay in power. The Netherlands had until 30 April to present the European Commission with a 2013 preliminary budget that will cut the country's projected budget deficit of 4.6% of GDP to within the EU's 3% limit. Political commentators said that it would be impossible to reach a deal on austerity measures that would satisfy both the markets and Brussels unless all the centrist parties worked together.



Dutch PM Mark Rutte



UN Secretary-General at EU energy summit



Side by side with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and the Danish presidency of the EU Council delivered a strong commitment to connecting every person on the planet to sustainable energy by 2030 at the EU Sustainable Energy for All Summit, held in Brussels on 16 April. "Access to modern energy helped to transform my world and my country", said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his keynote Address. "Access to electricity can seem so easy that it can be taken for granted. Unless you do not have it. I myself was one of those people until I was a freshman at college. It was 1963 and I was studying under a very dim kerosene lamplight. Can you believe it, now I am standing in front of you as the Secretary-General of the United Nations." Barroso also announced a commitment to provide access to sustainable energy for an additional 500 million people in developing countries by 2030.

19 metric tons of ozone-depleting substances seized in Russia

Customs Services at the Greater Port in Saint Petersburg succeeded to seize more than 19 metric tons of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) in February 2012. The cylinders originated from China and were shipped by sea transport via Gdansk in Poland to Saint Petersburg in the Russian Federation. They were misdeclared as hydrofluorocarbon R134a which is not controlled by the Montreal Protocol. But actually the shipment contained 3320 kg of R12, 2490 kg of R113, 4980 kg of R141b as well of 8300 kg of a mixture of R22 and the toxic R40. The import of these chemicals into the Russian Federation is either banned or requires an import license. The investigations are ongoing.



Entrance sign to the port of St Petersburg which still reads "Leningrad"



UNEP celebrates 40 years inStockholm



Banners portraying 40 years of UNEP's work

Forty years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs hosted the Stockholm+40 - Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development.

The aim of this conference was to provide a platform at ministerial level for discussing concrete measures to promote sustainable development, including good examples of sustainable innovations, production and living. Recommendations from Stockholm+40 will be communicated to decision-makers at Rio+20.

A report, a joint undertaking by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the European Commission, was launched at Stockholm+40, including 56 examples that countries could emulate to switch to more sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, who attended Stockholm+40, said: "Realizing a low carbon, resource-efficient and employment-generating Green Economy is the challenge for world leaders when they meet in Rio this June – 40 years after Stockholm and two decades after the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. This report further underlines that governments are not starting from zero – many of the transformations towards sustainable societies are flourishing within countries and communities across the globe. Rio+20 offers the opportunity to accelerate and scale-up these policies and projects in order to secure the prospects and prosperity of seven billion people, rising to over nine billion by 2050".

CITES Secretary-General, Mr John E. Scanlon, was invited to participate in the Stockholm+40 event to moderate round table discussions on sustainable supply chains – the results of which were fed into the ministerial discussions. The connection between CITES and the 1972 Stockholm Conference lies in Recommendation 99.3 of the 1972 Stockholm Conference, which called for the adoption of a convention "on export, import and transit of certain species of wild animals and plants". The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was adopted on 3 March, 1973.

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Secretary-General of CITES Mr John E. Scanlon with members of the round table discussion group

New Climate and Clean Air Coalition Expands to 13 Members

Five transformational initiatives aimed at accelerating and scaling-up action against a range of health, crop and climate-damaging pollutants were given the go-ahead by ministers meeting in the Swedish capital Stockholm on 24 April.

The initiatives, which mark the beginning of the implementation phase of the new Climate and Clean Air Coalition, will fast track momentum towards reducing black carbon or "soot", methane and a range of fluorinated gases called HFCs.

Further momentum was catalyzed with the announcements of Colombia, Japan, Nigeria, Norway and the European Commission that they are joining the Coalition along with the World Bank.

It brings to 13 the number of partners who have joined, expanding the initial membership founded by Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden and the United States and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The meeting assessed around a dozen initiatives proposed by developed and developing countries for fast and federated action on short-lived climate pollutants, including many happening already at the national level.

The Coalition today also unveiled a dedicated web site to support dissemination of information about the initiative's role and partners: <http://www.unep.org/ccac/>

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Environment and Security projects in Southern Caucasus

On 3 and 4 April, representatives of the Southern Caucasus and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) met in Tbilisi, Georgia to receive an update and discuss ongoing projects implemented in the frame of the ENVSEC Initiative in the Southern Caucasus, including projects with UNEP participation such as the GEO Cities Tbilisi. At this meeting, UNEP Vienna – ISCC provided participants with an update on the project "Cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions in the Southern Caucasus".

ENVSEC has been instrumental in supporting the process of cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of the mountains in the wider Caucasus region in a project implemented by UNEP in close partnership with REC Caucasus. Among the highlights was the Vaduz Ministerial Declaration, approved by high-level officials of the wider Caucasus region in Lichtenstein in 2007. In their statement, the countries committed themselves to strengthen the partnership for protection and sustainable development. Two technical level meetings were held in Bolzano, Italy in 2009, which have provided significant input to establishing a basis for further cooperative work in the region for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions in the South Caucasus.

Currently consultations as to the organization of a high-level meeting in the region, as decided in Bolzano, are being conducted. A final decision on a high-level meeting has not yet been taken by the government(s) that would be interested to host it. A next round of technical expert consultations is planned to take place in the autumn of 2012 to get an update on and to advance the process.

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"The Light Bulb Conspiracy" tackles sustainable consumption and production

UNEP and UNRIC co-sponsored a screening of the film "The Light Bulb Conspiracy" on 24 April at the Goethe Institute in Brussels. Part of the Cine-ONU series, the film tackled the concept of planned obsolescence and how it has impacted the lifecycle of consumer products worldwide. Following the screening, UNEP Brussels Head of Office Chris Vanden Bilcke joined Florian Iwinjak of UNIDO and the film's Executive Producer Joan Úbeda for a panel discussion on the challenges facing sustainable consumption and production and what can be done towards creating solutions from the regulatory, business, and private consumer perspectives.

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Chris Vanden Bilcke, head of the UNEP Brussels office (right), exchanges views with the audience and fellow panellists during a lively discussion moderated by Carlos Jimenez of UNRIC (left).



Sarajevo: State of the Environment



The state of the environment (SoE) in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been at the core of a two-day national workshop held in Sarajevo on 23 and 24 April to discuss the first ever comprehensive SoE report for the country.

The main focus of a two-year process to prepare the first environmental report for Bosnia and Herzegovina is the state of the environment in the country. The process is conducted in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDG-F) Programme "Mainstreaming Environmental Governance: Linking Local and National Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina". The workshop provided the second draft of the State of Environment Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for review and further development to a wide range of national environmental stakeholders, before the conclusion of the process in September 2012.

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Mountain regions call for pluriregional governance

On 12 and 13 April, the President of the Committee of the Regions, Ms Bresso, regional and local elected representatives of European mountain regions, UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna – ISCC) and other relevant stakeholders met in Covilhã, Portugal, to discuss the role of cohesion policy in the EU mountain regions.

The need of an effective and integrated management of all available instruments to address the specific needs of mountain regions was underlined. In particular, the relevant parts of the EU cohesion policy on possible future macro-regional strategies and European territorial cooperation programmes were considered as emerging opportunities to tackle this main challenge for mountain regions.

UNEP Vienna – ISCC participated in the Round Table "A strategic pluriregional governance" and presented the Carpathian Convention as an effective tool for pluriregional governance and its integration with other relevant instruments such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

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Acting Director of UNEP European Office attends high-level seminar in Helsinki, Finland

Mr Jan Dusik, Acting Director of UNEP – ROE, represented the ED in a high-level seminar in Helsinki on "Global Politics of Sustainability – Crossing Boundaries and Building Bridges" organized by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs on the premises of the Finnish Parliament. 124 participants registered for a half-day event on 11 April that preceded a national debate on Rio+20 in the Finnish Parliament and included interventions by Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Rural Development of India and Heidi Hautala, Minister for International Development of Finland. Finland is in favour of strong conclusions from the UNCSD both in terms of green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development. It also supports the strengthening of the role of UNEP, having been closely engaged in the IEG reform process.

http://www.fia.fi/en/event/447/global_politics_of_sustainability/

Sustainable Forest Management for the Carpathians: next steps

After the adoption of the Protocol of Sustainable Forest Management at the COP3 in May 2011, national representatives and experts met on 23-24 April in Donji Milanovac, Serbia, to elaborate the next steps for effective implementation of the ambitious objectives of the Protocol.

The main points under discussion were the draft Strategic Action Plan and the presentation of already existing key projects, such as the BioREGIO Carpathians project. BioREGIO is focusing on the development of integrated management measures that aim at balancing protection and sustainable development of Carpathian natural assets. The expected result is a very concrete contribution towards the implementation of the main provisions of the Forest Management Protocol.

The meeting was organized by UNEP Vienna – ISCC in cooperation with the Serbian Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning.

The development of a common approach in Sustainable Forest Management in the Carpathians is highly needed: the Carpathians harbour Europe's largest area of pristine forests (outside Russia). Half of the region is covered by forests. Forestry is an important economic sector in most of the Carpathian countries. Land privatization linked to fragmentation of ownership and increased use of forests is one of the major challenges Carpathian forests are currently facing.

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First board meeting for the Poverty and Environment Programme in Kyrgyzstan



The UNDP and UNEP "Poverty and Environment" Programme Board held its first meeting in Kyrgyzstan.

The board includes representatives from key ministries and agencies operating in the field of economics and finance, social development, agriculture and environmental protection, as well as representatives of civil society. Mr Temir Sariev, Minister of Economy and Antimonopoly and the Director of the State Agency for Environment Protection, Mr Sabir Atadzhanov, welcomed the PEI and assured them of their full cooperation.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the activities of the initiative to establish the evidence base for the integration of poverty and environment in Kyrgyzstan, the creation of an interdepartmental working group for the integration of environmental priorities, and issues of poverty reduction into national, sectoral and local development plans.

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Moving Mountains to Rio – Launch of Mountain Pavilion at Rio+20

At the initiative of the Government of Peru, a Mountain Pavilion on sustainable mountain development (SMD) will be set up at Rio+20. Its purpose is to secure the political support for concrete SMD activities and programmes at Rio+20 and beyond, and to connect mountain stakeholders worldwide for information sharing, knowledge exchange and improving common SMD actions in the future.

The Mountain Pavilion will provide mountain stakeholders, including the private sector, with a multipurpose space for promoting SMD. The following thematic areas will be highlighted: adaptation to climate change and disaster reduction, water and mountains, extractive industries and mega-infrastructure investments in mountains, mountain products, food security and sovereignty, and ecosystem services and biodiversity.

The Pavilion will be mainly set up by a committee consisting of the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Peru, the Swiss Development Cooperation, the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat. UNEP has been invited together with ICIMOD, the University of Central Asia, the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) and the CONDESAN to join the Programme Committee, which will coordinate the overall Mountain Pavilion programme. UNEP will coordinate the theme “Investment in Mountain: Extractive industries, tourism, infrastructure, clean energy and land-use changes”.

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Regional governance mechanisms for mountain regions

On 27 April, at the invitation of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, the European Commission, the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention informed Member States on the progress made in mountain regions' governance. Following up on the previous information session held in New York on 26 March and in light of the outcomes of the EU WPEI meeting held in Brussels on 12 April, this event took place on the occasion of the second round of “informal-informal” negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document.

Since the beginning of the Carpathian Convention process eleven years ago, UNEP has supported it and facilitated an intergovernmental consultation process which led to the adoption of the Carpathian Convention in Kiev, 2003. Currently, UNEP Vienna supports the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

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EU puts finishing touches to negotiation mandate

With just two months left until Rio+20, the EU27 environment ministers meeting in Horsens, Denmark, on 19 April responded to calls by Council President Ida Auken with a clear mandate for the final negotiating session to take place in New York from 23 April to 4 May. The Council identified energy, water and the oceans, soil, biodiversity, resources and, in particular, waste as the main EU priority areas to be included in the road-map towards a green economy that the conference is hoped to produce. “We are sending out a very clear signal that will accompany me to New York. The ministers have shown me their political goodwill”, Auken told the press.

Brice Lalonde, the coordinator of Rio+20, admits that the current text “lacks ambition”. He is, however, encouraged by how many heads of State and government have declared their intention to participate in the conference. In total 50,000 attendees are expected. “Right now there is a tension between those whose number one priority is development and those who say that the biggest priority is saving the planet, that we cannot go on like this,” Mr Lalonde told AFP. “We are looking for this magic formula which responds both to the needs of development and the environment.”

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Zoom in on Green Jobs and Youth ahead of Rio

As a follow up to the joint UNEP/ILO side-event on “Green Jobs for Youth too: Working towards Social Equity” held in New York on 27 March, the Green Jobs and Youth round table brought together 100 participants representing Permanent Missions to the UN, UN entities, NGOs, private sector, academic institutions and local authorities.

The interactive round table discussed the potential role of greening economies and its contribution to addressing the worsening youth employment crisis. Panellists shared experiences and practices on what needs to be done beyond policies, in particular the need to create strategic partnership and cooperation across the board with several entities and groups (UN, development agencies, public and private sectors) to address the worsening youth employment crisis. Some countries shared the lessons learnt from their own national development strategies and visions to attaining economic growth and employment creation as a whole and for young people in particular.

Participants repeatedly highlighted the need to support and invest in national and international efforts aimed at all-inclusive education and training, as well as making job-generating growth a key target of national and global green economic policy.

It was also noted that there has not been a concerted policy effort to tackling the issue of youth unemployment. A lot of past and present youth policies are focused on mitigating negative stereotypes of young people, with excessive attention given to substance abuse and violence. This type of policy focus ignores the majority of youth and diverts attention away from the need for structural investments in education, environmental protection, health care and employment creation.

The youth representative appreciated the efforts of more and more countries taking up the challenge of youth unemployment and designing strategies to address the urgent need for jobs among youth, and called upon governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to commit themselves to addressing the plight of young people.

UNEP will organize a side event on Youth, Employment and the Green Economy during the Rio+20 conference in cooperation with the Government of Tanzania and the ILO. The side event is expected to highlight good practices and request governments and private sector to support youth employment opportunities through the greening of economies.

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GreenUp partners with European Youth Press to send young journalists to Rio+20

The European Youth Press (EYP) teamed up with UNEP's GreenUp initiative earlier this year to launch a competition for young environment journalists in Europe. Selected participants contributed to the GreenUp Blog throughout March and April with stories highlighting green economy successes from around the world. Participants prepared radio feeds, videos, photos, infographics, and articles on everything from window farming to making furniture out of plastic bottles. Three lucky (and talented) winners will be chosen to travel to Rio+20 and report live from the conference. Several young journalists will also be invited to become regular contributors to the GreenUp Blog. View the GreenUp Blog from www.unep.org/greenup

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Round table of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative on environmental protection

The meeting, held on 22 March in Belgrade, Serbia, allowed countries' representatives to exchange views on Rio+20 topics, such as national green economy studies, sectoral analysis etc. Apart from governmental representatives, the meeting was attended by UNEP ROE Acting Director, Mr Jan Dusik, UNDP Serbia resident representative, UNEP Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP Bratislava and NGOs. All countries in the region reported that they engage in preparing national briefs and positions for the Rio+20 conference, with the stakeholders' engagement. The meeting also stressed the positive element of EU accession preparations and approximation to EU legislation. Green Economy practices of the countries of All should be presented at a joint side event of Rio+20.

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Chemical Safety for Sustainable Development

The third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3) will take place in Nairobi, from 17 to 21 September.

As the Strategic Approach enters into a critical phase in its implementation, the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management will make its first evaluation of progress in the implementation of SAICM. The first report on progress in the implementation of SAICM for the period 2009-2010 will summarise the data collected from stakeholders on the 20 indicators of progress adopted by the Conference at its second session. The Conference will consider for adoption the strategy for strengthening the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach, evaluate progress with emerging policy issues, consider new activities for addition to the Global Plan of Action and Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals as a new emerging issue. It will also evaluate and take decisions regarding the financing of the Strategic Approach, including recommendations from the Quick Start Programme Executive Board concerning the future of the QSP and its trust fund, in the light of the outcome of the mid-term review.

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How data can serve policy development in the Carpathians

Under the general theme “from data to knowledge, from knowledge to action” a broad representation of Carpathian scientists and decision-makers will meet in Starà Lesná, Slovak Republic, from 30 May to 02 June.

The Forum will focus on how data are generated and transformed into useful knowledge, how the knowledge is transferred to policy and practice, and how it can feed back to research planning.

In cooperation with the European Academy (EURAC) of Bolzano, UNEP Vienna – ISCC will organize a workshop on the role of science in the Carpathian Convention. The Forum Carpaticum is open to the public.

More information: www.forumcarpaticum.org

Ramsar COP11: “Wetlands: home and destination”



The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP11) will be

held in Bucharest, Romania from 6 to 13 July. Ramsar Contracting Parties, or Member States, will gather to assess the progress of the Convention and the sustainable use of wetlands to date, share knowledge and experience on technical issues, and plan their own and the Secretariat’s work for the next triennium. Access to online preregistration and other practical information are available at: www.ramsar.org/COP11

Mercury: Regional consultations for Central and Eastern Europe

Regional consultations for Central and Eastern Europe in preparation for the fourth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury will take place on 29 and 30 May 2012, in Lodz, Poland. Further information about the meeting is available: [here](#)





World Migratory Bird Day 2012 and AEWA Conference put spotlight on migratory birds

World Migratory Bird Day 2012 will be celebrated on 12 and 13 May with the theme “Migratory birds and people – together through time”. It will take place on the weekend right before the 5th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA MOP5), which runs from 14 to 18 May in the French city of La Rochelle.

AEWA is an international treaty administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds such as pelicans, cranes, storks, terns and flamingos.

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is a global awareness-raising campaign being jointly organised by AEWA, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and other key partners, highlighting the need for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats.

Since World Migratory Bird Day took place for the first time in 2006, events have been carried out in 104 countries to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with public events such as festivals, education programmes and birdwatching excursions.

The theme for WMBD 2012 is in many ways closely linked to the slogan of AEWA MOP5, which is: “Migratory waterbirds and people – sharing wetlands”. Both themes highlight the close relationship between migratory birds and people and the habitats we share.

A central WMBD event close to the venue of the intergovernmental AEWA meeting in France will be taking place at the study site of Pointe de Grave at Le Verdon sur Mer in Gironde on 13 May. The event is being organized by the French NGO “Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO)” (League for the Protection of Birds (LPO) – BirdLife in France) in cooperation with the UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MoU).

Exact details of this event and many others taking place around the world can be found on the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) website: www.worldmigratorybirdday.org

Central event in La Rochelle, France: http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/2012/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=33

