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Greece still without a government



Europe's date with destiny has been inked in: 17 June, when the Greeks return to the polls. If they back candidates who reject the terms of the bailout deal that keeps the country from bankruptcy, Greece could be heading out of the euro. Between now and then there will be weeks of anxiety.

The biggest threat is that some event sparks a run on the banks - in either Greece or Spain. Greeks have withdrawn 3bn euros in the past two weeks. Over the next few weeks an intense battle will be fought for hearts and minds of the Greek voter.

European leaders have already tried to define the vote as a referendum on staying in the euro. UK Prime Minister David Cameron, in Chicago, said: "We now have to send a very clear message to (the Greek) people - there is a choice, you can either vote to stay in the euro with all the commitments you have made, or, if you vote another way, you are effectively voting to leave." Much of this is aimed at weakening the hand of the main anti-austerity candidate, 37-year-old Alexis Tsipras. He was the rising star of the recent elections describing the austerity measures as "barbaric". He wants to stay in the euro but rejects the conditions of the bailout. Mr Tsipras believes Europe's leaders are bluffing. The more they warn of the dangers to Europe of Greece leaving the eurozone the more it strengthens his hand, he believes.

Source: BBC



New Russian Cabinet takes shape



On 21 May, following the submission by Prime Minister Medvedev of the proposals for Government Cabinet ministers and deputy ministers, and for the Cabinet organization, President Putin signed an executive order on the Cabinet's new composition and organization. The Government Cabinet is now made

up roughly by 75% of politicians who joined the government only very recently or for the first time. The candidate for the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment is Mr Sergey Donskoy, a former Deputy Minister in the ministry. Under the Russian Federation's Constitution the candidates are now to be approved by the State Duma.



Source: ITAR TASS

Sergey Donskoy

Nationalist Nikolic beats incumbent president Tadic in Serbia run-off election



Nationalist Tomislav Nikolic has been elected president of Serbia, with liberal incumbent Boris Tadic admitting defeat soon after the polls closed on 20 May.

With 40% of the votes counted, Mr Nikolic has 50.21% of the vote, against 46.77% for Mr Tadic. The contest had been seen as a vote on EU membership and the newly-elected president promised that "Serbia will not stray from its European path". Mr Tadic appealed to keep "Serbia's strategic orientation towards the EU". Serbia is plagued by unemployment of 24% and foreign debt of 24bn Euros. In the past Mr Nikolic served as a Deputy Prime Minister under the former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. He has vowed to invest in agriculture and industry, and tax the rich to fund a rise in pensions. Mr Tadic oversaw the EU candidacy negotiations and had argued that success for him and his Democratic Party was vital for development and stability in Serbia over the next decade. Under his leadership, Serbia captured Bosnian Serb war crimes suspects Radovan Karadzic and Gen. Ratko Mladic, and handed them over to international prosecutors at The Hague.

Source: BBC



Tomislav Nikolic

Cameron hears Green Deal concerns



On 16 May, the Green Deal was under scrutiny in Downing Street after warnings that it is liable to fail. The Cabinet Office interviewed critics of the scheme and reported their concerns to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Energy Secretary.

The Deal - to insulate the UK's aged housing stock - is designed to save carbon emissions, keep people warm, and make energy affordable. But critics say it won't give enough help to the fuel poor. They say this is a scandal, after the recent warning that the number of people unable to afford their energy bills is likely to rise to £8.5 million. They also warn the Deal may waste £2-3bn of people's energy bills.

A Downing Street spokesman said the meeting was routine, adding: "The Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister are fully committed to [the Green Deal]." But he said many issues over the scheme, due to launch in the autumn, were still to be resolved. This will come as a relief to the many critics of the Deal.

The Green Deal is split into two parts. The larger part relies on householders voluntarily taking pay-as-you-save loans to cut energy bills through home insulation. The private sector is supposed to deliver the improvements. The other part of the programme, known as ECO, will subsidise people to insulate their homes if they can't do it without help. This will be funded through a £1.3bn-a-year charge against all of UK energy bills.

Source: BBC



Germany has a new Environment Minister

On 22 May, Peter Altmaier (Parliamentary Secretary of the CDU/CSU) was officially sworn in, replacing Norbert Röttgen (CDU), who was fired the previous week by Chancellor Angela Merkel.

As to the background, CDU lost the 13 May's votes against SPD in North-Rhine Westphalia with a historic low (CDU 26%, SPD 39%), where Röttgen was running to become Prime Minister of NRW. Throughout the campaign Röttgen has been heavily criticised, because he never revealed whether he would leave his position as MoE in Berlin if he won the elections in NRW.

Source: Der Spiegel



Peter Altmaier

New Environment and Forests Minister for Romania



The new Romanian Government of Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta (Social Democratic Party)

was approved on 7 May 2012 and a new Minister of Environment and Forests appointed, Ms Rovana Plumb, member of Social Democratic Party. Ms Plumb has been a member of the European Parliament and Member of its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, and was a member of the national parliament from 2004 to 2007.

Ms Plumb will probably be chairing the Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention taking place in Bucharest in July 2012. She is expected to be a member of the Romanian delegation to Rio+20 headed by President Traian Basescu.

Source: Permanent Mission



CITES Secretary-General testifies before US Senate Committee



CITES Secretary-General, Mr John E. Scanlon, was invited on 24 May to testify on "Ivory and Insecurity: The Global Implications of Poaching in Africa" in front of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by Committee Chair, Senator Kerry.

During his testimony, Mr Scanlon requested a strong and clear political message from the highest possible levels to combat the illegal trade in wildlife and explained that illegal trade in wildlife is happening at a scale that poses an immediate risk to both wildlife and to people and their livelihoods. He stated that: "An even greater effort is required, and new approaches need to be taken, if we are to adequately address this risk, including through: employing more formidable and coordinated enforcement responses at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels; making better use of modern enforcement techniques and technologies; attracting additional financial and human resources at national and international level, and more effectively suppressing the demand that is driving illegal trade."

Dr Ian Douglas Hamilton, founder of the NGO Save the Elephants and Mr Tom Cardamone, managing director of Global Financial Transparency were also invited to testify. The hearing was attended by 4 senators and over 200 participants representing US government, IGOs and NGOs working on wildlife conservation.

The full testimony is available online at: http://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/ivory-and-insecurity_the-global-implications-of-poaching-in-africa



The challenge of the Global Mercury Observation System



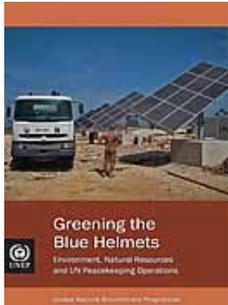
An improved understanding of mercury dispersion in the environment is important to support policy-makers in decision-making. The Global Mercury Observation System (GMOS – www.gmos.eu) is a first attempt to conduct worldwide measurements of mercury from both natural and anthropogenic sources.

The project is being implemented by a consortium led by the Institute of Atmospheric Pollution Research of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-IIA, www.ia.cnr.it) and is a major contribution to UNEP's Mercury Air Transport and Fate Research Partnership Area. The project is funded by the European Union.

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www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances



UN Peacekeeping set to benefit from new environmental practices



The findings of a two-year analysis of how peacekeeping missions around the world affect and are affected by natural resources and the broader environment was released by UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch on 1 May.

The report, *Greening the Blue Helmets: Environment, Natural Resources and UN Peacekeeping Operations*, is a major output of UNEP's ongoing collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS). Financed by the Government of Finland, the UNEP report is based on desk research, field visits and consultations with DFS and DPKO, including 10 peacekeeping missions. In

addition to highlighting the importance of reducing the environmental impact of UN Peacekeeping operations, the new report states that the implementation of good practice in this area has additional benefits, including increased financial savings for missions, and improved safety and security for local communities as well as UN Peacekeeping staff. The 17 missions currently led by DFS and DPKO constitute the largest carbon footprint in the UN system.

The report also recommends that where diamonds, gold, oil and other resources are factors in a conflict, peacekeeping missions should be given a more systematic mandate to support national authorities in restoring the administration of natural resources, monitoring sanctions and prosecuting violations. UNEP's Executive Director Achim Steiner said that addressing the ownership, control and management of natural resources is crucial to maintaining security and restoring the economy in post-conflict countries. "There has been little progress in systematically considering and documenting how natural resources can support, advance or undermine the aims of a peacekeeping mission, so this report is the first attempt to understand the links and identify good practices and gaps," Mr Steiner said. The report contains actionable policy recommendations for improving the environmental performance of peacekeeping operations, as well as capitalizing on the peacebuilding potential of natural resources while minimizing their possible contribution to conflict relapse and insecurity.

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The report can be obtained from:

http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_greening_blue_helmets.pdf



Eastern Europe and Central Asia aim for a cleaner productive future

On the final run-up towards world leaders gathering in Brazil for the "Rio + 20" UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Moscow takes leadership and fosters discussions on sustainable development in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

On 25 May, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and United Nations agencies hosted the first international Civic Forum for Sustainable Development. The forum gathered more than 100 experts and development champions, representatives of civil organizations, business and government structures from seven countries to discuss how to meet the needs of the current generation without depleting natural resources for future generations. At the Civic Forum, two reports on sustainable development were presented to the Russian speaking world.

Joint UN report "From Transition to Transformation: Sustainable and Inclusive Development in Europe and Central Asia" analyses the region including former Soviet republics and calls for a transformation to integrated policy making, where social equity, economic growth and environmental protection are approached together. Experts urge the region to remove fossil fuel subsidies, invest in 'green' jobs, and establish social protection floors to ensure a sustainable future.

The UNEP report "Green Economy", compiled in collaboration with economists and experts worldwide, demonstrates that the greening of economies is not a drag on growth but rather a new engine of growth; it is a net generator of decent jobs and also a vital strategy for the elimination of persistent poverty. The report's key conclusion, investing two per cent of global GDP across ten key sectors, can kick-start a transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient Green Economy. This two per cent, currently amounting to an average of US\$ 1.3 trillion a year, would make the global economy grow at the same – or higher – rate than what forecast under current economic models.

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World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated across the globe

On 12 and 13 May, more than 180 events were held in 70 countries to mark World Migratory Bird Day, including bird festivals, education programmes, presentations, film screenings and bird-watching trips, run by hundreds of volunteers and organizations. Starting in the Western hemisphere with the City of Vancouver, schools in Chile, the central event in France held back-to-back with the intergovernmental meeting on waterbirds, NGOs in Ethiopia as well as educational campaigns in India and Australia, all contributed to raising awareness of migratory waterbirds.

This year's theme *Migratory Birds and People – together through time* marks the special relationship between humans and birds. Migratory birds travelling up to thousands of kilometers each year fascinate more and more people.

Beyond providing pure aesthetic enjoyment, many regions are now recognizing the economic potential of bird-related tourism in response to an increasing interest from the wider public. Bird watching is creating economic benefits for many countries and communities, not only in the industrial countries.

There is also a growing trend among bird tour operators to practice sustainable and socially responsible ecotourism, while relying on local goods and services or supporting local conservation projects. For more and more people, wildlife-watching and in particular bird-watching is crucial for selecting a travel destination. This does not only improve the protection of birds and their habitats, but also creates jobs and boosts the economy.

While eco-tourism is growing, bird-watching plays an important role. UNEP's Green Economy Report shows that ecotourism is increasing by about six times the industry-wide rate of growth.

The Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) jointly organize this annual global campaign. It is an opportunity to both celebrate the phenomenon of bird migration and to take collective action to raise awareness on some of the threats migratory birds face.

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International Waterbird Conference adopts action plan for migratory waterbirds and people in Africa

A five-year plan to strengthen waterbird conservation, monitoring, knowledge building, awareness-raising activities and international cooperation was agreed at a waterbird conference in France. More than 60 signatory states to the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) adopted a new plan of action for Africa. This includes a set of concrete measures designed to strengthen the capacity to conserve migratory waterbirds and their important habitats in the African region. Thirteen per cent of all AEWA waterbird population living in Africa is globally threatened. Especially in this continent, there is a clear link between the benefit of biodiversity conservation, species conservation and human wellbeing.

Almost 30 resolutions were passed at the 5th Meeting of the Parties to AEWA. Topics ranged from the impacts of power lines, extractive industries, renewable energy, agrochemicals, alien species and climate change on migratory waterbirds, the importance of waterbird monitoring and promotion of twinning schemes.

Close to €10 million is needed to implement the Plan of Action for Africa over the five-year period 2012 – 2017. Countries clearly stated that more support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the new plan.

The international conference dedicated to waterbirds, held in La Rochelle, France, brought together nearly 300 participants, including many experts and government representatives of Member States of the Agreement. The theme of the meeting was "Migratory waterbirds and people – sharing wetlands" and was hosted by the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing.

More information: www.unep-awea.org

Asian countries move towards CITES e-permitting systems to strengthen the protection of CITES species



The development and use of CITES e-permitting systems, and their role in ensuring legal, sustainable and traceable international trade in CITES-listed species, was discussed by countries in Asia at a meeting held in Guangzhou, China, from 09 to 11 May.

The rapid advances by some countries in the Asian Region on the use of new electronic trade standards, including the establishment of 'Single Windows', assisted participants in discussing joint projects on the establishment of secure-permitting systems to: reduce fraud; improve meeting-reporting obligations; enhance permit issuance and administration; and provide up-to-the-minute data to assist with CITES scientific assessments. The meeting was jointly organized by the CITES Secretariat and the Government of China, and made possible through the generous financial support of China and the European Commission.

In his opening remarks, Secretary-General, Mr John E. Scanlon, noted that "A sustainable future is being discussed in the context of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, often known as Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June. Sustainability is not achieved through one action but through the accumulation of multiple actions. Actions such as those being taken today - namely to put into place e-permitting systems for legal, sustainable and traceable trade in CITES listed species - help build the essential foundations for environmental sustainability and sustainable development. E-permitting systems offer us one of the tools we need to reach the future we want."

During the meeting, Mr Scanlon also awarded a Certificate of Commendation to the National Inter-Agency CITES Enforcement Collaboration Group (NICECG) of China in recognition of two nationwide wildlife law enforcement operations carried out earlier this year. Over 100,000 enforcement officers were mobilised in this effective offensive against wildlife crime.

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New Members set to join the UN-wide Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements

An initiative launched in 2011 to enhance the sharing of information on international environmental agreements has expanded its platform to include new members. New members to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Information and Knowledge Management Initiative (InforMEA) include the 4 UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Conventions and the Regional Seas Programme. The European Environment Agency has also joined the Initiative as an observer. Supported by UNEP, the Initiative aims to assist parties to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the environment community at large, to access MEAs information from one central location.

Mr John E. Scanlon, Secretary General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), stated "This Initiative provides needed knowledge to officials who are working on the implementation of MEAs, and to policy-makers seeking to take coherent and consistent decisions across multiple conventions"

The Initiative currently includes 40 global and regional agreements from 14 Secretariats hosted by 4 UN organizations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It also includes observers involved in MEA information management. The portal provides information on MEAs' decisions and resolutions, news, calendars of events, list of parties, national focal points and national reports and strategies.

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Climate change at local level addressed in Ukraine

On 22 to 24 May, an awareness-raising workshop of the Territorial Approach to Climate Change (TACC) took place in Vinnytsya, Ukraine.

This workshop is one of the activities of the TACC, a joint partnership between four UN agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNITAR and UN-Habitat), raising capacity of sub-national governments to mitigate and adopt climate change. UNEP and the Institute of Urban Development (Vinnytsya, Ukraine) held this workshop in order to increase knowledge and capacity by sub-national territories to identify risks and opportunities related to climate change at the sub-national level, and also to design integrated climate change policies and plans within the framework of national plans, based on sound knowledge and science.

Energy Finance and Energy Efficiency in Buildings and Sustainable Transport options and planning were discussed in addition to Climate Change (adaptation and mitigation) issues.

The workshop also introduced the *Covenant of Mayors (COMO) going East initiative* funded by the European Commission, which involves local and regional authorities voluntarily committing to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.

Participants to the meeting included senior managers and local authorities' representatives from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, responsible for development planning (transport, building, energy) and the environment, UNFCCC focal points as well as local academia, civil society and NGOs.

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The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Scoping Study for Georgia



On 28 May, a “TEEB Scoping Study for Georgia Inception Workshop” was hosted by the Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia in collaboration with UNEP and the WWF Caucasus Programme to gather the views of relevant stakeholders on the development of a TEEB Scoping Study for Georgia.

To carry out the Scoping Study activities in Georgia, the WWF Caucasus Programme has been engaged to establish a project advisory group which will be consulted at critical stages of the project; organize an inception workshop to launch and present project objectives, and encourage participation in the development of the Scoping Study; conduct a series of consultation meetings with relevant experts and stakeholders, before and after the inception workshop, as may be required, to determine the availability of data and to review existing baseline studies; in close association with the Ministry of Environment Protection and UNEP, organize a second workshop to present the main findings of the draft scoping study; and drafting a TEEB Scoping Study for Georgia, in accordance with the specific needs of the country and relevant stakeholders. The Scoping Study report should, in particular:

- (i) Identify what data exists on ecosystem services and biodiversity in Georgia, what ecosystem valuations have been done so far and by whom, as well as identify major gaps in knowledge;
- (ii) Analyse what role ecosystems and biodiversity play in the national economy of Georgia, both at market and non-market value, and suggest economic value indicators;
- (iii) Give specific recommendations on how to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem valuation into relevant national and local policies, programmes and planning processes; and
- (iv) Identify institutions or expertise in Georgia available to undertake a national TEEB study.

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Training focuses on ecosystems as central to disaster risk reduction

Government representatives from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan gathered in Tbilisi from 29 May to 01 June to attend a training session on ecosystem-based approaches to reducing disaster risk.

The course was conducted by UNEP, the Council of Europe and the UN Development Programme, on behalf of the global Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), and hosted by Georgia’s Ministry of Environment.

The training’s purpose was to build government capacity to undertake more sustainable and resilient development planning by enhancing awareness of the linkages between the environment, livelihoods and disasters. The course targeted government officials, national disaster management institutions and major public training institutions, and provided practical tools on how to integrate environment and disaster risk reduction considerations into development planning at the national and sub-national levels.

The main output of the course is an Agenda for Action that reflects national development priorities and the proposed ecosystem-based solutions for disaster reduction in the respective priority areas, to be taken forward by governments. This training is the latest knowledge product developed by UNEP and its PEDRR partners. Since the course was pilot-tested in Sri Lanka in May 2011, PEDRR has received training requests from the governments of India, Uganda, Georgia/Armenia/Azerbaijan, Philippines and Afghanistan, amongst others.

PEDRR is a partnership that provides technical and science-based expertise and applies best practices in ecosystems-based approaches to disaster risk reduction. It includes UN agencies, international and regional NGOs as well as specialist institutes.

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European Environment and Health Task Force meets in The Hague, NL

As a follow up to the Parma Declaration that called on Members States to reduce the impact on public health of specific environmental risk factors, the second meeting of the European Environment and Health Task Force (EHTF) was held from 31 May to 01 June in The Hague, the Netherlands, to review monitoring needs related to the implementation of commitments of the Parma Declaration.

The meeting recommended the minimum set of indicators to be included in the monitoring, focusing on those based on existing information, and in particular those included in international databases and reporting systems. Potential options were also discussed for further development of monitoring, based on additional, voluntary data collection, using internationally harmonized methodologies. Such data collection will additionally be useful in supporting the implementation of national activities.

The meeting agreed on the follow-up actions necessary to ensure efficient reporting to the Intergovernmental Mid-term Review meeting in 2014.

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UNEP Resource Panel discusses sustainable water management

UNEP's Acting Regional Director Mr Jan Dusik chaired a session at the European Commission's annual Green Week conference. The session, entitled "Sustainable water management for a green economy," was closely linked to the latest report on UNEP's International Resource Panel: "Measuring Water Use in a Green Economy." Professors Jacqueline McGlade and Kevin Urama, Resource Panel members, presented the report's findings, highlighting that consistent water accounting systems for production and consumption - quantifying water flows in the economy and the environment - would be a tremendous boost, and clear information about related impacts would help managers and users develop the robust allocation and management systems that will be needed to underpin a green economy.

More information: www.greenweek-2012.eu



UN stand at Green Week

Alpine-Carpathian Exchange Meeting in Vienna

Project partners from the recently completed Alpine Space ECONNECT Project and the ongoing SEE BioREGIO Carpathians project had an exchange meeting to ensure a sustainable knowledge transfer between the Alps and the Carpathians. Both projects focus especially on the enhancement of ecological connectivity across the two mountain regions. Participants discussed the relevance of the ECONNECT project results for the BioREGIO Carpathians project and the possibilities to integrate the project results in the future BioREGIO activities (WP5 - Continuity and connectivity as a basis for WP6+7).

The meeting was initiated, with the generous support of the German Government, by the Alpine Network of Protected Areas - ALPARC - as partner of the ECONNECT project, in cooperation with the Platform Ecological Network of the Alpine Exchange Meeting and took place on 10 May in Vienna, Austria.

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UNEP addresses European Parliament on Re-industrializing Europe

UNEP Divisional Director for Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) Ms Sylvie Lemmet addressed a conference on Re-industrializing Europe - an initiative of the European Parliament's Greens-EFA Party. Ms Lemmet spoke on a range of subjects demonstrating the need for Europe to move to a resource - efficient economy. The elements covered included green economy and green jobs, metals recycling, consumption rates, by making contrasts and comparisons in the face of rising populations and compounding increases in demand. It was underscored that while Europe now favours import over production, there is a resulting onus to examine the entire life cycle of products carefully, and moreover a need to move to a cyclical economy, one also where we can value 'waste'.

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UN work on water highlighted at EU's Green Week

UNEP led a joint UN effort in highlighting the various work UN entities do on water. A joint information stand demonstrated the link between water and Rio+20, and gave Green Week attendees easy access to the latest UN reports, such as UN-Water's 4th World Water Development Report and UNEP's Green Economy Water chapter.

More information:
www.unbrussels.org/green-week-2012



Carpathian Convention signs MoU with the Science for the Carpathians Initiative at the Second Forum Carpaticum



Representatives of UNEP Vienna, ISCC, the Slovak Ministry of Environment on behalf of the presidency of the Carpathian Convention, and the Chair of the Science for the Carpathians Initiative (S4C) have signed a common MoU at the Second Forum Carpaticum, "From data to knowledge, from knowledge to action".

The MoU is aimed at providing a durable basis for the collaboration in the field of scientific research, project development and implementation, information exchange and knowledge transfer. The collaboration's purpose in the long term is to strengthen the awareness of a Carpathian-wide approach in the scientific work, which would provide an important information basis for further strategic political decision-making.

The S4C initiative is the organizer of the Forum Carpaticum, a biannual Carpathian-wide scientific platform that gathers a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines from both natural and social sciences of the Carpathian region and beyond. The Conference was held under the auspices of HE Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic. Amongst others, UNEP Vienna ISCC organized a workshop on the role of Science in the Carpathian Convention with a special focus on the BIOREGIO Carpathians project, aimed at implementing the main provisions of the Carpathian Convention Biodiversity Protocol. In particular, the first results of the activities related to the elaboration of a Carpathian Red List of Species and Habitats were presented and discussed with the participants.



More information: www.forumcarpaticum.org

United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation meet in Geneva



The General Meeting on Cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) took place in Geneva from 01 to 03 May. The meeting brought together 31 UN entities and 13 specialised organizations

of the OIC to discuss and reinforce cooperation on diverse areas of interest, including science and technology; international peace and security; social, political, economic and humanitarian issues; and inter-cultural dialogue, to name a few.

The meeting took stock of several environmental sustainability issues, and called for strengthening the collaboration to achieve sustainable development objectives as set out in Agenda 21. The meeting agreed on a matrix of activities to be pursued in the next two years, including development of green economy policies and mechanisms; capacity building in environmental protection; development of databases on environment indicators; help to OIC countries to meet their legal obligations under different MEAs; sustainable use of water and energy resources; strengthening of public health and development of the OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action 2013-2022; promotion of sustainable tourism and cross-border network of parks and protected areas; undertaking of a study assessing the impact of climate change in OIC Member States and initiation of related capacity building activities; support to innovative policies, practices and projects to promote education for sustainable development; and promotion as well as creation of opportunities for women and young people to become active participants in all social, economic and cultural actions for sustainable development. The development and implementation of projects on training and skills development for youth employment was particularly highlighted.

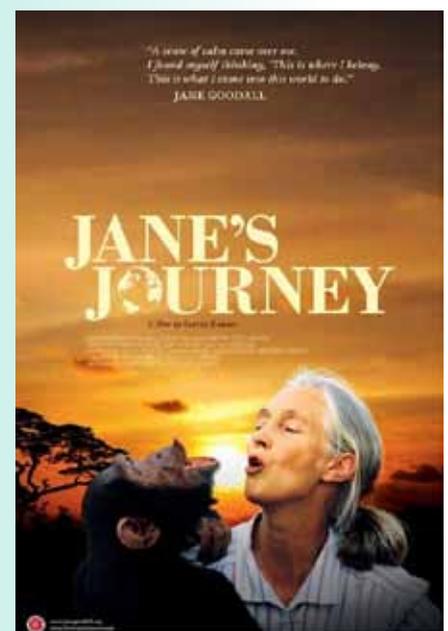
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Jane Goodall in Brussels encouraging youth to engage



On 14 May, over 1000 people attended a Cine-ONU screening of "Jane's Journey" where UN Messenger of Peace Jane Goodall herself engaged with the audience following the film, pressing her message that our hope for protecting the environment at large is in the next generation.

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UNEP Acting Director attends green economy workshop in Prague

On 09 May, the workshop "Rethinking the growth model: Sharing green economy best practices towards Rio+20 and beyond" took place in Prague and was attended by representatives of the Environment Ministries of the Visegrad Group countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary), and of Bulgaria; Jan Dusik represented UNEP. The Visegrad Group aims at gradually consolidating its positions regarding major multilateral events and processes, while respecting the EU general positions. The concept of Green Economy is well received by the Environment Ministries of these countries, however their programmes are not yet complex and cross-sectoral enough; the countries seek UNEP's responses on linkages to economic and social elements of green economy and demystification of some of its elements.

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How research can best inform the transition to a green economy

The European Commission, UNEP, GLOBE and IEEP are teaming up to inform the green economy discussion at Rio+20 as the role of cooperative scientific research is vital to this discussion. The partners will exhibit the important link between research and green economy via a series of events whose purpose is to extract general lessons learned from specific outcomes of FP6/7 projects at EU and international cooperative levels. Two initial events will be held in Europe that feed into two follow-up events at Rio+20 on 18 and 19 June.

The events' progress will be highlighted on a blog, so tune in at <http://researchandrio.tumblr.com>

UNEP Chief of Cabinet discusses Rio+20 at Brussels event



Michele Candotti, UNEP's Chief of Cabinet, joined a panel discussion at the European Commission's annual Green Week conference on 24 May, together with the European Commission's Karl Falkenberg and Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment Deputy Director General Dr Fritz Holzwarth, amongst others. Focusing on water, the panel canvassed the achievements since 1992, what elements of water policy make sense to tackle at the global level, and what concrete results we should try to get from Rio+20.

More information:
<http://www.greenweek-2012.eu/conference>



Regional Meeting of the ENVSEC Initiative in South Eastern Europe

The annual regional meeting of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative in South Eastern Europe will be organized on 06-08 June in Struga, FYR of Macedonia. The meeting's purpose is to give an update on the current work programme of the ENVSEC Initiative in South Eastern Europe and facilitate discussions on future priorities and opportunities in this region. Organized by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), the meeting will bring together national focal points of the ENVSEC Initiative from the region, donor representatives, experts, and key stakeholders, with a view to paving the way forward for addressing environment and security risks in South Eastern Europe.

More information: GKozhuharova@rec.org

First meeting on transboundary protected area



On 13-14 June in Sutjeska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), UNEP Vienna – ISCC, in cooperation with the Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of the Republika Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina, will organize the first bilateral stakeholder meeting in the proposed transboundary protected area "Durmitor-Tara Canyon- Sutjeska" in the framework of the ENVSEC-SEE Initiative.

The transboundary eco-region is located in the border region of Bosnia and Herzegovina/Republika Srpska and Montenegro. According to a feasibility study published in 2010 by UNEP, the possible transboundary protected area (TBPA), jointly identified by the representatives of the governments in 2006, can reach some 136 thousand hectares in size, including five large-scale protected areas in two countries.

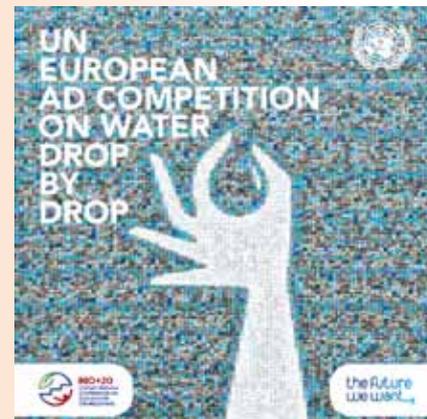
More information: veronika.hopfgartner@unvienna.org

MANFRED Final Conference takes place in Rome, Italy

On 28 June, "The Future Potential of European Mountain Forests: challenges and solutions between Green Economy and Climate Change" will be discussed at the MANFRED project final conference taking place at the FAO Headquarters in Rome.

The MANFRED project, launched in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation "Alpine Space Programme 2007-2013", aims at defining adaptation strategies for the Alpine Space forests in light of the potential impacts and hazard factors connected to climate change. Organized by the MANFRED project partnership, the event will be hosted and facilitated by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat that has its central hub in FAO.

More information: www.manfredproject.eu



30 finalists of Drop by Drop ad competition

Our UN Drop by Drop competition has announced its 30 finalists with the overall winner to be announced on World Environment Day. The winner gets a 5000 Euro first prize sponsored by the Nordic Council of Minister, to be awarded by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark at a special ceremony in Copenhagen on 5 June.

More information: james.morris@unep.org

Giant Bee-friendly flower garden at European Parliament



UNEP is partnering with the Bee Biodiversity Network to install a giant flower garden on the European Parliament plaza for one week starting on 3 June. The project does not only target awareness-raising, since a symposium on 5 and 6 June will also engage on the broader biodiversity issues that Europe needs to address.

More information: <http://www.reseau-biodiversite-abeilles.com>



GreenUp!

Powered by the UN Environment Programme

Swiss Caterer DSR and GreenUp promote World Environment Day 2012

Swiss caterer and restauration provider DSR has officially partnered up with the GreenUp campaign, initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to promote World Environment Day (WED) on 5 June.

UNEP launched a campaign called GreenUp in order to raise awareness about the Green Economy and to promote sustainable living.

Replanting trees, eating more organic foods, focusing on using renewable energies, and lowering carbon emissions (for example by making more use of public transportation) are all issues that GreenUp is concerned with.

DSR was immediately impressed by the initiative and has decided to support and contribute to the large-scale campaign for a Greener Economy.

An event has been organized for all DSR restaurants on 5 June which will include a special eco-friendly GreenUp dish. The menu will consist of organic foods prepared with local products.

In addition to the special menu, DSR has organized contests for people to win "Tree-Shirts" specially made by designer Vivienne Westwood. All DSR restaurants will feature green decorations and chef accessories to further endorse the Green Economy theme.

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Bologna, Italy, hosts EU South East Europe Programme Annual Conference

The EU South East Europe (SEE) Programme Annual Conference 2012 "The future built on the present", which will take place in Bologna, Italy on 29 June, will discuss the linkage of present and future territorial co-operation in SEE.

With 16 participating countries and an overall population of more than 200 million people, the South East Europe Programme, as part of the EU Regional Policy's Territorial Cooperation Objective, targets the most diverse and complex transnational area in Europe.

UNEP Vienna – ISCC, as representative of the BioREGIO Carpathians project consortium, along with numerous EU representatives, governmental representatives and more than 400 participants of recent and ongoing SEE co-funded projects will attend this programmatic conference.

More information:
www.southeast-europe.net/



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