

## Biological diversity and a project of its conservation in the Šumava National Park

### Biodiversita a projekt na její ochranu v Národním parku Šumava

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#### Abstract

Conservation of biodiversity is a common concern of humanity. The Convention on Biological Diversity, which entered into force in December 1993, has a global character and represents a legally binding instrument at the international level. The Czech Republic became a Party to the Convention in 1993. The national legislation and some projects contribute to its biodiversity conservation. A GEF project is carried out in the Šumava National Park and Biosphere Reserve. Proposed and implemented activities aiming at management and protection of selected areas have favourable effect on the environment. Mechanism enhancing the local community participation in management and planning of large-scale reserves is a significant component of the project and its positive social impacts are expected.

*Key words:* Convention on Biological Diversity, international cooperation, implementation, Czech Republic, programmes, Šumava region

The fact that thousands of plant and animal species worldwide are under the threat caused by overuse, loss of habitat and environmental pollution, represents a great danger for mankind. The value of maintaining biodiversity is gradually accepted, and necessary steps are being adopted to conserve individual species and entire ecosystems.

The Global Biodiversity Strategy outlines the steps that should be taken to protect and maintain biodiversity. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which was involved in drawing up this Strategy, plays an important role in the international process streamlined towards biodiversity conservation. As a main international body for matters relating to the environment UNEP has been established in 1972 by the United Nations General Assembly, following the recommendations of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The Governing Council of UNEP adopted in June 1987 a decision which became the starting point for a process culminating nearly five years later in the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention was a result of the work and several sessions of Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts, later changed into the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. The agreed text of the Convention was adopted on 22 May 1992 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Convention has the following main objectives: conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources. The Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature at the United Nations Conference held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, where it received 168 signatures.

With a view to initiate activities of international cooperation and to prepare the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the Governing Council of UNEP established the Intergovernmental Committee and the Interim Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity. After two sessions of the Committee (Geneva, October 1993 and Nairobi, July 1994) and one meeting of scientific experts (Mexico, April 1994) the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties was convened to Nassau, Bahamas, from 28 November to 9 December 1994. Establishment of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Group of Experts on Biosafety were among the important decisions adopted in Nassau. The first meeting of SBSTTA was held in Paris in September 1995. A panel of 15 government nominated experts in biosafety met in Cairo in May 1995, and the Group of Experts on Biosafety in Madrid in July 1995. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties took place from 6 to 17 November 1995 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Convention entered into force on 29 December 1993 and this day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly the International Day for Biological Diversity. The Czech Republic became a Party to the Convention on 3 December 1993.

A legal document on conservation of biological diversity was therefore adopted. But now, as expressed in the message to the Contracting Parties by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we have to move into a new phase from „consensus to active cooperation, from commitment to tangible and definitive action“.

In the Czech Republic, nature conservation has a long tradition which has been reflected in a legislative system on protection and management regulation of forest and hunting, as well as landscape, and establishment of a system of protected areas. Various projects aim directly or indirectly at biodiversity monitoring, management and conservation, being supported by a national grant system or by international and foreign institutions. Three priority areas of threatened biodiversity were selected for the Global Environment Facility project supported in 1993: Protected Landscape Area Pálava, Krkonoše National Park and Šumava National Park. This project is related to similar activities in four other countries marked by economy in transition (Slovakia, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine), forming thus a basis for cooperation in transboundary conservation.

The funds of GEF are administered by the World Bank. The total amount of 2 million US\$ is to be used for Biodiversity Protection Programme during the period 1994–1996. The Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic, is the recipient of grant funds and a special Project Management and Coordination Unit has been established to coordinate the Programme. The Unit cooperates with the Czech National Committee of MaB, UNESCO, WWF, IUCN and other organisations at different levels, to ensure the complexity of the Project implementation.

The Project consists of three programmes divided into ten subprojects:

*Biodiversity protection programme:*

1. Management of key ecosystems
2. Development of community support
3. Wildlife research and management

*Conservation programme:*

1. Preparation of sustainable development strategies, carrying capacity and revenue mechanisms
2. Demonstration projects

*Institutional infrastructure improvement programme:*

1. Small grants programme for non-governmental organizations
2. Computerization and data management

3. Infrastructure improvement
4. Project management and coordination
5. Professional development and training.

The Šumava National Park has been included into the Project as it belongs to the most valuable natural areas of the Central Europe, with almost continuous secondary forest cover. The bogs representing a refuge of cold-resistant flora and fauna, are other characteristic biomes of this region, which is an important watershed. Due to their natural value, Šumava Mts. have been designated as a Biosphere Reserve in 1990.

The main conservation problems of the region are as follows:

- Air pollution, and consequently acid deposition that cause forest degradation as well as acidification of soil and lake water in some parts of the region
- Intensified management and use of forest stands and agricultural land formerly included in the border zones
- Unsuitable management and forest technology causing serious damage to forest ecosystems.

The GEF fund is oriented to the following areas:

- Enhancement of education and interpretation facilities (66,000 US\$)
- Wildlife management (19,000 US\$)
- Ecosystem research (28,000 US\$)
- Ex-situ conservation of non-tree plant species (17,000 US\$)
- Sustainable development strategy, carrying capacity and revenue mechanisms (34,000 US\$)
- Agriculture programmes (34,000 US\$)
  - Model for farming
  - Categorization of woodless zones
- Radio-network (150,000 US\$)
- Computerization and data management
- Professional development and training.

All proposed measures aim at better conservation of nature in the Šumava region, requiring support by local communities and participation of public in general.