



PAN-EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY STRATEGY

Geneva and Strasbourg, 9 November 2009

STRACO (2009) 14

COUNCIL FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY STRATEGY

FINAL REPORT

12th meeting
22-24 September 2009
Université de Liège, Liège (Belgium)

*Document prepared by
the Joint Secretariat for PEBLDS*

1. Opening of the meeting

for adoption

document STRACO (2009) 01 rev

Mr. Robert Lamb (Switzerland), the Chair of the PEBLDS Council, welcomed the participants to the 12th Meeting of the Council of PEBLDS (Appendix I) and presented the draft agenda (Appendix II) for adoption. He stressed that with climate change, different ecosystems have become very fragile; climate change issues have become a reality and it is feared that human activity is causing massive extinctions. He also stressed that there is a need for biodiversity for continued ecosystem survival. However, sustainable development and sustainable consumption could help avert ecological problems. The geopolitical map in Europe has changed, the European Union has enlarged. In this context, he asked governments, international partners and NGOs to take the PEBLDS process and its future development very seriously during the 5th *Biodiversity in Europe Conference* and the meeting of the Council of PEBLDS. He also expressed his deepest hope that at the end of the Liège Conference, the Council of the PEBLDS would find the most appropriate option to continue the PEBLDS process in the most efficient way.

The PEBLDS council adopted the amended Agenda as it appears in Appendix I.
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2. Report of the Joint Secretariat on activities to date

for information

document STRACO (2009) 2

The Secretariat outlined progress on the work programs and planned meetings since the last PEBLDS Council held in March 2007 in Geneva.

The Joint Secretariat informed the Council about the activities carried out during the last few years and stressed that PEBLDS partners have also carried out a number of catalytic activities at the pan European level following the adoption of the PEBLDS.

The PEBLDS has been convening regional biodiversity conferences since the year 2000. The four previous Conferences have been held in Riga, Budapest, Madrid, and Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia focusing on the biodiversity priorities for the pan European region within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The past preparatory Conferences have proven to be useful for better preparation of the entire pan European region on the important issues under consideration of the CBD and raising awareness on the pan European priorities during discussions at the Conferences of the Parties.

UNEP has highlighted its collaboration with MCPFE (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) and presented the “Afforestation and reforestation” Guidelines, adopted in November 2008, and on its cooperation with the European Commission on the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The Council of Europe stated that it has participated in the PEBLDS process since the Conference of Sofia in 1995 and is ready to support its Joint Secretariat but would need extra resources to carry out related activities, given staff and budget cuts as from 2007. The activities carried out by the Council of Europe, which followed up on the Kyiv resolution, included:

- The implementation of the PEEN as the major means for the conservation and management of species, ecosystems, habitats and landscapes as part of the Resolution on Biodiversity, adopted in Kyiv in 2003.
- The launch of the Emerald network in the Caucasus region in 7 countries (the first step of the pilot projects).
- The adoption by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention of a resolution on the European Strategy on the Invasive Alien Species and the endorsement of the European Code of Conduct on Horticulture and Invasive Alien Plants.
- The implementation in 2006 of the Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate change.
- The adoption in 2008 of the European Strategy for Plant Conservation 2008-2014 by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

Finally, the Council of Europe is preparing the Conference “The Role of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe” in January 2010 in Madrid.

3. Future of the PEBLDS

for adoption

document STRACO (2009) 3

The Chair presented to the Council the document on the future of the PEBLDS suggesting different possible scenarios. He asked the governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and other partners to analyse and find the most appropriate options for this decisive period for PEBLDS. He outlined that having the Secretariat of the PEBLDS in Geneva and Strasbourg required more involvement from the staff and a higher budget. He then presented the possible solutions proposed in document STRACO (2009) 02 and asked the participants to express their opinion and opened the floor for discussion.

The Council of Europe stressed that many countries, especially EU countries, do not give accurate added value to the process and that it is crucial to find a structure and a strategy for the PEBLDS that will meet the current needs of all the countries. Activities should generally be carried out as an initiative of governments; intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and/or other partners. He outlined that the Council of Europe would follow and respect the decision made by the 54 governments involved in this process.

The representative of the Czech Republic raised the question about the financial implication of changing the Secretariat and what could be the consequences of that decision.

Norway expressed their support for the PEBLDS and emphasized that they have been actively involved in the process. She said they have benefited from this common framework on biodiversity. Finally, Norway asked what the next steps of PEBLDS could be.

The representative of the Ukraine highlighted that PEBLDS was an essential process for biodiversity and landscape conservation. However, it might need some restructuring to result in an instrument reflecting today's situation. As an essential source for implementing policy on biodiversity, PEBLDS needs to enable better intergovernmental cooperation in order to reduce biodiversity loss.

The representative of Serbia emphasised the value of the PEBLDS process and the significant work carried out at national level and summed up the pan-European activities related to the implementation of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity. She stressed the value of integrating biodiversity into other sectors, for example agriculture and forest management, and that the implementation of CBD by countries at a national level is very important, highlighting that the CBD and Strategy are looking towards the same direction. She added that the possibility of being able to exchange experiences on the implementation of CBD's decisions, if possible associated to an informal exchange on the documents for the CBD's COPs, could secure the forthcoming success of PEBLDS and could facilitate the development of appropriate co-operation.

The representative of Germany agreed about the importance to discuss the future of PEBLDS during the next coming days. She said that Germany had not yet decided about the future of the process but that for the German government, it was crucial to get ownership from governments for such a platform. The Eastern countries need such a platform and need to contribute fully, including financially.

The representative of Finland stressed the importance of this meeting and raised the question about the future of the PEBLDS. She thought that Option B, proposed in the document, was the most acceptable option and mentioned that clarification of the ownership is very important as is the collaboration with NGOs.

The representative of the Netherlands emphasised the importance of a clear strategy for the PEBLDS process, recalled that the political situation in Europe changed and raised the question about the organisation and preparation of the documents for the next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Kazakhstan.

The representative of Slovenia raised the question about the national capacity of every government in this process. As Slovenia takes part for Europe in two CBD regions, they could testify that the effect of the CBD COP process in Bonn was poor.

The representative of Turkmenistan stated that her government supported the future activities of PEBLDS, which are essential for Eastern countries. There was a very strong requirement to identify the new mechanism for PEBLDS to continue the process in Central Asia.

The representative of the European Commission highlighted that the Commission is in favor of regional cooperation. She said that the background document was a stimulating paper for practical decisions because it was time to come to concrete recommendations.

The Commission saw added value in this process, but it should be improved to be adapted to the current world situation: we should look at how to involve the local level and the operational level. Then PEBLDS could be a way for countries to learn more about different projects and programmes.

The representative of Austria stated that her government would support a continuation of a process that provides a platform for pan-European cooperation and information exchange in the field of biodiversity on the condition that the process has a clear merit for all participants. In this context she also underlined the positive achievements of the process so far. The majority of the participants agreed with this point. However, commitment and ownership of the EU, non-EU countries, the Secretariat, NGOs and civil society is needed.

The representative of the ECNC stated that the requirement for a new strategic framework should be underpinned by the determination of the added value of the PEBLDS process.

After very fruitful discussions with the participating governments and a consultation meeting with the Chair, the following decision was proposed and adopted by the Council of PEBLDS on the last day of the Conference:

Council Decision on the future of PEBLDS adopted at its 12th session - 24 sept. 2009

Recognizing the role of PEBLDS as an important process for facilitating implementation of the CBD at the pan-European level; and

Acknowledging the achievement of PEBLDS in the field of biodiversity in the pan-European region, in particular through the pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), the Kyiv Resolution, the Belgrade Resolution, in contributing to streamlining European 2010 biodiversity indicators, the identification of high nature value areas in agricultural ecosystems for Central and Eastern Europe, initiatives on business and biodiversity, and cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forest in Europe (MCPFE);

Considering the changes in geopolitical environment and new challenges in Europe, the Council, at its 12th session, decides the following with regard to the future of PEBLDS:

1. On the process:
 - a. The PEBLDS should provide a platform for collecting regional expertise, identifying priorities, and challenges (regional or sub-regional) making recommendations and providing input to implementation of the CBD and its new Strategic Plan.
 - b. The PEBLDS Council is to establish, without delay, a process to prepare a new post 2010 Pan-European strategic framework to be endorsed by the Ministerial Environment for Europe Conference in 2011 in Kazakhstan.

To this effect this process should include the following steps:

- i. An options paper should be prepared by the Chair with the support of the Friends of the Chair, based on the document already presented by the Chair and the discussion on it; and
 - ii. The options paper should be reviewed at the next PEBLDS Bureau meeting in the first half of 2010.
2. On reporting and timelines:
 - a. The documents prepared by the Friends of the Chair meetings are transmitted to the Bureau for information;

- b. The Bureau will review the final options paper at its next meeting in the first half of 2010, and will give the mandate to the Secretariat to implement the recommendations of the options paper with the guidance of the Chair; and
 - c. At its second meeting in early 2011 the Bureau will prepare a decision for adoption at the Environment for Europe meeting in Kazakhstan in 2011, and report to the UNEP Governing Council.
3. On the institutional setting, the Council requests UNEP to explore, in due time for the next meeting of the Bureau, ways and means for:
- a. arrangements for a Secretariat provided by UNEP-ROE and working in close cooperation with the CBD Secretariat and in partnership with the Council of Europe, IUCN, ECNC, CEEWEB, EcoForum and other relevant bodies;
 - b. the implementation of this decision;
4. Commitments:
Governments and other partners are encouraged to provide financial contribution to implement this Council Decision and also contribute by providing in kind contribution (e.g. by making staff available for providing input to the process and to the preparation of documents).

After the adoption of the decision, the Council of Europe made the following statement:

“ As the Council and Bureau of PEBLDS were created in 1996 by an Agreement between UNEP and the Council of Europe which states that both committee “will be set up, for reasons of expediency in the form of Committees governed by Article 17of the Statute of the Council of Europe” and that Institutional agreement seems no longer appropriate for Committee to be served by another international organization, UNEP is requested to seek a new institutional arrangement for the Council and Bureau of PEBLDS (Agreement between UNEP and the Council of Europe concerning the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Strategy, Appendix IV)”

The PEBLDS Council adopted a decision which fundamentally consists of a commitment to consider a proposal on the future PEBLDS process and a new PEBLDS Secretariat that facilitates the relevant activities with the different partner organisations and a number of topics in line with CBD priorities and the Kyiv Resolution. UNEP will prepare a proposal with new terms of reference to reflect the new direction of the PEBLDS process and the structure of a PEBLDS Secretariat.

5. Reflection on the Conference: Norway, Belgium, UNPD, Council of Europe and PEBLDS Chair

for information

The PEBLDS Council took note of the information and agreed to support a Chair's conclusions on the 5th Biodiversity in Europe Conference.

6. Adoption of the Liège Conference Chair's conclusions

for information

document STRACO (2009)

The PEBLDS Council welcomed and adopted the Chair's conclusions (Annexe III). All the participants and the Secretariat recognized Ms Tone Solhaug (Conference Chair/Norway) for her very positive contribution to the work of the Liège Conference, her excellent input and personal involvement in all preparatory meetings and expressed their deepest gratitude.

7. The future of the PEBLDS, continued: Budget implications and adoption of a decision

The Chair asked UNEP to propose urgently a budget for 2010 for possible adoption in the next Bureau meeting of the PEBLDS. The Chair asked the PEBLDS Council to submit all updated information on the implementation of activities to enable the new Secretariat to include them as programme activities for 2010. The PEBLDS Council did not adopt a budget for 2010. The Chair urged governments to provide voluntary contributions for the work to be carried out until Astana.

8. Election of the Chair and Members of the Bureau

for adoption

document STRACO (2009) 5

The PEBLDS Joint Secretariat introduced the document on the election of the Chair of the PEBLDS and new Members to complete the Bureau.

Mr Robert Lamb (Switzerland) was elected Chair of the PEBLDS, to take office after the Liège conference.

Belgium was elected as member of the bureau for EU Member States as it had been decided to increase EU representation to three members.

Norway was elected Bureau member to represent "other Western European states" as Switzerland would remain as Chair of the PEBLDS.

Albania was elected Bureau member to represent Central and Eastern European countries.

Germany was added to the Bureau as a European member of the CBD/COP Bureau, ex-officio.

Thus the Bureau of PEBLDS is as follows:

- a) Chair: Switzerland (starting after Belgrade with a term of office of two years);
- b) Vice Chairs: Serbia and the state organising the next EfE conference;
- c) 9 members representing 4 sub-regions (term of office of 1 year)
 - EU:** Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania;
 - Other Western European countries:** Andorra, Norway;
 - Central and Eastern Europe:** the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania;
 - The Newly Independent States:** Moldova, Georgia.
- d) A representative of the European Commission
- e) European members of the CBD/COP Bureau, ex-officio:
 - Ukraine
 - Croatia
 - Germany
- f) Observer organisations:
 - ECOForum
 - ECNC
 - CEEWEB
 - IUCN

The new Chair and Vice Chairs will take office immediately after the Liège Conference and the new members of the bureau will take up office immediately after the PEBLDS Council meeting (Liège, 22-24 September 2009).

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Closing of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting thanking the participants for their very active involvement and announced that the date and venue of the next Bureau meeting would be confirmed in early 2010.

APPENDIX I

Agenda of the Meeting PEBLDS Council Meeting (22-24 September 2009, Liège) Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
[Document STRACO (2009) 01]
3. Report of the Joint Secretariat on activities to date
[Document STRACO (2009) 02]
4. Future of the PEBLDS: Introduction by the Chair and discussion of the document
[Document STRACO (2009) 03]
5. Reflections on the Conference: Norway, Belgium, UNEP, Council of Europe and PEBLDS Chair
6. Adoption of the Liege Conference Chair's conclusions
[Document STRACO (2009) xx]
7. The future of PEBLDS, continued: Budget implications and adoption of a decision
[Document STRACO (2009) 03 and Document STRACO (2009) 04]
8. Elections of the Bureau and Chair
[Document STRACO (2009) 05]
9. Any other business
10. Closing of the meeting

APPENDIX II

Fifth Intergovernmental Conference *Biodiversity in Europe* 22-24 September 2009 Liège, Belgium

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APPENDIX III

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS – LIFE FOR EUROPE'S BIODIVERSITY 5TH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE Liege, Belgium, 22-24 September 2009

The 5th *Biodiversity in Europe* Conference brought together over 120 representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the private sector and scientists from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise and provide input to the post 2010 biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The conference was organized in the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS).

The Conference welcomed the results of pan-European cooperation over the last 15 years. In particular the Kyiv Resolution with the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and the focused action on the Pan European Ecological Network, on Monitoring and Indicators, on Forestry and on Business, Banking and Biodiversity.

The Conference underlined the economic and financial value of Europe's biodiversity, while also acknowledging its intrinsic, cultural and other values especially in relation to human well-being. The preliminary results of the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) were presented, and estimated a global welfare loss equivalent to 7% of the GDP in 2050 under a business as usual scenario, and highlighted that the yearly loss of ecosystem services far supersedes the impact of the current financial crisis.

The Conference furthermore recognized that biodiversity provides a security and insurance function for human well-being in relation to climate change, including as a buffer for unforeseen events and for providing options for future solutions, and highlighted in particular that;

- Improved knowledge on ecological tipping points and resilience of ecosystems are available, and must be used.
- Use of ecosystem-based approaches would promote ecologically and socially sound solutions both for securing and enhancing carbon storage and for developing sustainable adaptation measures.
- In many cases it is more cost effective and efficient to invest in biodiversity for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, e.g. in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), REDD+, land use management, conserving land cover and restoration, and maintaining intact peatlands, forests, and wetlands compared to investing in more expensive, man-made solutions.
- There is a need to ensure that mitigation activities, including bioenergy production, take due consideration of biodiversity concerns, risk assessments must be carried out, and the precautionary approach must be applied.
- Climate change is an added stress to biodiversity, and to mitigate its impact on biodiversity, other stresses must be decreased, particularly from fragmentation, land conversions, urban sprawls, invasive species, chemical contamination and over-exploitation. This is particularly urgent for specific ecosystems in Europe experiencing stress from climate change, including the Arctic, mountain ecosystems, the Mediterranean, coastal and marine areas, peatlands, wetlands, steppes and grasslands.

The Conference acknowledged that the target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 would not be reached in 2010 and that a strengthened and renewed effort is urgently needed for the

conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the pan-European region. The Conference proposed that the global post 2010 message should be inspirational, simple and politically attractive while at the same time realistic.

It was furthermore suggested that the overall target for pan Europe is to halt any further loss of species and habitats and to restore, by 2025, degraded areas with an emphasis on links between biodiversity, ecosystem services, climate change and human well-being with regular monitoring using relevant indicators to assess progress. It was also suggested that, in an equitable way, a 1 to 1 ecological footprint should be achieved in our lifetime.

The Conference highlighted the role of regional cooperation in the achievement of the new vision and targets as well as the implementation of the CBD strategic plan. The pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) must be linked to the new CBD Strategic Plan. The special needs of the countries of the Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region should be considered. The representation and implementation capacity of those countries must be increased and incentives and funding is necessary. The UNEP regional offices may have a useful role in the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements at the regional level.

The Conference requested the PEBLDS Council to establish, without delay, a process to prepare a new post 2010 Pan-European strategic framework to be endorsed by the Ministerial *Environment for Europe* Conference in 2011 in Kazakhstan.

The Conference recognized that achieving any post 2010 biodiversity target will require additional financial resources. The current financial crisis has and will impact the future availability of financial resources for biodiversity conservation. The conference recommended the following;

- Carry out a realistic assessment of the financial needs to achieve the post 2010 target within the pan-European region, including the possible establishment of a Biodiversity Technical Support Facility.
- Enhance existing financial instruments such as the GEF, the EEA Grants and EU neighborhood policy.
- Follow up on the Message of Paris on mainstreaming biodiversity into development cooperation.
- Build on the CBD Resource Mobilization Strategy by initiating a process to further explore and advance in the identification and establishment of new innovative financial resources and mechanisms for sustained biodiversity financing in the Pan European region.
- Increased engagement of the private sector.

Finally, the Conference acknowledged the need for an improved science-policy interface by enabling and enhancing knowledge transfers through mechanisms such as those proposed in the context of the IPBES process, and further underlined that mainstreaming of the biodiversity targets into other sectors and development of economic and regulatory instruments to address the drivers behind biodiversity loss are needed.

APPENDIX IV

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



AGREEMENT

Between the United Nations
Environment Programme and the
Council of Europe
concerning the Pan-European Biological
and Landscape Diversity Strategy

1. In conformity with the Declaration adopted by the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" adopted in Sofia on 25 October 1995, UNEP and the Council of Europe agree to co-operate for the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy approved by the Conference.

2. The Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (STRA-CO) and its Executive Bureau (STRA-BU) shall be set up, for reasons of expediency, in the form of Committees governed by Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, which will be entrusted with the task of implementing the Strategy.

The two bodies shall operate under the joint responsibility of the two Organisations and their structures and working methods shall be governed by their Terms of Reference adopted by the two Organisations and the decisions that the two bodies will take in the course of their actions. The Terms of Reference are appended to the present Agreement and can be modified by the two bodies with the consent of the two Organisations. UNEP and the Council of Europe agree, within the limits of their respective Budgets, to support the Strategy's Plan of Action and Work Programme and give secretariat services to the two bodies.

3. The Secretariat of the STRA-CO and STRA-BU shall be provided jointly by UNEP and the Council of Europe, with policy decisions being taken jointly by both Organisations and everyday tasks

being discharged by the Council of Europe. For this purpose, each Organisation, at its own expense, shall put at the disposal of the STRA-CO and STRA-BU an appropriate Secretariat.

4. Letters convening meetings, signed by both UNEP and the Council of Europe, and working documents shall carry the logos of both Organisations. Documents in English and French (and translations between the two languages) shall be produced by the Council of Europe. Documents in Russian (and translations from Russian into English and French and vice-versa) shall be produced by UNEP.

5. Interpretation in English and French shall be provided by the Council of Europe, and interpretation from and into Russian by UNEP

6. The Council of Europe shall bear the travel and subsistence expenses of representatives of its member States in Central and Eastern Europe or States which enjoy special guest status with the Parliamentary Assembly, while UNEP shall cover the expenses of representatives of other Central and Eastern European countries attending the Ministerial Conference, "Environment for Europe".

7. By common agreement each Organisation can represent the other at international meetings related to the implementation of the Strategy.

8. Each Organisation may receive voluntary contributions and donations which will be spent in conformity with the decisions of the STRA-CO and STRA-BU. Each Organisation shall exercise financial control on these sums in accordance with its internal regulations.

9. This Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely. It can however be modified by common agreement and each Organisation can denounce it by means of a notification addressed to, the other Organisation. The denunciation shall enter into force at the end of the financial year.

10. Any dispute which might arise in the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement will be solved in conformity with international law.

On behalf of UNEP

On behalf of the
Council of Europe

J.G.M. ALDERS
Director and
Regional Representative

Daniel TARSCHYS
Secretary General