

PRESS RELEASE

Marking the 2013 International Day of Biodiversity in Serbia

Belgrade, 27 May 2013 – Efficient protection of biodiversity in Serbia is feasible only if the government and other organizations and institutions as well as academia, media and NGO sector join their efforts, was concluded during the Biodiversity Week events organized by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The International Day of Biodiversity was celebrated during the past week by a series of events attended by over 500 participants, experts, representatives of governmental and non-governmental sector as well as public.

„Biodiversity is life. Protected biodiversity contributes to regulating climate, mitigating GHG effect, helps maintain the air and water quality and helps controlling draughts and floods. These are just some of the reasons why we wanted to draw the public attention to the issues of biodiversity within Biodiversity Week“, stated Milena Kozomara, UNDP portfolio manager, adding that UNDP continues to work with the Government of Serbia on the strategic and policy level to conserving biodiversity, through improving legislative and financial frameworks, as required by the UN Convention on Biodiversity.



The celebration started by a press conference that was held in Botanical Garden of Belgrade on May 17th, 2013. Representatives of the Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, UNDP Serbia and University of Belgrade answered media questions related to biodiversity, protected areas and International Day of Biodiversity celebrations.

The celebration continued during the 18-19 May on Avala near Belgrade where a school of nature photography was organized together with protected areas manager and the Centre for Youth Integration. Ten kids from the center were trained on photo taking by a National Geography photographer.

The central event on May 22nd, on the International Day of Biodiversity, was celebrated by the opening of the Visitors' Center Vrelo within the Nature Park Stara Planina. Some 200 guests gathered to open the newly built center. The Center will be providing information to park visitors on natural and cultural values of Stara Planina.

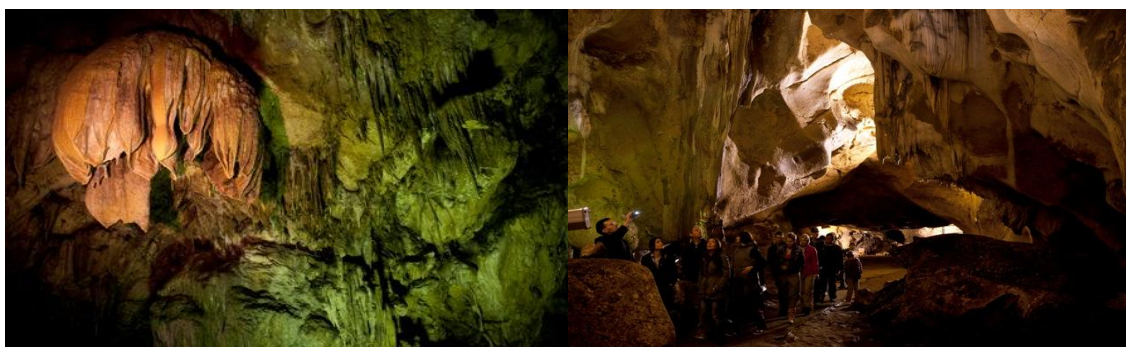


Within the Biodiversity Week, the European Park Day, May 24th, was marked by visiting protected area of natural monument Lazarev kanjon (Lazar's Canyon), organized by UNDP and Public Enterprise Srbijašume. "UNDP has been actively working with the Government on Serbia's strategic approach to conservation of biodiversity, through improving the legislative and financial framework, which is also the requirement of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity", stated Mr. William Infante, UNDP Resident Representative in Serbia, adding that events and the Biodiversity Week are important for raising awareness and understanding the genuine value of biodiversity.



"The importance of biodiversity week is not only the celebration of the week itself. The main goal is to increase efforts to maintain biological diversity in Serbia. We are grateful to UNDP for helping us recognize the need to preserve the environment, not only in this, but also in other projects as well", stated PhD Zorana Mihajlovic, Minister of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection of Republic of Serbia.

After the official ceremony, a tour of Lazar's Cave was organized, as well as a walk to the viewpoint and Vernjickica Cave, followed by a presentation on caves speleological research.



On Saturday, May 25th, climbing to Ostrovica Natural Monument was organized for media representatives. Empowered lives.
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Representatives of institutions that actively participated in the Biodiversity Week include the Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Public Enterprise Srbijašume, Belgrade's Botanical Garden „Jevremovac“ and many other organizations and institutions.

About UNDP:

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a UN global development network, advocating for change, connecting countries and providing them with access to knowledge, experience and resources, helping people build a better life. It operates in 166 countries and has been present in Serbia since 1952, working on solutions to global and national development challenges. As countries develop their local capacities, they rely on UNDP and its numerous partners. More information about UNDP's work available on the website <http://www.undp.org.rs/>.

About UNDP project:

Marking the biodiversity week in Serbia is organized within UNDP's project „Support to Sustainable Financing of the Protected Areas System in Serbia“. The purpose of this project is to promote financial sustainability and efficiency of the protected areas system, thus contributing to reinforcement of the overall system of nature protection in Serbia.

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