

On the International Day for Biological Diversity 2010, the Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water together with the Hungarian GEO magazine joined the International GEO Magazine's global initiative of organising a national *Biodiversity Action Day* on the 22nd of May in order to draw attention to the importance of conserving biodiversity. Accordingly, students of the local school together with scientists and taxonomists from the Danube-Ipoly National Park and the Hungarian Natural History Museum analysed the flora and fauna of the protected Szenas Hills holding a European Diploma. During the 24 hours Action Day the students could observe at four different sites how scientists work in nature.



Students of the local school listen the explanations of a botanist

„So it was – so it should be!”

In order to continue previous years' tradition, on the IBD the Ministry of Environment and Water announced a new competition titled **“So it was – so it should be!”** to draw attention to importance of biodiversity in cities. College and university students were invited to choose an area inside a town or a city which they would like to make greener and more natural; and design how they want to see it!

The selected site could be a square, a block, a street, a quarter of the town or even a deserted factory. The applicants had to present the current situation on a poster and also what they would like to change in this area. The deadline of the competition was the 30th of September 2010 after which an announcement and an exhibition of the best plans was organised on the 24th of November during the French Environmental Month in Budapest.



Science Café is a place where science is offered A'la carte. In a Science Café interested citizens can come to explore the latest ideas in science and technology and act as interested and engaged actors. In the Science Café model, the agenda and themes are framed by the questions and interest of the public.

The Ministry of Rural Development and the Environmental Social Science Research Group, under the auspices of a 7th Framework Programme of the European Union called „SciCafé” approached the Merlin Theatre with a proposal for co-operation for debating science issues and promoting public engagement with science in the field of biological and cultural diversity on a monthly basis from November 2010 to March 2011. Various well-known social and environmental scientists and practitioners were asked to bring their arguments about participatory nature conservation, protection of agro-biodiversity, multiculturalism and Roma integration and discuss them with wider audience.



Audience of Science Café

The competition for the **European Capitals of Biodiversity** started at the beginning of 2010. Local authorities in *France*, **Hungary**, Germany, *Slovakia* and *Spain* were competing for the biodiversity crown. The press conference was organised by Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency (LBDCA) together with the Ministry of Environment and Water on January 20, 2010 in Siófok where the competition was launched.

Between March and May 2010 5 one-day capacity building workshops were organized for municipalities at different parts of Hungary (Csopak, Győr, Kecskemét, Pécs, Miskolc) with regard to this project. During the workshops the participants listened to presentations about the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity, issues related to climate change and biodiversity, biodiversity-friendly planning processes, practical examples and best practices for biodiversity conservation and the “Hungarian Capital of Biodiversity Competition”. Speakers were invited from ministries (CBD National Focal Point), the International Advisory Board, and local practitioners from NGOs municipalities, National Park Directorates also showed their experiences.



Logo of the Hungarian Capital of Biodiversity

More than 100 municipalities participated at the workshops. Finally 43 municipalities filled-out the questionnaires of the competition. According to the performance of the municipalities with regard to biodiversity conservation the best three municipalities in each size-category were awarded and the Capital of Biodiversity was chosen.

The Award Ceremony was held on the 15th of September 2010 in Budapest, where the State Secretary of Environment and Nature Protection (Dr. András Rácz) and Managing Director of LBDCA (Dr. Gábor Molnár) gave certificated to the participating municipalities. The city of Tata was awarded as the Hungarian Capital of Biodiversity, which received an online media appearance and advertisement opportunity on a popular national website. Moreover, the representative of the Municipality of Tata was invited to present their actions at the City Biodiversity Summit in Nagoya in October 2010. The city of Dévaványa received a special award for the best municipal projects enhancing nature in the city.



Hungarian capital of Biodiversity - city of Tata

City of Dévaványa received an extra award

For Hungary, this year was a great opportunity to raise awareness of people on the role biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth. In addition to the several events organised by the Ministry of Rural Development - which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 2010 – a lot of programmes, competitions and events were organized over throughout the country by the 10 National Parks, NGOs and local communities.

For further information: <http://biodiv.kvvm.hu/>