

## International Year of Biodiversity 2010

### AUSTRIA

Throughout the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, many events are taking place in Austria under the umbrella of the **national biodiversity campaign “vielfaltleben”** (“living diversity”), with the overall aim to raise awareness on biodiversity and promote protection of the variety of life.

The campaign was launched in January 2009 by H.E. Nikolaus Berlakovich, Austrian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. It constitutes the biggest nature campaign that has ever been conducted in Austria. Twenty-one key-species are in the forefront of the campaign: 20 endangered umbrella-species and the “human being” to demonstrate the close interlinkages between humans and nature, also incorporated in the slogan of the campaign “Life is Diversity – Diversity is Life”.

The objectives of the campaign “vielfaltleben” are the following:

- Protection of endangered species and habitats, thus contributing to the 2010 target: 24 species protection projects throughout Austria contributing to the protection of more than 100 endangered species.
- Join all forces for biodiversity – “Alliance for Diversity”: establishment of partnerships with key stakeholders and representatives of all sectors of society (business companies, landowners, provincial governments, various associations, prominent persons, media, broadcasting, NGOs, etc.).
- Involve local communities (municipalities) in biodiversity protection: establishment of a local biodiversity network, launch of the competition “local biodiversity champion”.
- Raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity in cooperation with media and other partners.

The campaign is being carried out in cooperation with the biggest NGOs in Austria (Naturschutzbund, WWF, BirdLife) – also demonstrating that biodiversity protection needs cooperation, partnership and joint forces.

The campaign is ongoing (until the end of 2010). Many successes have already been achieved so far, inter alia:

- Tenfold increase in breeding stocks of the lapwing in Vorarlberg.
- Exceptional increase in breeding-pairs of the White-tailed sea eagle.
- Renaturation and safeguarding of 10 ha of amphibian habitats.
- Elaboration of an action plan on the wildcat in cooperation with hunters.
- More than 200 partners have joined the “Alliance for Diversity”: 130 municipalities engaged in the local biodiversity network and related competition, 21 VIPs raising awareness on biodiversity as ambassadors of key species of the campaign, 30 MoUs with various business companies, landowners and private associations have been established to carry out joint biodiversity programmes, 10 sponsorships (business enterprises, banks, etc.), 6 Austrian National Parks.
- Cooperation with print media, e.g. “Kronen Zeitung”, which has the widest circulation in Austria, ORF – Austrian Broadcasting (e.g. “Universum” series “Triumph of Life”) and other media.

### **Specific events in 2010 (examples):**

19 January: Launch of the IYB 2010 in Austria with H.E. Minister Berlakovich and more than 100 Austrian mayors in St. Pölten (Lower Austria).

22 - 29 May: “Week of Diversity” with more than 100 events conducted with more than 70 partners all over Austria: conferences, exhibitions, excursions, etc.

26 May: Establishment of a beehive on the roof of the Vienna Opera House with a live stream (<http://www.bienenfreunde.at/livecam>) to raise awareness for IYB 2010. This underlines the importance of bees for their role in pollination, for the environment as well as for the economy.

29 May: “GEO-Tag der ARTenvielfalt” celebrated in all six Austrian National Parks, with specific programmes for children and adults to explore and enjoy the diversity of life.

24 June: “Jugend-Impulse 2010”: Youth meeting in the Austrian Parliament to discuss and formulate requests to politicians on biodiversity protection needs.

Nov. 09 - 30 June: Competition “Local biodiversity champion”.

7 July: Summer party “living diversity” of H.E. Minister Berlakovich and the “Alliance of Diversity” and other supporters of the campaign to celebrate the diversity of Austrian nature and in particular the six Austrian National Parks.

### [Selected upcoming events:](#)

25 August: Staff excursion “Living Diversity” of the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management: colleagues are invited to contribute actively to the protection of the bee-eater in Austria by digging out hollows in steep walls that the birds need for breeding.

24 November: H.E. Minister Berlakovich will invite to a “Gala on Biodiversity” to celebrate the IYB 2010 with all the partners who have supported the campaign “vielfaltleben”, including the prize-awarding ceremony for the “local biodiversity champion”.

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### [Further information and materials on “vielfaltleben”:](#)

<http://www.vielfaltleben.at/> and [gabriele.obermayr@lebensministerium.at](mailto:gabriele.obermayr@lebensministerium.at)