

2nd Dinaric Arc Parks International Conference Report

2-5 December 2013
Budva, Montenegro





Let's become relevant!



The 2nd Dinaric Arc Parks conference is behind us! We shared some great moments, historical agreement, useful workshops, great tips... The four sunny days in warm Budva passed too quickly.

The protected areas need to become relevant to be able to perform their main function, which is to protect biodiversity. The parks should become a constituent part of the development of the region in which they are situated and need to be a driving force that will find ways how to enhance the quality of life of people who live in or around them, without disturbing the fundamental natural values in the process.



The participants of the Conference, who came from more than 60 protected areas in the region, expressed their wish to become formally united into a Dinaric Arc Parks Association. This decision was also recognised by the competent ministries through the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc", a joint statement of all ministries of the countries in the region. Accordingly, next year the WWF and the parks, in cooperation with the ministries, will try to find a model to establish a Dinaric Arc Parks Association.



This project helped sixteen protected areas to enter in the process of obtaining the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. During the Conference, the parks shared their experiences and progress, which also encouraged other parks to express their interest in engagement in the process to be able to obtain the Charter.

The Parks Dinarides work on the assessment of cultural and economic benefits of all protected areas in the region. All parks and main stakeholders in and around the parks participate in the process, including hikers, fishermen, foresters, hoteliers... All parks will thus be able to present their benefits individually to the local decision makers and communities. On the other hand, the WWF will present all benefits of the protected areas ecosystem to the decision makers at the national level.

In addition to other park activities, such as sustainable tourism, benefit assessment of the protect areas and branding, the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc" will enable the protected areas to take their rightful place on the economic and political agenda.



What does "Big Win for Dinaric Arc" mean to WWF?

The Dinaric Arc is one of the most ecologically important regions anywhere in Europe. But it's clear that if we want to conserve the natural resources that are here, countries in the region have to work together because nature doesn't respect political boundaries. They made an important first step in 2008 setting out to work together to conserve the Dinaric Arc. This meeting is a significant next step in confirming and building their collaboration.

Did it take a lot of engagement to gather all relevant people to endorse such an important document?

Well, it's clear that this kind of collaboration doesn't happen automatically. The WWF team in the region has been working hand in glove with ministers in every country to help build this collaboration and help them work across the boundaries that divide them. Already there is a greater level of trust and confidence, and I see a real opportunity to build that in the years ahead.

Is it the first time that you've visited Dinaric Arc region?

Yes, it is! I've heard about the beauty of the region for a long time, so I came now a couple of days early so I could look around a little bit. It's a gorgeous place and I plan on coming back some time when I can get more into nature. Clearly this is a place that has a lot to offer.



Mr. Jim Leape,
Director General of WWF International



JOINT STATEMENT

OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE DINARIC ARC PARKS CONFERENCE FROM THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA, KOSOVO¹, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, AND THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

As the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), EU member countries, EU candidate countries and EU potential candidate countries:

Recognizing that joint and coordinated efforts are needed in efficient and sustainable nature management,

Recalling the Big Win commitments signed at the CBD 9th Conference of Parties in Bonn, 2008, and

Noting that increased cooperation of nature conservation authorities leads to more coherent nature conservation systems and better coordination at the regional level,

We, the participants of the Dinaric Arc Parks Conference will in the framework of Big Win 2 for successful nature conservation of Dinaric Arc Region:

1. Aim to further continue the activities towards implementation of national priorities leading to delivering on the three objectives of the CBD and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Targets as well as EU directives on nature protection and EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.
2. Work toward strengthening conservation planning processes in the region.
3. Ensure conservation of valuable terrestrial and marine areas through increased management effectiveness, representativeness, and well-connected system of protected areas.
4. Encourage mapping and assessing the state of ecosystems and related services, assessing economic valuation of protected areas and develop the sustainable financing schemes.
5. Apply the results of stakeholder driven approaches to understanding the current and potential values of protected areas and use this information to strengthen management of protected area systems, encourage new partnerships to support protected areas and maintain and promote local cultural traditions.
6. Support evaluation of the contribution of protected areas to each country's economy and for the region as a whole.
7. Support initiatives and projects under the environmental pillar of EU Adriatic-Ionian and Danube macro-regional strategies, which contribute to sustainable economic development and regional cooperation.
8. Continue supporting the need for sustainable use of water resources and protection of ground-water-dependent ecosystems by respecting the requirements of EU Water Framework Directive, Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment, and public involvement.
9. Encourage integration of nature conservation goals into sectoral developmental plans and cross-sectoral cooperation.
10. Develop education and awareness programs on the value of natural capital to the country economy.
11. Recognize the specific natural and cultural values of the Dinaric Arc region and acknowledge the Dinaric Arc Parks network to be a valuable platform for creation of the joint regional brand.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Big Win for Dinaric Arc

Perhaps it seemed like a mission impossible for Montenegrin Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, WWF and IUCN to gather ministers or their deputies in Budva for endorsement of the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc", however the mission was successfully accomplished. Representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia have endorsed a key agreement for the protection of the environment in the Dinaric Arc region.

Countries formally committed to strengthen regional cooperation in conservation and sustainable development, to assess the economic value of their natural capital, while integrating nature conservation goals into economic development plans for fisheries, forestry, agriculture, energy, spatial planning, and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Countries committed to evaluate the contribution of protected areas to their own and the region's economy, and to draft sustainable financing schemes for protected areas. This will include plans to build sustainable tourism in these areas over the next five years.

European Commissioner for Environment Janez Potočnik opened the conference and congratulated all governments for endorsing the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc".

This agreement follows a former commitment from May 2008 at the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Germany, signed by 6 countries of the Adria region – 80% of which has been effectively implemented.

All national commitments can be downloaded at www.discoverdinarides.com.



It is clear that investing in nature – whether in protected areas or not – is a sound investment – and even more so given current economic constraints, when we need more than ever to invest our money wisely.

Through the Dinaric Arc Initiative, you can help prepare the partner countries to further develop and expand the Natura 2000 network, and foster and strengthen the value of green infrastructure offered by this part of Europe. This will help build resilience in your countries and in the whole of Europe. I strongly encourage you to continue pursuing these goals.

On your way to EU accession, you can benefit from the growth and job opportunities which can come from Europe's efforts to green our economy and invest in resource efficiency, as well as the innovation which is stimulated by the EU's high environmental standards. By working together to protect nature as a common valuable resource, you can increase the efficiency and impact of your actions.

Investing in natural capital, especially in countries such as yours, which have rich biodiversity, will underpin many opportunities for sustainable development in the future.



Mr Janez Potočnik,
European Commissioner
for Environment



The Big Win for Dinaric Arc ceremony is now behind us. How do you feel?

I feel slightly relieved, but on the other hand work is still ahead of us. We have completed the agreement phase, however in front of us is the stage of its application. It would be interesting to get together in six months or so and see what we have actually achieved.

What does the endorsement of this document mean for the Dinaric Arc region?

A big step forward. This broad political support is a precondition to do something concrete. An important first step we have made. Now, the work is ahead of us.



Mr. Boris Erg,
Director of IUCN Programme Office
for South-Eastern Europe

Should we have Dinaric Arc Parks Association?

A SWAT analysis has been made during a very interesting workshop led by Mr. Martin Šolar from Triglav National Park (SLO). More than 50 protected areas representatives were present when Martin was describing benefits of Europarc Federation and ALPARC –Alpine Network of Protected Areas, while Mr. Ivan Svetozarović (SRB) from Djerdap National Park spoke about Carpathian Network of Protected Areas. Any of these could be taken as a model for the formal DAP Association. However, shall we make one?

YES! Only one vote was against the formal association. To be continued...



Trouble with finding funds?

Mrs. Zrinka Delić, with many successfully implemented projects already carried out, has hosted a “Financial Potential of Protected Areas” workshop on behalf of Una National Park (BiH). Zrinka talked about sources of grant funds and reasons why the level of used funds is so low but also how to raise them and improve them.

The workshop has opened many questions and it was interesting to see how people coming from different countries reacted differently. While Croats and Slovenians inquired about how to overcome the period from sending final financial report until receiving the last payment from contracting authority, Albanians were troubled by how to receive any funds at all.

All participants wanted to know how to find and detect a trustful project partner and this brought up an idea of generating a database with Dinaric Arc Parks as its members. This database could be used for matching parks as potential partners for some common projects. Also, there was a clear consensus on necessity and utility of organizing workshop about writing and implementing EU funded projects.

Some useful tips were given to all participants by Mr. Andreas Beckman, director of WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, in a presentation about EU perspective. The money is there, we just need to find the way how to reach it!

"I am proud to present my country to the world not only through sports, but also its beauty. I am happy to join the Dinaric Arc Parks story!"

Ms. Ana Baletić,
Montenegrin national basketball team,
ambassador of Parks Dinarides



ANA BALETIĆ WITH VESELIN LUBURIĆ, DAP
NATIONAL COORDINATOR IN MONTENEGRO





What is a mouse?

Mrs. Sue Stolton held a short presentation about the millennium generation (generation of children born after year 2000). She mentioned that 90 % of Americans spend their time indoors. They do not recognize blackberry as a fruit... Only the phone BlackBerry! They do not know a mouse... Not even from Tom&Jerry! Only the one we use working on a computer!?

We need to react and work together in order to reconnect children and nature!

You expected a lot from this conference! Are you satisfied at the end?

- We expected a lot, and we got more than a lot! It was a very big success. We saw the protected areas from all over the Dinarides region coming together very strongly. This is a strong movement for the conservation of Dinaric nature, demonstrating that protected areas are a realistic option for the development of local communities and regional economy. WWF is proud to support this process. We are proud to work with such a motivated and great group of people.

What do this conference and the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc" document mean for the region?

It means that governments from eight countries in the region have committed to advance nature conservation through a wide and effective system of protected areas, including transboundary parks. This is a significant result for a region that is among the world's most important ecoregions. The conference also demonstrated that there is a strong protected area management capacity across the region. Protected area managers are coming together sharing experiences, developing solutions, designing visions for people and nature. These managers are an asset for countries in the Dinaric region. They showed the existence of a big potential for making protected areas across the region a pillar for development opportunities for Dinaric countries, to grow their economy and to improve the quality of life of their people, which in the end is the final aim of economy and politics.

What is the perspective of WWF in the region?

- WWF is here to stay in the Adria region for a long time. In a sense we have just started. We have been working for nature conservation in this region for about ten years. We have achieved important results such as the Big Win one and two. But there is still a lot of work to be done. We want to be a positive force for the mobilization of Adria societies for sustainable development. WWF is establishing its coordination office for the region in Zagreb, and will engage across all the countries of the Adria region. But we will not be working alone. We aim at building partnerships and alliances with NGOs, media, governmental agencies, private sector, because conservation requires the engagement of all sectors of society.



Paolo Lombardi, Director of WWF Mediterranean Programme

Protected areas assessment to achieve GDP growth...

Protected Areas Benefit Assessment (PA BAT) session gathered all the parks that have already been in the process of assessment, as well as those interested to assess their protected areas. Run by Ms. Andrea Štefan, WWF and Ms. Sue Stolton, Equilibrium Research, session began with the reminder of aims of the PA BAT, which are: to collate information on the full range of current and potential benefits of PAs, to work with stakeholders to identify important values and benefits that PAs bring to a range of stakeholders, from local to global; and to use a standard typology results that can be aggregated to provide an overview of a portfolio of PAs.

The purpose of the working session was to discuss the following use of PA BAT results at the level of an individual park, at the national and regional level. Key points, out of which many were the same for all three levels, included: revitalization of local tradition; strong marketing and promotion; communication with local community; necessity for quality communication materials with facts and figures related to potential for job creation linked with the i.e. nature-based tourism, GDP growth... Last but not least, "wow" effect would be highly appreciated to persuade people to value nature. Another crucial activity should include listing the major values and benefits and introduce them to decision makers and investors from different sectors, i.e. tourism, economy, finances.

Foto BAT



Was it hard to coordinate 170 people from more than 8 countries to come to the conference?

Coordination of such an event always demands a lot of effort. However, when coordinating a group of people who are willing to come and are happy to work, the effort is not so hard.

You talked to many people, what is the feedback?

The feedback is very good. I am happy we organized this conference in such a way and I hope that the next one will be even better, if this is at all possible.

Where will the next conference take place?

As it seems now, it will be in Croatia, in Brijuni National Park. I would like to invite everybody to book the beginning of October 2014 to be with us again.

Will Dinaric Arc Parks project have a follow-up or do you think the network is already ready to become a formal association?

I think that Dinaric Arc Parks Association is still too young to be left alone so I believe we will be working with the Association for another three, even five years.

Leon Kebe,
coordinator of
Dinaric Arc Parks
project, WWF
Mediterranean
Programme





Tell me a story...

WWF Mediterranean conservation director, Mr. Deni Porej, gathered eight representatives of different protected areas and countries. Through short interviews, in an Oprah Show manner, Deni asked his guests about their job, protected areas they work in, management, tourism products, history... Many interesting stories were told by Mr. Zoran Mrdak, director of PI National Parks of Montenegro, Mr. Slobodan Simić, director of Zasavica Special Nature Reserve, Mr. Sandro Dujmović, director of Brijuni National Park, Mr. Osman Delić, director of Protected Areas of Sarajevo Canton, Mr. Goran Gugić, director of Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, Mr. Hrvoje Teo Oršanić, director of Kozjansko Regional Park, Mr. Dragan Kovačević from the Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of the Republic of Srpska and Mr. Amarildo Mulić, director of Una National Park.



Hm... Where are women in protected areas?!



5 DECEMBER 2



Zoran Mrdak,
Director of Public Institution
National Parks of Montenegro

WWF is more than thankful for all the help you provided to have such a successful conference in Montenegro...

We are proud for having "Big Win for Dinaric Arc" endorsed here. Montenegro is the only country from the region that opened negotiations with EU and this is why we want to promote regional cooperation, environment and all activities related to nature protection. Montenegro should be recognized as a country that promotes sustainable development and the idea from the beginning of 90s when Montenegro was proclaimed ecological state. We are doing everything to put protected areas on a higher level. There are not many countries which can emphasize that their protected areas are linked with the past and the future of the country as Montenegro can. The whole history of Montenegro is linked to protected areas, particularly Lovćen and Skadar Lake National Parks. Two key activities that will be linked with protected areas in the next 20 to 50 years are tourism and agriculture, and these are the activities that are developed in protected areas through sustainable tourism. These parks are situated in undeveloped part, in the middle and Northern part of Montenegro, and they are recognized in all strategies as most important mechanisms for the development of that region. Because of that, it is crucial that Montenegrin public recognizes the importance of protected areas.

This is why the "Big Win for Dinaric Arc" is very important to us. Through the programme of the conference we heard about good practices, we presented our good practices...

What do you think about the idea of formalizing Dinaric Arc Parks Association?

We have generally supported that idea. Through that kind of association many good energies could be produced and thus bring many positive things in the region. Although Croatia has national parks that are visited by several millions of tourists, this region has much more potential for the future. National tourism organizations from the region are currently discussing how to attract Chinese market, because each of our countries has minor importance alone. Same way, we can make a brand of all our tourism economies and make the Parks Dinarides known in the world.

You were director of Skadar Lake NP, now you are director of Public Institution. What would be your message to your colleagues? Do not look at local interests only – there is always a broader picture. If you accept cooperation, good practices and positive energies, with Parks Dinarides you can bring something better to your park. We are too small to remain alone in the Balkans.



Marko Pečarević,
Mediterranean Programme Officer
in MAVA, Fondation pour la Nature



Since you have been at both Dinaric Arc Parks conferences, how do you comment this year's achievements?

In Banja Luka, I was there for only 2 days, so I cannot compare them properly. From what I had seen, it was clear that (most of) the participants had a much better picture of why they are there, and what the whole thing is about. I am sure that the exchange visits have helped make this happen. The major achievement of the Budva conference was the move towards the creation of a formal association. I would like to stress once again the importance of that process being led by the protected areas themselves, with WWF's technical assistance.

As a conservationist who worked at the Croatian State Institute for Nature Protection, do you see this conference being useful for the people working in protected areas in the region?

It will be useful for those who want to find it useful. There will always be those who will in cynical tone talk rubbish about the whole thing, while sipping coffee in the Montenegrin sun, courtesy of this project. Some will benefit by gaining access to the Sustainable Tourism Charter, others by meeting colleagues from different parks and countries and discussing themes of common interest, and some by hearing of good practices that exist in their neighbourhood (and hopefully attempting to emulate them).

Do you consider Parkvision programme as a useful initial step for parks to develop collaboration on common projects?

- Yes, definitely, but perhaps the way it was done this year was not the best (as I am sure you will also appreciate). Here are some notes that I took.

1. It was apparent that the parks were not given enough time to prepare the concepts
2. Majority were not in English, and as such difficult for the Albanian participants to appreciate (for those that spoke English)
3. Perhaps it would be good to set up some voting rules so that it is clear who of the participants should and should not vote (for example I do not think that a hypothetical park that came with 10 employees, or some other organization, should yield that much weight)
4. Perhaps stations could be set up where people would stand and present their projects, similar to a scientific conference.

Do you think MAVA Fondation will still have the interest to invest in Dinaric Arc Parks after 2014?

This decision will not be mine so I cannot talk in absolutes, but let's put it this way - I could see myself having the audacity to propose a follow-on project but it would depend on several factors (one of which would definitely be the final structure of the proposed association as well as its governance and mandate). As opposed to many other parts of the world, in that region the institutional setup largely exists (together with more or less functional institutions), and it is only a matter of strengthening it and having the managers start taking their job seriously. There is no doubt that the process of getting those PAs up to speed on the modern trends in PA management will be slow and painful, but it is worth the time and effort. Although it is all nice and rosy that they are all getting together and collaborating, we all know that many of these areas would (for different reasons) hardly pass the IUCN criteria for even being called a PA, let alone a national park. The new association should not be something that will endorse the practices we see in many of them.

Parks Dinarides vote for sustainable tourism

The workshop on protected areas and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) was chaired by Mr. Richard Partington from Europarc Federation and Ms. Andrea Štefan from WWF. The working session was an opportunity to discuss the current situation with 16 parks that are in the process of getting ECST. They shared many different stories, but all with the same goal – preparing their parks for the Charter. Few parks will actually succeed to apply for ECST by the end of 2013!

If the parks know where they are now and where they want to be in 20 years, they will more easily reach the goal. By building trust, involving local people and relevant stakeholders and desire to move to turn negative tourism into positive tourism, Parks Dinarides could have good tourism management that is essential for conservation.

To move forward and work with business sector, parks should create good relationships with business community, not becoming businessmen themselves. Tourism can make positive contribution to a healthy, mixed economy, using local skills and resources. This is why parks should explore quality certification and common eco-standards at regional level (Dinaric Arc region). If a standard label will be made of Parks Dinarides, we will have a strong brand instead of having 79 park brands that are lost in space.



The word communication was very often heard during the conference. People seem to understand they are missing it in their parks! What do you see as their need?

It feels like parks do not have substantial revenues or personnel to support their local communication needs, neither do they have the knowledge. We should, both WWF and Leo Burnett, support their needs. We have already spoken at the conference about organizing a workshop in which we are going to offer them very specific knowledge and sort of skills-set, a toolbox for advertising their activities on-line. This is what we find to be the best - instead of giving them a fish, we are going to teach them how to fish by themselves.

What did conference participants mostly talk to you about?

There was a great interest in branding that many park representatives have talked to us about. We have interviewed over

15 people from different parks and it seems that there is a growing need and even a potential to organize branded groups of products. There were some great ideas, some of them are actually doable. The challenging aspect is finding commonalities or similar things in all the parks, but it is not impossible. We are hopeful that we are not going to achieve only a communication brand, but also a product brand that is going to be associated to a group of parks working together.



Karlo Stojčević,
business leader in Leo Burnett Croatia/
Bosnia and Herzegovina



To be or not to be a ranger?

The main objectives of the workshop “Rangers in and for protected areas”, chaired by Mr. Martin Šolar, who was accompanied by Mr. Branko Štivić, were to make an overview of what is happening in the ranger service in the region and to detect what is needed inside Dinaric Arc parks to improve their ranger services. Very important aim was to set pillars of the platform for further development of ranger services. For healthy development of ranger service inside parks, it is crucial to set clear terms of reference for the future of rangers; specific and clear curriculum. During the workshop participants talked about education of rangers and the way ranger service function in their country.

This is the first time you joined Dinaric Arc Parks “community”! What are your impressions?

It’s fantastic... The bazaar where different protected areas presented themselves was really fun but also very impressive. What I find impressive is diversity of natural treasures that they have shown, as well as drinking and culinary treasures... There are many common songs that people share which pulls them together in a way. So there was a very nice atmosphere and very nice energy and that is the most important basis for future cooperation.



Mr. Andreas Beckman,
Director of WWF Danube-Carpathian
Programme

When you compare this conference to those that you organize within WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, do you see a great difference?

It’s different! There is a former Yugoslav atmosphere, a Mediterranean flare... You have the same drinks, rakija, šljivovica... more or less the same thing! I’d say you dance and party more! We have been famous for that, but you guys out-topped us and you have much nicer ambassadors.



Nina Jensen, CEO WWF Norway

Were your expectations met at this conference?

I am very happy and impressed with the efforts of the team. We are very proud supporters of the programme and we will do our best to continue at the same level. It was a historical moment when the 8 Ministers (or their representatives) were together – this is unique! It is not only about conservation, it is about people and piece-building in this region. It was exceptional to be part of it in many ways.

Why is Norway interested in funding protected areas in this region?

Initially Norway was sceptical of funding this project because it does not really fit the normal profile of the work they support in the region. So through a thorough process we were actually able to frame it quite nicely as regional cooperation and as a piece-building type of activity which it in many ways is. WWF is bringing the whole region together basing it on one of the key features, which is the unique biodiversity. Many people do not actually know that there are more than 5000 endemic species in the Dinaric Arc not found anywhere else. These are the types of values that if you develop them properly can really generate economic development for this region. For Norway this area has always been of interest, both because of political history and instability. Norway is present with 4 Embassies in the region, and as far as we can tell, the political support for this area will continue. Even though they have not initially been focused on biodiversity and conservation, if we are able to frame it right and make clear the obvious linkages to economic development, sustainable tourism, hydropower or alternative energy production, the good cooperation will certainly continue.





And the winner is...

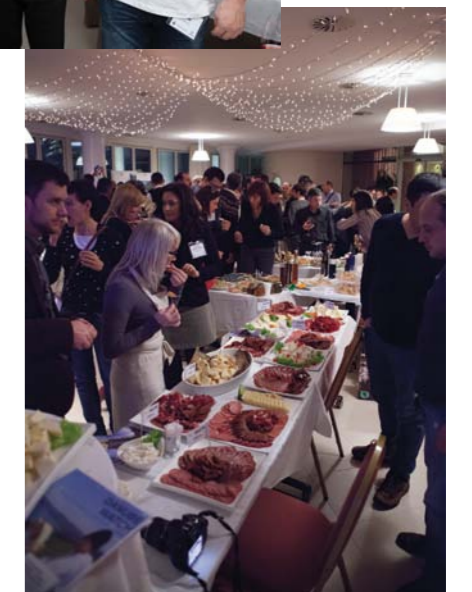


Djerdap National Park was voted to have the best proposed project in the Parkvision contest. Organized for the very first time, Parkvision was foreseen to serve as a contest among parks in the region in writing project proposals. Due to the lack of time to prepare projects, only 7 projects applied: Mavrovo NP, Pelister NP, Jasen Public Enterprise, Triglav NP, Lonjsko Polje NP, Tara NP and the winner – Djerdap NP. Dinaric Arc Parks project will pay a consultant to develop proposed project with Djerdap NP and help them apply to structural funds. The winning project is about natural resources and protected areas management as an opportunity for sustainable regional development, contribution to the protection, promotion and advancement of effective management of protected areas in order to develop tourism and alternative economic activities for the preservation of natural resources.



National tastes and common music

This year Protected Areas Bazaar was a major success! It seemed that every nation wanted to be the best in presenting original bites and sips of their countries. It is hard to say which table was more visited! People mingled, enjoyed and sang. Actually, in majority of cases, songs were those that united all participants together...





Deni Porej, Conservation Director
in WWF Mediterranean Programme

Two years of Dinaric Arc Parks are behind us. What have we achieved?

I think we have managed to build a community of people working in protected areas. That is something we set out to do and now, after two years, we are seeing the fruits of that labour. The discussions that people are having, the number of connections that the project has made is excellent. I am just now looking at the table where a lady from Macedonia, gentleman from protected area in Slovenia and a person from Montenegro are sharing a drink and talking. That will be a lasting legacy of our project.....

In which direction is the Dinaric Arc Parks project developing?

Dinaric Arc Parks is no longer a "project" - this is more a movement that is growing into something big. Discussions on forming a

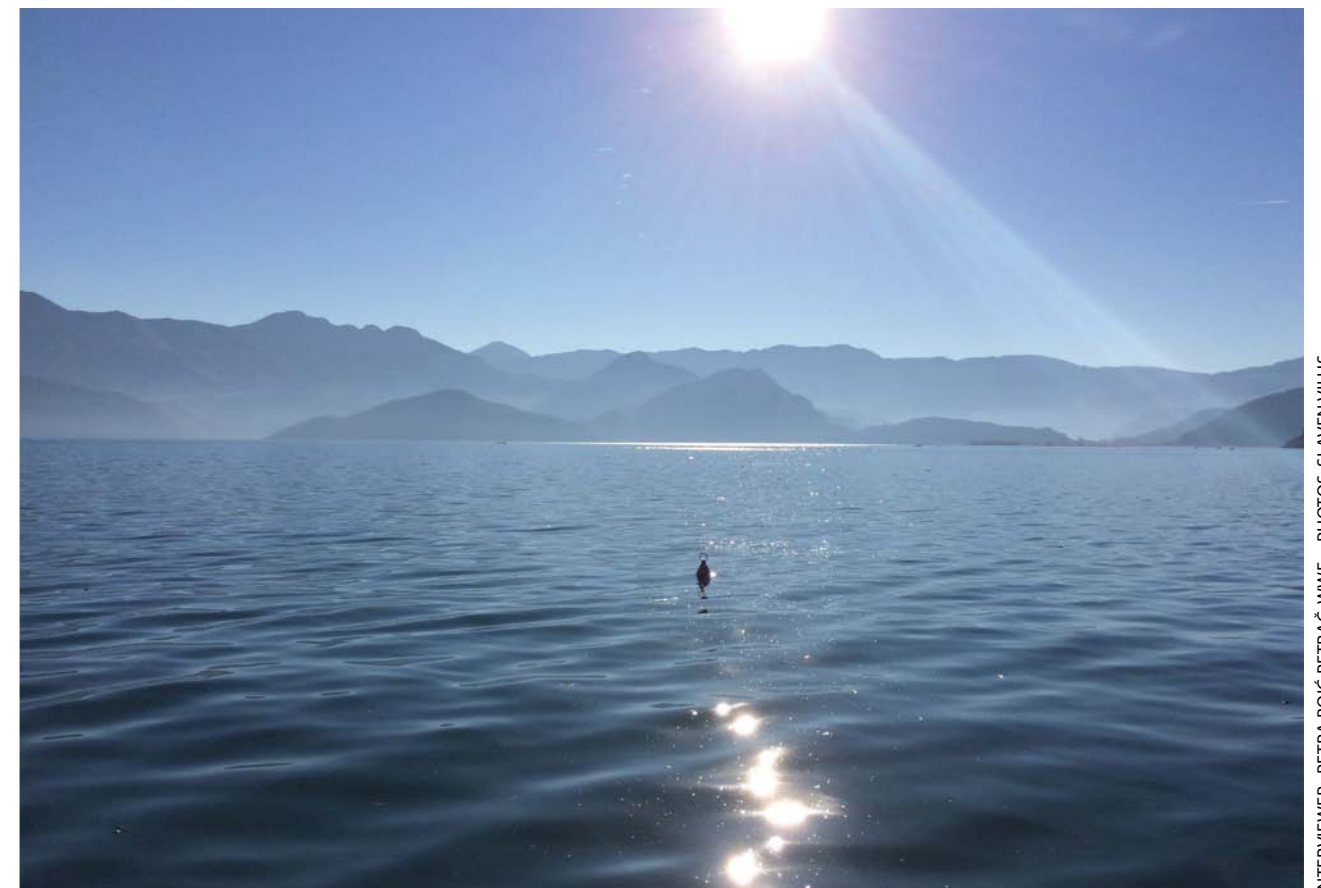
formal association and establishing this union of parks as a legal entity is a good move. On the other hand, we have managed to find topics that actually unite people in protected areas in the region. We have heard discussions about Charter for Sustainable Tourism, benefit assessment of protected areas, working on ranger services etc.... People are starting to see the value of Parks Dinarides and the value of talking to each other, they are developing joint projects! In the current political circumstances in which there are political difficulties in regional collaboration, and countries are looking inward, nature protection is sliding down on governments' agenda. We are managing to keep the regional cooperation going and keep the protected areas and nature conservation at some level of interest of the governments in the region, which will be some of the main outcomes of this project in a three-year period.



Montenegrin natural beauty

Although Budva is Montenegrin pearl, it would not be acceptable to leave the only ecological country in the world without visiting at least one national park! This is why the 2nd Dinaric Arc Parks conference concluded with a visit to the Montenegrin Skadar Lake National Park. On a way to Skadar Lake, participants went to Cetinje, the old royal capital of Montenegro, cultural and educational centre for five centuries and visited the Royal Palace, a house of King Nikola.

At the Skadar Lake, participants visited visitor centre and enjoyed the boat ride around the lake. That was the opportunity for them to listen to the stories about other national parks in Montenegro, as well as about the system of protected area management in this beautiful country.





Surname	Name	Organization name English	Country	E-mail
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Axhiu	Amet	Pelister NP	Macedonia	np.pelister@yahoo.com
Bajraktari	Fadil	Regional Park "Ujëvarat e Mirushes"	Kosovo*	fadilbajraktari@yahoo.com
Banić	Saša	Public Institution Maksimir	Croatia	ravnatelj@park-maksimir.hr
Beckmann	Andreas	WWF DCPO	Austria	abeckmann@wwfcdp.org
Biçaku	Mitat	Shebenik – Jabllanice NP	Albania	mitatbicaku@yahoo.com
Bici	Haxhi	RRUSHKULLI Nature Reserve	Albania	alb_forest@hotmail.com
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- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
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