





euRONATUR
OUR YEAR 2020

EDITORIAL & CONTENT



Dear Sir or Madam,
dear Friends of EuroNatur!

The past year was largely dominated by a single issue: the Covid-19 pandemic. I must admit that, at the end of 2019, I would have described conditions of severely restricted contacts and travel and the closure of restaurants and cultural venues as a gloomy prophecy straight out of a dystopian novel. But the cause of the current pandemic has little to do with literary fiction. In recent months there has been much reporting on the links between the destruction of nature, the treatment of animals and the spread of zoonotic diseases. It is largely undisputed that ever-increasing human intervention in the environment favours the development of zoonoses, i.e. infectious diseases that can be transmitted from humans to animals and from animals to humans. And such zoonotic diseases can also result in pandemics. Regardless of the exact origin of the Covid-19 outbreak, which has not yet been fully identified, the pandemic has brought into sharp focus the importance of leaving sufficiently large refuges for wildlife, with little or no interference from humans.

Even in the industrialised and densely populated Europe, such natural landscape areas still exist. EuroNatur has continued to work for their protection over the past year. In 2020, even though due to the pandemic the challenges we faced were greater still, we were able to achieve important successes for Europe's wildlife and natural habitats. For this, I would like to thank all the staff at the Foundation and in the partner organisations – they overcame all manners of difficulties and brought about positive outcomes in the process. These successes are our incentive to keep going even when the conditions are anything but easy. The fact that financially we, as the Foundation, have so far come through the Covid-19 pandemic relatively unscathed is mainly due to the EuroNatur donors and supporters. Because of their loyalty we can continue to fight for Europe's natural heritage. On behalf of the entire Foundation, I would like to express my great appreciation to you all. Thank you! I cordially invite you to read our 2020 Activity Report to learn more about our work, our achievements and our visions. With hope for a good future for people and nature, I salute you.

Yours sincerely,

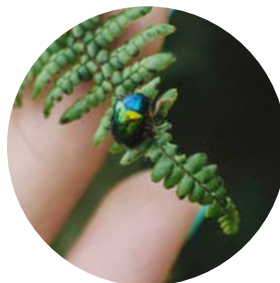
A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Thomas Potthast'.

Prof. Dr. Thomas Potthast
President of the EuroNatur Foundation

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MISSION & VISION

EuroNatur – Connecting nature and people



We are committed to connecting nature and people in a peaceful Europe – beyond national borders. Our donors support us in this endeavour.

The growth-oriented way we lead our lives and run our economies at this point in history is characterized by ruthless exploitation of natural resources and has resulted in the pervasive destruction of nature as well as in drastic climate change. People all around the world are feeling the resultant adverse effects.

Nature is the natural resource base on which all humans depend. Species and habitat diversity are prerequisites of a quality environment. Our aim is a European continent that hosts free-flowing rivers, pristine forests and diverse cultural landscapes and that offers sufficient space for wild animals and migrating birds within these and other ecosystems.

Our mode of operation

Our efforts for the protection of plants, animals and habitats are transboundary in nature; we strengthen local conservation organizations and create international networks between them. Together with our Europe-wide partner network we create solutions that allow humans to live and work in harmony with nature. In our work we follow a well-proven approach:

KNOWING

Using reputable scientific studies, we provide evidence of the conservation importance and uniqueness of species, landscapes and habitats and of the threats they face.

PROTECTING

We work on driving forward the formal protection of endangered species as well as of habitats and landscapes of particular high ecological value. To this end we utilize national and international political structures.

SAFEGUARDING

Protected areas and species must be given sustained effective protection. We support control measures and make our demands for rigorous protection measures heard in national and international political institutions as well as in the courts. Where necessary, we exert public pressure on decision-makers (for example by way of protests and media attention).

LIVING

We generate acceptance of the need for protection and potentially associated restrictions for the local communities. Together with the local people we establish ecologically compatible land-use methods in protected habitats that open up socio-economic prospects. This helps us to win over local people as partners for achieving our conservation objectives, thus laying the groundwork for the long-term effectiveness of our efforts.

WE HAVE A DREAM

EuroNatur staff talk about the motivation guiding their work. They draw visions of a future towards which we are working together.



“ Nature inspires me and I enjoy my excursions with all my senses: I see the intense play of colors of a sunset; I hear the concert of birds at dawn; I feel the mudflats under my feet. I dream of a future in which I can continue to experience intact nature and tell other people about its beauty and diversity. ”

Christian Stielow, Press and Public Relations



“ I dream of giant trees growing up to the sky; of the smell of lush green and forest floor; of life all around me. I'm reassured, that trees are allowed to stand their ground until they perish on their own and once again become part of the cycle of life. ”

Annette Spangenberg, Head of Conservation



“ I wish for a Europe, in which people live in harmony with nature, in which migratory birds can travel safely across national borders and find a richly structured landscape. I dream of the lovely songs of many species of birds filling the air – even of those that are endangered today. ”

Ilka Beermann, Project Manager Migratory Bird Protection



“ Forest may be our lungs, but in rivers our heart beats. I dream that we all stand up jointly for the protection of wild river landscapes. I sincerely hope, that many more people realize that the water in our rivers must flow freely, like the blood in our veins. ”

Tara Sukič, Project Manager River Protection



“ I wish that our children and grandchildren too can listen to the rushing of wild rivers, breathe in the mossy scent of old natural forests and enjoy the singing of birds. I dream that we preserve Europe's nature for future generations! ”

Leonie Kraut, Head of Administration



“ I dream that people feel connected across borders. Being aware that we are all part of a comprehensive web of life, we pay respect to nature and all living organisms. Full of awe and admiration, we preserve their beauty, wildness and diversity. ”

Anne Katrin Heinrichs, Project Manager European Green Belt



“ I love that we have such loyal donors and that they are growing in numbers. Yet, I dream that even more people will be enthused by Europe's great natural treasures and join us in their conservation – particularly young people from all around the world. ”

Ines Fantinato, Donations Management

ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE



A Foundation to protect Europe's nature

EuroNatur is a non-profit foundation established in 1987 by Friends of the Earth Germany (Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND), the German Federation for Nature Conservation (Naturschutzbund Deutschland, NABU) and German Environmental Aid (Deutsche Umwelthilfe, DUH). It is headquartered in Radolfzell. EuroNatur is legally, organizationally and financially independent, autonomous and non-partisan. A foundation having legal personality (rechtsfähige Stiftung) such as EuroNatur differs from a registered voluntary association (Verein) in that it has no membership base. The latest exemption notice (Freistellungsbescheid) was issued by the tax authority in Singen on October 15, 2020. EuroNatur is a member of, amongst others, the following organizations: European Green Belt Association e.V., International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), European Habitats Forum, German League for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection (DNR), Association of German Foundations, Agrar-Bündnis e.V. and Wetlands International – European Association.

The current Articles of Association can be downloaded at www.euronatur.org/statutes.

Presiding Committee provides strategic orientation

New members of the Presiding Committee are proposed by existing members and elected to the Committee by majority vote. The President is elected from among the members of the Presiding Committee. In 2020 EuroNatur's Presiding Committee had six voting members, all of whom served in a voluntary capacity. Their duties include determining the organization's strategic orientation, approving annual budgets, and approving the annual accounts. The Presiding Committee oversees the work of the Executive Director and the Director of Conservation Policy with a view to its lawfulness, expediency and economic efficiency. Detailed Committee member profiles can be accessed at www.euronatur.org.

Board of Trustees serves as an advisory committee

EuroNatur's Presiding Committee can nominate persons to the Board of Trustees who support the organization's concerns. In 2020, EuroNatur's Board of Trustees had 20 members, all of whom served in a voluntary capacity. They support EuroNatur in three areas: technical advice, especially with respect to access to funding; public relations work; establishing the organization and its work more firmly within society. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees attends the meetings of the Presiding Committee in an advisory capacity. Detailed profiles of the Members of the Board of Trustees can be accessed at www.euronatur.org.

Salaried management staff in charge of operative implementation

The Executive Director is in charge of and responsible for steering the organization's operative work. In 2020, EuroNatur employed a total of 28 staff, who are active in the central functions of project management, administration and public relations. More than 30 voluntary collaborators support the work of EuroNatur Foundation.

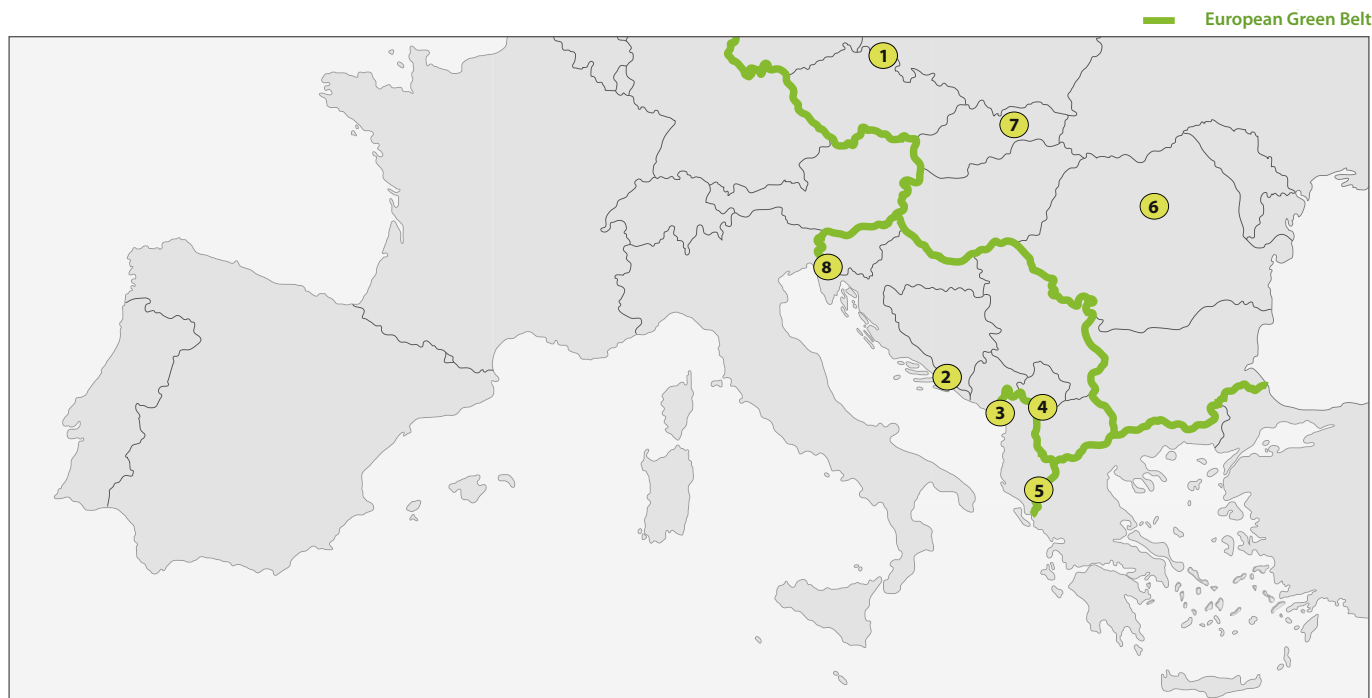
EuroNatur Service GmbH

More than 20 years ago, the EuroNatur Foundation established a wholly owned subsidiary, the EuroNatur Service GmbH, a limited company. This small but efficient service provider publishes and markets landscape and wildlife calendars and guidebooks on EuroNatur's project regions as well as a wide range of reference books and exclusive items. Additionally the EuroNatur Service GmbH has specialized on layout and mail order services which it provides to the EuroNatur Foundation and other clients.

ORIENTATION MAP

This map is for orientation purposes and only shows the project areas depicted in the EuroNatur Annual Report 2020. The project report illustrates the core themes as well as the Foundation's working methods by way of example. Successes or challenges in 2020 are highlighted. We are also continuously committed to the protection of Europe's natural heritage in projects that could not be presented in detail due to lack of space. A complete overview of all EuroNatur activities can be found in the chapter "Funding priorities 2020". The EuroNatur newsletter www.euronatur.org/newsletter-en provides information on current developments.

- ① Sudetes mountain (Poland, Czech Republic)
- ② Neretva-Delta (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina)
- ③ Bojana-Buna-Delta and Ulcinj Salina (Albania, Montenegro)
- ④ Šar Mountains (North Macedonia)
- ⑤ Vjosa/Aoos (Albania, Greece)
- ⑥ ⑦ Carpathians (Romania, Slovakia)
- ⑧ Northern Dinarides (Slovenia, Croatia, Italy)



HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

What did we achieve together in 2020 in terms of the protection of nature in Europe? Actors who are part of the EuroNatur network present their personal highlights.



“ The EU-wide ban on lead shot for hunting in wetlands, which was adopted in 2020, saves 1.5 million birds per year from a painful death from poisoning as a result of lead shot pellet ingestion with their feed. It is a stage win for reason and science in terms of nature conservation and consumer protection. Consequently, it must now be followed by a general ban on lead ammunition in all habitats! ”

*Dr. Stefan Ferger,
Deputy Head of Conservation at EuroNatur*



“ Intact ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity are central foundations of human existence, which is why our work is now more important than ever. I am glad that, despite the Corona pandemic, we have been able to further increase staffing and grow as an organisation. This allows us to step up our efforts to protect Europe's natural heritage. ”

Daniela Löchle, Deputy Head of Administration at EuroNatur



“ For years now we have been collecting evidence of the dramatic situation of the Romanian forests. In 2020, the European Commission became active and opened an infringement procedure against the Romanian government based on complaints we had submitted. We hope that the case will now be brought before the European Court of Justice, and ultimately achieve a stop to deforestation in Romania's Natura 2000 sites. ”

Janinka Lutze, SaveParadiseForests Campaigner at EuroNatur



“ For a long time we were lacking an adequate solution to help wild animals in trouble. Back in 2016 we started to look for ways how we can organize the establishment of an intervention team for large carnivores. One of the main aims was to reduce conflicts between animals and humans. With the support of EuroNatur, since 2020, we have a well-trained intervention team, at least in Republika Srpska. ”

*Aleksandra-Anja Dragomirović, CZZS,
EuroNatur partner in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

“ We are delighted to be able to say that donations are coming in at a consistent level, despite the Corona pandemic. In an online survey we conducted in 2020, we received a lot of positive feedback. We are very pleased that our long-standing funders and donors remain loyal to us and that we are also succeeding in inspiring many new people, getting them excited about Europe's natural heritage. ”

*Markus Dressnandt,
Deputy Head of Communication at EuroNatur*



“ In 2020, we rejoiced together when Albania's Prime Minister announced that the government has declared the upper Vjosa a National Park and that the permission for hydropower projects in the lower Vjosa was refused. However, meanwhile the government is discussing to declare Vjosa a nature park. This low protection status would leave the door open to hydro-power development. We are continuing the fight to save the last free-flowing river in Europe! ”

Besjana Guri, EcoAlbania, EuroNatur partner in Albania

EUROPEAN GREEN BELT

Largest nature conservation initiative on the continent

Geographical location in Europe

Ecosystem network with an extraordinarily high level of biodiversity, forming a 12,500 km long corridor along the route of the former Iron Curtain (Map p. 7). The European Green Belt connects eight biogeographical regions and 24 nations.

Status

In the shadow of the Iron Curtain a unique habitat network was able to develop with an astonishing level of species diversity. But the destruction of important habitats as a result of infrastructure projects and the intensification of agriculture threaten the species diversity of the European Green Belt. An additional risk factor is poaching, which could be the final blow for particularly rare animals such as the Balkan lynx.

Objectives

Our long-term aim is to preserve the European Green Belt as an important habitat for plants and wildlife. Where required, we want to drive forward restoration efforts. The European Green Belt is to become the backbone of Europe's Green Infrastructure. Furthermore, we aim for it to be perceived as a pan-European initiative for conservation and international cultural diplomacy. Through sustainable regional development, we aim at creating long-term prospects for the people living along the Green Belt.

WALLS AND BARBED WIRE STRETCHED ACROSS OUR CONTINENT DURING THE COLD WAR. HOWEVER, NATURE BENEFITED FROM LAND-USE PRESSURE BEING BY AND LARGE ABSENT. TODAY, THE FORMER IRON CURTAIN FORMS THE GREEN BACKBONE OF EUROPE.

Strengthening civil society in the Balkan Green Belt

EuroNatur aims at connecting people and nature. Together with our partners in the Balkans, we develop tangible solutions to this end in the southernmost section of the Balkan Green Belt, for example by maintaining organic pasture-based livestock management or promoting ecotourism. Since the governments of the countries along the Balkan Green Belt often show little interest in the genuine protection of their natural treasures, we are increasingly relying on civil society engagement by the local people.





Selected activities in 2020

- Despite the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the „European Green Belt Days“ took place in the reporting year. One of the highlights of the events, which took place at several locations along the European Green Belt, was a travelling exhibition in Bulgaria entitled „The Living Exhibition“. Life-size exhibits introduced interested people to rare bird species such as the Eurasian black vulture and raised awareness for the protection of birds.

Important achievements in 2020

- The largest contiguous protected area on the Balkan Green Belt could soon become a reality (more in the interview on the next page). The North Macedonian Ministry of the Environment has initiated the necessary formal steps for the designation of the Šar Mountains as a national park.
- The local action groups in the countries sharing in the Šar Mountains have become an important source of impetus for the movement to establish a national park. In Kosovo and Albania, the groups already have more than 100 motivated members.

Outlook

We will continue to advise and assist the process of protected area designation in North Macedonia and represent the interests of nature and the local population. The cooperation between the local action groups in the three countries sharing in the Šar Mountains is to be intensified. At a pan-European level we aim at further strengthening lobbying for the European Green Belt.

Partners: All EGBA members and stakeholders of the European Green Belt Initiative

Funding: GIZ, DBU and EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

EUROPEAN GREEN BELT

"The most important thing was to convince the local people."

An interview with Metin Muaremi

Metin Muaremi of the NGO Center for Education and Development (CED) loves his home region, the North Macedonian part of the Šar Mountains (Map p. 7, No. 4). Since the government in Skopje has done little to protect the area for a long time, Metin has taken initiative himself, together with like-minded people. They established the "Friends of Shara" local action group in North Macedonia.

What do you think of the decision of the government in Skopje, which has since resigned, to go ahead with the designation of the Šar Mountains (Šar Planina) as a national park?

I am happy and welcome the decision of the former government. Various political and social hurdles had to be overcome over the past two decades; the most important one certainly was to convince the local communities of the benefits offered by a protected area. I believe that the designation of the national park will contribute to a more efficient protection of biodiversity and that it will provide for sustainable socio-economic developments in the region.





What role did the „Friends of Shara“ action group play in this process?

Together with the people of Šar Planina we have worked on a number of issues, such as the sustainable use of resources or the development of soft ecotourism. In the process, we succeeded in transparently communicating relevant information to the local population.

What hopes do you have for the future of Šar Planina?

I hope that all parties and stakeholders will be involved in public debates and institutional meetings. Moreover, it is important that the people who live in Šar Planina also carry responsibility for the protection of their native home, because without that we will not have a truly sustainable protected area. I am already looking forward to the Šar Mountains eventually becoming one of the largest transboundary protected areas in Europe!

Interview: Christian Stielow

EURONATUR PARTNERS SAY "THANK YOU."

A key feature of EuroNatur is the continuity of its commitment – something that our partner organizations across Europe greatly appreciate.



“ The conservation of critically endangered species, such as Mediterranean monk seals, is not an easy task. It requires permanent activity over prolonged periods of time. In this sense, to have highly committed funders supporting your work, as EuroNatur has been doing for more than 20 years for the CBD-Habitat's Monk Seal Conservation Programme at Cabo Blanco, is an essential element that has allowed us to achieve important conservation results. ”

*Pablo Fernández de Larrinoa,
Director of the CBD-Habitat's Monk Seal Conservation Programme,
EuroNatur partner in Spain and Mauritania*



“ PPNEA's efforts with the Balkan lynx education programme started in 2015. Thanks to EuroNatur we were able to establish a network of 50 primary school teachers and have educated more than 500 children. In this way we have been contributing to the protection of lynx in and around the Munella region, one of the few places where Balkan lynx are known to still reproduce. ”

*Klaudia Koçi,
Outdoor Education Coordinator at PPNEA, EuroNatur partner in Albania*





“ In my view, the outlook for the bears in the Cantabrian Mountains is good. There is a large territory stretching as far as northern Portugal where the bears can live. It is imperative that funding for our work remains independent of political agendas. The help we receive from donors like you is therefore hugely important. ”

*Roberto Hartasánchez,
President of Fapas, EuroNatur partner in Spain*



“ EuroNatur has been a strategic partner of our organization for the last ten years. Through the support we receive, we have managed to reduce poaching in certain areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, preserve and restore wetlands, and involve local communities in the sustainable development of areas of importance for birds. Thanks to our joint efforts we also achieved the designation of new protected areas in our country. ”

*Dr. Dražen Kotrošan,
President of the Ornithological Society "Naše ptice", EuroNatur partner in Bosnia and Herzegovina*



EUROPE'S MIGRATORY BIRDS

Fewer patrols, more poaching: The 'Corona effect' on the Adriatic Flyway

Geographical location in Europe

Bird habitats along the Adriatic Flyway in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania. The Adriatic Flyway stretches from central and north-eastern Europe through the Balkans and down to Africa. Among the key areas are the Neretva Delta including the Hutovo Blato Nature Park in the border area of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bojana Buna Delta including the Ulcinj Salina in the border region of Albania and Montenegro (Map p. 7, No. 2 and 3).

Status

Illegal bird hunting in the Mediterranean is taking a heavy toll on Europe's migratory birds. According to a study conducted by BirdLife, every year some 11 to 36 million birds are illegally killed or captured in the region. A particularly high number of bird crime hotspots can be found in the Western Balkan countries: approximately one million migratory birds lose their lives to poaching every year on their migration pathway along the Adriatic Sea. After an initial brief respite for the birds (mainly due to the absence of hunting tourists, a segment that also includes many poachers), the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation in 2020. For the most part, patrols carried out by the authorities had been completely halted and even our partners could not go into the field for months on end (see the interview with bird conservationist Milan Ružić on p. 18 and 19).

Objectives

Together with our large network of partners in conservation, our aim is to significantly reduce illegal bird hunting in the Balkans. Through a combination of research and awareness-raising among the general public as well as political lobbying and showcasing of good practice in pilot projects, we strive to increase the pressure on the governments of the Western Balkan countries to, at long last, take effective action against illegal bird hunting in their territories. In selected project areas, such as the Neretva Delta in Croatia or Labudovo Okno in Serbia, illegal bird hunting is to be reduced by 50 percent by the end of 2022. At the insistence of EuroNatur and its partners, the signatory states to the Bonn and Bern Conventions even agreed to the goal of halving illegal bird hunting in the entire Mediterranean region by 2030 and to fully eliminating it in the long term.



**BIRD MIGRATION IS ONE OF
NATURE'S GREAT PHENOMENA.
BUT ON THEIR LONG JOURNEY,
THE NOMADS OF THE SKY ARE
EXPOSED TO MANY DANGERS:
DIRECT PERSECUTION, HABITAT
LOSS, COLLISIONS WITH POWER
LINES. WE ARE COMMITTED TO
MINIMISING THE RISKS FACED BY
MIGRATORY BIRDS.**



Selected activities in 2020

- The five-year hunting ban in Albania, adopted in 2016, expired in June 2021. Together with our Albanian partners, in 2020 we provided the government in Tirana with a team of experts to support the Ministry of the Environment in its overdue reform of the country's hunting legislation.
- When the restrictions on movement were relaxed in the summer of 2020, our partners immediately seized the opportunity. Together with public officials, several illegally erected hunting cabins were demolished in Croatia, Albania and Serbia, and numerous hunting decoys were removed from the areas. Such undertakings severely disturb the poachers, as evidenced, among other indicators, by the fact that a birdwatching tower in Croatia's Neretva Delta was damaged in an act of revenge.

Important achievements in 2020

- Despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, many cases of bird crime were uncovered. A network of volunteers established over recent years reliably provided our partners at BPSSS in Serbia with information on offences by phone, e-mail or via social media.
- After four years, in October 2020, confirmation was finally received from the Serbian prosecutor's office that four quail poachers had been given one-year suspended sentences. BPSSS plans to use this case in their public relations work to deter other poachers.
- In August 2020, three protected areas for birds with a total area of more than 1,200 hectares were added to the network of protected areas in the Neretva Delta.



Outlook

Legislation for the protection of birds is sufficient for the prosecution of poaching in many Balkan countries. But the Covid-19 pandemic has once again brought to light that hardly anyone, apart from non-governmental organisations, concerns themselves with ensuring compliance with that legislation. This is an area where we really want to turn things around and significantly reduce bird crime along the Adriatic Flyway through stronger commitment on the part of the competent public authorities.

Partners: BirdLife International, VCF, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, BPSSS, HDZZP, Biom, Naše ptice, CZIP, MSJA, PPNEA, AOS, DOPPS, MES, WWF Spain, WWF Greece

Funding: MAVA Foundation, Natum Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

EUROPE'S MIGRATORY BIRDS

“ Our network kept us informed
even during the crisis “

An interview with Milan Ružić

During the COVID-19 lockdown between March and May 2020, Serbia saw the highest ever increase in bird crime! Milan Ružić, founder and head of the Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS), a EuroNatur partner organisation, gives insights into a difficult year for bird protection.

Normally, BPSSS has a high presence in the field. Were you still able to work during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic?

For months, COVID-19 restrictions prevented us conservationists from being in the field. But no one stopped the poachers from doing their dirty deeds! In fact, people noticed that the police and game wardens patrolled even less than usual. While our efforts were seriously slowed down, we continued to document and report cases of bird crime to officials wherever we could. People were going crazy because they were not allowed to leave their homes. Some were shooting birds with air rifles around their homes. At the same time, there were even more poisonings of birds of prey than prior to the pandemic.

How did BPSSS manage to expose cases of bird crime during the lockdown?

Over the past five years we established more than 10,000 contacts. Our network also kept us informed during the crisis - by phone, e-mail, Facebook or Instagram.





Can you describe a scene that particularly touched you?

One night in August, we discovered a poaching community in northern Serbia that had previously been unknown to us. The grasslands there are a picture-book habitat for quail and many other rare bird species such as the imperial eagle and great bustard. The moon was shining and it would have been a beautiful scene, had it not been for this path that was lined with sound lures. As we came closer, countless quail flew up. We knew these birds had flown hundreds of miles only to be trapped and shot down in these gorgeous grasslands.

What makes bird conservation in Serbia so difficult?

More than 90 percent of the country is managed by hunting societies. They are responsible for maintaining the health of game populations. But their actions are not rooted in science and they are organized into interest groups. The more we find out, the more often we come across corrupt police officers covering up for poachers. The system is completely sick.

How are you getting on?

We have a good team, dedicated members and many volunteers who support us. The public is also now on our side. Thanks to our unwavering commitment, we are now witnessing a slow but steady change for the better. We know of many people who no longer engage in illegal hunting because they are afraid of getting caught, and police officers are approaching us asking how they can help. The support we receive from EuroNatur is crucial. We hardly get any assistance from the Serbian government.

Interviewer: Katharina Grund

WOLF, BEAR & LYNX

Cross-border wolf protection in the Sudetes

Geographical location in Europe

Sudetes mountain range (Map p. 7, No. 1).

Status

Thanks to strict protection measures, wolves are once again extending their range in the Czech Republic. Several packs live in the Sudetes in the north of the country, and form a cross-border population with wolves on Polish territory. At the same time, the Sudetes mountain range is a popular recreation area for winter sports enthusiasts, hikers and mushroom foragers. Moreover, the region is under intensive forest management and there has been a massive expansion of the road network. As it has not been long since the wolves have returned to the area, people often do not know how to react to the presence of these large carnivores or how to effectively protect their livestock.

Objectives

We advocate for the strict protection status of the wolf in the Czech Republic to be maintained – in dialogue with hunters and livestock farmers. We want the wolves to be able to further extend their range throughout the Czech Republic while also ensuring that the general public can share this ambition.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY, EUROPE'S
LARGE CARNIVORES ARE
RETURNING TO THEIR NATIVE
HABITATS. IN SOME REGIONS,
WOLVES, BEARS AND LYNX
ARE FACING PUSH-BACK
FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES.
WE WORK WITH LOCAL PEOPLE
TO FIND SOLUTIONS THAT
ALLOW FOR THE PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE OF HUMANS
AND WILDLIFE.





Selected activities in 2020

- Patrols of the protected areas are an essential component of the fieldwork carried out by our Czech partner organisation Hnutí Duha. The wolf conservationists discovered and reported several cases of poisoned bait. The prohibited bait was removed by police.
- With its intensive public awareness initiatives, Hnutí Duha has increased public knowledge about wolves. More than 100 print and online articles were published on the topic of wolves in the Czech Republic. These often focused on the important function of large carnivores in ecosystems. Wolves regulate populations of roe deer, red deer and wild boar and thus contribute to forest regeneration and habitat improvement.

Important achievements in 2020

- Monitoring by Hnutí Duha in the reporting year showed that wolves continue to extend their range in the Czech Republic. In the summer of 2020, our partners were able to confirm that at least three packs in the Sudetes had successfully raised pups. Considering that wolves had been extirpated in the Czech Republic for a considerable time, this is a great success.
- Important protected areas and wolf habitats in the Sudetes have been protected from deforestation. This was also achieved as a result of the involvement of a Hnutí Duha employee in the governmental committee in charge of conservation issues in relation to transport infrastructure.

Outlook

The plans for destructive projects in the Czech-Polish border region have not been abandoned however. Our partners at Hnutí Duha continue to fight for the preservation of ecological corridors. In addition, wolf monitoring will be continued throughout the Czech Republic and communication with livestock farmers will be intensified.

Partner: Hnutí Duha

Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

WOLF, BEAR & LYNX

Dinarides: Bear emergency teams in action

Geographical location in Europe

The Dinaric-Pindos brown bear population extends across nine countries from Slovenia to Greece. During the reporting year, our work focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republica Srpska, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Montenegro.

Status

The Dinaric-Pindos population is one of the last major bear populations in Europe. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro therefore play a key role in bear conservation. However, there are significant knowledge gaps especially when it comes to these two countries. There is a lack of systematic population surveillance as well as a lack of management plans for the bear population, both of which are needed in order to defuse potential conflicts and to ensure peaceful coexistence of bears and humans. Another major challenge is the shortage of up-and-coming conservationists in the Balkans.

Objectives

Together with our partners, we aim to introduce bear population management in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This management is to be supported by administrative structures that ensure the long-term coexistence of bears and humans, including, among other measures, bear emergency teams that intervene in bear-human conflicts. We also facilitate young bear conservationists who wish to enter the field of nature conservation.

The work to protect brown bears in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina is challenging. A lack of skilled workers in the countries, difficult political environments, a lack of awareness in the competent governmental authorities as well as in the hunting associations and the population at large ensure that we are making slower than desirable progress. This makes the successes achieved so far all the more remarkable. Our partners at CZZS and CZIP are successfully building a community committed to transboundary brown bear conservation. The fact that governments are now willing to cooperate and plans are being developed for the management of the bear population is owed to steady lobbying efforts.



Selected activities and achievements in 2020

- As part of the 'new generation' conservationist trainee programme for the protection of large carnivores in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we supported five graduates of our Large Carnivore Field School 2019 in implementing their own projects for the protection of bears, wolves and lynx. The project teams were exceptionally committed.
- In Republica Srpska (an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina), our partners at CZZS, together with the government, succeeded in initiating the first ever process for the development of a species management plan. One of the young conservationists was also involved.
- In Montenegro and Republika Srpska, bear emergency teams have been in place since 2020. This has built greater levels of trust in the local communities – a prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence of bears and humans.
- The bear emergency team in Montenegro had its first major mission in September 2020. A lost bear cub was rescued from a precarious situation and safely guided back into the forest.

Outlook

Management plans need to be finalised in Montenegro and Republika Srpska. The Field School concept will be transposed to Montenegro.

Partners: CZIP, CZZS

Funding: Bernd Thies Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors

WOLF, BEAR & LYNX

Transferring lynx to introduce fresh genes

Geographical location in Europe

Source population in Carpathians (Romania, Slovakia) (Map p. 7, No. 6 and 7).
Release region in northern Dinarides (Croatia, Slovenia, Italy) (Map p. 7, No. 8).

Status

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Dinaric lynx population in the north-west of the Balkans was on the verge of extinction due to persecution, habitat loss and a lack of prey. From a source population in the Carpathians Mountains, the first individuals of the rare felines were released in Slovenia in 1973. But the populations remained small, isolated and genetically impoverished.

Objectives

The genetically still small Dinaric population is to be maintained and strengthened by means of lynx introductions from the Carpathians, thus allowing for connections between the Dinaric lynx population and those in the Alps.



Current information, photos and videos about the project can be found at www.lifelynx.eu and www.facebook.com/LIFELynx.eu



Selected activities in 2020

- Five lynx were captured in the Carpathians and released in Slovenia and Croatia after a short quarantine. Telemetry data, camera trap data and genetic analyses showed that four of the five released animals have successfully settled in the project areas. The whereabouts of one of the lynx are unknown.

Important achievements in 2020

- Released and native lynx successfully mated and reproduced, as confirmed by genetic studies of lynx cubs. This is an important achievement as part of the efforts to save the lynx in the Dinarides from extinction.
- Camera traps yielded images of the lynx at around 350 different locations in the Dinarides. The involvement of local hunters in Slovenia and Croatia, who are most familiar with the lynx habitat, has been very successful.

Outlook

Camera trap monitoring will be continued in order to assess the success of the project. Reintroductions of additional lynx from the Carpathians are to be extended to the Alpine region. The establishment of these „stepping stones“ is intended to bring the populations in the Dinarides and the Alps closer together.

Partners: University of Zagreb, Slovenia Forest Service, Hunters Association of Slovenia, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Technical University in Zvolen, University of Ljubljana, Association Progetto Lince Italia, Karlovac University, Biom, ACDB, Italian Carabinieri special command unit for the protection of forests, the environment, and the agri-food sector

Funding: EU LIFE, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors, and others

EURONATUR, I'M WITH YOU!

EuroNatur's supporters are the foundation's backbone. Among them are Mario Broggi, Christine Mannings and Richard Kirchmann, and they all say "EuroNatur, I'm with you!"

“

EuroNatur dares to tackle the enormous task of conserving nature in Europe, and does so in many geographical regions: from brown bears in the Cantabrian Mountains to lynx in the Balkans, from Poland's Podlasia all the way to Greece. The foundation looks for allies, especially at the local level, and supports them in their difficult work. For me, this approach of helping people to help themselves is the great merit of EuroNatur's work, because today we often see a different trend around the world: Conservation organisations are joining the ranks of development aid – producing a great many reports and plans that end up on shelves, and with little continuity in their work. It is for this reason that I appreciate EuroNatur's professional approach all the more: they are modest and reserved and steadily work away but don't shy away from spelling things out plainly and clearly where necessary. ”

Dr. Mario Broggi, EuroNatur laureate



I REALLY APPRECIATE
EURONATUR'S INTEGRITY
AND PROFESSIONALISM.



I'M PROUD TO BE
ASSOCIATED WITH
EURONATUR'S
IMPORTANT WORK.



“ As a translator, it's my job to help people overcome language and communication barriers. What I particularly like about EuroNatur is the way the foundation works across borders. By supporting and networking partner organisations and communities on the ground, EuroNatur also works to break down barriers, helping to share ideas and expertise and strengthen relationships. Volunteering for EuroNatur is very important to me. Not only have I got to know a lot of very nice people, it is also a real pleasure to be able to contribute to the foundation's important work. Through my translation work I have also gained valuable, practical experience and my confidence has increased as a result. ”

Christine Mannings, volunteer translator

“ I have been donating to EuroNatur for many years, first as an "occasional donor" for a variety of different projects and later also in the form of sponsorships for animals that are particularly dear to my heart. What I particularly like about the way the foundation handles donations is that you can select an individual project and thus know exactly the purpose for which the donation will be used. When I read the project reports, I can feel how every single member of staff puts their heart and soul into the projects. I am also impressed with the way EuroNatur works, namely their cooperation with European partner organisations for a common goal: the protection of Europe's natural heritage. ”

Richard Kirchmann, sponsor of migratory birds and lynx



I CAN FEEL THAT
THE EURONATUR
TEAM PUTS THEIR
HEART AND SOUL
INTO THE WORK.

CAMPAIGNS: SAVE PARADISE FORESTS FOR FORESTS

Geographical location in Europe

Romanian Carpathian Mountains (Map p. 7, No. 6). These mountains host the European Union's last sizeable primeval forests outside of Scandinavia. Focal areas of the campaign include primeval and old-growth forests in national parks and nature parks, areas that form part of the European Natura 2000 system of protected areas, and precious forests that are as yet unprotected.

Status

Romania hosts the largest natural untouched forest heritage within the EU's temperate climate zone. The old-growth and primeval forests of the Romanian Carpathians taken together occupy an area the size of the Black Forest (where there are no longer any comparable forests however) and host many strictly protected species. Moreover, these ecosystems significantly contribute to climate protection. The Romanian government does not however engage in genuine efforts to protect the valuable Carpathian forests. In recent years, 20 million cubic meters of timber were illegally logged in the Romanian Carpathians every year, even in protected areas. The Romanian forest management Romsilva is responsible for the management of almost all protected forest areas. It puts profit before forest protection and generously grants logging rights. The timber is exported and sold to large timber plants in Romania.

Objectives

EuroNatur together with the Romanian nature conservation organization Agent Green started the "SaveParadiseForests" campaign in order to contribute to halting the overexploitation of the forests. Our aim is to protect the precious forests of the Romanian Carpathians for current and future generations by pushing for improved provisions for the forests' protection and by generating awareness at the national and international levels of the risk facing the Romanian primeval forests.

WITH OUR CAMPAIGNS WE AIM TO BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE BY MEANS OF EXERTING PUBLIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE IN ORDER TO PRESERVE EUROPE'S NATURAL HERITAGE. TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE EXPOSE UNDESIRABLE DEVELOPMENTS AND ABUSES, INFORM AND MOBILIZE THE PUBLIC, ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE WITH RELEVANT EU INSTITUTIONS AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, INITIATE LEGAL ACTION.



Outlook

Where possible and necessary, we will continue to take legal action against illegal logging with our partners at Agent Green. At the international level, we remain in contact with the EU Commission to advance the infringement proceedings.

Partners: Agent Green, ClientEarth

Funding: Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Fair Future Stiftung, Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund, EuroNatur donors

**“ TRUE FORESTS ARE ALWAYS PARADISEAN,
BUT NOWADAYS SUCH FORESTS REMAIN
ONLY IN VERY INACCESSIBLE AREAS. ”**

**PROF. DR. HANNES KNAPP, FOREST ECOLOGIST AND MEMBER
OF EURONATUR'S PRESIDING COMMITTEE.**

CAMPAIGNS: SAVEPARADISEFORESTS FOR FORESTS

Selected activities and achievements 2020

- In 2020, on foot of complaints we submitted, the EU Commission launched two infringement proceedings against the Romanian government.
- In April 2020, EuroNatur and Agent Green, together with the environmental lawyers of ClientEarth, submitted a further complaint to the EU Commission. Its focus was on the poor implementation of the European Birds Directive and the European Habitats Directive in Romania's Natura 2000 sites.
- In June 2020, Agent Green delivered our joint petition to the Ministry of the Environment in Bucharest. More than 120,000 people from all over the world had signed the petition to halt the felling of Europe's last wild forests and called on the Romanian government to ensure the protection of these natural havens.
- In order to emphasise the urgent need for action at the European level, our partners at Agent Green and selected Members of the European Parliament travelled to sites that are part of the Natura 2000 system of protected areas in the Romanian Carpathians. Together they witnessed massive illegal logging.
- As a result, in November 2020, 83 members of the European Parliament called on the EU Commission to do everything in its power to stop the destruction of Romania's Carpathian forests.



Where are we now?

So far, there has been little improvement in the situation of Romania's primeval forests. In the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, deforestation has even worsened due to a lack of controls. One bit of good news is that the destruction of Romania's Carpathian forests has become a European issue thanks to our campaign. The Romanian government is under increasing pressure at a number of levels: not only are several national lawsuits underway against illegal logging, but the two EU infringement proceedings are putting more pressure than ever on the government to take action against the destruction of primeval and old-growth forests. Moreover, Romanian civil society is no longer willing to tolerate the exploitation of its natural heritage. The network of volunteers who support our Romanian partners' actions or plan their own activities has steadily been growing. To draw an interim conclusion: We now have many supporters in the scientific community, the political arena, in civil society, the judiciary and the media and we managed to highlight the deplorable situation in Romania, elevating it to a European issue. To date, however, the Romanian government has been showing scant regard to being put in the spotlight and the Carpathian forests continue to be at great risk. We will continue to pursue this issue.

Information, photos and videos regarding the SaveParadiseForests campaign can be found at www.saveparadiseforests.eu/en.



- Aided by donations, the project team was able to initiate further court cases against illegal logging and continue ongoing proceedings. Numerous valuable forests could be saved from logging in this manner, including forests in the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park and Natura 2000 site. There, Agent Green won a case against the Romanian Ministry of the Environment and Romsilva, the national forest management.
- As a result of several lawsuits filed by Agent Green, the Supreme Court in Bucharest ruled in November 2020 that the public must be given access to environmental information in relation to the forestry sector, including information on timber volumes per logging permit and site.
- Large-scale logging in Romania's primeval and old-growth forests is receiving a lot of attention in international and national media (for more information see p. 38). In Romania, the coverage at times came second only after news on the Covid-19 pandemic.



CAMPAIGNS: SAVE THE BLUE HEART OF EUROPE FOR RIVERS

Geographic location in Europe

Ecologically valuable watercourses in the entire Mediterranean region (there especially in Portugal) and the Balkan Peninsula. A particular focus is on Europe's last major untamed river: the Vjosa River in Albania (known as "Aoos" in Greece) including its catchment (Map p. 7, No. 5).

Status

Especially in the wake of the discussions on climate change, hydropower tends to be wrongly touted as a "green" form of energy generation. This massively increases the pressure on the natural environment. It may spell the end of the last free-flowing rivers. A large proportion of the planned hydropower plants are to be built in South-Eastern Europe.

Objectives

Our aim is to protect Europe's last free-flowing rivers and their ecosystems. At the national and international levels we aim to raise awareness of the destructive impacts of hydropower plants on nature and mobilise civil society to fight back against the destruction of their rivers. For the Balkan Peninsula, we have set out no-go areas for hydropower plants as part of an Eco-Masterplan. These no-go areas were based on the following criteria: naturalness, species diversity and the riverine landscapes' protective status. We want international financial institutions to enter into commitments to refrain from funding hydropower projects in these areas and to support the use of alternative energy sources instead, such as solar energy. We are also pressing for the Vjosa River to be designated a national park – all the way from its source to its estuary.

The Balkans, the blue heart of Europe

Between Slovenia in the north and Greece in the south there are still intact rivers and riverine landscapes that are unparalleled in Europe. They are hotspots of biodiversity and constitute a unique natural heritage. More than 3,500 hydropower plants are planned for the Balkans or are already under construction – often without a credible Environmental Impact Assessment. Even if only a fraction of these were to become operational it would spell an ecological catastrophe, especially given the fact that many of the installations are planned in protected areas. Moreover, thousands of people would lose their farmland, their drinking water supply and their native home. More than 90 percent of the planned plants have a capacity of less than ten megawatts. In short, this means that great damage will be done to nature and people in exchange for a minimal contribution to electricity generation. In 2013, EuroNatur and Riverwatch, in cooperation with local partners, launched the „Save the Blue Heart of Europe“ campaign in order to halt the hydropower tsunami in the Balkans.

For information, photos and videos on the internet please refer to www.balkanrivers.net and www.instagram.com/blueheartrivers



Selected activities and achievements in 2020

Going down the legal route to protect rivers

- With the "Lawyers for Rivers" initiative we have established a growing, transboundary network of environmental lawyers who uncover unlawful acts in connection with hydropower projects in selected areas of the Mediterranean region and take legal action against them. In the reporting year, legal action was taken against 17 hydropower plants in Bosnia-Herzegovina alone, and the majority of cases were successful.
- The parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed on a moratorium for all new small hydropower plants in the country. No further new plants will be approved and hundreds of already approved projects are to be critically reviewed. With this decision, the parliament meets the demands long voiced by large segments of the Bosnian general public as well as by conservationists – first and foremost by our Bosnian campaign partners. This decision could set a precedent for the entire Mediterranean region.
- The head of government of neighbouring Montenegro announced that subsidies for hydropower plants will also be stopped in his country, and similarly the Portuguese government decided to end public subsidies for hydropower.
- The European Energy Community launched an infringement procedure against Albania. Grounds for the procedure are based on the approval process for the construction of the large Poçëm hydropower plant on the Vjosa River, which contravenes the provisions of the Energy Community. This step was triggered by a complaint we filed in 2019. The Energy Community is responsible for extending the EU's internal energy market to South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region.
- Together with legal experts, we compiled a „Legal Toolkit“. It is intended to aid activists and civil society organisations in countering hydropower projects in ecologically sensitive areas with the help of international law and EU environmental regulations.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment for the large Kalivaç hydropower plant in the Vjosa's middle reaches was rejected by the Albanian Ministry of the Environment. As a result, we gained valuable time. The Ministry's decision was preceded by enormous legal efforts and intensive campaigning on our part.
- The Water Framework Directive (WFD) for the protection of rivers will not be touched! The decision to not revise the WFD was taken by the EU Member States at a meeting of the Environment Council in March 2020. This decision was a success of the two-year #ProtectWater campaign: In 2019, more than 375,000 people had followed the call issued by numerous conservation and environmental associations, including EuroNatur, to urge the European Commission to maintain the WFD in its current form.

CAMPAIGNS: SAVE THE BLUE HEART OF EUROPE FOR RIVERS

Selected activities and achievements in 2020

People were mobilised for the benefit of rivers

- With an opinion poll conducted by IDRA Poll, we were able to show that the Albanian public wants a free-flowing Vjosa River. Ninety-four percent of the respondents are in favour of a Vjosa National Park covering the river's entire length.
- At a press conference in Tirana in February 2020, Albanian scientists, supported by colleagues from Austria and Germany, spoke out in favour of a free-flowing Vjosa River. Their stance was strongly backed by the scientific community: 776 scientists from 46 countries subsequently signed a joint petition; the signatories included some of the world's most renowned scientists in their field. They call on the Albanian government to comply with international standards when conducting environmental impact assessments for planned hydropower plants and to stop the projects on the Vjosa River.
- In Bosnia-Herzegovina, our campaign partners, by means of protests, managed to halt the construction of several hydropower plants. Among other activities, 300 people blocked the access to a construction site on the Neretvica River, causing a stir nationwide. It is now likely that none of the 15 planned plants on the Neretvica River will go ahead.
- More than 40 artists from the Balkan region drew attention to the threat to the Balkan rivers by means of video messages, musical contributions and impressive river photography posted on social media.

“ A RIVER IS MORE THAN A
GENERATOR OF ELECTRICITY! ”

DR. AMELIE HUBER,
EURONATUR PROJECT LEADER - PROTECTION OF RIVERS

How effective is our campaign?

The number of hydropower plants under construction in the Balkans is steadily declining. Our years of campaigning have made a significant contribution in this regard. Balkan civil society is increasingly resisting the destruction of their rivers and rebelling against the energy companies' often illegal activities and also against political leaders. There is now a major network of allies involved in the struggle for free-flowing Balkan rivers - nationally, at the EU level and even worldwide. Scientists and artists are raising their voices for the rivers' benefit, and we have also been able to initiate a rethink in the EU institutions as well as with important financiers of hydropower projects and the governments of some of the Balkan countries. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has also had a negative impact on rivers: For example, in many places investors have used the state of emergency to commence with the construction of controversial, unauthorised hydropower plants.



Reasoning for protection of rivers further strengthened

- Hydropower plants are a major driver of the decline in numerous fish species in the Mediterranean. A study we commissioned jointly with Riverwatch, Wetlands International Europe, GEOTA and WWF Adria substantiated this fact.
- The "Solar for Kutë" campaign succeeded in gaining strong allies for the idea of making the village of Kutë on the Vjosa the first solar village in Albania. Thanks to numerous donors and the support provided by the Swiss Embassy in Albania, the village will probably soon be equipped with solar panels. Kutë would be severely affected by the construction of the Poçëm hydropower plant – one of the two large hydropower projects in the middle reaches of the Vjosa. Our aim is to present alternatives to the river's destruction to the public officials in charge.

Outlook

We will continue to pursue the campaign to protect Europe's rivers with great intensity. Together with our partners and legal experts we will at the same time vehemently fight the system of subsidies for hydropower as well as selected hydropower projects. In 2021, there will also be a special focus on the Vjosa River and the goal of having the entire river system protected as a national park.

Partners: Riverwatch, ClientEarth, Bankwatch, Front 21/42, CZZZ, EcoAlbania, Tour du Valat, MediNA, Pindos Perivallontiki, DPRS, IUCN ECARO, WI European Association, WWF Adria, GEOTA, RERI

Funding: MAVA Foundation, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Bristol Stiftung, Fondation Genevoise de Bienfaisance, Patagonia, EuroNatur's donors

CAMPAIGNS: #SAVESALINA FOR THE BIRDS



Geographical location in Europe

The Ulcinj Salina (Map p. 7, No. 3) is an area of salt evaporation ponds on the Adriatic coast, covering almost 1,500 ha in the south of Montenegro near the border to Albania.

Status

Tens of thousands of birds depend on the Ulcinj Salina as a breeding, overwintering and resting site. In 2005, the saltworks were privatised under questionable circumstances and the area was at risk of being developed for mass tourism. Together with local and international partners, we have successfully worked to prevent this. But salt production has been at a standstill for years, as a result of which the saltworks have been falling into disrepair and salt loving bird species are disappearing. An analysis by Transparency International Montenegro has concluded that the salina belongs to the state of Montenegro and cannot be considered private land. However, a final decision on this matter by the competent court has been delayed for years. Only when the ownership issue has been resolved will larger investments in the salina's infrastructure be possible.

Objectives

Our aim is to save the bird paradise that is Ulcinj Salina. To this end, salt production must resume and the salina must be managed with a view to conservation objectives. The local communities should be able to draw on Ulcinj Salina's potential for ecologically compatible income generation and thus contribute to the protection of flamingos, black-winged stilts and all the other bird species.



“ IT ENCOURAGES US TO KNOW THAT ULGINJ SALINA HAS FRIENDS ALL OVER EUROPE. WHENEVER WE STUM-BLED IN THE PAST, THERE WERE HANDS THAT HELPED US UP AGAIN. ”

JOVANA JANJUŠEVIĆ, CZIP

Our #SaveSalina campaign is working, but we are not there yet

Those who are walking through the salina today are walking through the „Ulcinj Salina Nature Park“ - a formally protected area. This is something many people have worked for for more than two decades. However, the designation alone is not enough, as only a properly managed salina provides habitat for a great variety of breeding and migratory birds. But there is hope: the spatial plan for the coastal zone adopted in 2020 provides for the resumption of works at the salina. With an emergency package of restoration measures and baseline analyses (including an analysis of the economic viability of the saltworks' operation), we have laid the foundation for a management regime governed by bird conservation objectives. The Montenegrin government, newly elected in 2020, has shown itself to be co-operative in this endeavour. After years of deadlock, first steps have been taken to resolve the ownership issue. The EU Commission has made the protection of the Ulcinj Salina and the effective implementation of measures leading to improvements of the salina's conservation status a prerequisite for Montenegro's accession to the EU – yet another achievement of the #SaveSalina campaign.

Information, photos and videos on the #SaveSalina campaign can be found at www.euronatur.org/ulcinj-en



Important activities and achievements in 2020

- The proposal for a management plan for the Ulcinj Salina was completed. Our partners at CZIP and MSJA have been instrumental in developing appropriate restoration and conservation measures for the nature park.
- In 2019, together with our partner organisations and the local communities, we had developed business ideas for gentle ecotourism around the Ulcinj Salina, including birdwatching tours, and selected projects worthy of support. Three projects commenced in 2020, in so far as this was possible under the conditions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In the 2020 breeding season, more than 60 pairs of little terns bred on the two breeding platforms installed as part of the project.

Outlook

We will support the Ulcinj municipality in creating the necessary structures to ensure ecologically compatible management of the saltworks. Other priorities include the restoration of the salt evaporation ponds and the further development of soft ecotourism. We hope to finally be able to take these long overdue steps in cooperation with the new Montenegrin government.

Partners: CZIP, MSJA, BirdLife International, Tour du Valat

Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur donors

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



Romania's old-growth forests in print media, radio and television

There is just no end to the illegal felling in old-growth and primeval forests of the Romanian Carpathians. But at least this environmental crime in the centre of Europe is no longer going unnoticed by the general public. Thanks to our media relations, reporting has increasingly focused on the issue. Numerous national and international media reported on the deforestation in Romania's Paradise Forests in 2020. Here are some excerpts:

(Die Zeit, 25 April 2020, translated)

Many European timber companies, especially from Austria, are active in the country, operating huge sawmills – and these sawmills are hungry for wood. [...] „Illegal logging in Romania is not limited to individual sites. It's a systemic problem," says EuroNatur Executive Director Gabriel Schwaderer. „We hope that [EU] intervention will come as soon as possible, because forests are being cut down as we speak."

(SRF, 23 June 2020, translated)

It's a sad sight: There are stumps everywhere, of trees more than a hundred years old, forests that have been partially or completely cut down. „They are clear-cutting here," says a depressed Gabi Paun [President of our Romanian partner organisation Agent Green]. „All these old trees were a functioning ecosystem,"

he continues. "There were brown bears here, lynx, wolves and thousands of other animal species. It's all been destroyed now – forever."

(Al Jazeera, 26 November 2020)

Romania's old-growth forests are vast ancient woodlands that stretch across the Carpathians in Eastern Europe. They have barely changed since the end of the last Ice Age. But now these extraordinary forests are disappearing at an alarming rate [...]. There is growing outrage over the environmental crimes being committed by what has been dubbed the „timber mafia" – criminals considered by many to be working hand in hand with the Romanian authorities.

Clean hydropower myth debunked

Hydropower is seen as "green" power, given that it is a regenerative source of energy. However, more and more media outlets now report on the devastating effects of hydropower dams on river systems. The "Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign is having an impact.

“THE GREAT MEDIA RESPONSE WITH REGARD TO THE TRUE RECORD OF HYDROPOWER PLANTS IS HAVING AN EFFECT. THE FACT THAT AT THE END OF 2020 SEVERAL COUNTRIES COMMITTED, AT THE SAME TIME, TO A PROSPECTIVE PHASING-OUT OF SUPPORT FOR SMALL HYDROPOWER PROJECTS IS NOT SOLELY BUT TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE DUE TO THE CHANGE IN PUBLIC OPINION.”

ANNETTE SPANGENBERG, HEAD OF NATURE CONSERVATION EURONATUR



Record number of entries to the EuroNatur writing competition

Never before have there been as many entries: 328 writers took part in the fourth EuroNatur writing competition. The theme of „Can't see the wood for the trees..." clearly struck a chord. Oliver Graf from Erlangen placed first in the writing competition. His touching short story entitled „Schokoriegel" (chocolate bar) completely won over the jury. The friendly author also reached out with a video message to thank the jury for the award.

Commitment to future-proof agriculture honoured

The Covid-19 pandemic also left its mark on last year's EuroNatur award ceremony: There were far fewer invited guests, and masks and physical distancing were compulsory as the award was presented. The 2020 EuroNatur Award was accepted by a four-member delegation from Mals. This municipality in South Tyrol has been committed to biodiversity-friendly farming in the intensively cultivated fruit-growing region since 2014 - despite much opposition from the agricultural lobby, the political sphere and the judiciary. Impressions from the award ceremony can be found online at euronatur.org/preis

ECONOMIC SITUATION

„ Looking to the future
with confidence „

Between politics and the pandemic: In this interview, Executive Director Gabriel Schwaderer looks back at the financial year 2020 which developed favourably despite Corona.

The year 2020 will enter the history books as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic. How did the EuroNatur Foundation fare financially in this extraordinary year?

Financially, it was another very good year. We achieved a positive operating result of € 356,000. It is particularly worth noting that following an increase in donations in 2019, we were able to achieve a further significant increase in 2020 of about € 170,000, and this against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic! This result is an expression of the fact that our work is now attracting even more attention and also that we are supported by very loyal donors.

Where did the increase in donations come from? Was there a specific reason?

What we saw in 2020 was that the measures we have taken to increase our donor community are now beginning to bear fruit. In previous years, we were mostly able to maintain the volume of donations, but lost active donors. We have now been able to change this and for the first time in a long time managed to increase the number of supporters again. This allows us to look forward with confidence, because it shows that we are being seen by more people. The MAVA Foundation, one of the main supporters of our work, will close its doors at the end of 2022. But MAVA takes its responsibility for its long-standing partners very seriously and is supporting us in the major task of future-proofing EuroNatur. In particular, MAVA is helping us with financial support for organisational development and targeted marketing measures – and these are now beginning to take effect.



Donors form the basis

In 2020, EuroNatur Foundation's regular donors, sponsors and legacy donors continued to provide the financial footing for our tangible conservation efforts in Europe as well as for political lobbying, campaigns, awareness-raising and environmental education. Once again, EuroNatur also attracted substantial financial support for project implementation, primarily from private foundations and associations as well as from public sector funding in 2020, most notably from Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Bristol Stiftung, Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) and BUND Nature Conservation in Bavaria, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Federal Environment Ministry (BMU), German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz),



Dr. Manfred and Gudrun Keim Fund, European Commission, Fair Future Foundation, Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature, Fondation Genevoise de Bienfaisance, Bernd Thies Foundation, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, MAVA Foundation, and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). Moreover, EuroNatur's work was financially supported by certain commercial enterprises in 2020. These included, among others, the utilities company Gelsenwasser and the Bielefeld public utilities.

How was it possible to achieve a surplus this year?

The very welcome surplus is due to a number of major nonrecurring items. We received a major testamentary gift and we had a very good financial result. The latter is largely based on redistributive gains. We have now decided to put these gains into a special reserve ("Umschichtungsrücklage"). This will enable us to offset any potential losses from capital investments should we ever be so affected. The testamentary gift has been added to the Foundation's core capital and thus strengthens our financial basis. When it comes to testamentary gifts there is usually a notion of perpetuity involved and they are a great sign of confidence in our work. We see it as our duty to make long-term use of this money for the benefit of nature conservation in Europe.

How did the foundation get through 2020, this challenging pandemic year?

We had feared that, to some extent, there would be drawbacks as a result of the pandemic. That did not come to pass. A year ago we assumed that the public sector would become more reserved in its spending or that charitable foundations might get into difficulties – neither of which appears to be happening so far. Our entire network – we as an organisation as well as all the people working for EuroNatur and our partner organisations – has been faced with considerable challenges as a result of the pandemic, as we depend on trust and mutual support in our work. This form of collaboration is much easier to achieve when people can meet face-to-face. While we succeeded in moving our work to video-conferencing, we very much miss the human interaction, internally in the EuroNatur team but also with the partners – it really is a missing component.

ECONOMIC SITUATION



Let's take a brief look at expenditure in 2020 – how were the funds used?

We again managed to mobilise € 4.4 million for nature conservation efforts in Europe. As in the previous year, more than 80 % of this expenditure went into project implementation, campaigns and educational work. The liabilities of more than € 3 million, which also increased compared to the year prior, is due to project grants we received but have not yet used. Shortly before the end of 2020, we received grants that are earmarked for the coming years. To a large extent this also explains the sharp increase in total assets.

Many foundations are struggling with low interest rates on the financial market. How stable are the Foundation's capital stock investments?

It is indeed not possible right now to generate significant interest gains from bonds. In some cases we have to pay custodial fees for current accounts. However, for many years now we have put our Foundation's capital stock into solid forms of investments that are in line with sustainability principles. These are investments that have as few adverse effects as possible, and in the best case even have positive effects on the environment and society. For a long time it was disputed whether or not such forms of investment could financially be worthwhile. But for us there is no alternative! In the meantime, it has become clear that it does indeed make economic sense – quite apart from the positive societal dimension.

Presentation of the Activity Report in accordance with DZI specifications

The income and expenditure headings used for the purposes of this Activity Report correspond to the prescribed specifications as part of the guidelines for the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. The headings therefore diverge somewhat from the customary breakdown set out in the Handelsgesetzbuch (German Commercial Code), especially in the profit and loss account. Amongst the criteria assessed by DZI are two important threshold values, i.e. the share of expenditure on advertising and administration to total relevant expenditure, and the ratio of expenditure on advertising to total income from donations. Not all expenditure is included for the purpose of calculating the share of administrative expenditure: Expenditure on portfolio management and commercial activities are not taken into consideration. Given that the DZI calculations of the shares of expenditure under the different headings are only undertaken following the publication of the Activity Report, there may be some discrepancies between EuroNatur's calculations and the DZI results.



DZI Seal of Approval

In April 2021, EuroNatur Foundation was again awarded the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. EuroNatur had applied for the seal in August 2020 based on its 2019 annual accounts. The result of the DZI assessment of EuroNatur Foundation was a positive one: It confirmed that we meet the seven DZI Seal of Approval standards (please refer to the chapter on „Transparency“ on p. 49).



How did the Foundation develop in general, beyond the purely financial aspects?

In 2020, we met with some challenges for our organisational development. One aspect was the closure of our office in Rheinbach near Bonn as a result of the retirement of long-serving, valued employees, in particular Lutz Ribbe, our long-time Director for Nature Conservation Policy. We combined the decision to close the Rheinbach office with the intention to relocate the conservation policy work to Brussels. Overall, EuroNatur developed very positively: We now employ significantly more staff, which also meant that we had to deal with organisational and structural issues which in turn led to a reorganisation in 2020. We now established a clear structure with three departments: Projects, Communication and Administration.

Let's venture an outlook – what will the coming years bring for EuroNatur?

Since March 2021, we have already had two staffers in Brussels. Once the Covid-19 pandemic comes to an end – hopefully soon – we are planning on opening a EuroNatur office in Brussels. In the coming years, the focus of our conservation policy work will include our ongoing work on agricultural policy as well as an increased focus on the European Union's biodiversity and funding policies. Many of the EU's programmes have a negative impact on the protection of biodiversity, and that is something we want to address. We are confident as to the Foundation's financial future and consider ourselves well-positioned. However, above all and for all our sakes we hope that the pandemic will be overcome and that restrictions will be removed. As in the time-lapse, the pandemic has propelled us into a new situation where it appeared normal to come together only in video-conferences. But for the advancement of our work face-to-face exchanges are crucial – both internally and with our partner organisations all over Europe.

Interview questions: Anja Arning

ECONOMIC SITUATION



Planned giving for European nature

A further strengthening of EuroNatur's asset base is of great importance for the foundation's independence and performance as a successful advocate for nature in Europe. The increase in the foundation's capital creates planning certainty and independence. Endowments and bequests therefore provide immensely valuable support to us and are a great sign of confidence, confidence that we endeavour to honour with our commitment. In 2020, all endowments and yields from bequests were transferred to the foundation's capital stock. This has further strengthened EuroNatur Foundation's financial position. We expect that revenues from portfolio management will, as a minimum, remain stable in the coming years.

Bequests and legacies in 2020

In 2020, the following individuals bequeathed funds to EuroNatur Foundation upon their death. We are greatly indebted to them and will honour their memory.

- Gerth Rudolf Richter, Klingenberg
- Jürgen Ahrendt, Hamburg



Dependent foundations and named funds

In 2020, EuroNatur managed three dependent foundations and three earmarked named funds. The named funds' capital (€ 490k) was increased by € 5k compared to the previous financial year while the capital of the dependent foundations (€ 2,169k) remained unchanged. In the reporting year, yields from dependent foundations continued to exclusively benefit EuroNatur project activities.

- Dr. Manfred and Gudrun Keim Fund
- Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund
- Lappat Fund
- EuroNatur Fund for Eastern Germany
- EuroNatur Fund for the Protection of Migratory Birds
- Elisabeth Seifert-Becker's endowment fund for the protection of wolves in memory of Viktoria Neumann, Emilie and Franz Seifert

Working together for Europe's nature

EuroNatur's successes in nature conservation in Europe in 2020 could only be achieved with the support provided by our donors, sponsors and legacy donors as well as providers of grants and commercial sponsors. We are most grateful for your support!

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31.12.2020

ASSETS		2020 "000 €	"000 €	2019 "000 €	"000 €
A. Fixed assets			8,542		8,267
	I. Itangible assets	0		0	
	II. Tangible assets	964		973	
	II. Financial assets	7,578		7,294	
B. Current assets			3,535		2,125
	I. Stocks	10		13	
	II. Account receivable and other assets	611		659	
	III. Liquid funds, short-term securities	2,914		1,453	
C. Deffered Items			1		3
TOTALS			12,078		10,395

LIABILITIES		2020 "000 €	"000 €	2019 "000 €	"000 €
A. Equity			8,847		8,471
	I. Foundation's capital				
	Core capital	77		77	
	Endowments	5,834		5,765	
	II. Revenue reserves	2,936		2,629	
B. Provisions			202		257
C. Liabilities			3,029		1,667
TOTALS			12,078		10,395

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT FOR 2020

Revenue according to DZI	2020	2019	%	%
	“000 €	“000 €	2020	2019
Cash donations	1,176	1,004	24.79	19.83
Donation in kind	37	30	0.78	0.59
Bequest	46	140	0.97	2.77
Fines	8	10	0.17	0.20
Subtotal – total income from donations * (excluding endowments)	1.267	1.184		
Government grants	473	412	9.97	8.14
Grants from other organizations	2,488	3,007	52.46	59.39
Commercial activity	27	13	0.57	0.26
Interest and capital gains	459	396	9.68	7.82
Other revenue	29	51	0.61	1.00
Total revenue	4,743	5,063	100.00	100.00
Withdrawals from revenue reserves	4	18		
	4,747	5,081		

Expenditure according to DZI	2020	2019	%	%
	“000 €	“000 €	2020	2019
Expenditures on programmes				
Staff-related expenditure	1,120	1,110	25.51	23.30
Material expenditure and non-personnel costs	2,464	2,909	56.13	61.06
Expenditures on advertising and PR work				
Staff-related expenditure	178	178	4.05	3.74
Material expenditure and non-personnel costs	192	145	4.37	3.04
Expenditures on administration				
Staff-related expenditure	251	266	5.72	5.58
Material expenditure and non-personnel costs	74	81	1.69	1.70
Expenditures on portfolio management & business operations				
Portfolio management	111	75	2.53	1.58
Total expenditure	4,390	4,764	100.00	100.00
Transfers to the Foundation capital stock	46	140		
Transfers to revenue reserves	119	42		
Transfers to „Umschichtungsrücklage“	192	135		
	4,747	5,081		

* In the 2020 financial year we received € 1,433k in monetary donations, € 143k of which have not yet been claimed due to earmarking. The latter are expected to be claimed in the following year and at the time of actual spending of funds.

The endowments of € 23k (p.y. € 17k) are not included in the income statement.

DEALING WITH POTENTIAL RISKS

For a non-profit foundation, EuroNatur Foundation's capital stock is relatively slim. Therefore the organization is urgently dependent on donations and third-party grants so as to be able to discharge its mandate as an advocate of nature in Europe. We are aware of the fact that with this funding comes great responsibility and day in, day-out we work towards using the funds as efficiently as possible. Due to differences in legal systems, language barriers and potentially greater corruption risks, the manner in which these grants and donations are passed on to partner organizations abroad is also a sensitive issue, one that is predicated on a very good network of contacts built up over many years. Moreover, a multi-level control system is essential for the correct assessment of and effective response to risks. Risk mitigation measures must also be adopted for capital investments.

Potential risks and the measures we take to avert them

Financial and economic crises

The Covid-19 pandemic and its far-reaching effects on national economies as well as the 2008 global financial and economic crisis have shown once again that our lives' economic circumstances can change swiftly and dramatically. That there is no interest without risk has now become an undisputed fact. In this light it is becoming increasingly difficult to find some middle ground between security and financial returns. Charting our course in this respect we abide by the following principles: EuroNatur Foundation invests its equity capital in low-risk funds, taking into account ethical and environmental criteria (please refer to the chapter on "Transparency"). Moreover, reserves are built up in order to be able to even out fluctuations in revenues. Over the past years we have established a special reserve for gains from transactions which can in turn be used to cover potential losses of future transactions ("Umschichtungsrücklage") as a safeguard against potentially required depreciation of fixed assets.

Lack of competent and trustworthy partner organizations

EuroNatur Foundation has very consciously not opted for a Europe-wide network of offices with full-time employees, thus eliminating considerable administrative expenditure. We are primarily concerned with cooperating with existing conservation organizations that are well connected in their local areas and are successful in their endeavours. In many countries of southern and eastern Europe, powerful non-profit and independent conservation organizations are few and far between. The lack of competent and trustworthy partners limits our options. It is for this reason

that EuroNatur invests in the systematic development and strengthening of civil society in southern and eastern Europe. EuroNatur's project work is always predicated on cooperation with a local partner organization. If there is no such partner organization in a particular region, it is reason enough for EuroNatur not to engage.

Misappropriation of funds

We have self-imposed strict rules on budgetary control. All outward payments are checked for mathematical and factual correctness. Payment orders are always subject to the "Two-man rule". Target-performance comparisons are carried out on a monthly basis, allowing for swift detection of potential irregularities. Our 2020 annual accounts were audited by the independent auditing and tax accounting firm WISTA AG and endorsed with an unqualified audit certificate.

Inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in project work

We regularly scrutinize our internal processes, which allows us to continuously increase our efficiency. We also analyse the work of our partner organizations and work with them to find possible ways to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Our partners' statements of expenditure are checked by the project liaison person for factual accuracy and by the accounting department for financial accuracy. All statements of expenditure are submitted to the managing director for approval prior to funds being released. In order to increase the efficiency of our work we conduct staff development and training, in terms of both content and methodology, for ourselves and our partners on an ongoing basis.

TRANSPARENCY - ONE OF EURONATUR'S IMPORTANT TENETS

EuroNatur was again awarded the DZI Seal of Approval

In 2020, EuroNatur Foundation was once again awarded the DZI (German Central Institute for Social Issues) Seal of Approval. It will expire at the end of the third quarter of 2021. The Seal of Approval certifies that, amongst other things, EuroNatur meets the DZI's seven standards as follows: EuroNatur conducts its work in keeping with its statutes; the organization's management and oversight are adequately structured, clearly separated and are being exercised effectively; in our solicitation of donations and public relations work we provide information in a clear, truthful, factual and open manner; we openly and comprehensively report on our work, structures and finances; remuneration is paid taking into consideration the organization's charitable status, qualifications, levels of responsibility, and industry pay standards; the procurement and use of funding as well as the organization's financial status are traceably documented and adequately verified; the proportion of funds spent on advertising and administration in 2020 was at an appropriate level in accordance with the DZI standards ("appropriate" = 10 % to 20 %). The effectiveness of the organization's spending is monitored and results are documented and published.

Initiative for transparency in civil society

EuroNatur has been a signatory to Transparency International Germany's "Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft" (Initiative for transparency in civil society) since 2010. Signatories to the initiative voluntarily commit to publishing ten particular items of information about their organization on their homepage. These include i.a. their statutes, the names of essential decision-makers, and information on how they are funded, how they use their funding, and their personnel structure.

Auditing

In 2020, EuroNatur once again voluntarily submitted to an audit of its annual accounts by an auditor. The auditing and tax accounting firm WISTA AG audited EuroNatur Foundation's 2020 annual accounts in accordance with Par. 317 ff. of the German Commercial Code (HGB) and in accordance with the accepted standards for the review of financial statements as set out by the Institute of Public Auditors in Germany (IDW) and endorsed the accounts with an unqualified audit certificate. An extract from the audit certificate states the following:

"We have audited the annual financial statements, consisting of the balance sheet as of December 31, 2020, profit and loss account for the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2020, and the Annex, including the presentation of accounting policies. Additionally we audited the management report for the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2020.

In our opinion, based on the information obtained during our audit, the financial statements are in all material respects compliant with the provisions of commercial law applying to corporations in Germany, and convey, in accordance with the German principles of proper accounting, a true and fair view of the Foundation's net assets, liabilities and financial position as of December 31, 2020 and the results of operations for the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2020. The position statement, as a whole, provides an accurate picture of the Foundation's position. In all material respects this position statement is consistent with the annual financial statements, is compliant with the German statutory provisions, and adequately depicts the opportunities and risks arising from future developments. Pursuant to Section 322 (3)(1) HGB (German Commercial Code) we declare that our audit did not lead to any objections as to the correctness of the annual financial statements or the position statement.

June 14, 2021, WISTA AG, Mannheim"

TRANSPARENCY

Capital investment based on environmental and ethical criteria

EuroNatur Foundation's foundation capital now amounts to almost € 5.9 million. Moreover, EuroNatur Foundation holds trust property of more than € 2.2 million in trust for the benefit of three non-autonomous foundations. In keeping with the organization's philosophy, investment decisions are based on environmental and ethical criteria. Both inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to these decisions. As a minimum, investment products are not considered if they invest in companies involved in nuclear power, agrochemicals, weapons, genetic engineering, pornography, alcohol, tobacco, the motor industry, the oil and coal industries, airline companies, or if they are invested in government bonds in nations practicing capital punishment, actively driving forward nuclear energy, or which are considered corrupt. Our main financial service providers for asset management purposes in 2020 were the Bank Vontobel Europe AG, Munich Branch, and the V-BANK AG in Munich, Germany. We manage a large part of the assets ourselves and since the summer of 2017 we have also consulted with an independent financial advisor on a fee basis.

System of remuneration

In 2020, the Foundation underwent structural reorganization, prior to which EuroNatur's employees were assigned by subject area at five different functional levels: Administration I and II, Divisional management, and Project management I and II. In addition, there is the Executive Director. The new structure (see also the interview on p. 43) is now oriented towards the three newly created divisions, i.e. Projects, Communication and Administration, and provides for six functional levels: Administration/Communication I-III, Project Management I and II and Divisional Management. As before, remuneration bands have been set for each of the levels, extending 20 % either side of the mid-point. The mid-points are € 39k per annum for Administration/Communication I, € 43k for Administration/Communication II, € 53k for Administration/Communication III, € 48k for Project Management I, € 58k for Project Management II, and € 62k for Divisional Management.

In 2020, the Executive Director received an annual remuneration package of € 100k gross. Without exception all members of the Presiding Committee and the Board of Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and only receive reimbursements for cost incurred, but no flat-rate expense allowances.

Advertising and donor information

Six times a year EuroNatur Foundation sends out information to its donors to keep them in touch with ongoing projects and request support for concrete endeavours. Similarly, support for individual projects is solicited, and information provided, through the organization's website at www.euronatur.org, the digital EuroNatur newsletter and emailings. In addition, regular donors receive the EuroNatur magazine four times a year as well as topical project reports containing comprehensive information and reports on current developments in the projects. In 2020, EuroNatur Foundation conducted its own donor information and fundraising. With the exception of printers, no aspect of these tasks was outsourced to any agency or external service provider.

Impact monitoring and impact analysis

One of the most important tenets of EuroNatur's work is the efficient deployment of funds entrusted to us by our donors and by the organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) that support our work. Systematic planning of activities and comprehensive impact monitoring are preconditions to the efficient use of funds.

EuroNatur Foundation takes both a supportive and an operative role. For projects undertaken by EuroNatur in cooperation with its partner organizations, and which in most instances are in receipt of third-party financial support (from both governmental and non-governmental sources), EuroNatur reports back in detail to the financial backers. Impact monitoring already begins at the stages of project development and project application. EuroNatur develops projects based on comprehensive situational analysis and needs assessments. Together with our partners we formulate the overall objectives and prepare project applications based thereon. These can only attract funding if the objectives are clearly set out and if activities are proposed that serve to meet these objectives. Evidence of the use of funds must include comprehensive evaluations of the achievement of set objectives as well as rationales for potential changes in or adjustments to activities or even objectives. In order to receive grants from EuroNatur, applicants must present cohesive project designs in keeping with the principles set out above. The partner organization's reports are subject to comprehensive evaluation by EuroNatur and our project managers regularly visit the project areas to discuss the projects' progress – as long as there is no pandemic that prevents travel.

Both positive developments and difficulties arising are assessed in order to allow for procedural adjustments to be made and to learn lessons for the future. Progress reports document project development up to the point of the projects' completion.

HOW YOUR LEGACY CAN DO GOOD A TESTAMENT FOR EUROPEAN NATURE



Testamentary gifts and legacy bequests to EuroNatur support the organization's long-term planning of project activities designed to maintain Europe's natural heritage.

In this interview, Regina Harten tells us what connects her to EuroNatur and why she seeks to ensure her continued commitment to nature conservation in Europe even beyond her death. Fifteen years ago, she and her husband Rolf, who has since passed away, decided to include EuroNatur in their wills.

Mrs. Harten, what motivated you and your husband to take this step?

We both always felt we shared in the responsibility for shaping the future. That's what we wanted to invest in. What EuroNatur is doing greatly appealed to us. At EuroNatur, projects are assisted over long timeframes and EuroNatur is not deterred in its commitment by pushback.

As a donor, how do you feel you are being looked after and perceived by EuroNatur?

You feel like you're not just a number, a source of regular account transfers. If I have questions, they are answered. There's no need to hold back with either praise or critical questions. In personal conversations I have always had the feeling that Mrs. Günther and Mr. Schwaderer are not only committed to the cause but also really interested in the people who support EuroNatur. EuroNatur has this extra little touch.

Could you describe in imagery what you would like to contribute to with your bequest to EuroNatur?

The future as I imagine it would be one where anyone who steps outside their front door can still hear a variety of birds and see butterflies in summer. I want rivers to be more than just channels and I want us to be able to swim in them again. People need nature; we need trees and space and wildlife, we want to see and feel and smell things.

Interviewer: Katharina Grund

If you would like to find out more about bequests please get in touch with us.

**Your contact: Sabine Günther,
sabine.guenther@euronatur.org, Fon +49 (0) 7732/92 72 17**

EURONATUR'S PROJECT FOCI IN 2020



In 2020, the projects implemented by EuroNatur Foundation focused on the following areas:

- **Protecting the European Green Belt and further advancing the European Green Belt Initiative**
- **Protecting Europe's rivers and river landscapes**
- **Protecting migratory birds in Europe**
- **Protecting large carnivores in Europe**
- **Protecting Europe's last wilderness areas**
- **Agricultural policy, biodiversity policy, energy policy**

This Activity Report describes a selection of projects under individual priority headings. EuroNatur Foundation has supported and implemented a number of additional projects and initiatives over and above these priorities, a more detailed description of which is beyond the scope of this report.



Priority "European Green Belt"

Funding spent on this priority: 220,000 Euro

Projects:

Protection and development of the European Green Belt and ongoing advancement of the initiative (Partners:), all EGBA members as well as the actors involved in the European Green Belt initiative; Funding: EuroNatur's donors), **Risk analysis, development of solutions, and capacity building in the Šar/Korab-Koritnik region along the Balkan Green Belt** (Partners: MEA, PPNEA, Finch; Funding: DBU, EuroNatur's donors), **Biodiversity protection in the Šar Mountains by means of strengthening local action groups** (Partners: MES, Finch, PPNEA, CED for the "Friends of Shara" action group; Funding: GlZ, EuroNatur's donors), **Development of local transhumance practices with a view to the maintenance and sustainable management of pastureland in the Sakar Mountain region** (Partners: Green Balkans; Funding: EuroNatur's donors), **Strengthening NGO-led Conservation in the Transboundary Prespa basin** (Partners: MES, PPNEA, SPP; Funding: PONT, Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, EuroNatur's donors)



Priority "Protecting Europe's rivers and river landscapes"

Funding spent on this priority: 1,440,000 Euro

Projects:

"Save the Blue Heart of Europe" campaign (Partners: Riverwatch, Front 21/42, CZZS; Funding: MAVA Foundation, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Patagonia, Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature, Fondation Genevoise de Bienfaisance, EuroNatur's donors), **Saving Europe's last free flowing wild river – Vjosa/Aoos** (Partners: Riverwatch, EcoAlbania, MedINA, Pindos Perivallontiki, IUCN ECARO, WI European Association, Tour du Valat; Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur's donors), **Halting Hydropower developments in the Mediterranean Basin** (Partners: Riverwatch, WWF Adria, WI European Association, GEOTA; Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur's donors), **SavaParks network for transboundary protection for the Sava river landscape** (Partners: HDZPP, The Green Ring of the Zagreb County, all members of the SavaParks network; Funding: Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, EuroNatur's donors), **Preserving Sava River Basin habitats through transnational management of invasive alien species** (Partners: The Green Ring of the Zagreb County, all members of the SavaParks network; Funding: Interreg through funding mechanisms ERDF and IPA, EuroNatur's donors), **Support for the protection and sustainable regional development of the Bosnian karst poljes Livanjsko Polje and Duvanjsko Polje** (Partners: Naše ptice, Naša bastina, Dinarica; Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur's donors)

EURONATUR'S PROJECT FOCI IN 2020



Priority "Protecting migratory birds in Europe"

Funding spent on this priority: 1,102,000 Euro

Projects:

Safeguarding the bird migration route along the Adriatic Flyway (Partners: BirdLife, VCF, IUCN Med, Tour du Valat, HDZPP, Biom, DOPPS, BPSSS, CZIP, Naše ptice, AOS, MES, PPNEA, WWF Spain, WWF Greece, ATN; Funding: MAVA Foundation, Natum Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting the Ulcinj salt flats** (Partners: CZIP, MSJA, BirdLife, Tour du Valat; Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting migratory birds in the Senne landscape** (Partners: Paderborn-Senne Biological Station; Funding: Gelsenwasser AG (water and energy supply company), Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH – public utility, EuroNatur's donors), **Bright Future for Black Vulture in Bulgaria** (Partners: Green Balkans, VCF, FWFF, Junta de Extremadura; Funding: EU LIFE, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Protecting European wet meadows and pastures, in particular in the European Stork Villages** (Partners: European Stork Villages and their national conservation partners; Funding: Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, Fondation pour la Sauvegarde de la nature, Bristol Stiftung, EU LIFE, Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), **Environmental education through school garden projects as part of the European Stork Villages Network initiative** (Partners: European Stork Villages and their national conservation partners; Funding: Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, EuroNatur's donors)





Priority "Protecting large carnivores in Europe"

Funding spent on this priority: 561,000 Euro

Projects:

Protecting brown bears in the Cantabrian Mountains (Partner: FAPAS; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting brown bears in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro (Partners: CZIP, CZSS; Funding: Bernd Thies Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting brown bears, lynx and grey wolves in the northern Dinarides (Partners: University of Zagreb, Carnivora Magna; Funding: EU LIFE, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme (Partners: MES, PPNEA, ERA, Stiftung Kora, Piensa-Stiftung, Our Earth-Foundation for Nature Preservation, Wildlife and Environmental Education; Funding: MAVA Foundation, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Preventing the extinction of the Dinaric-South-Eastern Alpine lynx population through reinforcement and long-term conservation (Partners: University of Zagreb, Slovenia Forest Service, Hunters Association of Slovenia, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Technical University in Zvolen, University of Ljubljana, Associazione Progetto Lince Italia, Karlovac University, Biom, ACDB, Italian Carabinieri special command unit for the protection of forests, the environment, and the agri-food sector; Funding: EU LIFE, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors, and others), Protection of grey wolf populations that have recolonized central and western Poland (Partner: Wilk; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Maintaining

the ecological integrity of migration corridors for large carnivores (especially wolves) in Poland (Partner: Conservation organisation "Workshop for all Beings"; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protection of the Polish-Czech wolf population (Partner: Hnutí Duha; Funding: Elisabeth Seifert-Becker's endowment fund for the protection of wolves in memory of Viktoria Neumann, Emilie and Franz Seifert, EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protection of the wolf population in Slovakia (Partner: CWS; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), International expert platform for the cross-border protection of large carnivores in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Partners: Hnutí Duha, CWS, Wilk; Funding: Bernd Thies Foundation), Protection of large carnivores in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Guidelines for dealing with wolves (Partners: EuroNatur is a member of the 'Arbeitskreis Wolf' working group as part of the 'AG Lynx Baden Wuerttemberg' working group, Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting the Mediterranean monk seal colony at Cap Blanc (Partner: CBD Habitat; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors), Protecting Mediterranean monk seals in the Eastern Adriatic (Partners: MOM, PPNEA, CZIP, Biom; Funding: EuroNatur's donors and sponsors)

EURONATUR'S PROJECT FOCI IN 2020



Priority "Protecting Europe's last wilderness areas"

Funding spent on this priority: 262,000 Euro

Projects:

Protecting primary and old-growth forests in Romania (Partners: Agent Green, Client Earth; Funding: Manfred-Hermesen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, Fair Future Foundation, Ludwig Raue Memorial Fund, EuroNatur's donors), Ecological forest conversion of monoculture pine forests in Brandenburg to semi-natural mixed forests (Partners: Nature Park administrations at Dahme-Heideseen, Märkische Schweiz, and Schlaubetal; German Federation for Nature Conservation (Nabu) - Märkische Schweiz regional association; Stiftung Naturschutzfonds Brandenburg; local conservation groups and farmers; Funding: EuroNatur Trust for Eastern Germany, EuroNatur's donors)

Priority "Agricultural policy, biodiversity policy, energy policy"

Funding spent on this priority: 120,000 Euro

Projects:

Agricultural platform – alliance consisting of roughly 30 associations representing the concerns of nature conservation, environmental protection, animal welfare, family farming, organic farming, and development policy in the process for the reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (Funding: BfN with funding provided by BMU), Guidance for the establishment of regional, decentralized economic and supply structures in Podlasia/Poland with a focus on renewable energy (Partners: Bialystok Marshal's Office, Politechnika Bialystok, the town of Lapy, Hajnowka District, LEADER regions, Energievision Frankenwald e.V., the town of Wunsiedel and the Wunsiedel Department of Public Works; Funding: UBA with funds provided by BMU), #ProtectWater Campaign (Partners: WWF, EEB, ERN, EAA, WI and various other national and international NGOs and anglers associations; Funding: EuroNatur's donors)



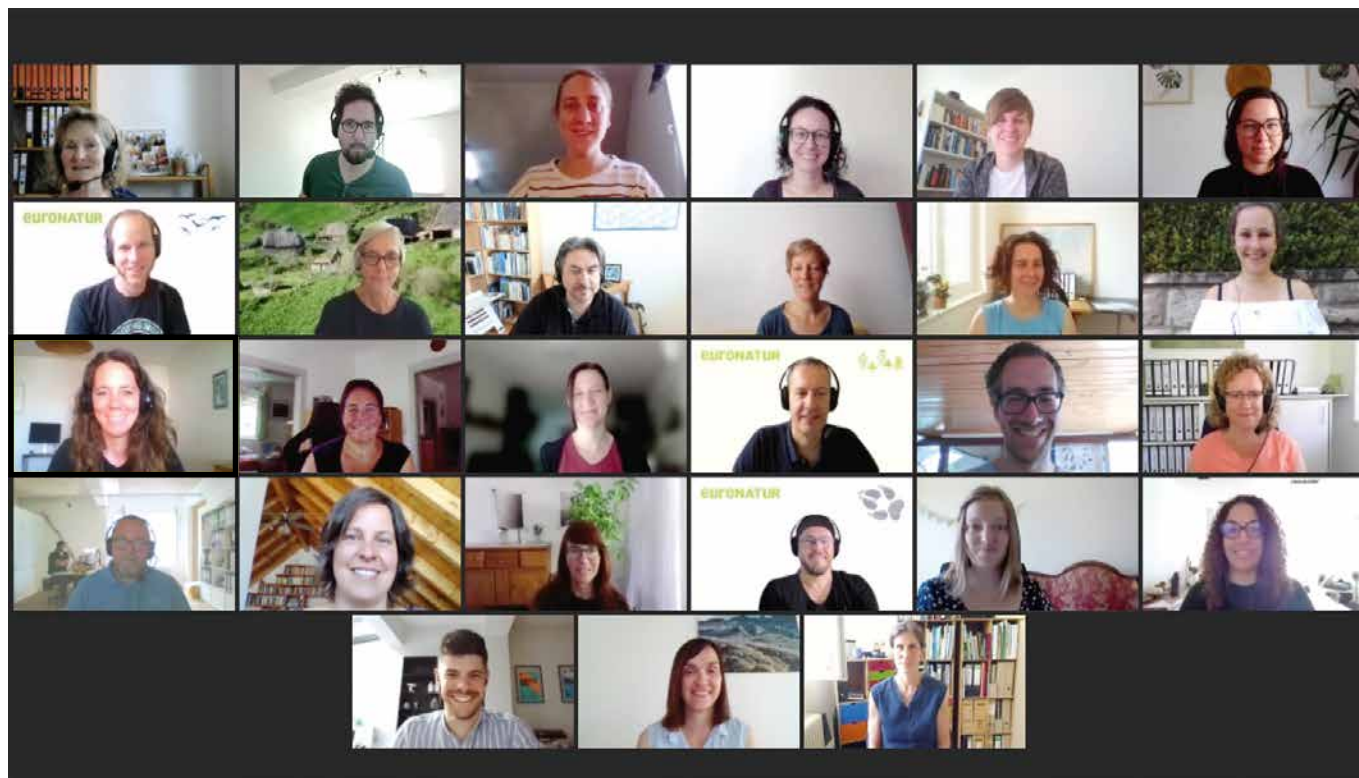
Abbreviations

Partners:

ACDB: Association for the Biological Diversity Conservation
 AOS: Albanian Ornithological Society
 ATN: Association for transhumance and nature conservation in Portugal
 Biom: BirdLife Croatia
 BPSSS: Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia
 CBD Habitat: Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity and its Habitat in Spain
 CED: Center for education and development
 CWS: Carpathian Wildlife Society
 CZIP: Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro
 CZSS: Center for Environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina
 DOPPS: BirdLife Slovenia
 DPRS: Slovenian Native Fish Society
 EAA: European Anglers Alliance
 EEB: European Environmental Bureau
 EGBA: European Green Belt Association
 ERA: Environmentally Responsible Action group
 ERN: European Rivers Network
 Fapas: Wild animal protection fund (Spain)
 FWFF: Fund for Wild Flora and Fauna
 GEOTA: Study group for spatial and environmental planning in Portugal
 HDZPP: Croatian Society for Bird and Nature Protection
 IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature
 IUCN ECARO: IUCN Eastern Europe and Central Asia
 Kora: Foundation for carnivore ecology and wildlife management in Switzerland
 MedINA: Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos
 MES: Macedonian Ecological Society
 MOM: Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk seal
 MSJA: Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association
 PPNEA: Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania
 RERI: Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute
 SPP: Society for the Protection of Prespa
 VCF: Vulture Conservation Foundation
 WI: Wetlands International
 Wilk: Conservation Association "Wolf"
 WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

Funding:

BfN: German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
 BMU: German Federal Environment Ministry
 DBU: German Federal Environmental Foundation
 ERDF: European Regional Development Fund
 GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
 IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
 LIFE: L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement
 PONT: Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust
 UBA: German Federal Environment Agency



The EuroNatur team in June 2021. Digital meetings like these have become the norm in Corona times. F.t.: Gabriela Strobels, Matthias Heinrich, Janinka Lutze, Leonie Kraut, Lisa Leschinski, Mona Kühn, Dr. Stefan Ferger, Sabine Günther, Michael Fantinato, Mira Bell, Ines Fantinato, Tara Sukič, Katharina Grund, Daniela Löchle, Sandra Wigger, Gabriel Schwaderer, Christian Stielow, Manuela Fundinger, Marco Panista, Dr. Amelie Huber, Kerstin Sauer, Markus Dressnandt, Ilka Beermann, Bruna Campos, Thomas Freisinger, Anja Arning, Annette Spangenberg.





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