



CEEweb for Biodiversity
Széher út 40. 1021 Budapest, Hungary
Phone: +36 1 398 0135
Fax: +36 1 398 0136
ceeweb@ceeweb.org
www.ceeweb.org

Information about the planned revision of the Natura 2000 site designation in Hungary

After the elections in spring 2010 the new Hungarian government has started its work officially in May. Since center-right FIDESZ has won the elections with 68%, it was able to form two-third majority in the new government.

In his first statements¹ the new secretary of state for the environment² has indicated to start with the revision of the Natura 2000 network in Hungary. In a meeting between the secretary of state and NGOs 25th June he has confirmed the revision will effect site designation, as well.

This move seems politically motivated and might be the result of the fact that communication and stakeholder involvement have been largely lacking throughout the process of development of Natura 2000 in Hungary. Farmers and owners of land have not been informed adequately and in some cases are still not informed about the designation of their land. With the planned revision the government seems to try to respond to the feelings of these rightly hurt people.

Ceeweb believes the site designation in Hungary is adequate to the provisions of the Habitats Directive and corresponds to the natural heritage of the country. We think designation is based on the best available expert knowledge. This was also confirmed by the adoption of the site list by the European Commission in 2007³. Thus the government's plans to revise site designation seem the false answer to the problem of lacking communication.

Also, the revision is potentially dangerous, because:

- The re-opening of designation process can lead to sites being taken out, if powerful lobby wants so. Thus this can lead to the reduction of the network in Hungary.
- It will lead to legal uncertainty for a number of years. This compromises implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives in Hungary. Drawing up of management plans, further refining the regulatory framework etc. could be postponed for years.
- The payments to farmers from EARDF in the 2013-2020 period could be hindered.

We are certain that revision is unnecessary and possibly harmful. We ask you to use all your powers to draw the attention of the Hungarian government to this.

Sarolta Tripolszky
EU Biodiversity Policy Coordinator
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Budapest, 29th June 2010

¹ http://www.greenfo.hu/hirek/hirek_item.php?hir=24259

² The Ministry of Environment was united with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, therefore the secretary of state for the environment is the highest official in the environmental field.

³ 2009/90/EC: Commission Decision of 12 December 2008 adopting, pursuant to Council Directive 92/43/EEC, a first updated list of sites of Community importance for the Pannonian biogeographical region