

## BIODIVERSITY in VILLAGES, TOWNS and CITIES

**„While our goals are global, they can most effectively be achieved through action at the local level.“**

Kofi Annan, 7th Secretary-General of the United Nations

Local Authorities move the world. Villages, towns and cities are important key players for biodiversity. Throughout Europe, municipal politicians, technical staff and citizens can make the biggest difference when it comes to preserving biodiversity within and around their settlements.

Decision IX/28 of the 9th Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Bonn in 2008, underlines that successful biodiversity conservation requires full dedication of cities and local authorities.



P. Kientz

Four out of five Europeans live in cities and towns. They depend on biodiversity from the surrounding landscapes, mostly without being aware of it. Man-made and virtual surroundings dominate the senses and lives of urban citizens. So to a large degree they have lost contact with the diverse multitude of life that keeps them alive. This is one of the reasons, why they hardly understand the pressing importance of preserving biodiversity. So, through adequate action and communication about the significance of biodiversity, municipalities could be leaders in making the population aware of the need to stop the loss of biodiversity.



R. Nebauer



Jane Goodall Institute Spain



REC Slovakia

## What LOCAL AUTHORITIES can DO for BIODIVERSITY

- Include biodiversity objectives in local land use planning
- Promote the extension and accessibility of green areas
- Manage public green spaces in a nature-oriented way
- Protect habitats and species and create green corridors for connecting biotopes
- Support the nature reserves on their territory
- Include biodiversity as a procurement criteria
- Inform and raise awareness among citizens and key actors, and promote and support their active engagement in biodiversity protection

## PROJECT PARTNERS and ORGANISERS



**A**  Deutsche Umwelthilfe  
www.duh.de

**D**  REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER  
www.rec.sk

**B**  IUCN  
www.iucn.org

**E**  Fundación Biodiversidad  
www.fundacion-biodiversidad.es

**C**  ICLEI  
www.iclei.org

**F**  natureparif  
www.natureparif.fr

**G**    
www.balatonregion.hu

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The project is supported through LIFE, a programme of the European Union. Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed some 2,750 projects, contributing approximately €1.35 billion to the protection of the environment.”



# PROMOTING THE PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN URBAN AREAS

[www.capital-biodiversity.eu](http://www.capital-biodiversity.eu)

# BIODIVERSITY

means the diversity of life on this planet: From animals, plants and fungi all the way down to microorganisms and their ecosystems. Biodiversity also refers to genetic diversity, which shows that every living being is a unique part of this great jigsaw puzzle of life.

Our biodiversity is a priceless treasure. Its ongoing destruction erodes the ecological, cultural and economic ground we, and future generations, all live and nourish upon.

## THREATS to our BIODIVERSITY

**“Humanity stands at a defining moment of its history.”**

Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Animals and plants need habitats which provide adequate living conditions. These habitats are being reduced or destroyed today. Some of the causes are excessive land consumption for the construction of roads and buildings, monocultures, high nutrient input due to agriculture and contamination by industry and traffic.



City of Weiden

Europe is no exception. Already up to a quarter of mammals, birds or butterflies are extinct in some European countries. Between 30 and 50 percent of Europe’s mammals, birds, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles and freshwater fish are threatened with extinction. Worldwide, human activities lead to extinction rates by a factor of 100 to 1000 times higher than the natural extinction rate!

## The COMPETITION CAPITAL of BIODIVERSITY

Municipalities compete in many fields. Who has got the most beautiful city centre? The most interesting cultural life? The best quality of life?

Within the competition “Capital of Biodiversity”, we will have the municipalities compete in biodiversity: Which municipality acts with most commitment for biodiversity? Creates and supports natural green spaces? Initiates river revitalization or recuperation of other important habitats? Preserves nests of bats and birds in old buildings? Considers nature in their planning processes?

We seek the most engaged municipalities in France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Spain. Based on the experiences made in these countries, further countries could

- A simple but solid monitoring system to control the impact of measures and the long term development of biodiversity
- A pool of experts available for training on biodiversity
- A set of workshop modules and contents on “Biodiversity in Municipalities” that can be used by any event organizers who want to incorporate a biodiversity aspect in their event

The winners will benefit from public relation and media coverage on national and European level.



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Present your biodiversity strategy and actions!

## Become CAPITAL of BIODIVERSITY

The national competitions for the national Capital of Biodiversity will take place in 2010 and 2011 National partner organisations will address municipalities and invite them to join the competition and complete the questionnaire.



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join. Finally, the best municipalities should be honored at European level.

## Our SUPPORT to MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities interested in the protection of biodiversity and this competition can count on the support of an experienced project team and with:

- Workshops on aspects of the protection of biodiversity at local level and the exchange of best practices in all countries involved
- Assessment regarding legal requirements and specific questions
- Brochures and CDs with information and positive examples in six languages

## MEASURING and MONITORING URBAN BIODIVERSITY

Action on biodiversity requires knowledge on biodiversity.

- What is the situation like in your municipality?
- Do you know where and how to act?
- Do you know how to measure and monitor the impact of your actions?

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature is developing a set of indicators for biodiversity in municipalities. It will be easy to apply and available in six languages. We encourage all municipalities to apply this set of indicators with the support of the national project partners.



R. Nebauer

## HUMANS NEED BIODIVERSITY

Humankind depends completely on the services that are provided by nature, ranging from fish, crops and cattle for food, to medicines, building materials, clothes, fuel, air and water purification, crop pollination, to name only a few. The economic value of biodiversity is huge. About 40% of the world economy is based on biological products or processes.

Also our emotional and mental well-being and health depend on a high diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems in our surroundings.

We need the abundance of forms, colors, smells, sounds and tastes of nature. We need room for recreational promenades. We need cool parks in hot summer cities. We need to hear the birds singing. Our children need space to play, to explore the beauties, wonders and challenges of life.

In times when large parts of the population spend most of their lives in towns and cities, rarely ever leaving them, the only chance to supply these needs to the public is with a high biodiversity in urban areas. Declining biodiversity there means increasing monotony and stress and less quality of life.

## OUR POLITICAL COMMITMENT to SAVE BIODIVERSITY

All European States and the European Union signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), committing themselves to reduce the decline of biodiversity in their countries and worldwide. In the 2006 communication “Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond”, the EU Member States set their goal to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss.

Moreover, several EU directives and communications support the conservation of biodiversity, e.g. the Habitats Directive (Natura2000) and the Water Framework Directive.



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