

## **Presentation of the workshop - Promoting CBD activities in Central and Eastern Europe: challenges and the way forward**

**(Abstracts)**

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The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has played a crucial role in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries' efforts to preserve and sustainably manage their rich biodiversity. With this workshop we provide an overview of the activities and outcomes of CBD implementation in the CEE region, highlighting achievements, ongoing initiatives, and key challenges.

Our aim is to promote the visibility and effective implementation of the CBD via boosting participation of biological conservation experts in European countries with less activity and capacity.

CEE countries have made notable strides in aligning their national policies and strategies with the objectives of the CBD. Biodiversity conservation has become a central component of environmental agendas, with governments enacting legislation and establishing protected areas to safeguard ecosystems and species. Collaborative efforts between CEE countries and international organizations have led to the development of action plans, capacity-building programs, and funding mechanisms that prioritize biodiversity conservation. However, challenges persist and new challenges emerge.

The CEE region faces severe biodiversity conservation issues associated with habitat loss and degradation, invasive species, illegal wildlife trade, potentially harmful agri-environmental subsidies and insufficient governmental, financial and academic resources for comprehensive biodiversity monitoring and management to mitigate these issues. The transition to more sustainable land-use practices and the incorporation of traditional knowledge into biodiversity conservation strategies are emerging goals that require further attention and sustained efforts.

International collaboration and knowledge exchange have been instrumental in advancing CBD objectives in the CEE region. Sharing best practices, scientific research, and technological innovations among countries have facilitated more effective conservation measures and policy implementation. At the same time, CEE countries are lagging behind in terms of the amount of biodiversity research and the visibility of the results for policy makers, while their biodiversity experts are much less represented in CBD processes.

Looking ahead, CEE countries must enhance their commitment to CBD principles, fostering cross-border cooperation, and leveraging available resources to address these challenges. Strengthened participation of national experts in CBD processes, partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, and local communities will be essential

in ensuring the long-term success of biodiversity conservation efforts in Central and Eastern Europe within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

With this workshop, organized in collaboration with the CO-OP4CBD project (Cooperation for the Convention on Biological Diversity, <https://www.coop4cbd.eu/>), we expect the strengthening of activities associated with the CBD and with the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in CEE countries, thus supporting biodiversity conservation and policy efforts.

## **Presentations**

### **Claire Brown, UNEP-WCMC, United Kingdom - The CBD and the role of experts in the process**

The success implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is dependant on the effective use of expertise held in different sectors including researchers. Recognising this, a central component to the CBD is the implementation of technical and scientific cooperation. This presentation will focus on: 1) the process and mechanisms for technical and scientific cooperation, and 2) the benefits for experts to engaged in the implementation of the CBD. The presentation will draw on a range of experiences but will specifically draw on the activities from the EU funded COOP4CBD project. It is anticipated the resulting discussion will focus on opportunities and barriers for experts to engage in CBD processes at the global and national level.

### **Grégoire Dubois, Joint Research Centre, European Commission, Italy - Leveraging Regional and Subregional Cooperation to Enhance CBD Implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework in Central and Eastern Europe**

In this talk, we will explore the challenges and opportunities in promoting the activities of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the distinct ecological and socio-political landscape of Central and Eastern Europe. The focus will be on how regional and subregional cooperation, particularly through technical and scientific support centres proposed by the CBD, can play a critical role in implementing the ambitious targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Central and Eastern Europe, characterized by its rich biodiversity and varied ecosystems, faces unique challenges in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. This talk will delve into these challenges, highlighting the need for tailored approaches to CBD implementation that respect the region's specificities. We will discuss the potential of regional and subregional centres in fostering scientific cooperation, technical capacity building, and knowledge exchange. These centres, coordinated by a Global Knowledge Support Service, are envisioned not only as hubs of expertise for capacity building, but also as platforms for strengthening the implementation of the GBF across national borders.

**Kinga Öllerer, Tímea Németh, András Báldi, HUN-REN Centre for Ecological Research, Hungary - Why are there so few CEE researchers involved in the CBD and how this could change?**

Most Central and Eastern Europe countries signed the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, and ratified it through their national legislative processes within five years. This played a crucial role in their efforts to preserve and sustainably manage their rich biodiversity, as it provided a basis for national legal frameworks. However, the number of CEE experts involved in CBD processes is still very low, though their expertise on the specifics of the region is much needed. Historical (political) factors have led to limited opportunities for scientific research and international collaboration, funding shortages, and inadequate research infrastructure. These constraints still hinder the ability of researchers in the region to engage in international initiatives from their own country. Language and differences in scientific communication practices can also be barriers. Addressing these challenges would require long-term commitments from governments and concerted efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and investment in research infrastructure. Funding opportunities to promote international collaboration and networking could support training and capacity building for researchers to understand CBD processes and mechanisms. Their participation can be further motivated by the opportunity to meet other fellows, produce high impact scientific papers and engage in research projects that can enhance their career prospects.