

Environmentally protected territories and biodiversity

The territory of Ukraine totals 603,628 sq km, which accounts for 5.7% of the territory of Europe and 0.44% of the landmass of the globe. Ukraine is the largest country whose entire territory lies within the boundaries of Europe.

Ukraine is laden with natural resources. The abundance of natural black humus, vast forest areas, steppes and forest-steppes and water resources explains the extremely wide range of flora and fauna in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, due to the increasing pressure of anthropogenic factors, untouched nature with its associated biodiversity is to be found only in nature reserves.

Thus, for the purposes of the preservation and protection of the environment, the Ministry of the Environment of Ukraine was established, the main functions of which are as follows: provision of state policies on environmental issues, sustainable use of resources, renewal and protection of natural resources, and the provision of management of the protection of the natural environment and others.

For purpose of preserving of the protected areas and biodiversity are provided international and intergovernmental policy.

The following measures were taken by the Ministry of the Environment in 2006 in order to preserve the protected areas:

The 'Concept underlying the state program for the development of the reserve management for the period to 2020' has been prepared. The draft Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine 'On the improvement of the management of the institutions of the protected nature reserves of Ukraine', which declares the transfer of the six nature reserves and four national nature parks from the State Committee of Forestry to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment, has been prepared.

Decrees of the President of Ukraine, initiated by the Ministry of the Environment, such as Presidential Decree no. 21/2006 of 10.02.06 'on the establishment of the National Nature Park Bol'shoi Lug in the Zaporozhskaya region', and Presidential Decree no. 122/2006 of 10.02.06 'on the establishment of the Mesinskii National Nature Park in the Chernigovskaya region', and other decrees aimed at the establishment of new, and the expansion of already existing, nature protection areas, and objects of national importance, have been enacted.

The program promoting the demarcation of the precise boundaries of the territories and of the various objects within the protected nature reserves, and for sketching them on the relevant maps and plans, has been formulated and partially implemented.

As a result, the area of the protected nature reserves was extended by 49098.39 hectares in 2006. By 1 January 2007, the total number of such sites stood at 7,281, covering a combined area of 2,856,154.1 hectares, which accounts for 4.73% of the total land area of Ukraine. Among these sites there are 17 nature and four biosphere reserves, 19 national nature parks, 46 regional protected landscapes, 3057 nature sights, 2693 partial reserves, 618 botanical and zoological parks, dendro-parks, and parks featuring landscape gardening art and 739 protected woodland features.

The protected nature reserve resources of Ukraine are constantly expanding, and in future their area will account for 10% of the total land area of the country.

Measures planned for 2007 include:

– The enactment of the Law 'On the implementation of the state program on the development of reserve management for the period up to 2020', and also integration of the issues of protection, state control and land relations into the Law 'On the introduction of amendments to the Ukraine law 'On protected nature reserves of Ukraine'.

- In addition to this, the preparation of projects on the establishment of new nature reserve parks, namely, 'Nizhnednestrovskii', 'Priazovskii', 'Meotida', 'Tarkhankutskii', 'Verkhovynnyi',

‘Cheremoshskii’, ‘Zhemchuzhina Volino-Podol’ska’, ‘Zakoldovannyi Krai’, ‘Kremenetskie gory’, ‘Velikii Bor’, ‘Nizhneosul’ski’, and others, has been completed.

Moreover, work is being carried out within the framework of the ‘program for the development of the national Ukrainian eco-system for the years 2000-2015’. The project provides for the formation of a unitary territorial system of nature landscapes consisting of the various natural regions and corridors, for the conservation of biodiversity,

strengthening bio-resilience and bio-recovery capacity, and ecological balance within the territory of Ukraine.

Falling within the framework of this program is Vyzhinskii National Nature Park, founded in 1995. At present this is one of the smallest national nature parks in the Ukrainian Carpathians. The main value of the park is its forests, covering almost 80% of its land area. 630 species of vascular plants (of which 34 are listed in the ‘Red Data Book’ of Ukraine) and 221 species of bryophytes have been found in the area of the park.

In order to maintain biodiversity, the Ministry of the Environment has contributed to the adoption of several laws and regulatory documents, such as:

- The resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine ‘On the enactment of the procedure for the state recording and register of flora’, the purpose of which is to record quantitative, qualitative and other characteristics of natural vegetative resources, as well as the level and quality of their use, and also to carry out systematic checking of the qualitative and quantitative changes in flora and to provide information on the state of flora for the executive authorities and those leasing land.

- The resolution of the Parliament of Ukraine ‘On the enactment of the procedure for the collection, use and distribution of information on desertification and degradation of lands’, aiming at identifying the mechanisms of collection, use and distribution of information on desertified and degraded lands, which will provide for the more effective use and protection of the land, and the averting and prevention of destructive natural processes and phenomena.

- Instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine ‘On the approval of the concept for the reform and development of forestry in Ukraine’. The aim of the instruction is essentially to provide assistance in the pursuit of state policies in relation to the sustainable management of forests, and to promote an increase in the efficiency of the functioning of the nation’s forestry, aiming at improvements in the ecological, social, and economic functions of the forests of Ukraine.

- The draft act ‘On the national program for the conservation and restoration of the biodiversity of Ukraine for the period 2007-2025’ has been completed. The act is aimed at pursuing state policies in the sphere of conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity in order to significantly lessen the anthropogenic pressure on biodiversity.

In addition:

The Ministry of the Environment, in order to foster the conservation, protection and renewal of the biodiversity of the nation’s natural resources, has been involved in various international cooperative efforts, namely:

- Participation in Conventions

Ukraine is a party to a total of 26 environmental conventions and their protocols, among which are:

- a) The United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification

In 2002 the Parliament of Ukraine passed a Ukraine Law ‘On joining the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification in Countries experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, especially in Africa’, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine enacted a list of imperative measures for the implementation of the recommendations of the Convention. The Parliament of Ukraine adopted resolution no. 998 of 19.07.06 on the ‘Procedure for the collection, use and distribution of information on desertification and degraded lands’.

The data required for preparing the national report on the implementation of the Convention in Ukraine has been processed.

Recommendations on the development of partnerships in the sphere of combating soil degradation caused by the pollution of the Chernobyl disaster has been prepared and sent to the Secretariat of the Convention and to the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany, as well as to leading academic institutions in Germany.

b) The Convention on Biodiversity

The revisions to the draft Ukraine Law 'On affirmation of the state program on the maintenance of biodiversity in Ukraine for the period 2007-2025' have been made. The representatives of the Ministry took part in the various meetings and seminars dedicated to this issue. Measures designed to maintain biodiversity and preserve the national eco-system have been elaborated

c) The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

The first meeting of the conference of the parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians was held on 11-13 December 2006 in Kiev. The meeting was attended by the delegations from the countries party to the Carpathian Convention: Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Hungary, Ukraine, the Czech Republic. The representatives of the Alpine Convention, UNEP, WWF, CEEWEB, ANPED, FAO, as well as the representatives of various environmental NGOs and Ukrainian civil institutions also contributed to the work of the meeting.

This meeting aimed at developing the mechanisms of implementation of the Carpathian Convention, which, in turn, was founded for the preservation of the unique features of the Carpathian region.

The rules and procedures of the Conference and the financial procedures of the Carpathian Convention were adopted, and the final documents were signed, i.e. the memorandum on mutual understanding between the Carpathian Convention on one hand and the Alpine and Ramsar Convention on the other, and the Carpathian Declaration..

The latter Declaration will promote international cooperation in the area of the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions, and the maintenance of the biodiversity and natural sites of the Carpathian region.

Recently, the parties concerned have been involved in talks regarding the possible location of the Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

Proposals have been put forward to the secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, suggesting the secretariat be located in the city of Chernovtsy.

The summary reports on the implementation of the plan for measures aimed at the implementation of the decisions of the Carpathian Conference have been sent to the parties concerned.

There has also been participation in meetings and seminars dedicated to the discussions of the problems of protected trans-boundary territories.

d) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

The draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 'On the enactment of the procedure for issuing permits and certificates for the inbound and outbound trading of species of wild fauna and flora, regulated by the Convention', has been prepared. A total of 267 permits for inbound and outbound trade of species of wild fauna and flora in Ukraine, the trade of which is regulated by CITES, have been issued.

e) The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention)

f) The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution

- g) The European Landscape Convention
 - h) The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)
- and others.

On issues of environmental protection, Ukraine cooperates with the following international organizations: the UN, the OSCE, UNEP, UNDP, the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Global Environment Facility, and others, as well as with various international financial institutions such as the IBRD, the EBRD, and the World Bank. With their help, projects and programs of technical assistance aimed at the maintenance of biodiversity, and the preservation of forests and protected areas have been implemented. Several projects can be mentioned in this regard: the UNDP/GEF project on the 'Establishment of the ecological corridor in Polesie', which covers the territories of Byelorussia, the northern part of Ukraine, and the adjoining territories of Poland and Russia. The project is designed to conserve the wetland biodiversity in the region. In addition: there is the 'Project to renew Ecosystems of the Black Sea (2001-2007)', 'Transboundary and River Basin Management, Second phase, Pripjat river' 'Ecological Regeneration Plan for the River Dnestr' and others.

A total of six protected areas of Ukraine are listed as UNESCO protected sites. Two of them are trans-boundary – the East Carpathian Biosphere reserve, established across the territories of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine (in Ukraine it has the status of national and regional nature park) and the Danube Biosphere Reserve, located in the delta of Danube, and co-managed by Romania and Ukraine. Both of the reserves were founded in 1998, in order to provide for the sustainable development of the appropriate trans-boundary regions via comprehensive research and monitoring activities, environmental education

of the population, as well as spatial planning and the appropriate management of land use.

In addition to this, reserves (including biosphere reserves) and national nature parks are to be found on the border between Ukraine and Romania (in the Carpathians), Poland, Moldova, Byelorussian Polesie, Russia, and on the Black Sea coast, including Crimea. In the trans-boundary areas, there are protected areas of a smaller scale. Ukraine is a part of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, one of its purposes being the conservation of Carpathian biodiversity.

The second session of the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum is scheduled to be held on 21-23 May 2007. The main theme will be 'Key challenges for ensuring environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE region:'.

A discussion of the report entitled 'Environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE region', prepared by the representatives of UNEP and UNDP, will form part of the agenda of the Forum.

The report on 'The Environment and security for Eastern Europe' is devoted to the specific aspects of the interrelationships between the problems of environment and security that the countries of Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldova) are facing due to their geopolitical, political and economic status, and will contribute to the solution of the problems common to this region, including those related to the conservation of biodiversity and of protected areas.

Ukraine will lead the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation from November 2007 until April 2008. Among other activities, the workshop on environmental issues and the roundtable discussion on the ecological and economic aspects of the development of the Danube river basin, involving committed international organizations, are planned. As a part of the aforementioned activities, the various ecological problems facing the Black Sea region and others are slated for discussion.