



# ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER



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Dear Reader,

The Environmental Newsletter continues its successful journey. You have in your hands the third edition of this publication. It is our hope that through this newsletter we bring you important, high quality, and interesting information. We encourage you to continue sending us reports of your activities. Our aim is to deepen this cooperation in order to enrich the content and diversity of topics for our readers. Joining activities that are being organized around the world in the framework on healthy, sustainable and biodiversity rich environment, in this issue we put the spotlight on the activities of institutions, civil society and other actors to protect the nature and natural heritage values. Topics include sustainable tourism, agro-forestry, species protection and raising environmental awareness. We thank all those who have contributed to the enrichment of this newsletter with interesting topics and articles.

Editorial Team

## PROTECTING WILD BIRDS

The Non-Governmental Organization "Finch" from Prizren is one of the few organizations in Kosovo that cares for the protection of wild birds. The activities of the organization for the protection of wild birds and their environment have enabled them to attract more than 100 members and supporters and to have a good cooperation not only with local organizations and institutions but also international ones.

Organization of expeditions to observe the birds is one of the most important activities of Finch. This activity has attracted interest not only of the members of the organization but also of many foreign tourists. Through these activities Finch promotes the development of mountain and rural tourism in Kosovo and in particular in the Sharr Mountains, Mountains of Opoja and those of Gora. During these expeditions the bird observers have the opportunity to enjoy not only the natural beauties but also traditional food and acquaint with the culture of the inhabitants of these localities.

Monitoring of endangered bird species in the Sharr Mountains and of migratory birds along

the river Drin are also important activities of the organization.

A photograph exhibition on birds in the nature of Kosovo was carried out by members of the organization. Activities planned for this year includes the organization of mountain campsite "Limthi" which is traditional and takes place during summer vacation. Its purpose is to recognize the types of wild birds in the nature of Kosovo. NGO Finch is a unique example of NGO work in Kosovo due to the fact that most of its activities are on voluntary basis and based on membership fees. ♦



ENVIRONMENT



**FAST INFO BOX**

- ◊ Air pollution in Prishtinë/Pristina often exceeds rates allowed under EU standards, presenting a threat for causing serious and recurrent respiratory diseases
- ◊ About 80 % of the residents of urban areas have access to a sewage system
- ◊ Numerous illegal landfills generate health and environmental hazard by contaminating the soil and water source lying underneath
- ◊ Some restaurants in Kosovo cage bears illegally, causing permanent damage to their natural behavior

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MOUNTAINS**

The development of mountain tourism is one of the more established ways to generate local income for the population and thus contribute to economic and social development. For one year, the municipality of Prizren in Southern Kosovo has been working on developing mountain tourism on its territory including the unique Sharr mountain area supported by a French alpine region, the Hautes Alpes, the French Embassy and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main objective of the project "Sustainable Tourism, a Tool for Territorial Development in Mountain Areas" is to make the Prizren Department of Tourism operational, effective and to finalize a master plan on tourism; a road map for tourism of the naturally rich and beautiful mountain region.

Further activities will include assisting Prizren to implement the first steps of the plan and to foster partnerships with the neighboring municipalities across the Sharr mountains.



Impressive Sharr Mountains in the Southern Kosovo

Besides promoting local economic and social development, sustainable tourism attempts to avoid generating negative impacts to the local environment and culture. ◊

**RESEARCH EXPEDITION IN THE GRAND CANYON CAVE**

Grand Canyon Cave in Rugova Gorge is a rare beauty under the ground of Kosovo and an object of interest to many researchers. It is estimated that this cave is one of the most attractive natural objects for the realization of research and tourist expeditions not only in the Bjeshkët e Nemuna mountains but also in Western Balkan region. During the month of February a research expedition was conducted in the cave, a result of a cooperation between the Association of Speleologists "Aragonit" from Peja/Pec, the Environmental Protection Agency of Kosovo and a team of speleologists from the Republic of Slovakia. During this expedition some new corridors and galleries of the cave were explored for the first time. Corridors and galleries that we re explored are rich in crystals that represent a rare scientific and touristic value. Similar expeditions in order to explore other unsearched corridors and galleries of the cave will continue in the future.

Grand Canyon Cave is located on the eighth kilometer of Rugova Gorge, about 90 m above the riverbed of Lumbardhi of Peja/Pec. The entrance to the cave is located at 637 m altitude. The length of the explored corridors and galleries is about 13,450 m. It is one of the largest caves in Kosovo and the region. It was created by water flow in Triassic rocks. Inside the cave are some rivers and underground lakes of different shapes and sizes, that have contributed to the expansion of the underground corridors and galleries. It is estimated that Grand Canyon Cave has rare natural, scientific, hydrological, biological, educational and touristic values. ◊



**ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS!**

⌚ Stand-by mode consumes vainly electricity - turn off instead!



⌚ Try to avoid buying soap in a plastic container—choose one without and ecologically produced



⌚ Reduce, reuse and recycle instead of buying new





**ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR**

**International Year of Forests 2011**

**8 May**  
World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

**31 May**  
World No Tobacco Day

**5 June**  
World Environment Day

**8 June**  
World Oceans Day

**17 June**  
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

**FIRST SOLAR WATER HEATING IN MEDICAL HEALTH CENTER**

In Kosovo, electrical energy is mostly used by households, industry and the service sector and it is mainly produced by burning low quality lignite coal. Development and use of renewable energy sources is crucial for Kosovo due to the growing levels of air pollution and to follow a sustainable environmental model of a clean and safe environment with secure energy and a strong economy. A pilot project for installing a solar sanitary water heating system at the Medical Health Family Center in Dragash/ Dragaš, was implemented by UNDP with the support of a non-governmental energy organization AKEREE and funded by the Government of Finland to promote the use of solar panels for heating sanitary water supply with an increased energy efficiency and a stable adequate supply of hot sanitary water. In order to maintain the year round stable hot water supply, it is estimated that water will be heated by solar energy for nine months, while during the three winter

months, the water will be heated by oil boilers installed for heating space. The expected results of the two month pilot project include electric energy savings of 22.995 MWh/y, reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 31.259 t/y, and cost reductions in electricity consumption of 2000 e/y. As the first solar water heating system in the Dragash/Dragaš municipality, the pilot project has a great deal of demonstration value to the community and the whole region including its application to food processing and households in the future. ♦



Solar panels on the roof of the health center

**PLANTING PEACE TREES BY COMMUNITY BASED FORESTRY**

Since 2008 InterSilva, a non-governmental organisation, has been involved in developing community-based forestry in Kosovo with local partner organisations. Community forestry encourages and supports the involvement of people in the decision making and management of their local resources. In Kosovo, community forestry can create “green infrastructure,” whereby open-space is set aside and planted with trees and other ornamental or useful plants creating a pleasant safe environment.

InterSilva has an ongoing “Kosovo Peace Trees” project, designed to plant 2.5 million trees over a five year period with strong local community involvement. It will help establish a foundation for national tree planting efforts in the future. Agro-Vet Development is the local partner organisation currently implementing the project on the ground. To complete the first stage of the Kosovo Peace Trees Project, additional trees, to reach the target of 10,000 trees are currently been planted in Obiliq/c. ♦

When managed sustainably, open spaces can provide fuel wood, building materials, and non-wood products like honey and fruit. They also provide important wildlife habitat that supports biological diversity. Urban tree planting can also be part of community forestry providing new street trees, tree plantings around buildings to provide shade and beautification, and trees in town parks and school yards.





## SAY NO TO PLASTIC BAGS

With the motto "I love clean Podujevë/o - Say NO to plastic bags!" the non-governmental organization from Podujevë/o, Ekovizioni, has distributed fabric bags to the citizens of this municipality. The purpose of this project is informing and raising awareness among citizens about damage caused by uncontrolled use of plastic bags. Students and volunteers have joined the organization's members in helping to distribute cloth bags and messages about environmental protection.

The distribution of bags was mainly done in the urban area of the town. Uncontrolled use of plastic bags, in addition to ruining the image of natural and urban landscapes, causes other environmental damage. Consider that plastic bags in natural conditions can last up to 400 years. Plastic bags are particularly harmful to animals.

According to animal protection organizations each year about 100,000 sea animals die as a result of plastic bags. It is estimated that, at the global level, plastic waste makes up 14-28% of general waste. Ekovizioni is a nongovernmental organization whose activities are directed at strengthening the role of youth and civil society in environmental protection. ♦



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## REGIONAL TRANS-BOUNDARY HABITAT PROTECTION

The European Commission has proposed that the EU ratifies an agreement to protect the sustainable development of the Prespa Park in Southeastern Europe. The proposed agreement was negotiated by the European Commission, Greece, Albania and by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Prespa Lakes and their surrounding environment are a unique natural area of great ecological significance, which will be better preserved through a comprehensive treatment at the basin level. The agreement is a step toward changing existing agreements of cooperation at the local level and should facilitate successful implementation of the objectives of Water Framework Directive of the EU in this area. The Prespa Park Area is designated as a trans-boundary protected area between Greece, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia being an example of a trans-boundary protected area in Southeastern Europe. Under the agreement, the parties will be obliged to manage the lakes in a careful manner, paying special attention to water level. There is a need to prevent pollution and protect and preserve biodiversity. Any development of the area must be done in a sustainable manner. ♦



The Prespa Park area in the Southeastern Europe

### ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS!

🔄 Volunteer for green initiatives in your community



🔄 Prefer walking and biking, it's healthy and emission free



🔄 Prefer using renewable energy sources for electricity

