

**DELO NAŠIH ZAVODOV IN DRUŠTEV  
ATTIVITÀ DEI NOSTRI ISTITUTI E DELLE  
NOSTRE SOCIETÀ  
ACTIVITIES BY OUR INSTITUTIONS  
AND ASSOCIATIONS**

**FIRST STEPS IN ESTABLISHING THE SLOVENIAN  
NATIONAL BIOPLATFORM**

On January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 2003, an international exchange of project proposals was taking place in the Biology Centre, Ljubljana within the framework of the regional initiative called TriCo, which is to aid the collaboration in research and development within the Alps-Adria Region. The exchange – the 7<sup>th</sup> so far and carrying the title "Sustainable spatial planning and vulnerable ecosystems" – was much more comprehensive than the previous meetings, for parallel to the project presentation, a scientific conference within the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> basic programme of the EU "Bioplatfrom" project was taking place. At the scientific conference, research groups from further 14 European countries were taking part, in addition to the researchers and experts from the six countries of the Alps-Adria region. More than 180 researchers from 20 countries also participated, simultaneously with the exchange of project proposals on the subject of "Sustainable spatial planning and vulnerable ecosystems", in the preparations of scientific background in the establishment of Slovenian national platform for the research in the sphere of biodiversity, which eventually became a member of the EU network. The European network of national bioplatforms is functioning within the forum called EPBRS ("European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy"), which serves as a bridge between the European policy making and directives in the sphere of sustainable development as well as between the research sphere and impacts of the sustainable economic development on biodiversity in Europe. Integration of experts from the EU countries in this sphere actively aids the candidate countries also in the surmounting of difficulties in the implementation of European directives and in the preparation of regionally specific contents in the sustainable development and its impact on the environment.

Within the framework of the above mentioned international exchange, the founding meeting of the Slovenian national platform for the research in the sphere of biodiversity also took part, i.e. of the forum for the stipulation and direction of development strategy and identification of priority research in the sphere of biodiversity in Slovenia, at which we, the participants, founded the Slovenian National Bioplatfrom (SNB), which is to bring together various experts from the spheres of biology, spatial planning, sustainable development, biodiversity and representative of the ministries

contributing towards the national policy making in the field of development and research.

The planners of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) have come out with 4 concrete objectives, towards which national bioplatforms are to contribute as well:

1. Monitoring of the development of the European bioplatfrom through inclusion of platforms from all 32 countries (within the RTD programme), and integration of national platforms with other European and international organisations with the intention to promote the common European area of biodiversity research;

2. Organisation of 5 EPBRS meetings;

3. Organisation of electronic conferences before the meetings, at which a wide range of users would discuss the selected topics, and

4. Reports on findings, discoveries and other EPBRS results.

The main objectives of the Slovenian National Bioplatfrom are activities dealing with the preparation of the national strategy for biodiversity research, preparation of interdisciplinary research programmes and definition of priority tasks, integration with other national bioplatforms and the European platform, identification of the good and the bad aspects of development, inclusion of Slovenian research into international programmes, and a series of other activities associated with it. The fact is that Slovenia is faced, similar as other Central and Eastern European countries, with some major problems, such as shortage of taxonomy specialists, lack of strategy of this kind, modest financial support to the classical research in the sphere of biodiversity, lack of communication between scientific institutions and professional non-government organisations dealing with similar subjects, and concordance between competent ministries regarding the developmental-spatial and sectorial activities, which have a potential impact on biodiversity as well as on the outer appearance of cultural and natural landscape in Slovenia. In Europe, Slovenia is known as its "hot spot" with extremely high biodiversity, due to which it is highly important that the greatest possible attention is dedicated to this complexity.

Last but not least, the strategy of economic growth in Slovenia and its tourist development is based on the conservation of natural wealth and biodiversity, which is due to the country's position at the junction of very diverse climatic-geological belts in fact unique in Europe. Exceptionally important for the survival and further development of SNB is also the support given by the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy and the goodwill of Minister Janez Kopač, who in his address given during the opening of the international exchange in the Biology Centre in Ljubljana on the subject of sustainable spatial management and vulnerable ecosystems gave his full support to the SNB and its successful functioning.

At the founding meeting in Ljubljana, its participants agreed that within the framework of the founding activities of the Slovenian National Bioplatform they would initially name a number of experts from various scientific-research institutions, prepare a list of professional institutions and non-governmental organisations connected with the biodiversity research in Slovenia and a list of experts at the competent ministries. These lists will be applicable during the setting up of the so-called "Slovenian Biodiversity Network". In the following phase we intend to prepare a catalogue of the current research and applicative projects in the field of biodiversity and systematic monitoring of interventions into our natural environment. With the support given by the Ministry of School Education, Science and Sports, the Slovenian National Bioplatform has been enabled, as early as during its establishment, to appear on the World-Wide Web. Within the framework of the ministerial websites [www.rtd.si](http://www.rtd.si) earmarked for information on research programmes, call for tenders in the national research programme and target research programmes, we have given information support to the SNB with all the necessary links to the suitable international websites. The SNB website works within the information framework covering the research activities by the EU and the Republic of Slovenia in the field of sustainable development and global changes in the EU's 6<sup>th</sup> general programme.

The participants of the SNB's founding meeting in Ljubljana in January 2003 believed that the establishment of SNB is an exceptional opportunity for further integration and communication of the Slovenian professional public, which is any possible way associated with biodiversity, but at the same time represents a forum for reconciliation of the priority research projects.

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#### REPORT ON ACTIVITIES FOR LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF THE *POSIDONIA OCEANICA* MEADOW IN SLOVENIA



*Posidonia oceanica* (L.) Delile is, together with *Cymodocea nodosa* (U.) Ascherson, the most common seagrass in the Mediterranean. It is widespread in the entire basin, except in the area close to the Strait of Gibraltar, Northern Adriatic, coastal waters of Israel, Bosphorus, Sea of Marmara, and the Black Sea. Accord-

ing to Benacchio (1938), it used to be quite common also on the silty bottom of the Gulf of Trieste in the Northern Adriatic. Further investigations showed, however, a drastic change in its distribution in this northernmost part of the Adriatic. It is very likely that at present there is only one very restricted meadow of *P. oceanica* in the Gulf of Trieste. The area is in Slovene coastal waters between the towns of Koper and Izola. A preliminary and approximate mapping of the area carried out in 1993 showed that the meadow is approximately 1 km long, starting close to the coastline (water depth from 0.2 to 0.5 m) and extending 50 m from the shore (water depth app. 4 m). The meadow consists of several *P. oceanica* islands of different sizes and shapes and does not fit into normal meadow types.

The meadow has been included in the local physical plans as a future protected area. At the same time the Slovene government decreed *P. oceanica* a rare and endangered species; the decree was adopted by the national parliament in 2002. Furthermore, *P. oceanica* is listed in Annex II of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean as endangered species, while the EU Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC of 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1992 defines its meadows as priority habitat type. The protection of *P. oceanica* and its meadows is thus one of the top priorities in the sphere of nature conservation. However, in order to suitably define the potential threats and apply efficient conservation measures for this unique meadow, further research and monitoring were necessary.

The importance of further research and monitoring is even greater due to the planned changes concerning the main coastal road that at present runs virtually along the coastline. The new road, which is bound to be built in the forthcoming years, will be shifted into a tunnel and will, as a consequence, "free" the coastline and make it available for other activities, mainly recreation and tourism. Due to it, increased pressure for beach enlargement, piers, maritime traffic and other recreational and tourist facilities is expected. Without suitable legislation, accurate maps of the sea floor and its habitat types, a well-defined monitoring and awareness campaign, the expected pressure for the development of recreational facilities could jeopardise the conservation of the meadow.

Within the framework of the SAP BIO project (Strategic Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity in the Mediterranean Region), carried out by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas in Tunis, National Reports were prepared in order to define the state of art in the field of biodiversity conservation and to foresee the due future activities. In the Slovene National Report, 14 priority actions were listed, including activities concerning legal protection, research and monitoring programme for *P. oceanica*. As a follow-up of the National Report, a Na-