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PRESS RELEASE

Successful workshop on sustainable forest management practices

In 2017, the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe' became the largest serial transnational WH Site in UNESCO's portfolio, with 78 component parts in 12 countries. Alongside this spectacular recognition, questions arose on how to guarantee appropriate protection and sustainable development of these forests across the whole spectrum of included countries.

For this purpose, BEECH POWER recently organised a workshop with lectures on beech forest management in different European countries (Slovenia, Slovakia, Germany, Belgium). Topics included: cooperation between countries within the UNESCO World Heritage Site, ecology of beech forests, and different forest management practices in beech forests. The workshop organised by the project partner Slovenia Forest Service took place on 24th-25th March online and was part of the thematic work package

Key to conservation: continuity in space and time

The event was opened by Janez Logar, acting director of Slovenia Forest Service, who welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of this workshop. Following, Miha Varga from the Slovenia forest Service presented to the participants a short comparison of current forest management situation and conservation issues in buffer zones of the project areas, namely Austria, Croatia, Germany, Slovakia and Slovenia. Caroline Celis from the World Heritage Coordination Office provided an introduction into the importance of the Guidance document for buffer donation and management as well as the common language used in the management of the property and the buffer zone of the World Heritage site 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe'. Pierre Ibisch from the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development shed a light on the impact of forest management practices on forest microclimate. He explained the changes in landscape and how is it correlated with temperature changes and other environmental events.

Participants discussed forest cultivation practices and the creation of dynamic ecosystems with higher biodiversity level and better economic revenue in the Lübeck forest presented by Knut Sturm from the Natural Forest Academy, as well as in Slovenia by Aleš Poljanec from the Slovenia Forest Service. The first day ended with a presentation on the ecology and management of Slovenian beech forests by Andrej Bončina from the Biotechnical faculty of Slovenia, and the importance and value of old-growth forests from the aspect of research and biodiversity by Tom Nagel from the Biotechnical Faculty.

The second day participants learned about Slovak, Belgian, Slovenian and German beech forest conservation and management. Ivor Rizman from the National Forest Centre Slovakia talked about the status and management methods of Slovakian beech forests with special focus on buffer zone management. Following that, participants travelled virtually to Belgium to understand how beech forest buffer zones are managed there, presented by



Frederik Vaes from Brussels Environment. Špela E. Koblar Habič from the Slovenia Forest Service touched on the specifics of managing beech forests in the high karst habitats. The workshop was finished by the presentation of Susanne Winter, who gave a good insight into the conservation objectives and recommendations for beech forest management in North-Eastern Germany, and presented the freshly translated 'Best Practice Handbook - Conservation in Beech Forests Used for Timber'.

Key focuses within BEECH POWER

[Work package 2](#) of BEECH POWER targets the buffer zones of Protected Areas comprising World Heritage component parts as border areas with high potential for conflicts between different interest groups but also as areas for regional outreach of the protected areas in terms of involving stakeholders in their management, transferring knowledge regarding natural heritage and promoting sustainable development in the region. Within the project, we aim to develop strategies for protected areas and concerned public authorities for active stakeholder participation in buffer zone management, for conflict solution, visitor information and World Heritage communication as well as sustainable forest management.



Background: The BEECH POWER project

The UNESCO World Heritage (WH) Site ‘Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe’ represents the most complex transnational serial natural site in the UNESCO portfolio - comprising 94 component parts in 18 countries. The programme area shares almost 25% of the components parts distributed in 5 countries (AT, DE, HR, SK and SI). While local management units of the component parts face similar challenges, i.e. concerning buffer zone management, the respective environmental and socio-economic contexts differ considerably on local and national level. The main project objective is to improve management quality and effectiveness of the WH site to safeguard the ecosystem integrity of the single component parts by improving capacities and active participation possibilities of relevant stakeholders.

The project takes an ecosystem-based and participatory approach working on different administrative levels to anchor the WH site in sustainable regional development and produce replicable and innovative models for WH beech forests and their local surroundings (i.e. WH Beech Communities, sustainable buffer zone management, Beech Forest Quality Standard). The main outputs are guidelines and strategies for stakeholder participation and regional development, a handbook for buffer zone management, recommendations for visitor management, a communication concept and a Beech Forest Quality Standard that support protected area administrations, public authorities and actors from civil society in their daily work. The results will be applicable for other WH component parts outside the programme area. The transnational cooperation responds to the challenges of a transnational WH site, as comprehensive solutions must reflect the heterogeneity of the single component parts. Further, it ensures the establishment of a WH-wide learning network between different stakeholders that would not be possible on national level.

For more information on the project: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/BEECH-POWER.html>

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