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Regional Accession Network **ECRAN**

Sub-Regional Workshop on Pilot Appropriate Assessment

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Introduction to the topic: Natura 2000 as an object of Appropriate Assessment

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Acronyms used

- AA = appropriate assessment, the entire process pursuant to Art. 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive
- AA study = outcome of Art. 6(3) „main assessment“
- EC = European Commission
- EU MS = Member States of the EU
- N2K = Natura 2000 network
- target features = habitat types & species for which the given site was classified/designated

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Rationale behind N2K

- 1970s – recognition of inefficiency of separated national nature policies:
“nature does not recognize borders”
- such an idea implementable only in continental scale and under certain political conditions
- EU – unique chance for such an approach

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Rationale behind N2K

- 1979 – EU Birds Directive – first attempt to make nature protection “supranatural”: all EU 9 MS had to establish SPAs
- no rules, no instructions, no supranational control
- result: by 2000 almost no implementation
- lesson learnt: an obligation left purely up to Member States is *ineffective* and *hardly enforceable*

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Rationale behind N2K

1992 EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) –
lessons taken:

- introduction of an obligation to establish “non-birds” sites (SCI, SAC) across EU 12
- sites will not be randomly clustered but are to create a *network* called Natura 2000
- supranational external check of sufficiency of the network secured

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Principles of N2K network establishment

N2K sites: always must have defined *target features*

Target features: selected

- bird species
- non-bird animal species
- plant species
- “natural habitat types”

Principles of N2K network establishment

Lists of target features:

- Birds Directive Annex I + regularly occurring migratory species
- Habitats Directive Annex I (habitat types)
- Habitats Directive Annex II (species)

Must not be mixed up with features from other Directive's annexes

What are target features?

- habitat types and species which:

habitat types	species
are in danger of disappearance	endangered
have a small natural range	vulnerable
present outstanding examples of typical characteristics of ... regions: Alpine, Atlantic, Black Sea, Boreal, Continental, Macaronesian, Mediterranean, Pannonian and Steppic ...	rare
	endemic and requiring particular attention

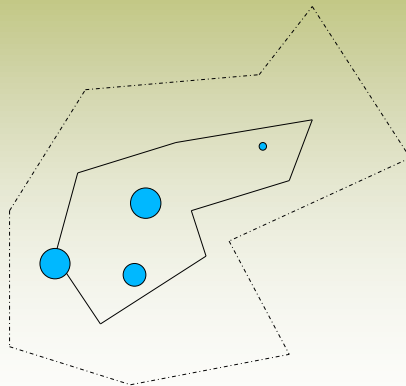
What are target features?

If a given target feature occurs at the territory of a MS, *at least one* SPA/SCI must be designated

Aim of Natura 2000

“This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types ... and habitats of the species ... shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status **in their natural range**“

(Art. 3(1) HabDir)



Aim of Natura 2000

i.e., N2K aims at contributing to FCS *in the whole country*;

therefore,

the term „(favourable) conservation status“ *does not refer* to individual sites;

therefore,

AA has *nothing in common with FCS!*

Rules of establishment of N2K

Art. 4, Annex III HabDir + several documents of the EC approved by Member States

Each Natura 2000 site

- must have: *target features*
- should have: *conservation objectives* set

2 terms crucial for AA

- site integrity
- (ecological) coherence of the network
- none of them defined in the Directive
- settled definitions developed over time:

a) site integrity

- can be defined as all those factors that contribute to the maintenance of the ecosystem including structural and functional assets
- site integrity is maintained when all ecological functions and site structure needed for maintenance of target features are present and well-functioning **within the site**

b) coherence of N2K

- it means that the network comprises all the sites which, according to the criteria in the Directives, *should be included* in it

Please remember that

- **integrity** refers to individual **sites**
- **coherence** refers to the whole Natura 2000 **network**

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Why is this important?

Because of *different requirements* of Art. 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

Now back to Natura 2000...

At the end of preparatory process (= before accession!), each EU MS should have

completed, i.e., *coherent* Natura 2000 network at its territory

How many obligations refer to N2K?

Only 3:

- two proactive
- one reactive

they all described in Art. 6 HabDir:

Proactive obligations

- establishing conservation measures and applying them within all sites (Art. 6(1))
- preventing any deterioration of habitat types and habitats of species, as well as disturbance of species – both *man-caused* and *natural* (Art. 6(2))

Reactive obligation

- ensure that any plan and project likely to affect N2K sites is subject to **appropriate assessment** of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives...

... and this is why we are here - much more about it tomorrow...

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