



# 7<sup>th</sup> European Ramsar Meeting

27–30 September 2011  
Trnava - Slovak Republic  
Holiday Inn

## Programme and Annotated Agenda



### Aim

The Meeting addresses major themes that influence the ways to manage and use water-related ecosystems during the coming years. It aims to identify areas of successful cooperation between different sectors of society, administration and private business. National Ramsar Convention focal points from the Ministries, experts for scientific and technical matters (STRP) and those in charge of national programmes for communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA), NGO representatives and sustainable development experts will – together – look at progress made with the implementation of the wetland convention, exchange their experiences, and update newcomers about environmental challenges in the water sector, and how best to make use in the long term of ecosystem services provided by wetlands.

### 27 September: *Why Are Wetlands Relevant?*

The day's programme focuses on aspects that make wetland ecosystems relevant for those who are not yet necessarily directly involved in wetland management, and who are probably neither convinced about the necessity to invest in wetland ecosystems? Our capacity to act for wetlands is limited by time constraints and restricted resources. Thus, we need to identify areas of common interest and synergies to be developed with existing and new partners; opportunities to work together for water-related ecosystems with farmers, foresters, fishermen, field sports, navigation people, energy experts, and others.

### 28 & 29 September: *Ramsar Site Days - Symposium and On-site Visit*

The first day focuses on real-scale laboratories to develop innovative and sustainable approaches for environmental management. A forum to share experiences and lessons learnt with fellow practitioners and with experts of other international instruments. The second day provides an opportunity to experience *in situ* some of the issues discussed at the first Trilateral Ramsar Site, shared by the Slovak, Czech and Austrian Republics, in the floodplain of the Morava-Dyje-Danube confluence.

### 30 September: *Fit for the Future?*

A focus on practical indicators to show if we cope well with the increasing environmental challenges, if our approaches and methods are still best adapted to find effective solutions, and if we are working sufficiently in synergy with all potential partners who share our interests?

*The Meeting benefits from additional financial support by*



Royal Norwegian Ministry of the Environment



Ministry of the Environment  
of the Czech Republic

# Why Are Wetlands Relevant ?

Tuesday • 27 September 2011

08h00 Registration

**09h00 Welcome and Opening Session**

*Vladimír Butko* - Mayor of Trnava

*József Nagy* - Minister of the Environment, Slovak Republic

*Nick Davidson* - Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Convention

**09h30 Media Conference and Coffee Break**

session 2 chairing: *Tobias Salathé*

rapporteur: *Elif Okumus*

**10h00 Wetland management in Slovakia and the Carpathian Wetland Initiative**

Presentation of wetland management policies in Slovakia, its 14 Ramsar Sites and the development of regional cooperation for wetland ecosystems and their services in the Carpathians.

*Ján Kadlecík & Tereza Thompson* - State Nature Conservancy, Slovak Republic

**10h30 The International Water Assessment Centre works for wetland ecosystems**

IWAC is a collaborative centre to facilitate the implementation of the UNECE Water Convention, mainly in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in a transboundary context. Several of its projects deal with the integration of water and land management practices, as well as the management of water-related ecosystems.

*Boris Minárik* - International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC)

**10h50 Assessing transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters continent-wide**

The UNECE Water Convention launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" on 21 September 2011. Ramsar focal points contributed information on the services of a selected number of transboundary wetland ecosystems in the major Pan-European river basins. A promising start for future cooperation between the water management and ecosystem sectors.

*Annukka Lipponen* - UNECE Water Convention Secretariat

**11h10 From Stockholm to Trnava – progress with Ramsar implementation in Europe**

Setting the scene for the work during the days to come. Revisiting earlier recommendations from the 6<sup>th</sup> European Meeting and their implementation. Presenting major issues to be negotiated during Ramsar COP11 in Bucharest (18-26 June 2012) and addressing governance issues for the Convention during the period 2012-2015 and beyond—refer to the draft documents available for the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Standing Committee at [ramsar.org](http://ramsar.org) > [Useful links](#) > [SC43 documents](#).

Including an update on the proposals for administrative reform ([SC43-13](#)) and for the governance responsibilities and composition of the Standing Committee for the period 2012-2015 ([SC43-17](#)). With an outlook on the next 40 years of the Convention ([SC43-31](#)). Followed by questions and answers and discussion.

*Tobias Salathé* - Ramsar Secretariat

**11h50 An overview of the technical decisions to be made by Ramsar COP11**

Brief presentation of the topics of the technical draft resolutions (other than those to be focused on later during the Meeting) presented for negotiation and adoption to the Parties during COP11. Focusing on these documents [SC43-16](#), [SC43-20 to 23](#) and [SC43-25](#), [SC-26](#), [SC-28](#), [SC-32](#), including remarks on future work in synergy with other environmental MEAs and an outline for the expected outputs from IPBES. Followed by questions, answers and discussion.

*Nick Davidson* - Ramsar Secretariat

12h30 **Buffet lunch**

13h30 **Poster session**

The authors of posters and exhibits will be available for explanations and exchanges with the participants in front of their posters and stands.

session 3 moderating: *Andy Farmer*

rapporteur: *Nick Davidson*

14h30 **Why wetland conservation is politically relevant**

The afternoon sessions focus on valuation, economics and payment for wetland ecosystem services—including cultural aspects, on how EU policies and financial instruments can help to this end, and on ecosystem management as a response to climate change, related risks and increasing urbanization. After an introduction by the moderator, a number of experts will briefly address interrelated key issues, prior to a more in-depth discussion of the issues in smaller groups and a final exchange of views in plenary.

**Valuing and taking into account the economics of wetland ecosystem services**

Introducing the session, its programme and aims, providing an update on progress with the TEEB report (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) for water and wetlands.

*Andy Farmer* - Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

14h50 **Successful use of EU financial instruments to support wetland ecosystem services**

Summarizing how Ramsar Parties have made, and can continue to make best use of different European Union policy and financial instruments for wetland restoration and wise use projects.

*Gerhard Schwach* - Austrian Federal Ministry of the Environment

15h05 **Wetland management and restoration as part of flood mitigation strategies**

Presenting a number of project case studies to use clever wetland management to create synergies between flood mitigation and biodiversity restoration plans through comprehensive accounting for ecosystem services.

*David Pithart* - STRP focal point, Daphne Institute of Applied Ecology

15h20 **Wetland services in urban environments**

An update on the global trend of urbanization, on the specific roles wetland ecosystems play in urbanized environments and on the advantages to work closely with local governments, including Ramsar's cooperation at global level with UN-HABITAT and ICLEI, referring to [SC43-24](#).

*Robert McInnes*, STRP representative of the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)

15h40 **Cultural aspects of wetlands: values and services**

The work of the Ramsar Convention in promoting the effective use of cultural values and services in wetlands, including the new book on 'Culture and wetlands in the Mediterranean: an evolving story' focusing on the implementation of the respective Ramsar Guidance.

*Thymio Papayannis* – Coordinator Ramsar Culture Working Group / Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (Med-INA)

16h00 **Coffee Break**

session 4 moderating: *Andy Farmer*

rapporteur: *Nick Davidson*

16h30 Discussion of specific issues addressed in the introductory presentations in three parallel groups facilitated by *Andy Farmer*, *Robert McInnes* and *Thymio Papayannis*

17h20 Short reports by the three groups back to plenary and final discussion

17h55 Conclusions by the moderator

# Ramsar Site Days

Wednesday • 28 September 2011

08h00 registration

session 5 moderating: *Tobias Salathé*

rapporteur: *Robert McInnes*

**09h00 Ramsar Sites – laboratories for sustainable development**

Specific values of Ramsar Sites, how to use them as a planning tool for water catchment planning needs, and how to communicate about this in public. Introducing synergies to be created with other global networks of protected areas, and outlining ways of networking and cooperation at national scale and in cooperation with public and private partners.

introduced by *Tobias Salathé*

**09h05 Synergies between Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Properties and Biosphere Reserves**

Providing an overview of sites with multiple designations and the advantages of this. Summarizing ongoing cooperation and exchanges and future possibilities between the only three global networks of protected areas.

*Marc Patry* - UNESCO World Heritage Centre

**09h20 Towards a five-party Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar Site along the Mura-Drava-Danube rivers**

Building on the existing protected areas and networks, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia endeavour to conserve and restore natural and semi-natural habitats along the riverine ecosystem in the cross-border area.

*András Schmidt* - Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development & *Arno Mohl* - WWF Austria

**09h35 The French national wetland action plan as an example for trans-sectoral cooperation**

A new model of cooperation at national level between different Ministries, socio-professional sectors, experts, NGOs and different stakeholders of the civil society is operating in France. Some of its key points are presented, such as the ecosystem services of the Cotentin and Bessin marshes, wetland management agreements with the agricultural sector, the preparation of a national strategy on Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness and the perspective of an association of French Ramsar Sites.

*Emmanuel Thiry* - Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing (MEDDTL)

**09h50 Contributions by a timber company to wetland conservation and restoration**

Explaining the nature-space-management approach of the Austrian Federal Forests Ltd., illustrating the “Forests for Water and Wetlands” approach of the UN International Year of the Forests 2011, and indicating how the programme can be transferred to situations in other countries. Including an additional outlook on the company’s programme on peatlands and climate change.

*Gerald Plattner* - Austrian Federal Forests Ltd. (ÖBf)

10h05 Panel discussion among the presenters, followed by a general discussion with the audience

**10h30 Coffee break**

- 11h00 Ramsar Sites – how to care for the jewels in the crown**  
Introduction by *Tobias Salathé* - Ramsar Secretariat
- 11h05 **Using Ramsar tools for site monitoring and management**  
Illustration about practical outcomes for improved wetland management through the use of Ramsar tools such as Advisory Missions, Montreux Record listing, and Article 3.2 reporting, making reference to [SC43-29](#) and providing an overview on available updated Ramsar Site information and possible gaps. Discussion and feedback from the audience.  
*Kati Wenzel* - Ramsar Secretariat
- 11h20 **Developing the knowledge-base of the Ramsar Site network**  
Examples from the Black Sea region how the Global Wetland Observation System and the Critical Site network tool can enhance the current Ramsar Site Information System as a management, monitoring and early warning tool for site managers and administrative authorities. Discussion and feedback from the audience.  
*Vasily Kostushyn* - Wetlands International
- 11h35 **Establishment of Ramsar Sites in the Carpathian region**  
Presentation on recent work in the Ukrainian Carpathian region, analysis of stakeholders involvement and cooperation with government. Data on wetlands degradation will be presented as well as latest developments for the Carpathian Wetland Initiative.  
*Bohdan Prots* - WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme / Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
- 11h50 **Streamlining procedures for designating and updating Ramsar Sites**  
Proposed revisions of the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) and Strategic Framework and guidelines for Ramsar Site designation, and demonstration of planned on-line submission system, followed by a question and answer session and a hands-on workshop after lunch.  
*David Stroud* - STRP expert for Ramsar Sites

### 12h30 Buffet lunch

- 13h30 Hands-on workshop to get acquainted with the planned new on-line Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) submission system for Parties**  
Visit <http://ris-2012.wikispaces.com> beforehand to prepare yourself, bring your laptop if you wish to interact with the on-line demonstration.  
lead by *David Stroud* with support from *Robert McInnes* and *Nick Davidson*

- 14h30 Managing Transboundary Ramsar Sites**  
A forum for managers of Transboundary Ramsar Sites. They each briefly address a few key operational points and then exchange their experiences, and discuss the best ways forward to manage shared watersheds and protected areas.
- Recent developments of Transboundary Ramsar Sites (TRS) and first experiences**  
addressed through a panel discussion facilitated by *Tobias Salathé*:
- Morava-Dyie-Danube confluence - *Libuse Vlasáková*
  - Pasvik boreal forest watershed - *Jan-Petter Huberth-Hansen*
  - Upper Rhine floodplain - *Christian Blum*
  - Northern Livonia bogs - *Juris Jatnieks*
  - Transboundary coastal Ramsar Sites - *Karin Dubsky*
  - Prespa lakes - *Aleksandar Ivanovski*
- Questions from and discussion with the audience.

**16h00 Coffee break**

session 8 moderating: *Goran Gucić*

rapporteur: *Gerhard Schwach*

- 16h30 Towards a strategy for the Danube basin and its Ramsar Sites**  
Addressing specific issues of regional development, water management planning at basin level and local development with inputs from key Danube partners. Introduction by the moderator from the perspective of a Ramsar Site manager in the Sava sub-basin.  
*Goran Gucić* - Lonjsko Polje Nature Park, Croatia
- 16h40 **An integrated approach to sustainable development – connecting people, ideas and needs**  
Introducing the key ideas and concepts of the new European Union Danube macro-region strategy and its relations with environmental policies  
*Olivier Baudelet* - European Commission (DG REGIO)
- 17h00 **What does an integrated Danube river basin management plan imply for the environment**  
Illustrating the Danube Commission's work of relevance for wetland ecosystems and migratory species, including the declaration on navigation.  
*Raimund Mair* - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)
- 17h20 **Danube Parks – a network of Ramsar Site managers inside a shared watershed**  
Presenting the cooperation in the Danube river network of protected areas and the synergies to be achieved with the Ramsar Convention  
*Carl Manzano* - Danube Parks network of protected areas
- 17h40 **Successes and challenges for the maintenance and restoration of Danube basin wetlands**  
Wetland conservation and restoration is a major priority within important international policy commitments. Significant results were achieved on the Lower Danube and Mura-Drava-Danube floodplains. But a number of growing challenges remain, stemming from new navigation and hydropower development plans.  
*Orieta Hulea*, WWF-International Danube-Carpathian Programme
- 18h00 **Introduction to the Trilateral Ramsar Site Morava-Dyje-Danube confluence**  
A presentation to prepare the Meeting participants for the next day's on-site visit, to brief them about their expected interactions, exchanges with local guides and contributions.  
*Miroslava Plassmann* - Daphne Institute of Applied Ecology
- 20h00 **Evening reception to celebrate Ramsar's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary**  
by invitation from the Slovak Ministry of the Environment  
in the Holiday Inn  
according to a specific programme



**Thursday • 29 September 2011**

- 08h00** Meeting in the lobby of the Holiday Inn for the bus departure to the  
**on-site study tour to the Trilateral Ramsar Site Floodplain of the Morava-Dyje-Danube confluence**  
(for the detailed itinerary cf. the specific programme)
- evening* **Reception to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2001-2011) of the Trilateral Ramsar Site**  
dinner at the village of Skalica with folkloristic presentations  
by invitation from the Slovak Ministry of the Environment
- c.23h00* buses arrive back in Trnava

# Fit for the Future ?

Friday • **30 September 2011**

08h00 registration

session 9 chairing: *Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen*

rapporteur: *Sandra Hails*

**09h00 Working at regional level to be more effective – an opportunity or wishful thinking?**

**Ramsar Convention guidelines for regional cooperation**

After a brief recollection of the guidelines adopted at COP10, a panel discussion focuses on lessons learnt and remaining challenges for four regional initiatives in Europe facilitated by *Tobias Salathé*

- Mediterranean basin (MedWet) - *Nejib Benessaiah*
- Nordic-Baltic region (NorBalWet) - *Tiina Nikkonen*
- Black and Azov Sea coastal area (BlackSeaWet) - *Grigore Baboianu*
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) - *Tereza Thompson*

09h45 **Fields of cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and the CWI**

*Harald Egerer* - Secretary Carpathian Convention

10h00 Discussion of specific aspects in three parallel groups

facilitated by *Nejib Benessaiah, Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen* and *Ján Kadlecík*

**10h30 Coffee break**

session 10 chairing: *Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen*

rapporteur: *Sandra Hails*

**11h00** Reporting back by the three groups, general discussion and conclusions in view of the future work through regional cooperation (referring to document [SC43-15](#)).

chairing: *Sandra Hails*

rapporteur: *Tobias Salathé*

**11h30 Issues and priorities for the future scientific and technical work of the Convention**

The session will provide the opportunity to receive feedback from Parties on what they perceive to be the most pressing issues Ramsar's STRP should be concentrating its work on during the coming years. This is also an opportunity for Parties to indicate their willingness to support work on specific themes or tasks, e.g. through hosting specific workshops, supporting necessary studies or leading particular processes.

Introduction to options for enhancing future scientific and technical implementation support, including proposed adjustments to the *modus operandi* of the STRP ([SC43-18](#)) and future work and priorities for the STRP 2013-2015 ([SC43-19](#)).

*Nick Davidson* - Ramsar Secretariat

12h00 Discussion of the STRP priorities and work plan 2013-2015 in three parallel groups

facilitated by *Robert McInnes, David Stroud, Sandra Hails*

**12h30 Buffet lunch**

session 11 chairing: *Sandra Hails*

rapporteur: *Tobias Salathé*

**14h30** Reporting back by the three groups, discussion and conclusions

chairing: *Tiina Nikkonen*

rapporteur: *Kati Wenzel*

15h00 **How is the Ramsar Convention working in my country?**

A brief introduction on the roles of National Focal Points (for administration, CEPA & STRP) in-country. Why nominate them? How do we define their key roles at the national level? Is there an effective mechanism for them to work together (such as a National Ramsar Committee, cf. the [latest analysis](#)) What about the role of the IOPs and other actors – how do they contribute to our Ramsar implementation? What are the strengths and weaknesses in my country in terms of coordinating key implementers?

*Sandra Hails* - Ramsar Secretariat

Discussion of specific questions, sharing our views and experiences in three parallel groups facilitated by *Sandra Hails, Nick Davidson, Tobias Salathé*

16h00 **Coffee break**

session 12 chairing: *Tiina Nikkonen*

rapporteur: *Kati Wenzel*

16h30 Reporting back by the three groups and conclusions in view of future work at national level and in particular on CEPA issues ([SC43-10](#)).

moderating: *Tobias Salathé*

rapporteur: *Nick Davidson*

17h00 **Wetland wilderness – great tourist destinations**

Presentation of the tourism protocol and tourist concept in preparation under the Carpathian Convention and its importance for the Carpathian Wetland Initiative. Followed by a moderated discussion and feedback in view of the global Ramsar focus 2012 on tourism and recreation and its impact on wetlands ([SC43-27](#)).

*Michael Meyer* - UN World Tourism Organisation Consulting Unit

17h15 **Wetland tourism: a great experience**

Overview of the issues to be covered by the global World Wetlands Day 2012 campaign and the COP11 theme, and the communication products in preparation by the Secretariat. Followed by questions and answers and discussion.

*Sandra Hails* - Ramsar Secretariat

17h30 **Outlook from Trnava to Bucharest: priorities for the months to come**

General discussion on urgent issues, followed by three visions of the conclusions to be taken home from the 7<sup>th</sup> European Ramsar Meeting, and on priorities to prepare ourselves for Ramsar COP11 in Bucharest in June 2012.

*Gordana Beltram* (Slovenia), *Emmanuel Thiry* (France), *Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen* (Norway)

17h55 **Closing of the Meeting and Farewell**

*Rastislav Rybanic* - Director General, Nature Conservation and Landscape Management, Slovak Ministry of the Environment