

**6<sup>th</sup> European Ramsar Meeting, Stockholm - Sweden**

**Sunday, 4 May 2008 - Parallel Working Groups, 11:00 – 13:00**

**Workshop N. 3: focusing on lakes**

Are lakes under-represented wetland types in the Convention?

How can the values of lakes be better conveyed to the riparian communities?

Chair: *Udo GATTENLOEHNER*, Living Lakes, Global Nature Fund

**Introduction:**

Wetlands are important for mankind for many reasons. These diverse ecosystems provide fish and reeds, help prevent floods and reduce levels of pollutants. However, they are also fragile and vulnerable habitats and among the most threatened ecosystems in the world. Across the planet they have been extinguished at an alarming pace due to industrial processes and intensive agricultural practice. And particularly in the intensively developed Europe the loss of these vital water bodies is very acute.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two thirds of European wetlands and shallow lakes have been lost due to engineering construction works, draining and conversion to arable land, exploitation of groundwater and dumping of refuse. Furthermore, many have been degraded through nutrient enrichment, the main sources being sewage effluents and agricultural fertilisers. These developments have severely threatened the important ecological functions of water bodies and are jeopardising the use of water resources by man. Preservation is cheaper than restoration. In order to protect wetlands a legal framework as well as a close collaboration with the riparian communities is required.

*What are appropriate measure to make people cherish the value of their lake wetlands? This workshop's aims at identifying successful approaches and pilot projects as well as sharing experiences.*