

TEWN Declaration of Partners

Date: 03.04.09

New EU member states, mainly in Central and South Eastern Europe, still host valuable non-fragmented natural habitats. Avoidance and mitigation of conflicts between new transport infrastructure and existing ecological corridors for wildlife is essential. In addition, preservation of landscape connectivity is of great importance.

For all species of animals unlimited possibilities of movement throughout their potential range are fundamental to maintain viable populations. Against the background of development of transport infrastructure in Europe, this can only be secured by establishing and protecting a network of ecological corridors.

Wide ranging mammals (large carnivores and ungulates) form an important part of European fauna communities and biodiversity. Due to their spatial requirements, they occur in low densities which makes them very susceptible to mortality on roads, as well as to fragmentation of habitats and disruption of their migration routes. Thus, they may serve as umbrella species in order to ensure connectivity of important habitats on a large spatial scale.

Therefore, the Transeuropean Wildlife Network (TEWN) Project Team, consisting of representatives from various non-governmental organisations and research institutions from Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania, call for the implementation of the following mitigation measures when constructing new and/or enlarging/upgrading existing transport infrastructure:

- Decisions on routes of transportation network should be based on the extensive knowledge on natural values of areas to be crossed and suitable studies allowing to choose the best variant for nature.
- Mitigation of habitat fragmentation should be implemented as a key requirement of national transport infrastructure planning schemes
- Construction of a new transportation route or upgrading of an old one should not lead to the fragmentation of the most valuable natural areas.
- Disconnecting populations of rare and endangered animal species, especially those having great spatial requirements such as large carnivores, must be avoided.
- If a transportation route has to cross an ecologically valuable habitat, the route should be chosen so as to minimize fragmentation and mortality factors. Whenever an ecologically valuable habitat is being fragmented, the length of the road/railway crossing the habitat should be limited, to appropriately place animal passages.
- On all transportation routes which are preventing animals from crossing, wildlife crossing structures should be constructed
- On all transportation routes on which traffic volume causes a high rate of collision with animals should be fenced

The most important principle to be followed when planning new traffic routes is avoiding conflicts with the natural environment from the outset. All efforts should be made in order to reduce the negative influences of traffic routes on environment by applying appropriate mitigation measures. These should be aimed at preserving or, if

necessary, restoring connectivity between the fragments of environment separated by a traffic route as well as reducing animal mortality on the road/railway section.

Constructing a passage at the time when a traffic route is being built is significantly cheaper than constructing it later on. Therefore, all measures suggested above require close cooperation of institutions involved in infrastructure planning as well as nature conservation experts.

We believe and expect that with such a policy it will be possible to better avoid or significantly reduce the threat of habitat connectivity loss due to transport infrastructure development within Europe. It should result in more efficient protection of European biodiversity in general.

In addition, fulfilling of the above mentioned will allow new EU member states as well as those aiming at a membership of EU to better meet national environmental policy objectives as well as to improve implementation of EU regulations.

euroNATUR

EuroNatur Foundation (D)



**FRANKFURT
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**
GRZIMEK'S HELP FOR THREATENED WILDLIFE



Mammal Research Institute
Polish Academy of Sciences
Białowieża

Mammal Research Institute (PL)



Association for Nature "WILK"
(PL)



Balkani Wildlife Society (BG)



Association for Bird and Nature Protection Milvus
Group (RO)



Carpathian Wildlife Society (SK)



Veterinary Faculty
University of Zagreb (HR)



Institute for Landscape Management
Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg (D)