

Minimising the negative impacts of power lines on birds

29 May 2019, Ostrava, Czech Republic

REPORT

Key outcomes:

- Mortality of birds caused by power lines is still an underestimated, yet significant issue – not only in terms of nature conservation (where the conservation efforts in case of some bird species are undermined by the mortality caused by collisions or electrocutions), but also for the electricity distribution companies that seek to guarantee reliable energy supply to their customers.
- The issue is being addressed in most of the countries, however the extent of activities differs across the region and although there are many examples of both good practice as well as of unfit solutions, experience is usually not shared.
- Main needs identified in order to tackle the issue:
 - awareness raising (at all levels, including nature conservation)
 - legal requirement to address the issue on national level
 - data from monitoring
 - methodological support
 - increased cooperation among relevant sectors
 - sharing of information and experience / avoiding the development of solutions that have already been tested in other countries

Full presentations are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1076N4bv1tAWQCxIXpMBoPX7SABBF76GA?usp=sharing>

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Short summary of presentations:

- **EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 2 – Sustainable Energy**
(*Klára Fedorucová, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic*)

Ms. Fedorucová introduced the Priority Area 2 of EUSDR, its agenda and activities. She mentioned some of the recent events, such as the SME seminar (Melk) or a conference on tourism and energy synergies (Sofia). PA 2 also commissions studies focusing for example on the topics of Smart Cities or Waste to Energy.

- **Carpathian Convention** (*Tamara Mitrofanenko, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention*)

Ms. Mitrofanenko presented the Carpathian Convention as an important platform for international cooperation and joined initiatives aiming at preserving and sustainably developing the unique region of the Carpathians. She explained the structure and organisation of work within the Convention as well as relevant strategic documents and ongoing projects. She highlighted the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

- **Cooperation between the EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention** (*Eliška Rolfová, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic*)

Following the previous presentations, Ms. Rolfová focused on the cooperation between both platforms, established with the aim to look for synergies, strengthen networks of stakeholders and join efforts. This long-term cooperation proves to be successful in addressing the needs of the Danube/Carpathian region.

- **Introducing the issue and the study on Protecting birds from power lines focusing on countries of Danube/Carpathian region** (*Marek Gális, Raptor Protection of Slovakia*)

As an introduction to the topic of negative impact of powerlines on birds, Ms. Gális presented a study which was commissioned to provide the background for the workshop.

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He explained the main risks of powerlines (collisions, electrocutions, loss of habitat quality), provided an overview of how the issue is being addressed in different countries of the region as well as examples of effective and non-effective solutions.

- **The CMS Energy Task Force and Minimizing the Impact of Powerlines on Migratory Birds** (*Tilman Schneider, Convention on Migratory Species*)

Mr. Schneider presented the Convention on Migratory Species and its TF focusing on avoiding and mitigating negative impacts of energy development on migratory species. Inter alia, this multi-stakeholder platform provides guidance and tools at the international and national level, showcases flagship projects, assesses progress or aims to reduce knowledge gaps.

- **Danube Free Sky Initiative** (*Georg Frank, DANUBEPARKS*)

Mr. Frank pointed out large rivers as highly critical areas in terms of collisions and described the activities of the Danube Protected Areas' initiative for bird conservation at powerlines along the Danube River, such as the Danube-wide inventory of power lines, pilot actions or policy work. He highlighted the need to raise awareness on the issue among all relevant actors and to link the policy and expert level.

- **LIFE ENERGY - Energy in the land - power lines and conservation of priority bird species in Natura 2000 sites** (*Marek Gális, Raptor Protection of Slovakia*)

Main goals of the project were to develop systematic approach on 22 kV and 110 kV power lines in 13 SPAs in Slovakia and a special methodology which would enable identification of most dangerous parts of power lines. As one of the results, some 77 km of crucial parts of power lines were evaluated for the whole country and diverters were installed there.

- **Avoiding electrocution of birds on medium-voltage power lines in Western Romania** (*Tamas Papp, Milvus Group*)

Mr. Papp presented the history of bird and power line interactions in Romania including relevant project cooperation, with special focus on project "Conservation of the European

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Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) in the Carpathian Basin”. This project significantly helped to improve the quality of the isolation work in Romania thanks to successful cooperation between an electricity company and a nature conservation association and also to know-how transfer from another country (Hungary).

- **Monitoring bird mortality on power lines in the Czech Republic and proposed solutions for protection of birds** (*Václav Hlaváč, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic*)

Mr. Hlaváč described the history of tackling the mortality of birds on power lines in the Czech Republic. One of the main achievements was an extensive monitoring project aiming at verification of mortality on particular constructions, development of new safe solutions and preparing guidelines and catalogue of suitable solutions.

- **Bird protection in E.ON distribution grid** (*Jan Volek, E.ON CZ*)

As explained by Mr. Volek, the obligation to implement technical measures for the protection of birds is set out in Czech Energy Law. National working group was established and methodological guidelines developed. Distribution system operators have committed to use only products approved by the Nature Conservation Agency. E.ON strategy to 2040 is to install only safe consoles / put the lines under the ground.

- **Minimizing the negative impacts** (*Martón Bálint, Megawatt Engineering Ltd.*)

Presentation of Mr. Bálint focused on solutions for bird protection resulting from long-term research and development carried out in cooperation of electrical utility companies and bird protection associations in Hungary. Complete bird protection system (including bird friendly cross-arms, plastic covers, wing spacers or bird rests) proved to be successful in Hungary and is also exported to other European countries.

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- **LIFE BIRDS on POWER LINES** (*Mariya Georgieva, Krum Gledzharski, CEZ Distribution Bulgaria*)

Ms. Georgieva and Mr. Gledzharski provided information on CEZ Distribution Bulgaria and its biodiversity conservation policy. Through the LIFE project, CEZ intends to develop several bird protection measures (including insulation caps and extensions, wing spacers, perches, diverters or nest platforms) in order to reduce the mortality of birds as well as to provide more reliable power supply.

- **Policy Paper Protecting birds from power lines focusing on countries of Danube/Carpathian region** (*Marek Gális, Raptor Protection of Slovakia*)

As a summary and an introduction to final discussion, Mr. Gális presented a policy paper based on the study which was elaborated for the workshop. Recommendations and reflections are summarised as key outcomes above.

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