Biogeographic seminars

2015-04-22

How to evaluate the completeness of the Natura 2000 network during the biogeographical seminars

In accordance with the rules governing the functioning of Natura 2000 network in all EU Member States, the European Commission approves the network cohesion on the basis of results of biogeographical seminars. Such a bilateral seminar for two biogeographical regions covering alpine and continental territories of Poland was held in Warsaw at the end of March 2010. However, in November 2009, an international Biogeographical seminar for the Baltic Sea area was held in Sopot, assessing the completeness of the Natura 2000 network for this water body.

The seminars ware attended by representatives of the European Commission, General Directorate for Environmental Protection, scientists representing both the Commission and Member States as well as representatives of NGOs and other institutions interested in results of discussion (ex. Directorate General of State Forests).

The sufficiency assessment was conducted for habitats listed in Appendix I to the Habitats Directive as well as animal and plant species listed in Appendix II, that can be found on the territory of Poland. In other words, the network was analysed in terms of representativity, habitat after habitat and species after species in both biogeographical regions. The meetings are led by the European Commision, which is supported by by a scientific unit - the European Topic Centre.

During the seminar, the Commission emphasised on numerous occasions that it is satisfied with Polish efforts in finalising the realisation of "habitat part" of Natura 2000 network and with the amount of work undertaken in recent years.
Despite the fact that in the assessment of the General Directorate for Environmental Protection the process of forming the complete Natura 2000 network in Poland is considered completed, the European Commission pointed that sites for several species and natural habitats must be added to the list of Polish Natura 2000 sites. In the alpine biogeographical region there is the necessity of designating one new site and enlarging the site already presented to the EC - PLH120012 Na Policy.

The continental region has to be complemented with new sites for 8 plant species, 14 animal species and 18 types of natural habitats. Despite the necessity of adding the aforementioned items to the network, it has been agreed following negotiations to designate only 20 new sites and enlarge 12 sites already sent to the EC in the previous years.

Moreover, during the meeting it was agreed that it is necessary to complete the documentation of existing sites, i.e., standard data forms, with confirmed information gathered by means of monitoring and scientific research.

Another decision taken during the seminar concerns the necessity of conducting additional research in order to check or confirm the existence of 32 natural habitats or plant and animal species on the territories either included in or excluded from the Natura 2000 network (in the case of some species it has to be confirmed that they do not exist in Poland, became extinct, migrate to Poland or if their former range of existence was not entirely known). It may require designation of additional sites. The results of the seminars are successively implemented by Generale Directoriate for Environmental Protection, among others by conducting research of habitats and species listed in the conclusions.

Furthermore, it was agreed that in the case of sites located in both biogeographical regions, standard data forms have to be completed with the information on their existence in two regions - so far sites were ascribed to the region where their larger part was located.

On the basis of the conclusions of the aforementioned seminars, in the years 2010-2012 an analysis of the newly proposed and amended existing Natura 2000 sites was carried out. The result of the above process was posted in October 2012 to the European Commission in the form of a supplementary list of Natura 2000 sites in Poland, more.