

May 2003, Kyiv
Pan-European Ecological Network
Fact sheet II – History of PEEN

Important dates that contributed to, had an impact on, and led to the establishment of PEEN

The idea of, and need for the establishment of the PEEN is a result of scientific, political, regional, and international approaches to combat the habitat fragmentation of nature and biodiversity in Europe.

From the 1960s until the 1980s scientific studies addressed the negative effects of fragmentation for biodiversity. This scientific knowledge was gradually integrated in land use planning, nature conservation strategies and policy.

The increased attention for the conservation and sustainable management of ecological networks and protected areas was reflected in international instruments, such as the Bonn Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (1979), the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (1979) including the setting up of the Emerald Network, the EU Birds Directive (1979) and the EU Habitats Directive (1992).

However, at a global level as well, instruments were developed that addressed the importance of comprehensive approaches to nature and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, such as the Ramsar Convention (1971), the World Heritage Convention (1972), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1992).

Milestone dates that led to PEEN:

- 1967 - Arthur & Wilson theory of island geography gained scientific interest.
- 1969 - Metapopulation theory was introduced.
- 1974 - Rodoman's theory of polarized landscapes inspired several government and research institutes to initiate the development of ecological networks.
- 1970s - First ecological networks developed in Lithuania and Estonia.
- 1979 - The Bonn Convention on Migratory Species was endorsed.
- 1979 - The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats was opened for signature, providing a Pan-European approach to habitat and species protection. Initiated and developed by the Council of Europe the principal aim of the Convention is to protect flora and fauna and their habitats, and to promote international co-operation amongst the contracting parties in their conservation efforts, with particular emphasis on the protection of endangered and vulnerable species and their habitats, particularly migratory species. The Convention includes four annexes, listing threatened species.
- 1979 - The EU Birds Directive was put into effect.
- 1980 - The Bern Convention came into force.
- 1990 - The European Conservation Strategy as prepared by the Council of Europe was endorsed.
- 1991 - The first Ministerial Conference "Environment of Europe" (Dobruška, Czech Republic) addressed the state of the environment in Europe and initiated a dialogue on the nature and threats in Europe.
- 1992 - The EU Habitats Directive was put into effect. Article 3 of this Directive states: "A coherent European Ecological Network shall be set up under the title Natura 2000".
- 1993 - Lucerne (Switzerland) Ministerial Conference, the second meeting of the "Environment for Europe" process.

- 1993 - A Pan-European Strategy was proposed in the Maastricht Conference's Declaration "Conserving Europe's Natural Heritage" that builds on the Bern Convention, the European Conservation Strategy, the Dobris and Lucerne Ministerial Conferences, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other existing initiatives and programmes.
- 1994 - The Council of Europe together with ECNC and in cooperation with other national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations took the initiative to develop the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, as the European response to support the implementation of the CBD. One of its themes is the Establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network.
- 1994 - The Monaco Declaration under the aegis of the Bern Convention and Council of Europe recommends conducting required research for the identification and understanding of the components of biological diversity, and by this, the ecological networks.
- 1995 - The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy was endorsed at the third "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Sofia (Bulgaria), involving 55 countries to date and all international governmental organizations and NGOs involved in nature conservation, biodiversity and environment protection in Europe. Following this decision a Council and Bureau of PEBLDS were established, which created an intergovernmental expert committee to oversee the establishment of PEEN; the Council of Europe and ECNC were requested to coordinate the PEBLDS action on PEEN.
- 1998 - The Green Backbone of Central And Eastern Europe International Conference supported the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network in Central and Eastern Europe, Cracow (Poland).
- 1998 - At the fourth "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference, Aarhus (Denmark) the European governments welcomed the progress made in the establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network in a declaration.
- 2000 - One of the main objectives of the First Intergovernmental Conference "Biodiversity in Europe" in Riga (Latvia) was to improve and enhance regional cooperation and implementation of the CBD in Europe, through existing international frameworks and instruments, namely the PEBLDS, the EC Biodiversity Strategy and other relevant biodiversity-related strategies.
- 2001 In the European Commission's (EC) Action Plan for Natural Resources under the EC Biodiversity Strategy, the European Community underlined the need to increase connectivity between Natura 2000 sites.
- 2002 - The second Intergovernmental Conference "Biodiversity in Europe" in Budapest (Hungary) highlighted the need for integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as a corner stone for sustainable development and into all relevant economic, financial and land-use policies and sectors in Europe and world wide.
- 2002 - At the 6th Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity in The Hague, The Netherlands, it was agreed to have protected areas as the central theme of the 7th Conference of the Parties.
- 2002 - The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (South-Africa) confirmed the support for the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and decided to promote ecological networks in all regions of the world. This reinforced the thinking about a global ecological network.
- 2003 - At the Fifth "Environment for Europe" Conference in Kyiv (Ukraine) a Ministerial Resolution on Biodiversity includes specific targets and deadlines for the establishment of PEEN, and also includes a Statement on PEEN.
- 2002 -The Vth World Parks Congress of IUCN (September 2003, Durban, South-Africa) addresses the issue of "Benefits Beyond Boundaries" in protected area policies and management.