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Humanity on the Move, Workshop, March 2017



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HUMANITY ON THE MOVE

20-22 March 2017, Neusiedler See NP, Austria

Summary report and input for the project outline



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Introduction

Protected areas* (PAs; in the following also named “parks”) are considered as one of the most important tools for conservation of biodiversity, but at the same time they provide essential social and economic benefits for societies. Ecosystem services, like clean water and air, protection against flooding or erosion, climate change mitigation, but also direct economic benefits, like incomes and jobs generated by tourism and spiritual values like recreation potential or preservation of the cultural heritage are becoming more and more important in securing favourable ecological and socio-economic conditions for humanity.

“A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

*IUCN definition of the Protected Area; Dudley, 2008

Protected areas have an important role to play in reconnecting people with nature, fostering a sense of national identity and engendering physical, mental and spiritual welfare.

There is already good evidence that PAs can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and play a key role in supporting human welfare and well-being, protecting water and food security, helping to mitigate climate change and reduce disaster risk. But they also have potential to help with addressing one of the growing social challenges of our times – how to cope with the growing tide of refugees, economic migrants and help new immigrants to assimilate in their new countries.

Currently there are estimated to be 65 million of migrants worldwide. Many were forced to leave their homeland due to wars, natural disasters, drought, political or ethnic pressures, overpopulation and increasingly environmental degradation. It is expected that the number of migrants might drastically increase due to the effects of climate change and that the number can reach 200 millions of people.

Europe is currently under severe pressure trying to accommodate migrants and people seeking asylum from the war and conflict zones, especially Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, but there are also large numbers of migrants attempting to escape poverty from other regions, such as Africa, Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Many of these migrants are hoping for a better life in Germany, Austria, Italy, Scandinavian countries and in other EU countries.

Persecution, conflict and poverty forced over 1 million people to flee to Europe in 2015. Many came seeking safety for themselves and their families, risking their lives and facing a treacherous journey. Half of those crossing the Mediterranean in 2015 were Syrians escaping the war at home.

Source: UNHCR

Many other countries are also attempting to cope with the large numbers of migrants travelling through their territories (Turkey, Balkan countries...). It is expected that the migrant’s crisis will continue for some years and there are some predictions that around 8 million of »newcomers« could come to Europe in the next period.

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Europe is a final destination for millions of migrants, who are forced to leave their homelands for various reasons. They cross from West Africa to the Spanish Canary Islands, from Morocco to southern Spain, from Libya to Malta and the Italian islands of Sicily and Lampedusa, and from Turkey to the islands of Greece. Many more enter the European Union by land, via Turkey and the Balkans or from Ukraine and Belarus.

People entering Europe irregularly – without passports or visas – do so for a variety of reasons. In some cases, they are fleeing persecution, human rights violations and armed conflict and can, therefore, be considered as refugees who need special protection. More often, they are migrants trying to escape poverty and unemployment.

Source: UNHCR

»New Europeans«, as one could call migrants seeking their new homes in Europe, should be included in special programmes to enable their assimilation and integration into the country's legislative, socio-economic, cultural but also moral and ethical frameworks. Several countries already run effective programmes and initiatives within PAs to give these people experiences in nature and help them to integrate better into their new societies. Austria, for example, can show examples of such cooperation at the local and regional levels and some of them are widely accepted as successful models of integration. Austrian experiences could be used as model for other countries, especially in highlighting the role of PAs in dealing with migrants in transit, as showcased at the World Conservation Congress. There are other well developed models for assimilating new immigrants into society; for example, Canadian parks can serve as a successful model generating new ideas, including PAs as the driving forces for offering new skills and employment opportunities to the immigrants.

It would be an illusion to think that protected areas can play the leading role in the integration programmes and activities for migrants and newcomers to Europe. This is the task which should carefully be planned and overseen by other sectors, especially by social care and integration policies. But protected areas and their staff could assist in this process. Many PAs are valued for their scenic, natural, cultural or recreational values and provide facilities to enable visitation, education, learning and other activities and related services. Often, however, visitation is heaviest during only part of the year, and facilities in parks are under-used at other times. Protected area staff usually comprise skilful people with high educational and interpretation skills who are well-equipped to run dedicated courses. Their skills could be used to help migrants and refugees, coming to PAs at times of otherwise low visitation, if sufficient resources are provided to undertake additional work with the newcomers..

Such an approach would also bring benefits to the environment, nature and especially parks and their management through emphasising the relevance of PAs to different sectors. Working with new immigrants will bring broader social benefits, including enhanced social integration but will also raise the profile of PAs within different governmental sectors and perhaps attract more funding for staff, key infrastructure and equipment in PAs. Communication and collaboration with other sectors, especial social sector and integration policy, as well as with local and regional authorities will be essential.

IUCN WCPA** Europe and its partners would like to develop an initiative to explore possibilities where parks could be of support to migrants in their assimilation and to see if migrants, in return, could contribute to better management and effective conservation of nature in parks. The initiative would involve several European countries, parks, organisations and experts.

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***IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas is a global network of protected area professionals, with more than 2700 members worldwide and almost 600 in Europe. will draw on global experience and best practice through the broader WCPA network and partnerships.*

For the beginning, analyses of the current situation about legislative and administrative environment for utilising protected areas more effectively in the process of integration and assimilation of new immigrants into European societies and identification of potential opportunities and needs of both people and parks are needed. As a first step, a workshop, sponsored by the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, was organised in March 2017 in Illmitz, Austria, to discuss the situation with respect to Protected Areas and “New Europeans”, present some of the existing initiatives and to discuss and agree on the next steps in development this initiative.



The workshop gathered experts from both environmental and social sectors and around 20 participants from different European countries, institutions, organisations and expertise discussed challenges and opportunities and determined key elements for further work.

Workshop presentations are found at

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/0BzECDMSTOGJJWmZuTXRvazFnSHc> as Annex 3 to this report (in the electronic version only) and provide additional information on the workshop contents.

Findings and recommendations from this workshop are synthesised below and provides a basis for development of the project proposal for submission to the donors.

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Spirit of the project

Human migration is a process that has occurred since there were humans.

Migration is intimately tied to political context that can sometimes create constraints.

Protected areas in Europe are very diverse. Many of these areas reflect Europe's rich cultural heritage and long lasting co-existence of man and nature which shaped different cultural landscapes. Also, vast natural areas, often in good ecological condition, are still found in some parts of the continent, mainly in the North, East and South-East. No matter where these areas are, they all need specific management in order to preserve their attributes.

Primary management objectives of every protected area are orientated towards protection of nature and provision of ecosystem services. Benefits of conserved nature, especially intrinsic values of biodiversity, are often difficult to evaluate and measure and thus protected areas attract less attention of public and politicians. Understanding protected area standards, both in the wider society and within the protected area constituencies, is crucial for effective management of these areas. This is especially important in Europe with high population densities and pressures on natural resources and spaces.

The problems European protected areas are confronted can be summarised in the following: their coverage is not adequate, systems of protected areas do not include representative share of ecosystems and do not provide for species and ecosystem services protection, many of these areas are not well managed and they lack political and public support. The common modality for almost every PA in Europe is that the area is underfunded and lacks adequate resources, human, material and financial for effective management. At the site level, some protected areas are visited by too many people and some PAs are the target destination for new investments in the infrastructure and construction or are under pressures of overexploitation of natural resources.

Diverse cultural and social roots of the newcomers to Europe is often demonstrated in different understanding of nature and its resources.

In the assimilation process of the newcomers to their new homelands the differences in cultural and social roots often do not comply with the European understanding of nature and culture and even basic environmental standards (low level of awareness about the environment, cultural differences...).

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One example to illustrate difference in appreciation of the protected area (often National park) can be described in a typical purpose and enjoyment of visitors of the National Park in parts of the European Union and in some countries in the Middle East, North Africa or Eastern Europe; while visitors in »Western Europe« are often coming to protected areas for (passive) recreation (like walking, cycling, learning about nature and enjoy it in its undisturbed forms), in some other parts of the world, use of the national parks for weekend campfires and family gatherings could be seen as the prevailing activity.

Situations, where newcomers might wish to replicate particular behaviour patterns, originating from their homelands to the established system and standards of management and behaviour in the European protected areas could become a cause of conflicts and can be seen by the local population as intrusive.



Typical picnic area »for masses« of visitors. Akamas National Forest Park, Cyprus



Typical visitation pattern of visitors in the Krkonoše National Park, Czech Republic

In addition, large numbers of new citizens could cause major pressures to the environment, so raising environmental awareness of the newcomers at the general level should also be a component or activity included in this new initiative. Some presentations at the workshop illustrated pressures and impacts of the former »immigration waves« in some European countries (see, for example, presentation by Mayerhofer-Sebera, Castillo).

The discussions at the workshop clearly distinguished between the needs of the migrants at the start of their migration routes (in their original homelands), the migration routes and the centres where they congregate before they come to their new destinations in Europe (see, for example, presentation by Kallio). It was concluded that the project should not concentrate at places where the migrants start as the situation there is too »hectic« and has extensive environmental impacts, where protected areas could only be given additional threat due to masses of people, pollution, etc. It would be essential to address the need of preventing such mass exodus of people from their original countries and on their way to the new home countries but this goes beyond the scope of the current project initiative and aims. The migration process, until the migrants reach the integration centres in the European countries, is therefore proposed to be excluded from the current project outline development. However, it was observed that the questions of teaching the country's language, explaining the values of coexistence, basics on the environmental awareness and labour market entries already at the stage of integration centres (where some migrants can stay for a longer period) would facilitate later processes of integration and also understanding of nature and cultural values in the new countries.

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It was also concluded that there are similarities between the different groups of migrants and social marginal groups. There are several initiatives in different European countries, where these social groups are already included in the work of protected areas (see, for example, presentations by: Hasler, Steininger, Schoen, de Waal, Jungmeier, Biendarra, Cicciglione, Mitrofarenko...).

Project target groups

The challenge was to identify the social groups to which the project should be focused. Threats of immigration are similar to threats of overpopulation; the difference is in the magnitude and time.

At the »park« side, questions were raised on whether to address protected area at the system level or at the local or site levels and how to involve local authorities and other partners. The scope of the project when reflecting the »PA sector« should be to support nature conservation in protected areas through social inclusion and valorisation of potential of project target groups.

In defining the role and potential of the target groups in the project in the work and management of protected areas it is essential to consider what are the management objectives of every protected area and what are the key management activities that are undertaken in managed protected areas.

Every protected area has two basic management objectives:

1. Protection of nature and biodiversity

2. Provision of information on the area and enabling visitation and appreciation of nature.

In different protected area categories other objectives can be defined, however they need to be subordinated to the above mentioned main management objectives. Managerial tasks of the authorities, responsible for management of particular protected areas are thus different, but in the following some of the key pillars of management tasks, where the inclusion of migrants and other project target groups could be foreseen, are highlighted:

-maintenance, restoration and protection of the ecological character of the protected areas, its ecosystems, habitats and species and natural assets,

-presentation of the area, provision of information, promotion of the park and raising environmental awareness,

-monitoring of the area, its biological, social, physical, visitation and other parameters,

-maintenance of the visitor's infrastructure and visitor management,

-cooperation with local communities and stakeholders, provision of advice and support in promotion of the local products,

-protection and promotion of cultural heritage, traditions and typical landscapes,

-surveillance of the area and its protection regimes, ranger services

-other activities

Target groups to be addressed in the project include:

At the »people« side of the project, target groups to be addressed should be selected in order to gain more acceptance from local communities and their needs and potentials should be focused to support conservation. The discussion revealed that different sub-groups were identified and these include migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Each of this »on the move« groups have certain particular needs and characteristics that influence their inclusion into the PA work and life. On the other side, it was also concluded that certain differences in the needs of these sub-groups exist: for example, asylum seekers have less access to language courses due to their specific position when entering the countries. But in general, all three sub-groups have a need to improve language skills and have different perceptions of nature and conservation according to their cultural background etc. Several presentations identified similarities in the needs and roles of migrants (at the broader sense) and vulnerable (marginal) social groups so it was proposed that the latter should also be included as the target project group. Example from Austria shows how the work of group of volunteers working with immigrants, parks and local people was spread into themes, covering learning language, mobility / escort, donations, public relationship and recreational activities. All these activities could easily be applied also to the work with migrants in protected areas (see, for example, presentations by: V. de Waal, Schoen, others)

Identification of the project

In the discussions that were addressed to the identification of the project it was commonly agreed that establishing the dialogue between nature conservation and social and intercultural issues provides benefits for all stakeholders. In more details, the project should be identified by positioning on the following:

1. Focus on protected areas and positioning of nature and cultural heritage as important components of the national identity
2. Support of protected areas and nature conservation with inclusion of migrants (»target groups«)
3. Integration of target groups through learning and working in nature (newcomers might also have experiences that could be applied in their new environments, not only technical but also intellectual skills)
4. Building strategic partnerships to raise awareness on nature (social and immigration sectors to become »strong« and pro-active partners)
5. Exchange of experiences (experiences can be shared in both ways; between the parks and between the target groups)
6. Transdisciplinary approach (but the lead should be in nature conservation rather than the social sector)

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Three components in the project development were considered as essential in the initial phases:

a) **pilot initiatives** to be developed and evaluated in different protected areas

Workshop provided several examples on initiatives that are already running in different parks and different European countries (see attached presentations)

b) **toolkit** for development of the process and activities/programmes of interactions between migrants and parks

Examples of activities where migrants are already included in some parks as shown from participants at the workshop include: learning to walk, guided tours, appreciation of nature, photography courses, learning to camp (Canada), interpretation for visitors and teaching languages (in both ways: for migrants and for local people to learn local languages), visitor programmes specially adapted to the needs of migrants etc. More work is needed to identify also »social« components of the programme that would not be in opposition to the main goals of protected areas. »Parks« people do not have sufficient experiences how to work with different social groups, including migrants.

Guidance is needed how to approach funding institutions for implementation of »parks and migrants« programmes as it can not simply be the task of individual protected area authority. The same is true for different international agreements and instruments for protected areas and people (see, for example, presentations by: Biendarra, Mitrofanenko, Skandrani, Dimović, Ciccaglione and others). That is why a coordinated approach and a concerted action is needed.

c) **standards** of conservation in reaching the goals of inclusion of migrants into the parks and their assimilation process

Participants of the workshop concluded that the initiative would not be successful if it just reflects in additional workload for parks (usually park programmes with limited staff and other resources are full already). Saying »be creative« for protected area staff is not a solution when considering Humanity on the move initiative in PAs. Sustainable financing models should be developed in advance as park's budgets are often (or always) too limited. It is important to upgrade the concept from PA level to local community levels where local people should be involved in the process. This means that PA can invite and involve locals to assist in the implementation of the special »migrants and parks« programmes but expectations that PA staff (guides) will take over the responsibility to undertake the activities in the field are unrealistic, considering the large amount of work PA staff is already engaged in their daily work.

Aim of the project

To support nature conservation and protected areas through social integration and the valorization of potentials provided by migrants and other vulnerable groups

Identified needs / gaps

- position natural heritage on the same level as cultural heritage for the national identity
- maintain sustainable land-use / landscape in protected areas and around them
- increase environmental awareness and acceptance of protected areas

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-work force needed (PA staff, seasonal activities and seasonal work pressures in PAs, joint project of social actors and nature conservation, inclusion of migrants in research projects etc.)

-dignity

-language training

-skills training / certification

-positive experiences / personal contact

-employment

-coordination of different initiatives / networking between the institutions and PA authorities

Project in support to...

...PROTECTED AREAS

-hands-on conservation activities, coupled with educational training (involving both migrants and the local population («target groups»))

-additional resources for protected areas (manpower, financial aid from the authorities...)

-engage participants as ambassadors in their social circles

-interdisciplinary research on PAs, potential for citizen-science initiative

-coordination of efforts to ensure finance and resources

-exchange of experiences

-jobs and part-time positions (typically, the intensity of work in protected areas varies throughout the year, there is no need for only permanent jobs, PA staff need to coordinate additional seasonal work)

-parks offer is «site» and few «staff» (avoid inclusion of activities for integration of migrants that would cause additional burden to nature and local life in PAs)

...INTEGRATION

-certification and training for both local communities, marginal groups and migrants

-intercultural dialogue on nature

-skills exchange workshops

-participatory approach and communications throughout the project

-improving coordination and communication between environmental and social sectors

Elements to be considered

1. Legal, policy and institutional framework

Problems are varied and different, some are very technical: questions of accommodation for newcomers, their mobility, their special requirements (i.e. food) and social security, work permits (access to work for refugees is highly restricted), health care insurance, legislative barriers...

2. Involvement of local population from the beginning of the project

No protected area can flourish without support of the local population and this is even more true in case of the sensitive issue of immigration. Extensive efforts should be made to involve local population in as early stages of the project as possible and wider public should not be excluded too.

Demonstrate then migrants are not »competition« but can offer complementary knowledge and experiences to the local environment.

3. «Thinking outside the box»

The project theme is unconventional so it should be worth thinking to develop a parallel campaign to support the aims of the project and seeking support for it.

4. Considering the needs of the target groups; these need to be tailor-made to specific area

Different protected area categories allow for different levels of human interventions and impacts to the natural environment and this should be taken into consideration when designing a project at the site level (i.e. promotion of agricultural practices where migrants could play an important role is not consistent with the primary management objective of allowing natural succession in the IUCN cat. II sites – National Parks). Also, specific groups of migrants or social groups might have very specific needs, but also very specific knowledge (i.e. migrants could also provide their experiences in management of vegetation or other practices; do not forget that there are also educated people among the migrants who can be included in specific works)

5. Gender dimension and consideration of age

Both sex and age groups should be included in the project at both »local« and »migrants« side. Younger retired local people and youth are particularly important potential contributors to the project at the local levels.

6. Governance over the project / initiative

Is there a need for a legal entity for coordination of the project, »help-desk« and networking? Creation of the new entity might also be an obstacle or could cause additional costs.

Participants agreed that the project should be undertaken with inclusion of consortium of partners, possibly coordinated by the IUCN WCPA. All the participants at the workshop expressed their wish that the organisations they represent would be involved in further stages of the preparation of this initiative and offered their personal skills to be used in shaping the proposal.

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Expected benefits of the project

Participants identified several possible benefits which should be used when drafting justification and need for the preparation of this project. These include:

- enhanced social cohesion
- awareness raised about PAs and nature conservation
- support to PA management
- increased nature conservation activities
- exchange of knowledge about nature and culture
- provision of coaching and social learning opportunities
- capacity building (education and skills) for all target groups
- potential for gender transformative efforts

Expected constraints in the preparation and implementation of the project

Discussions at the workshop revealed several possible constraints and obstacles that need to be carefully elaborated when drafting next stages of the project. These include:

- PAs need more jobs, but financing for these jobs is often missing (protected areas are not allowed to give a job to a refugee, but (local) governments could provide such jobs through special programmes for integration of newcomers)
- national policies and legislation do not foresee inclusion of migrants in the working relationships
- different legal backgrounds in different countries: some countries might have no legal provisions for inclusion of migrants into the life of parks
- technical problems (see also under: Legal, policy and institutional framework)
- acceptance of the local and wider public for the project might be low or even against the project

Thanks

This workshop, coordinated by the IUCN WCPA, has been organised with generous support of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and contribution from the Neusiedler See National Park. Their contribution is highly appreciated. Special thanks are given to Viktoria Hasler (Ministry) and Alois Lang and park's staff (National Park).

Several institutions and organisations contributed to the success of the workshop by sending relevant experts to this workshop and here comes special thanks for this.

At the end, big thanks also to all the participants, both those representing institutions as well as individual experts, who provided their time, knowledge and experiences and contributed to the fact that our stay in Illmitz was not only productive but also a pleasure.

Andrej Sovinc, IUCN WCPA, 29.6.2017

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ANNEX 1: Workshop programme:



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20-22 March 2017, Neusiedler See NP, Austria

Programme

Monday 20 March 2017

Morning: arrival of participants to Vienna airport until 12.00.

Local transfer provided from the central train station and from the airport at 12.30 to Illmitz, Center for visitors, NP Neusiedler See. Participants arranging their own travel should arrive to Illmitz by 13.00.

13.30 – 14.30 Buffet lunch

14.30 – 16.30 **Session 1: Introduction and »state-of-the art«**

-Welcome of participants and aims of the workshop (Ministry, National Park, IUCN WCPA)

-Introduction of the participants

A.Sovinc: Migrants in Parks in the light of the IUCN Protected Area standards

-New Europeans: situation at the country level

Simona Mayerhofer-Sebera: Reflections of migrant's flows in Austria

E.Kallio: Migrants and Integration in Finland

R.Borde: Protected Areas and the Integration of New Europeans - Possible Challenges in the Czech Republic and from the Czech Experience

Discussion

16.30 - 17.00 Coffee break

17.00 – 19.00 **Session 2: Protected Areas and Migrants**

-Presentation of programmes and activities in Parks for and with migrants and potential impacts for biodiversity conservation and life in the areas: case study examples at the PA level

Louis-René Sénéchal: Parks Canada's role in integration of immigrants (live Skype presentation)

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A.Biendarra: The role of the BfN (Federal Agency for Nature Conservation) coordination of integration and nature conservation

- Opportunities and Challenges

B.Schoen: Migrants in parks and local communities

V. de Waal: The Role of Protected Nature Areas in the Relocation, Integration and Assimilation of Immigrants

Discussion

19.00 Departure of participants to the accommodation

20.30 Dinner at the local restaurant

Tuesday 21 March 2017

09.00 – 11.00 **Session 3: Protected Areas and Migrants (continued)**

B.Steiningr: Involvement of migrants and minor social groups in the work of parks and communities

E.Kallio: Waste - A Challenge at the Front Line of the European Migrant Crisis

J.Castillo: Green integration: The Swedish experience to promote and ensure sustainable human development.

Discussion

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 13.30 **Session 4: Linking Humanity on the Move initiative to the work of international organisations and sectoral policies at the national and subnational levels – partners to the project?**

-Presentation of the activities of international institutions and agreements and at national/local levels

T.Mitrofanenko: UNEP, environment, migrants

Z.Skandrani: Engaging Biosphere Reserves in the origin countries of immigrants and in their European destination countries

R.Bucioaca: IUCN, parks, migrants (Skype)

D.Dimović: WWF, parks, migrants

S.Ciccaglione: "GreenGoldPeople" proposal project

Discussion

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 16.00 Excursion

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Excursion – Neusiedler See

16.30 – 19.00 **Contents of the future project** (Work in groups)

20.00 Dinner at the local restaurant

Wednesday 22 March 2017

09.00 – 09.15: Presentation: M.Jungmeier: Flora@velden.eu: Citizens science as a tool for social inclusion. First experiences of a model project

09.15 - 10.00 Reports from the working groups

10.00 – 11.00 Recommendations and conclusions

11.00 – 11.15 Closing remarks

11.15 Farewell snack

From 11.15: transfer of participants to the Vienna airport.

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ANNEX 2: List of participants:



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20-22 March 2017, Neusiedler See NP, Austria

List of participants

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ANNEX 3: presentations

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/0BzECDMSTOGJJWmZuTXRvazFnSHc>