



Potential Important Plant Areas in South East Europe

*Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia,
Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro*



Project: IPA in South East European Countries - 2003

- Beginning: 18 – 19 July 2002, Sofia
- 20 experts from SEECs: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, SMn, Kosovo
- Plantalife , REC – partnership established

Project: IPA in South East European Countries - 2003

- Albania – prof. J. Vangelis
- Bulgaria - prof. D. Peev, team established
- Croatia – prof. T. Nikolich, team established
- Macedonia – prof. L. Melovski team
- SMn – D. Lakushevich (Serbia), MN – Danka Ptrocich (pilot survey)

The potential IPA selection project in South East European Countries - 2003



- Countries- Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.
- Objectives
 - Enhance cooperation between SEE countries
 - Elaborate a provisional list of national Important Plant Areas (IPA) – focus on crossborder sites – 2 pilot areas

Results

- The 5 SEEC occupy less than 4% of the total area of Europe, but possess about 50% of the European flora.
- In Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro groups of plant specialists working on the IPA selection have been assembled.
- The existing data are collated and analyzed. Preliminary lists of selected IPAs are prepared.
- The gaps in the information are identified and the basis for future IPA work is established.



Implementation of SSM Methodology - Application of criteria A and C – Species and Habitats

	A Total	Ai	Aii	Aiii	Aiv	C Total	Ci	Cii
Bulgaria	92	15	55	13	9	201	11	190
Croatia	114	15	62	4	33	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
Macedo- nia	102	4	12	34	52	?	6 in HD 29 in Res 4	19
Montene- gro	9	-	6	2	1	1	Not defined	Not defined
Serbia	86	3	33	20	30	95	75	20

Implementation of SSM Methodology - Application of criterion B

The application of criterion B has been the most difficult for the project countries.

- In Serbia and Bulgaria this criterion has not been used mainly due to the lack of basic necessary data including habitats and species distribution maps.
- In Macedonia, the EUNIS Level 2 habitat list, as well as check list of indicators for species richness are compiled on the basis of sub-habitats in every habitat. This phase of the project is not completed yet.
- Croatian team has used the abundance of Red Data Book species and endemic species per unit area to select IPAs, as an alternative of comparing habitats type, which contain these species or possess extraordinary rich flora.



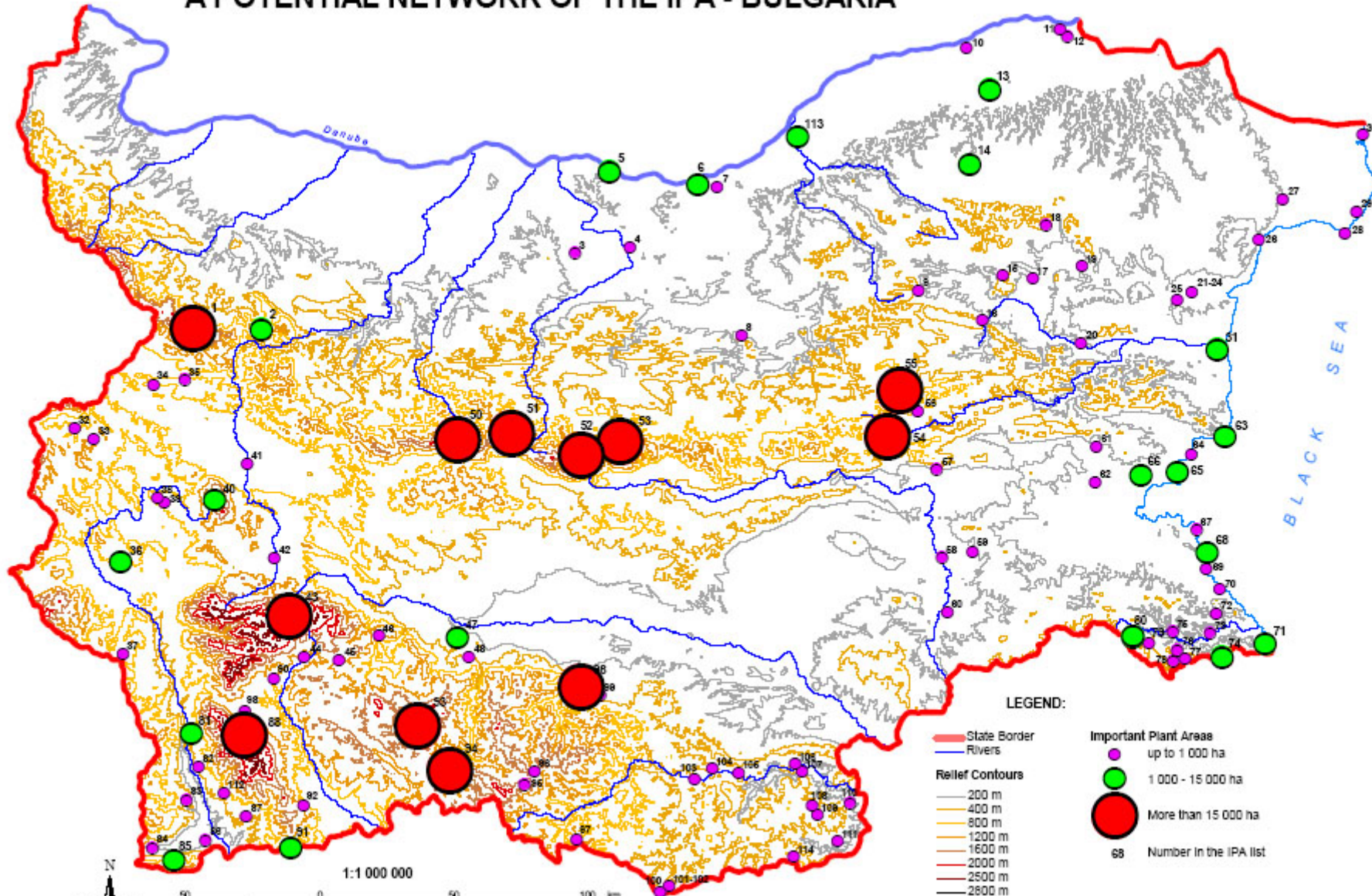
SEEC Important Plant Areas Sites

- 474 potential Important Plant Areas are selected in Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.
- Most of IPAs are justifiable according not only one criterion, but the combination between 2 or even the 3 of them.



	Bulgaria	Croatia	Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Number of potential IPAs	114	88	42	8	222
Cross border IPAs	2	6	15	2	12

A POTENTIAL NETWORK OF THE IPA - BULGARIA



Map prepared by T. Meshinev, G. Spiridonov, D. Paev, A. Petrova, I. Apostolova, N. Popova, S. Tzerveva and Z. Kaneva.
 Digital cartography: V. Dimitrov

Potential crossborder IPAs in Croatia

1/ Učka and
Čičarija mountain

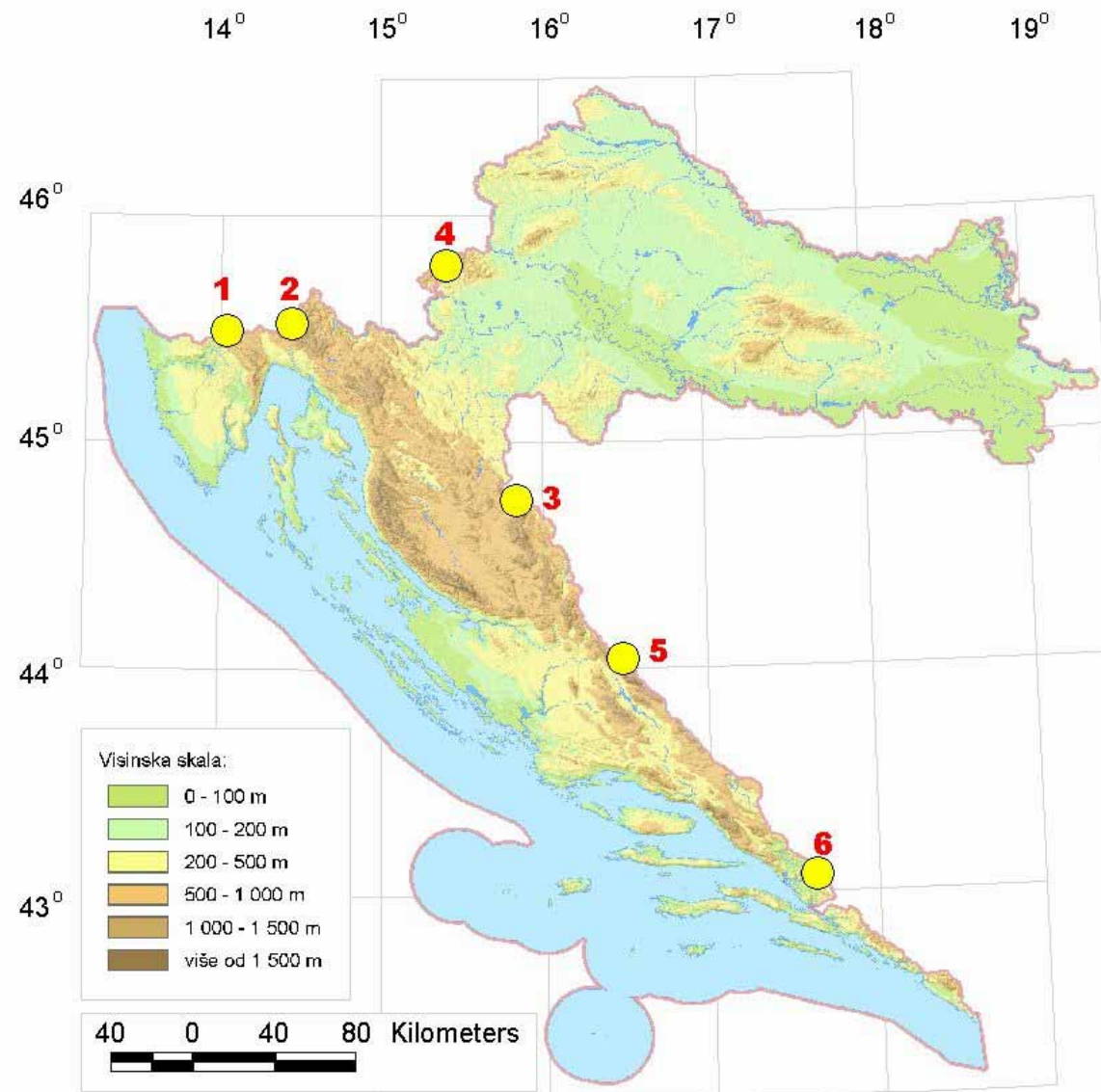
2/ Gorski kotar
and Kapela

3/ Lička Plješivica
(including
Plitvička jezera)

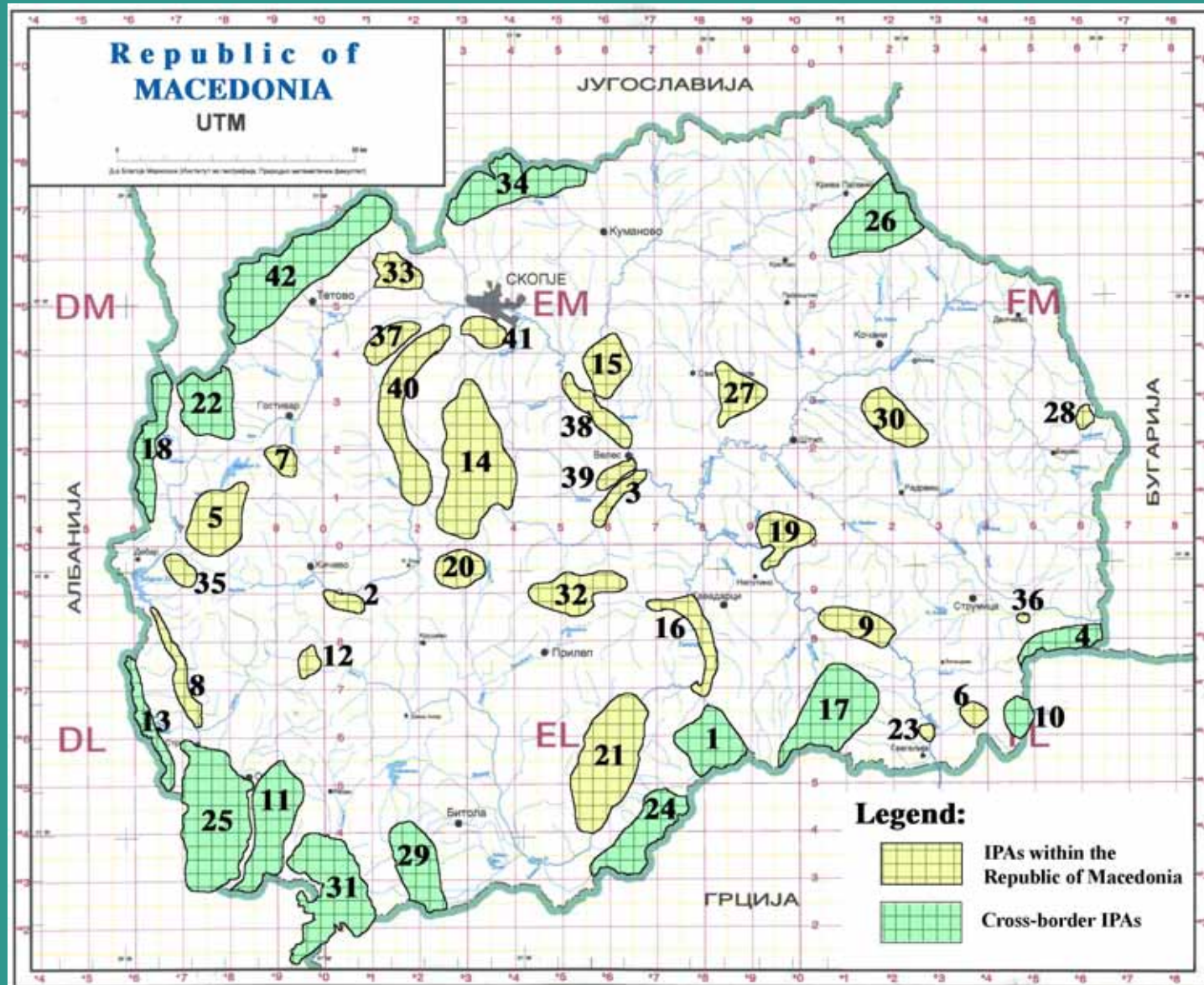
4/ Žumberak and
Samobor
mountain

5/ Dinara
mountain

6/ Neretva delta



Potential IPA sites in Macedonia



SEEC Important Plant Areas Sites

- Proposed IPA sites include areas with very diverse altitude, ranging from sea level to areas above 2500m. Most of the selected IPAs cover mountainous areas.
- The IPAs size vary significantly Crna voda in Montenegro - 30 ha, to Velebit Mt. in Croatia 200 000 ha. The definition of exact area of the potential IPA sites has not been possible in each country and for every particular IPA.
- Between 25 and 44% of the IPAs in the different countries have some status of protection.

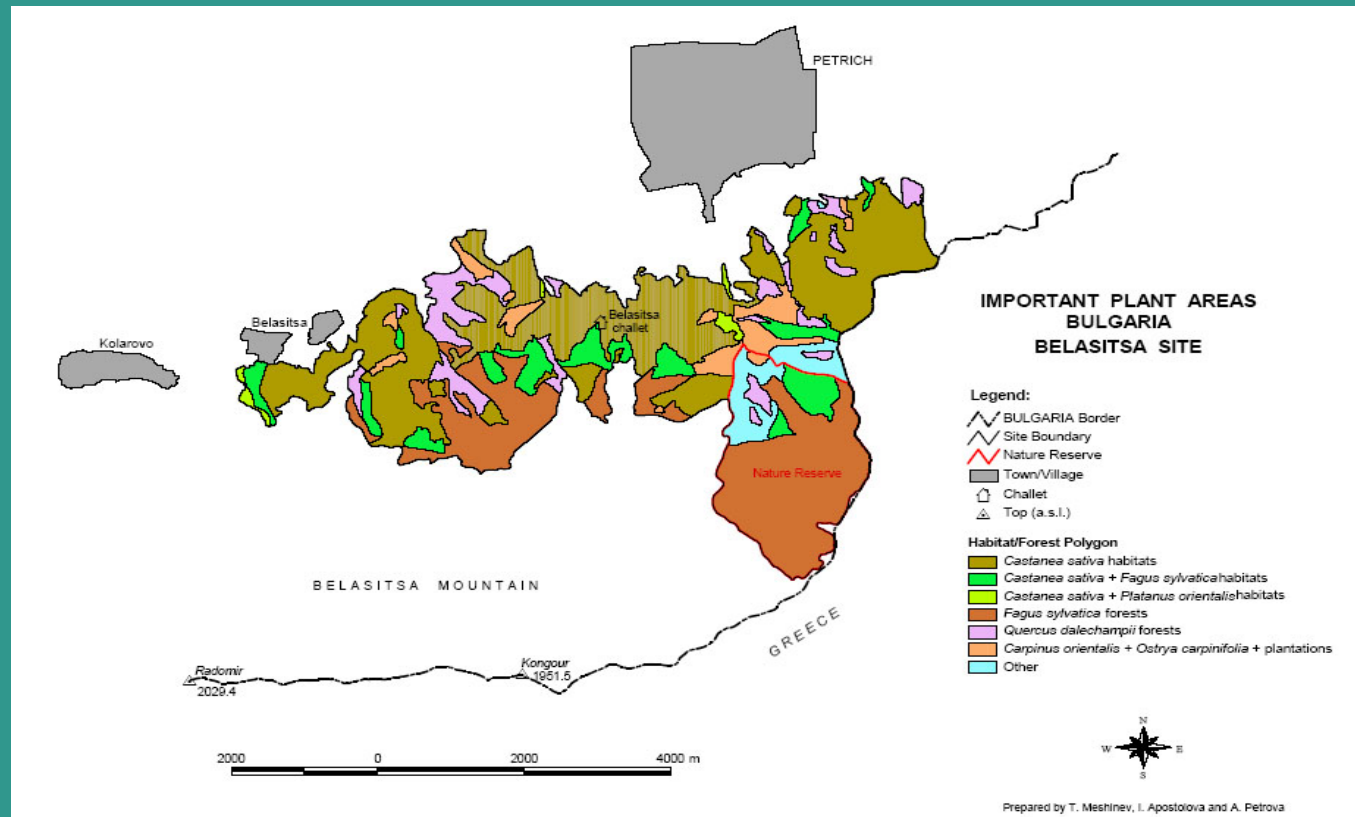


Plants along the borders – cross border IPAs

- **34 cross border IPA sites have been identified in the SEECs.**
- **3 sites are selected as Important Plant Areas from both neighboring countries. 7 cross border IPAs are identified as such from one only of the project countries.**
- **2 IPA sites are situated between 3 countries - Belasitsa Mountain and Gorwe Podunavie.**
- **Over 50% of the cross border IPAs are fully or partially protected as reserves, nature and national parks or other categories of protected areas. In some cases from one side of the border the site is protected when on the other side the area does not have a protection regime.**



Cross border IPA – BELASITZA Mt.(Bulgaria, FYROM, Greece) (map of the Bulgarian part)



MAP of Cross border IPA – West Stara Planina (Bulgaria – Serbia)



Difficulties in the sites selection process

- Lack of complete and up to date information about species and habitats distribution as well as lack of vegetation and habitat maps in appropriate resolution or scale.
- Number of threatened endemic and rare plant species with global conservation significance in the SEECs countries, are missing in the IUCN Global/European Red Lists as well as Annexes of the Habitat Directive and the Bern Convention.
- More time, financial resources and involvement of a larger number of contributors is needed for future research projects.



The IPA project uses the best available data at the present time. As more data becomes available in the future they should be incorporated into the system.

Main Conservation Threats in SEE Countries

- The main threat to the flora and vegetation of the SEEC is connected with habitat loss and degradation due to human activities. Most affected are the inland wetlands (rivers, lakes, salt marshes, mires) also the sandy beaches, steppes and marine habitats.
- Significant negative effect has the poor agricultural practices, shifting agriculture and generally intensified agriculture.
- The mountains are mainly affected by uncontrolled exploitation of forests; burning of dwarf shrub vegetation; extensive grazing; unsustainable harvesting of species of economic importance such as mushrooms, medicinal plants and wild fruits.

Recommendations – What are the next steps?

- Development of national strategies and action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of plant diversity and plant genetic resources. The policy level measures require harmonization of the national legislation with the international requirements. IPAs network may become a base for the Natura 2000 network establishment with the SEE countries joining EC.
- Efforts have to be focused on the need for more contemporary floristic and habitats research including intensive fieldwork in all SEECs. The national IPA teams have to prioritize the needs of new investigations in respect of the national specifics.
- Capacity building is needed in following areas: application of IUCN criteria for the National Red Data Books, application of habitat typologies (CORINE, Natura 2000 and EMERALDS), etc. It is good the national IPAs teams to establish and maintain Regional IPA Network for sharing information, knowledge and experience .



Recommendations – What are the next steps?




- The members of the national IPA teams should be engaged in future public information campaigns aiming at different target groups: other scientist and specialist in certain taxonomic groups especially bryologists, lichenologists etc.; politicians and decision makers; environmental NGOs; academia and the general public.
- Special attention should be given to encouragement of cooperation between governmental authorities, state-owned economy systems (transport, water-management, forestry, agriculture, etc.) and the private sector in the IPAs network establishment and sites management.
- For the future development of the IPAs network SSM Methodology application seminars on national level have to be organized including more experts and stakeholders in the process.

The potential IPA in South East European Countries



- Will be translated into five languages available on websites in:
- Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

- 
- Thanks for your attention on behalf of the whole IPA expert team from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro
 - Mira Mileva – Project manager
 - Regional Environmental Center for CEE
 - www.rec.org; email: mmileva@rec.org