



170 IPAs (21%) in CEE currently have absolutely no legal protection.

Forest in Puhtu IPA in Estonia

## Protection and management

Many IPAs have some form of legal protection, although the level of protection is highly variable. Appropriate management of plants and habitats, through good management, planning and implementation, is fundamental for the conservation of plant diversity.

IPAs provide a framework to assess and support existing conservation programmes such as national protected area networks, the EU Natura 2000 network, the Bern Convention and Emerald Network, PEBLDS and PEEN, and the Ramsar Convention by providing up to date, easily accessible, plant data.

IPAs have compatible aims and approaches with Important Bird Areas, Prime Butterfly Areas, Important Dragonfly Areas and Important Herpetological Areas and contribute to the Key Biodiversity Areas concept currently under development.

The challenge at hand for plant conservation in Europe is to use the information collected through the IPA programme to ensure that all stakeholders, from local communities and land managers, to national governments and regional policy makers, are aware of the importance of IPAs and to ensure that they act to prevent their destruction or damage through ignorance or indifference.



Anemones in the High Tatras mountains, Slovakia

## Action required

- IPAs must be recognised as priority sites in local, national and regional conservation policies and actions, setting a special emphasis on threatened IPAs.
- Poor forestry management, and the loss of wild plant diversity associated with intense agriculture and land abandonment must be addressed.
- Development (especially tourism and recreation, urban and transport) at IPAs must not oppose biodiversity conservation aims.
- Appropriate management systems and funds for their implementation must be a priority for the conservation of wild plants and their habitats at IPAs.
- IPAs must be integrated in monitoring frameworks and adequate funds must be provided to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

399 out of 510 IPAs in the five countries that recently joined the EU have been proposed to the European Commission as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and will in the future form part of the Natura 2000 network.

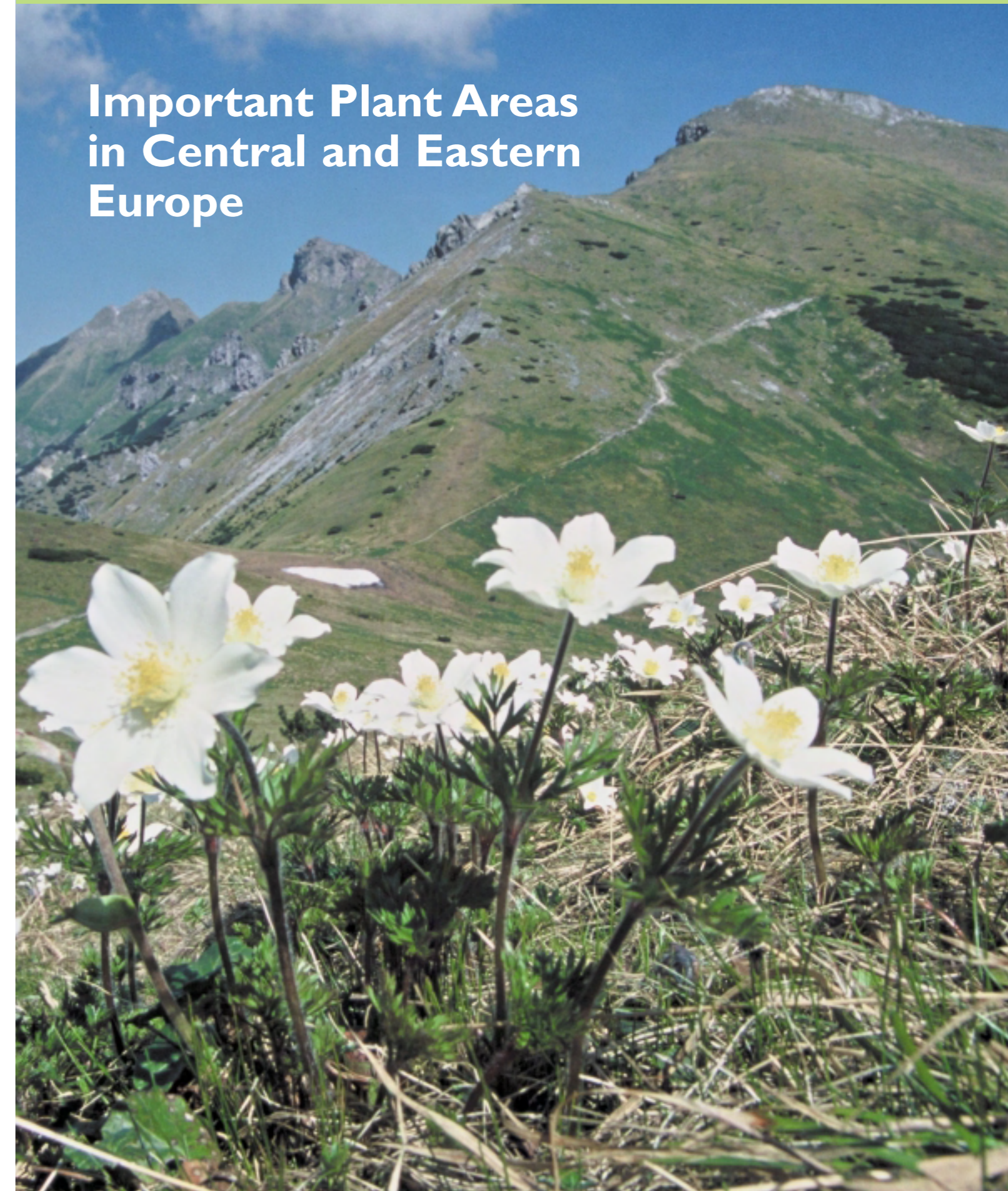


**'The identification of IPAs in central and eastern Europe has proved that Planta Europa not only finds out the needs and sees the objectives for plant conservation in Europe, but it also delivers on-the-ground, quality field work. In return, these achievements strengthen Planta Europa's experience, capacity and competence.'**  
*Jan Cerovsky, Emeritus president of Planta Europa and senior consultant for IPAs in the Czech Republic.*

This project was carried out with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality with the PIN/MATRA funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Plantlife International wish to acknowledge the financial contribution of the Swedish Species Information Centre.

**Plantlife International - The Wild Plant Conservation Charity**  
 Plantlife International is a charity dedicated exclusively to conserving all forms of plant life in their natural habitats, in the UK, Europe and across the world.

**Planta Europa**  
 Planta Europa is the network of independent organisations, non-governmental and governmental, working together to conserve European wild plants and fungi. The Planta Europa network comprises 61 member organisations from 34 pan-European countries. Plantlife International hosts the Planta Europa Secretariat.  
 e-mail: [plantaeuropa@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:plantaeuropa@plantlife.org.uk), website: [www.plantaeuropa.org](http://www.plantaeuropa.org)



## Important Plant Areas in Central and Eastern Europe



**'BirdLife International** is glad to have provided support to Plantlife International in their excellent work. IPAs provide us with the long awaited list of priority sites for plant protection. We hope that IPAs will be actively used in protecting these valuable sites as in the case of our Important Bird Areas.' *Dr Canan Orhun, BirdLife International, Head of European Division*



PLANTLIFE

Plantlife International - The Wild Plant Conservation Charity  
 14 Rollestone Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1DX  
 Telephone: +44 (0) 01722 342730 Fax: +44 (0) 01722 329035  
[enquiries@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@plantlife.org.uk) [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

Plantlife International - The Wild Plant Conservation Charity is a charitable company limited by guarantee.  
 Registered Charity Number: 1059559. Registered Company Number: 3166339. © September 2005. ISBN: 1-904749-16-X



98 IPAs (12%) in CEE contain globally threatened species.

*Geum bulgaricum*

ANTONETA PETROVA

Forest and grassland are the most common habitats at IPAs, occurring at 68% and 65% of IPAs respectively. Many endemic species only survive in well managed grasslands.



Pasqueflowers in the Czech Republic

DANA TURNOVA

Tourism, forestry and agriculture are major land uses at IPAs in CEE. Nature conservation is a major land use at over half of the IPAs (59%).

Meadow in Slovakia

## What are Important Plant Areas?

**Important Plant Areas (IPAs)** are the most important places in the world for wild plant diversity. The IPA programme aims to identify and protect a network of the best sites for plant conservation, using globally consistent criteria: threatened species, botanical richness and threatened habitats.

The IPA programme makes a practical contribution to the implementation of international agreements such as the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Summit on Sustainable Development's goal to reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010, the EU Habitats Directive, PEBLDS and the Bern Convention.

### IPA inventories in central and eastern Europe

Belarus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have completed inventories of their IPAs - sites that are rich in wild plants and diverse in habitats. 796 IPAs covering 14,739,174 hectares were identified in these seven countries.

The full report, *Important Plant Areas in Central and Eastern Europe*, including data, threats and policy recommendations can be ordered from Plantlife International or downloaded from [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

These inventories of best sites for plant conservation were carried out by Plantlife International and national partner organisations in central and eastern Europe (CEE) with the support of Planta Europa and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.



The Romanian IPA team collect field data

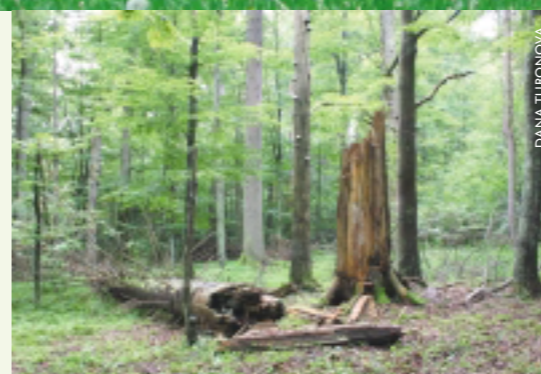
ANCA SARBU

### Forestry

Forests are key habitats for the conservation of many rare plants, fungi, mosses and lichens. The forestry industry is also very important economically in Europe, employing several million people. 44% of the IPAs in CEE are threatened by poor forestry practices, including intensified forest management, afforestation and deforestation. Currently there is no pan-European or EU forestry legislation to ensure sustainable forest management.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is a crucial factor affecting IPAs, especially natural and semi-natural grassland. Agricultural intensification or expansion threatens 29% of IPAs, whilst land abandonment threatens 27%. A balanced development between increasing agricultural production and applying agri-environmental schemes would support the maintenance of biodiversity-rich farmlands, grassland habitats and rural communities in CEE.



Old growth forest, rich in fungi and non-flowering plants

DANA TURNOVA

### Development

Unsustainable development, in particular as a result of increased tourism and expanding infrastructure, has been identified as another key threat to IPAs. 38% of IPAs in CEE experience significant pressure from tourism development. This comes not only from the construction of accommodation or recreation facilities but also from new or more frequently used nature trails and paths. Urban, industrial or transport developments threaten 25% of IPAs. Consistent application of environmental impact assessments would diminish the negative impacts of infrastructural development.

### Other threats

Forestry, agriculture and development all contribute to habitat fragmentation, which has been identified as a major threat to 21% of IPAs. Nearly one quarter of IPAs in CEE is threatened by poor water management systems, drainage, extraction or canalisation. Eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) threatens 15% of IPAs. Wetlands especially suffer from these threats. They are essential for water regulation including flood prevention and provide life support functions for many habitats and species.

Invasive plant species threaten the diversity of 17% of IPAs in CEE by replacing local, native species.

Lack of appropriate management, inside and outside of protected areas, is a significant threat to plant conservation at IPAs.



Pylons in Slovenia

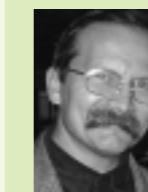
NEJC JOGAN



'The setting up of **Important Plant Areas** is a very important instrument to help achieve the policy goal of strengthening and achieving the sustainable use of biodiversity. These areas are unique places where the jewels of Europe's wild plants and fungi can be found. IPAs - as part of the Pan-European Ecological Network - can help to reduce the loss of biodiversity in Europe and the world.' *Drs Jan-Willem Sneep, Chairman of Planta Europa*



'The identification of IPAs in Romania offered the opportunity to update information on threatened species and habitats and to conclude a list of candidate sites for the Natura 2000 network. It was a chance to develop an equal scientific position, as a necessary background to the international compatibility of knowledge.' *Prof. Dr. Anca Sarbu, University of Bucharest - Association of Romanian Botanical Gardens (AGBR)*



'Botanists and conservationists must take responsibility for the process of selecting sites for conservation otherwise it will be left to the bureaucrats.' *Prof. Zbigniew Mirek, Director W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences.*