

1st IENE meeting, DANUBE DELTA - ROMANIA, 9 - 11 October 1996

Report of the meeting

Introduction

The first meeting of the Infra Eco Network Europe was organized by the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Division of Road and Hydraulic Engineering from the Netherlands, in cooperation with the Bucharest University, Department of Systemic Ecology and the Management of the Natural Capital, Romania. The workshops of this first IENE event have brought together the IENE National Coordinators of 11 European nations and the members of the IENE steering committee. Between 9-11 October, surrounded by marvelous natural landscapes of the Delta of the Danube, the participants representing almost equally the two wide IENE fields of activity, engineering and ecology, have been concentrated on the following subjects: the establishment of Infra Eco Network Europe presentation of a preliminary report on the current situation in each country the topic and internal organization the future development

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1. General framework of the meeting

In an opening session IENE was introduced to the participants by the IENE Coordinator, Mr. Dan Teodorascu . An outline was given of the background of the initiative, namely the [Declaration of the International Conference on Habitat Fragmentation and Infrastructure](#) held in Maastricht, 18-20 September 1995, the current state of the development of IENE and its plans for the future. The goal of the meeting was clarified.

2. Institutions members of the IENE steering committee

An outline of the activity in the field of habitat fragmentation and transportation infrastructure was given by representatives of the initiator of IENE, namely the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management and of 4 international organizations. The IENE steering committee was represented as follows:

The Ministry for Transport, Public Works and Water Management , Division of Roads and Hydraulic Engineering was presented by Hans Bekker, coordinator of program 'Defragmentation'.

IUCN - The World Conservation Union was introduced by George Romanca.

PIARC - The World Road Association had prepared a note about its support to the initiative by Mrs. Inga-Maj Eriksson . A letter from Mr. Suter, Chairman of the Committee on the Environment (C 14) of PIARC was presented by Mr. Hans Bekker.

UIC - The International Union of Railways was presented by Mr. Hans Kaper.

ECNC - European Center for Nature Conservation was introduced by Mr. Ben Delbaere, who also introduced LYNX - Special Interest Network on Ecological Networks .

3. Current situation on habitat fragmentation and infrastructure in the IENE member countries

The national coordinators of the 11 countries present gave a short preliminary introduction on the state of the art of habitat fragmentation through linear transportation infrastructure in their respective countries.

Jaak Liivaleht , Estonia - "Habitat fragmentation caused by infrastructure in Estonia"
Heikki Hirvonen , Finland - "Ecological effects of infrastructure and prospects for the European level"
Jean Gaber and Jean Carsignol, France - "Current situation France"
Ágnes Simonyi , Hungary - "Hungary - presentation for the 1st IENE meeting"
Armando Gariboldi, Italy - "Habitat fragmentation and infrastructures: the Italian situation"
Annette Piepers, the Netherlands - "Habitat fragmentation and infrastructure: the Dutch approach"
George Romanca and Mircea Nicolau, Romania - "Habitat fragmentation and infrastructure - Romanian case"
Dmitri Kavtaradze , Russia - "Habitat fragmentation in Russia"
Lennart Folkesson , Sweden - "Infrastructure, habitat fragmentation and landscape ecology in Sweden"
Peter Oggier , Switzerland - "Current situation Switzerland"
Penelope Angold , United Kingdom - "Habitat fragmentation, Research and Current Conservation in the U.K."

4. IENE objectives and products

The objectives of IENE that are stated in the IENE Project Plan were analyzed by the participants. After constructive discussions they have been reformulated as follows:

General objective "to promote a safe and sustainable pan-European transport infrastructure through recommending measures and planning procedures to conserve biodiversity and reduce vehicular accidents and fauna casualties"

Secondary objectives "to design methodologies for defining priorities when solving conflicting intersections between nature and transportation infrastructure and implement them in the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Impact Assessment studies" "to harmonize mitigation and compensation measures at European level" "to stimulate national strategies on environment and transportation" "to promote international and multidisciplinary research and monitoring" "to improve public awareness, education and training on habitat fragmentation due to infrastructure"

These goals will further enhance the realization of national and international agreed objectives to conserve biodiversity at the ecosystem/habitat, species and genetic levels. The objectives of IENE are fully concordant with the provisions and recommendations of: [The Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (Rio, 1992) – Article 6, 7 subparagraphs (c) and (d), 8 (d) and (f), 10 (a) and (b), 14 (a) and (c), 17 and 18; [The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats](#) (Bern, 1979) – Articles 1,2,3 and 4; [The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy](#) – strategy 1996–2016 for the 'Transportation' sector.

According to the above objectives unanimously accepted by the representatives of 11 European countries, major products of IENE have been proposed. The participants have recognized the need on European level of:

- 'European Handbook on Habitat Fragmentation due to Linear Transportation Infrastructure'.
Concerning its content, several items were proposed to be included:
 - * guidelines for the maximum amount of habitat fragmentation that is allowed (comparable to e.g. limit values for pollution)
 - * methodologies to define priorities
 - * environmental indicators
 - * design plans to implement mitigation and compensation measures
 - * keys for planners to help them within planning procedures
 - * bad examples of projects/measures and solutions to prevent such mistakes. Examples are given to learn from in order to save money and time with future projects and to prevent duplication of effort concerning research.A short version of the handbook is desirable for decision makers.
- 'State-of-the-Art Report' regarding the current situation in the field of habitat fragmentation due to infrastructure in Europe
- 'On-line IENE database' that will contain:
 - * list of European experts in the field of infrastructure and habitat fragmentation
 - * database on existing literature and video on the above topic
 - * keyword list and list of reference to allow common language on European level

For a rapid access and exchange of information, the World Wide Web will be used. The products of IENE could be used as scientific support to the implementation of the Trans European Networks.

5. Organization of IENE – The Tasks and Status of the IENE National Coordinator

Discussion took place on the main tasks of the national coordinators as formulated in the project plan. Building up a national network means involving persons working in all kind of disciplines: planners, engineers, ecologists, managers, politicians. The approach to build up a national network depends on the country. A country should be covered geographically completely.

One of the topics of most direct concern to the national coordinators is the list of tasks that they are requested to carry out. The following list of tasks has been drafted during the meeting:

building up a national network of cooperators along the same line as the international network of IENE. Complete geographical coverage of a country should be aimed at; collect information from different sources and filter out the most relevant information for IENE; prepare a national report on habitat fragmentation through linear transportation infrastructure; seek ways to inform and influence central government institutions; look for good and bad examples of projects/measures regarding the topic of IENE.

The national coordinators have full liberty to decide own strategy in the build-up of national network in his/her country because of great differences among European states: institutional development, socio-political system, size.

6. Financing European projects: Introduction to the COST program

The European IENE Coordinator, Mr. Dan Teodorascu, gave a presentation of the [COST program](#) as a potential means for financing the realization of the proposed IENE products. COST stands for European COoperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research. This program focuses on specific themes for which there is an interest in the COST countries, offering complete freedom of participation by each country involved according to national research priorities

With regard to future funding opportunities for IENE, an overview was given of the current state. Unsolved points of the COST New Action proposal scheme were analyzed and the participants tried to fill in the missing paragraphs. The improvement of the proposal refers to:

1. Reformulation of general and secondary objectives of IENE. Remark: The objectives should be aimed at making products and not a network as such.
2. Defining possible IENE products. Remark: The IENE Website may be regarded as a database and hence as a product.
3. Possible areas of research in the field of "Habitat fragmentation due to infrastructure". These have been identified by Mr. Keith Kirby from English Nature and presented at the meeting by Mrs. Penelope Angold, the IENE national coordinator for the United

Kingdom:

- * Accurate documentation of fragmentation
 - * Identification of indicator species of fragmentation/linkage
 - * Circulation of international knowledge and practice
 - * Reviews and monitoring effectiveness of defragmentation/mitigation measures
 - * Comparative and evaluation studies on edge and interior species
 - * Population dynamics (source/sink populations and colonization)
 - * Metapopulation and genetics research
 - * Detailed studies of sites experiencing fragmentation or linkage
4. The interest to participate at the proposed COST Action has been shown by all the IENE national coordinators of 11 European nations.

Benefits of the project. Besides the already stated ones have been proposed the following:

- * saving time and money by learning from mistakes mentioned in the handbook and by avoiding overlapping research;
- * positive influence on road safety and reducing risks.

These improvements and additions will be included in the COST Scheme. Further contact will be taken with the COST-Transport Contact Point in the Netherlands and the official submission procedure will be followed.

7. Presentation of the Homepage of IENE on the World Wide Web

In support of the IENE activities, the presence of IENE on the World Wide Web was presented by Dan Teodorascu, showing the basic structure of the Website. This comprises three modules, as follows:

- The general information module provides IENE project description
- The interactive module gives the users the possibility to exchange information, to register themselves on different expertise fields and to enrich the informational tree of IENE by adding new WWW sites regarding habitat fragmentation and infrastructure.
- The database module contains: Bibliographic data on existing literature on habitat fragmentation and infrastructure, expert database and a photo collection with real examples of mitigation and compensation measures as well other features in the field of interest.

Quality control

Any data that will be placed on the site (article, website, cv., photo) will be examined and evaluated against a set of criteria (relevancy and up-dating) and will be accompanied by a description of its scope, content and origin. The final informational goal of IENE is to make a comprehensive coverage of Europe's information resources in the field of habitat fragmentation and infrastructure of high quality.

To guarantee that a resource will give maintained, developed and kept up-to-date information, specific control is necessary to be done by the IENE coordination center with the network manager. Mr. Ben Delbaere had a short intervention regarding the general requirements for quality control. More information can be found at the URL:

http://www.gslis.ucla.edu/SCOUG/internet_quality.html

8. The subject of the next IENE meeting

1. During one session the group was split into 3 subgroups, that all discussed the same topic: the next IENE meeting and more in particular its topic, the participants and the location. The following subjects were chosen:

1. Vision of IENE towards European Transportation initiatives

2. Case studies

3. IENE's future: including other infrastructure, expanding membership

The participants have agreed with the proposal of Mr. Lennart Folkesson to organize the second IENE meeting in Sweden (Lund). At this meeting will participate: the IENE National Coordinators, the members of IENE steering committee, invited members of Directorate-General for Transport (DG VII) of the [European Commission](#).

2. Other interesting subject proposals to be discussed at future IENE meetings are here mentioned:

3. Evaluation of effectiveness of measures on population level

Public involvement in Environmental Impact Assessment

Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment in politics

Integration of knowledge on Habitat Fragmentation in European planning Matching cross-border projects

Exchange EIA experience

Draft data-base IENE

Understanding of the problem per discipline: engineers, planners, ecologists

Proposals to organize the third IENE meeting have been received from the representatives of Hungary and Russia.

9. Conclusions and recommendations of the meeting

The conclusions of the meeting were presented in an original way, rather than listing all topics discussed, Mrs. Annette Piepers simply asked all participants what would be the first action they would undertake concerning IENE when arriving back home at the office. This yielded an extensive list presented below. On the right side of the list, the number of persons that will take the action is shown:

1. Network development persons: 8

2. Contact ministry and other organisms for backing position 4

3. Need for official letter 4

4. Communicate information 4

5. Stimulate related projects 4

6. Development of Public Relations: involve IENE in Conferences 3

7. Database construction 2

8. Start drafting the content of the National Report on infrastructure and environment 2

9. Look for subsidies 2

10. Make IENE list of reference 1

11. Personal appreciation 1

12. Including IENE in the 'Defragmentation' program of Road and Hydraulic Engineering

Division 1

13. Contact railway organizations 1

14. Translate products in English 1

15. Organize IENE meeting 1

16. Introduction of IENE topics in various education programs 1

During the workshop open discussions, the participants have raised also the following issues and recommendations:

- the need for a common language to be used between policy makers, planners and scientists.
- the need for integration of different ministries with universities, NGOs, companies and research institutes.
- cost-benefit analyses should be included as well as economic and social benefits of measures regarding habitat fragmentation through transportation infrastructure.
- IENE should involve itself at all levels of policy making processes through lobbying activities.
- development of public relations and public awareness.
- the need for more fundamental thoughts concerning the value of nature, criteria to weight different political decisions and to assess the scale (both temporal and geographical) of measures.