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PROTECTED AREAS - AS MAIN AND VERY IMPORTANT SPACE FOR BIODIVERSITY EVALUATION AND THEIR CONSERVATION

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Abstract: *In the diversity of pearl of the nature in Albania, known for its richness in particular underpin comprehensive biodiversity values, land and sea ecosystems, habitats and species of flora and fauna, which extend from the marine-coastal belt up to the field-montane and most in-depth, high in the mountains has a national and international importance. The high diversity of ecosystems and habitats offers rich habitats for a variety of plants and animals. This diversity is attributable to the country's geographic position as well as geological, hydrological, climatic, soil and relief characteristics. About 36% of the country's territory is covered by vegetation. There are still natural and semi-natural areas, where the degree of human intervention is almost absent or less sensitive. These areas, even preserve their true values of natural, both require special attention and care.*

For these reasons, Albania as part of the Balkan region as an area of global importance for biodiversity, referred to as a hot-spot of global biodiversity and that attention to this region is required to be pronounced by competent institutions and the entire community.

Nature protection and biodiversity conservation is ensured through a number of legal and institutional mechanisms, which in Albania, especially in the last decade have taken a dimension oriented by principles stemming from international conventions in the field of nature and biodiversity. These mechanisms are already being further consolidate and being adapted to European Union standards.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, one of the most effective and most widely used to achieve the objectives of nature conservation and biodiversity, is the establishment and management of protected areas. Nowadays protected areas plays an important role in supporting local, national and international policies for biodiversity. They also serve as a place for scientific research, conservation of wild flora and fauna, providing environmental services such as education, tourism and recreation, protection of natural and cultural features and sustainable use of biological resources. In these 20 years we have heard mentioned often phrase "biodiversity and protected areas". Unfortunately, only that, since the facts speaks otherwise. Their condition and care, are not at the level required. Awareness, civil behavior and concrete actions are completely lacking.

Biodiversity and protected areas are one of the greatest heritages that humanity can leave to future generations to ensure that our descendants have access to natural resources, material and immaterial benefits that they provide. However, biodiversity and protected areas exist in an environment which rapidly changing and facing with numerous challenges.

A number of issues are evident, which represent an opportunity and real threats to biodiversity and protected areas. Reflecting these, environmental pollution, damage to habitats and species, foreign types, fragmentation of natural landscapes, cutting forests, fires, hunting, grazing, overfishing, climate change, increased urbanization, construction without criteria, tourism irresponsible, infrastructure development, construction of hydropower plants, quarries, increasing the needs for natural resources, etc. and growing demand for land and water, initiated by the lusts of business unfriendly with nature and biodiversity.

In many cases such partnerships is extremely harmful for nature and biodiversity. Their destruction and alienation affects significantly to the development of the country. Such examples are numerous. While instant profits are fat, but later never will be so profitable, and never will be a valuable approach for future generations. So, such a partnership are contrary to sustainable development, balanced by socio-economic progress of the community, the uses of bio-natural resources, without respecting any management and uses standards.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

As in all sectors, even in the field of nature and biodiversity are being implemented several measures in the framework of the national plan for the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Albania and the European Union.

Thus, in the field of nature conservation are drafted a legislative package oriented by European legislation with 5 basic laws such as the Law "On Protection of biodiversity", the Law "On Protected Areas", the Law "On the rules and

procedures for international trade of threatened species of wild fauna and flora ", the Law" On protection of wild fauna "and the Law" On hunting ", and a number of regulatory bylaws, in which are approximated the main EU directives in the field of nature protection and for preserving wild birds and habitats.

RESULTS

Biodiversity and Protected Areas, containing some of the greatest values of the country from economic and ecological point of view, where except protective and guarantor of the diversity of the living world, serve as a source of existence, of material goods and income for the community. Already, the declaration of protected areas, not just selected territories with forests, pastures, but also agricultural areas, water lagoons, mountains, even populated, with a tradition of sustainable use of natural resources and an important activity socio-economic development. Knowledge of ecological values of biodiversity and put them under a protection status is a new development for all residents who live and develop their activities socioeconomic in respective areas.

Protected areas embody the important of cultural and historical values, some of them reflected traditional practices and sustainable use of land and natural resources as in the case of the national park "Butrint", which is included in the list of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage -s, (1992). Now the efforts carried out for the establishment of Transboundary Biosphere stocks for the Prespa-Ohrid region, approved in June 2014 by the UNESCO Secretariat as well as the approval of Lake Shkoder watershed.

Albanian Government in collaboration with all stakeholders and major donors, in the framework of national priorities, has taken several actions for natural conservation and biodiversity and to establish or expand protected areas in large areas, pristine or very few fragmented, with unique natural values or in the areas that are threatened or provide maximum protection of threatened species.

It compiled a list of invasive species, red list, legal framework for Stocktaking and monitoring of biodiversity. In Red Book recorded 405 species of flora and 575 species of wild fauna threatened status, ie a state of their own serious. While domestic and foreign scientists announce quite new discoveries species of wild flora and fauna of Albania.

For conservation and management of this natural resource based on the principle of sustainable development has been established a protected ecological network, with an area of 460 thousand ha or 15.5% of the national territory, among which we emphasize national parks as areas with special importance for biodiversity conservation and development, but also for ecotourism. The objective is that the surface of protected areas in 2020 to reach 17% of the territory and 10% of sea, reaching levels close to EU member countries.

For the values to carrying on life, health and human welfare, protection of nature, conservation of nature and biodiversity, to improve and promote the values of sustainable development, development of efficient bio service and the ecosystem in harmony with socio-economic, touristic and cultural developments etc., should be considered essential for Albania and the international community, and therefore

the return of attention to the creation and support structures for the administration and management.

This problem is still not resolved properly decades. Donors have embedded to reform the administration of the PA, seeking their secession by the Forestry Service. Even reforms in Forestry sector, based on regions according to the law was not done in proper time and effectiveness since 2005.

"Representative network of protected areas requires a functional authority for the management and administration of protected areas. Along with the efforts to expand their surface, it was necessary to take measures to increase and strengthen the capacities of the respective management structures ", for this reason the Council of Ministers in February 2015 has approved the Decision on "Establishment of National Agency of Protected Areas", National Agency of Protected Areas will have a staff of 224 people, of whom 21 in the central office and 203 in the Regional Administration of the Protected Areas.

The agency has a duty to manage functional network of protected areas and other natural networks such as Natura 2000 under the management plans drawn up, monitor and inventory flora and fauna in these areas, and a very important aspect, generate income from services to others, and to use the proceeds to invest in the same areas. With this establishment of this structure Albania join the other Balkan countries, which already have such structures.

For the country's future integration challenges and leading efforts in the field of nature protection will be focused on the identification, evaluation and creation of Natura 2000 network, one of the major obligations in this area and as a comprehensive process that requires commitment and commitment of all specialists in the field. Good management of protected areas network is one of the current challenges of the MOU and the structures responsible. It is worth mentioning that in this national ecological network will work, among other things, for the identification, evaluation and mapping of special conservation areas, special areas of conservation, and areas of international importance for the European Community (Natura 2000). The process of establishing Natura 2000 network is an almost scientific process, even assessment that will make the European Commission identified areas will be made on the basis of scientific sessions that will take place.

The decade 2011-2020 was proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as decades of Biodiversity, as a period that states and state structures and society to take measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural values. As members of actions within this decade, European policy orientated in this field, Albania remains committed to pursue and implement the fulfillment of obligations for conservation of nature and biodiversity as a precious asset for the country.

CONCLUSIONS

Biodiversity and landscape diversity is not yet considered as a particular source of economic development and tourism. Endangering and the alienation of coastal and marine landscape, Ionian and Adriatic Riviera or and hilly landscape,

mountain and rural, is not a smart solution. To Landscape, human behavior and especially the business are meaningless. We should work, for the community awareness and for the expand their participation in governance and decision-making for conservation of biodiversity and landscape, to strengthen the control and improvement of legality. Moreover, in many protected areas lacking political support, have insufficient financial and human resource.

Establishment of the Agency of the protected areas it was one of the challenge of the Government for better management of this areas. The Agency should manage network of protected areas, habitats and natural and semi natural species with conservation interest, obliged by national and international conventions and agreements.

Nature conservation policy, in collaboration with all stakeholders, should be based on principles of protection and sustainable use of natural resources, in partnership developments in order to provide a social prosperity, promotion and improvement of management system of nature and protected area with a new concept.

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- ✓ Amendment of the Law “On protected areas”, no. 9868, of 4.2.2008;
- ✓ Law “On international trade of endangered species of wild flora and fauna” no. 9867, of 31.1.2008;
- ✓ The red list of fauna and flora species approved by Ministerial Order in 2007.

The work has therefore advanced with the approximation of the legislation, namely the Habitats Directive by the amendment of the law “On Protected Areas”, of 2008 and two laws: “On wild fauna protection” of 2008 and “On Hunting” of 2010 with the Wild Birds Directive.