

# **Transboundary cooperation for the designation of new Ramsar sites between Romania and Bulgaria**

Transfer project in the framework of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme

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## **Executive summary**

Nowadays environmental problems are too big to be managed by individual persons or individual countries. In other words, there are international problems and it is important that environmental issues should be treated internationally.

The project regarding the strengthening of cooperation (exchange of experience and joint projects development) is developed in the framework of The Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme and is focused on the new Ramsar sites designation between Romania and Bulgaria.

The main aim of the project is to contribute to the enlargement of the Ramsar sites network in Romania and Bulgaria by designating new cross-border protected areas and promoting adequate management measures. The sites targeted are ROSPA0010 Bistreţ (RO) – Ibisha Island (BG), ROSPA0102 Suhaia (RO) – Belene (BG), and ROSPA0051 Iezer Calarasi (RO) – Srebarna (BG); these are needed because many of the bird colonies use both sides of the river and the corresponding administrative boundaries.

First steps in achieving the aim of the project were made last year in March, when took place in Bucharest a bilateral meeting between Bulgarian and Romanian National Focal Points for Ramsar Convention and WWF representatives from both countries. (Annexes 12.2.1) During the meeting it was agreed that the best way to promote appropriate management and monitoring measures is to designate Iezerul Călăraşi, Suhaia, Bistreţ (RO) – Srebarna, Belene, Ibisha Island (BG) as Ramsar transboundary sites. (Annexes 12.2.2)

The sites targeted by the Ramsar cross border designation have a mirror position alongside the Danube and because of this many of the birds species use one site for nesting/resting and the opposite for feeding. These 6 sites host an important number of waterfowl species.

After the successful meeting between NFP's, the next step was for Bulgarian side to update their RIS's and for Romanian side to designate the three targeted sites as wetlands of international importance.

Between March and June 2012, in collaboration with WWF, it was organized a face to face meeting in order to make the custodians understand what is a

Ramsar site, what are the duties of the custodians, how to manage a cross border Ramsar site and the way to complete the Ramsar information sheet, that is the base document for the designation.

In July 2012, Romania received during the Conference of Parties for the Ramsar Convention, that took place in Bucharest, the certificates for designation of ROSPA0010 Bistreț, ROSPA0102 Sahaia and ROSPA0051 Iezer Calarași as wetlands of international importance. After this important step, I started the correspondence with the Bulgarian NFP in order to send the common letter to the Secretariat of the Convention for final designation.

In February 2013, I sent to the minister of environment and water of Bulgaria the official letter with our intention and also for asking for support from their side for transboundary designation and cooperation. The Bulgarian side assured us of their entire support and thus our common letter was sent to the Secretariat. In couple of weeks the Secretariat of the Convention will make the official announcement of the transboundary cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria.