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## **Regional Workshop**

# **Enhancing Biodiversity Protection in the Eastern Partnership Countries: Learning from EU Best Practices**

## **Draft Agenda**

**Date: 28-30 April 2025**

**Venue: Small Congress Centre of VEDA, the Slovak Academy of Sciences,  
Bratislava, Slovakia**

**Format: On-site with online connection on Day 1**

**Language: English (no interpretation available)**

[The Map of key locations](#)

Registration link to participate online:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/join/mH1QNpgNQsSWY-kQ\\_5oAXQ](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/mH1QNpgNQsSWY-kQ_5oAXQ).

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## Enhancing Biodiversity Protection in the Eastern Partnership Countries: Learning from EU Best Practices

28-30 April 2025, Bratislava, Slovakia

### Background

This workshop is organised under the EU4Environment Programme – Activity 4.1.2 “Supporting regional collaboration, information exchange and knowledge sharing in protecting biodiversity and natural ecosystems (the Emerald Network) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries”.

The EU4Environment Programme supports the EaP countries in advancing the Emerald Network by developing national action plans and roadmaps, legal framework recommendations, management plan guidelines, and pilot management plans. It also enhances scientific knowledge, builds management capacity, raises awareness, promotes regional collaboration, and facilitates knowledge exchange.

### Objectives

The workshop aims to share knowledge, experiences and good practices in management and conservation of the Emerald Network. The event will focus on legal frameworks, site management, enforcement, capacity building, community participation, economic activities, and the experiences of EU countries and related initiatives such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law.

### Organizers

The workshop is organised by the World Bank jointly with the international consulting company “Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment”, SIA (ELLE) and the Institute of Landscape Ecology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (ILE SAS), implementing Activity 4.1.2.

### Participants

The meeting will gather representatives of line ministries and other relevant government agencies, CSOs, and academia from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, representatives of the EU4Environment Programme, the World Bank, ELLE, and ILE SAS.

### Venue

Small Congress Centre of the VEDA publishing house of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Štefánikova 878/3, 811 06 Bratislava, Slovakia.

### Language

The meeting will be held in English.

### About EU4Environment

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment – Green Economy) Action helps the Eastern Partnership countries preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

The programme is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organisations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO, and the World Bank. It is implemented over the 2019-2024 period for OECD, UNECE, UNEP, and UNIDO, and over the 2021-2026 period for the World Bank, with a total budget of EUR 20 million.

For more information, please visit our website: [www.eu4environment.org](http://www.eu4environment.org).

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**(28-30 April 2025)**

<b>CET time</b>	<b>DAY 1: Monday, 28 April 2025</b>  <b>Venue: Small Congress Centre, Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Štefánikova 3, 814 99 Bratislava</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
13:30-14:00	<i>Registration and welcome coffee</i>
14:00-14:20	<b><i>Opening remarks:</i></b> Welcome address and introduction to the workshop <i>Moderated by Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gayane Minasyan, Regional Manager, Environment, World Bank</li> <li>• Fisseha Tessema Abissa, Task Team Leader, EU4Environment Programme Result Area 4, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank</li> <li>• Ľuboš Halada, Director, Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS</li> </ul>
14:20-14:50	<b><i>National systems of protected areas in the new EU Member States</i></b> Comparative review of national systems of protected areas in selected EU Member States and its evolution, focusing on transitions from post-Soviet systems to Natura 2000 and case studies from Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, and other countries. <i>Speaker: Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i> Q&A
14:50-15:05	<b><i>Road map to a functional protected area system</i></b> Presentation of a road map for establishing and ensuring the functionality of protected area systems (Emerald Network or Natura 2000). <i>Speaker: Jan Černecký, Head of the Reporting and SAC Department, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic</i> Q&A
15:05-15:50	<b><i>Stakeholder roles in management of protected areas</i></b> Roles of stakeholders (national and local authorities, communities, academia, civil society, and the public) – initiative, responsibility, funding, management, land ownerships. A couple of case studies with different role distribution. <i>Speaker: Gatis Eriņš, Key Expert, ELLE</i> Q&A
15:50-16:20	<i>Coffee/tea</i>
16:20-16:40	<b><i>Conservation and management: from doing nothing to doing everything</i></b> Overview of conservation measures and management activities for key habitats and species groups, ranging from minimal intervention to active management practices. <i>Speaker: Anete Pošiva-Bunkovska, Key Expert, ELLE</i> Q&A

16:40-17:10	<p><b>Forest management in Natura 2000 areas – a hot topic</b></p> <p>Insights into forest management practices within Natura 2000 areas, highlighting their impacts on biodiversity and economic contributions to local communities.</p> <p><i>Speaker: Gatis Eriņš, Key Expert, ELLE</i></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
17:10-17:40	<p><b>Contribution of protected areas to economy</b></p> <p>Exploration of how economic activities within Natura 2000 sites can promote biodiversity conservation, with a focus on community participation and sustainable practices.</p> <p><i>Speaker: Anete Pošiva-Bunkovska, ELLE (tbc)</i></p> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
17:40-17:50	<p><b>Closing remarks:</b> Overview of Day 2 and logistics</p> <p><i>Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>
18:00-19:00	<p>Networking cocktail</p> <p><i>Venue: Restaurant “Štefánka by Pulitzer”, Palisády 741/59, 811 06 Bratislava</i></p>

<b>CET time</b>	<p><b>DAY 2: Tuesday, 29 April 2025, Field trip*</b></p> <p><b>Meeting time and place:</b> 09:00 at the entrance of Hotel Tatra, Námestie 1. mája 5, 811 06 Bratislava</p>
<b>09:00-18:00</b>	
<b>09:00-09:30</b>	<i>Travel to Devínska Kobyla</i>
09:30-12:30	<p><b>Visit to Devínska Kobyla</b></p> <p>Features xerothermic biotopes, forests, sand walls, and paleontological sites. The site hosts specific habitats with a high number of protected species. It is managed by NGOs and a local farmer under the guidance of public administration, with cooperation from local authorities, and demonstrates traditional management of xerothermic meadows, such as goat grazing. Examples of extensive forest management approaches and development of sustainable tourism will be provided.</p>
12:30-12:45	<i>Transfer to the lunch venue</i>
12:45-14:15	<b>Lunch at Hradna Brana, Muránská 1062/15, 841 10 Devín, Slovakia</b>
14:15-14:20	<i>Walk to Devínske rameno</i>
14:20-14:40	<p><b>Visit to Devínske rameno</b></p> <p>Devínske rameno (Devin branch) is part of the Natura 2000 site Bratislavské luhy typical by natural floodplain forests. The Devín branch was re-connected with the river after 70 years of isolation in 2015. The restoration done by the BROZ NGO aimed to ensure that the Devín branch flows along its entire length. At its inlet, the bottom was deepened by two meters and the 28-meter-long old bank fortification was removed. The applied measures contained removal of migration barriers for aquatic animals, creating suitable breeding grounds for fish and amphibians, removal of invasive plants and planting native trees.</p>

14:40-14:50	<i>Walk to Devínska hradná skala</i>
14:50-15:10	<p><b>Visit to Devínska hradná skala</b></p> <p>A small, scenic site renowned for its zoological, botanical, and geological significance. It can be visited if time allows or skipped if time is limited. Serves as an example of protecting a NATURA 2000 site located near a tourist hotspot—Devin Castle.</p>
15:10-15:55	<i>Travel to Rudava river</i>
15:55-17:00	<p><b>Visit to restored part of the Rudava river</b></p> <p>The Rudava river represents unique lowland river in Slovakia with natural channel, flowing in part of its course through sand dunes. Main part of the river is designed as Natura2000 site, Ramsar site and as protected area by national legislation. Protected is broad spectrum of habitats, including alder floodplain forests and natural river habitats. The restoration took place in channelized part of the river and it aimed in converting straight channel with bottom and banks fortified by concrete to meandering river. This type of restoration was applied here first time in Slovakia. After removal of fortification, meandering channel was excavated and where necessary, natural fortification of the banks was locally applied. The rest of channel formation was left for natural processes of the river. We will observe results.</p>
17:00-17:40	<i>Travel back to Bratislava – Drop off at Tatra hotel</i>

<b>CET time</b>	<p><b>DAY 3: Wednesday, 30 April 2025</b></p> <p><b>Venue: Small Congress Centre, SAS, Štefánikova 3, 814 99 Bratislava</b></p>
09:00-09:10	<p><b>Opening session:</b> Introduction to the day's scope and objectives</p> <p><i>Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>
09:10-09:30	<p><b>Recap of field trip</b></p> <p>Recap of the field visits from Day 2, focusing on key lessons learned and participant feedback</p> <p><i>Ľuboš Halada, Director, Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS</i></p> <p><i>Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>
09:30-10:20	<p><b>Discussion session: Sustainable tourism in protected areas</b></p> <p>Session on sustainable tourism in protected areas, addressing strategies for maintaining or expanding tourism offerings while safeguarding habitats and species</p> <p><i>Moderated by: Gatis Eriņš, Key Expert, ELLE</i></p>
10:20-10:30	<i>Coffee/tea</i>

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10:30-11:40	<p><b><i>Interactive group activity: The rockstars of protected area management</i></b></p> <p>Country teams to identify and present three examples of good practices from their national experience in managing protected areas (30 minutes for preparation, followed by four 10-minute presentations)</p> <p><i>Moderated by: Anete Pošiva-Bunkovska, Key Expert, ELLE</i></p>
11:40-12:00	<p><b><i>What's new in the EU policies?</i></b></p> <p>Updates on EU policy initiatives, including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law, and their implications for Emerald Network management.</p> <p><i>Speaker: Ľuboš Halada, Director, Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS</i></p> <p><i>Q&amp;A</i></p>
12:00-12:15	<p><b><i>Closing session:</i></b> Concluding remarks and workshop evaluation</p> <p><i>Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>

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