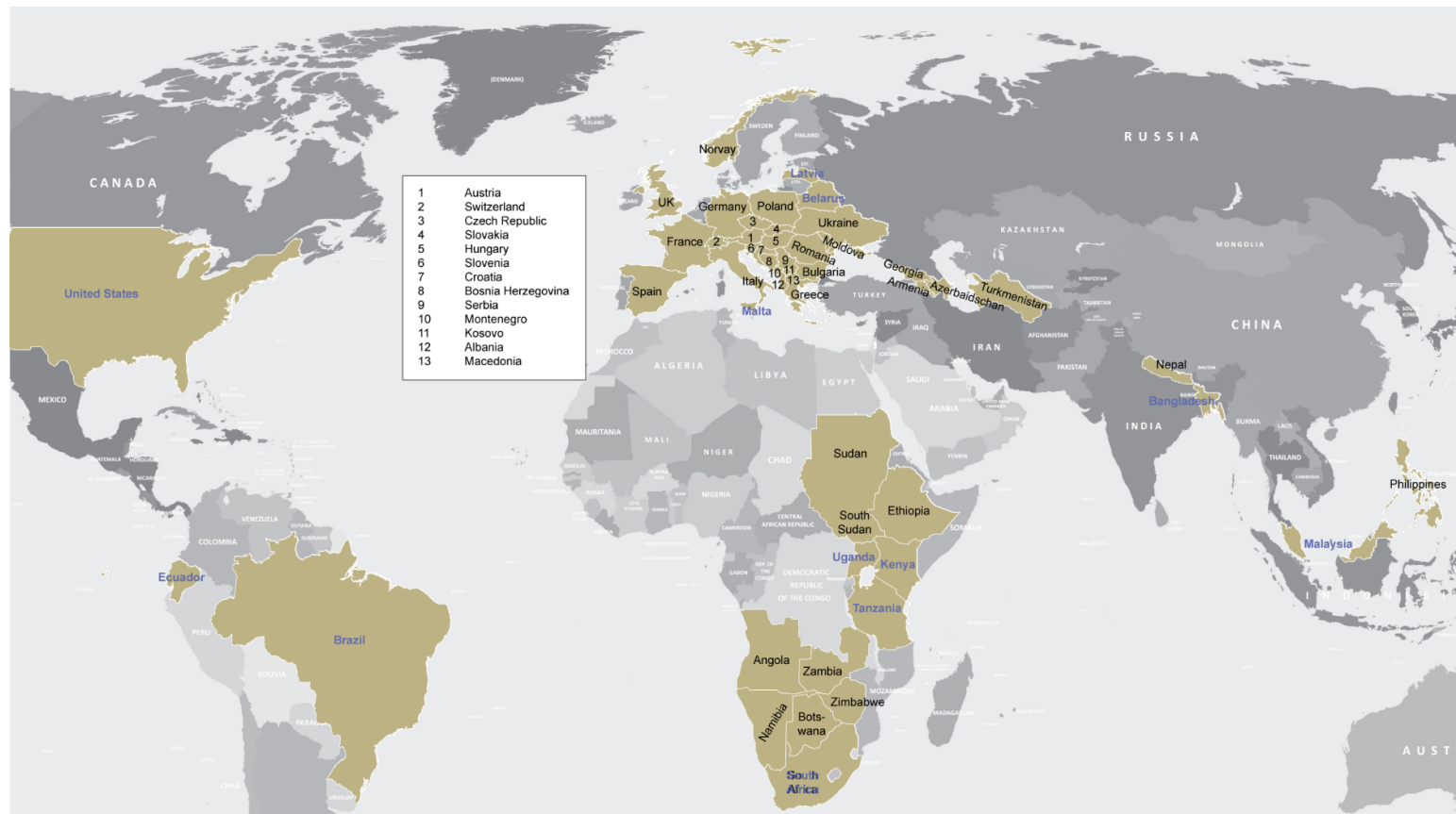


UNESCO Natural World Heritage: Primeval Beech Forest of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe



DI Michael Huber

Wilderness Workshop
Pruhonice
1.3. 2017



E.C.O. Institute of Ecology
Working in conservation for more than 20 years...

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Primeval beech forest are endangered...

Beech forest in Europe before human intervention: 91.000.000 ha

Current primeval/ancient beech forest: 90.000 ha

...and exclusively in Europe



Initiative to preserve the last remnants...



UNESCO World Natural Heritage

- Inscription on the World Heritage List under Criterion ix:
- “Outstanding examples representing **significant ongoing ecological and biological processes** in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.”



The OUV: A European natural heritage

- The WH is a “showcase for **the post glacial expansion process**, through a **series of sites** that include some of the glacial refuge areas and demonstrate the **most natural and undisturbed development history of European Beech Forest Ecosystems** as possible”.
- Main objective
 - Give the beech as typical European forest ecosystem a platform
 - Preserve the last remnants of ancient and primeval patches of beech forest in Europe
 - Create a pan-European network of knowledge, expertise and protected areas

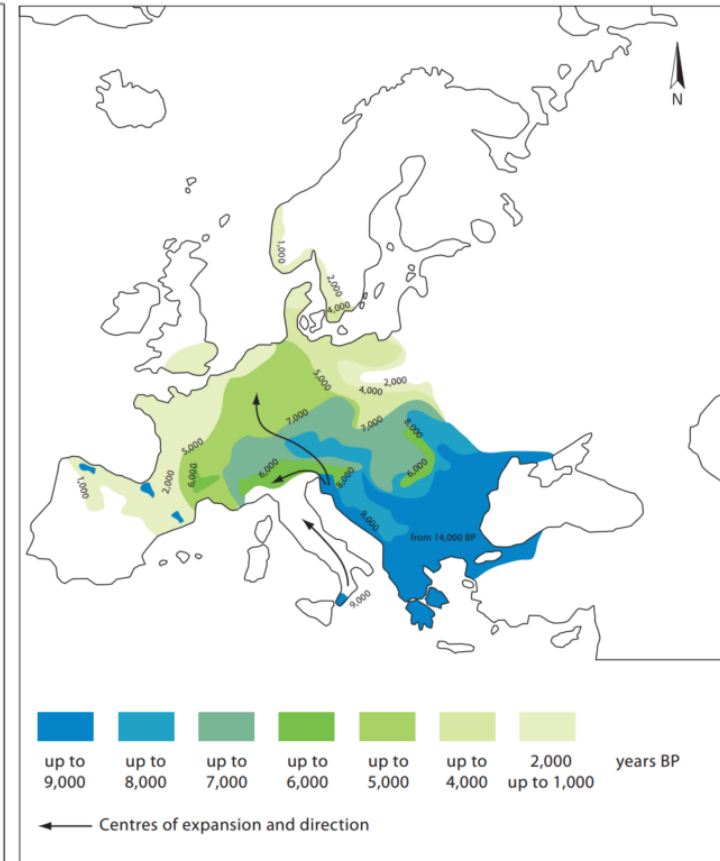
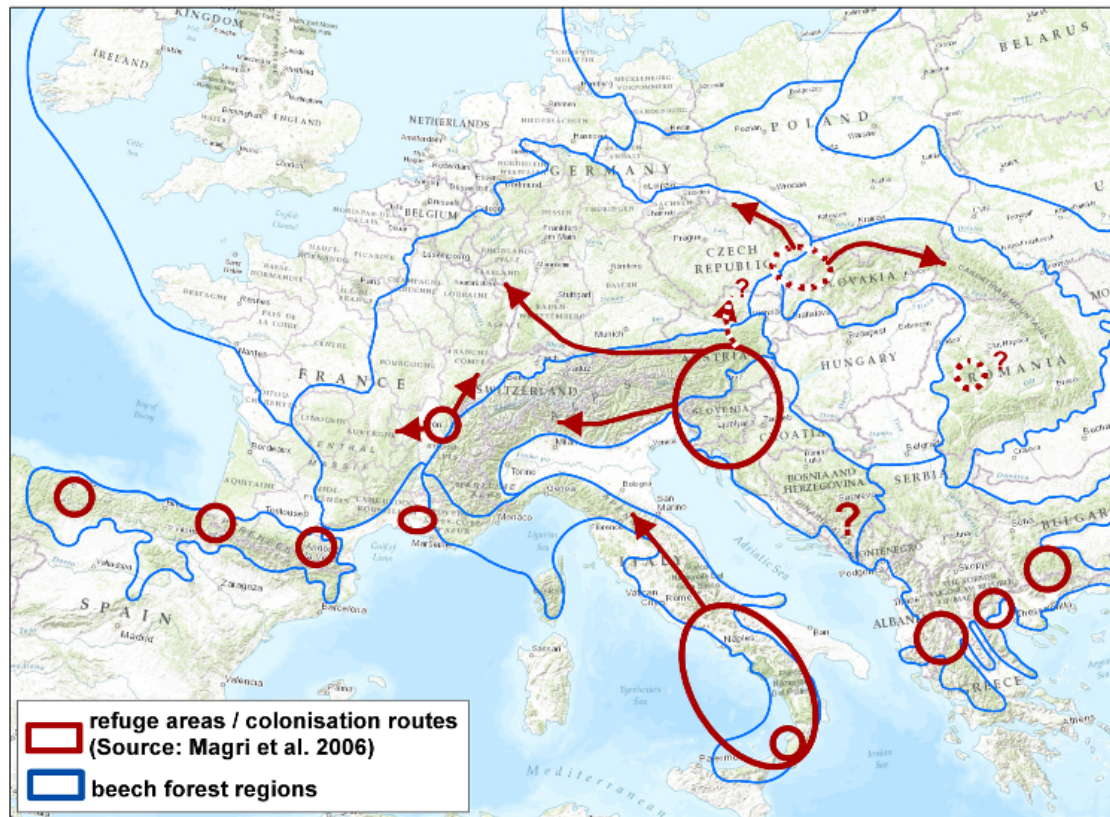


World Heritage, Beech and Wilderness?

- „Old wilderness“ approach
- Strictly representative site selection process
- Preservation of natural dynamics at a continental level
- Clearly focused objective: Fagus
- Representative selection process: Best sites
- Joint conservation effort across 12 countries
- Protection of natural dynamics in static sites in a static system of UNESCO World Heritage



Invasive speices: Refuge areas and postglacial expansion paths of European Beech

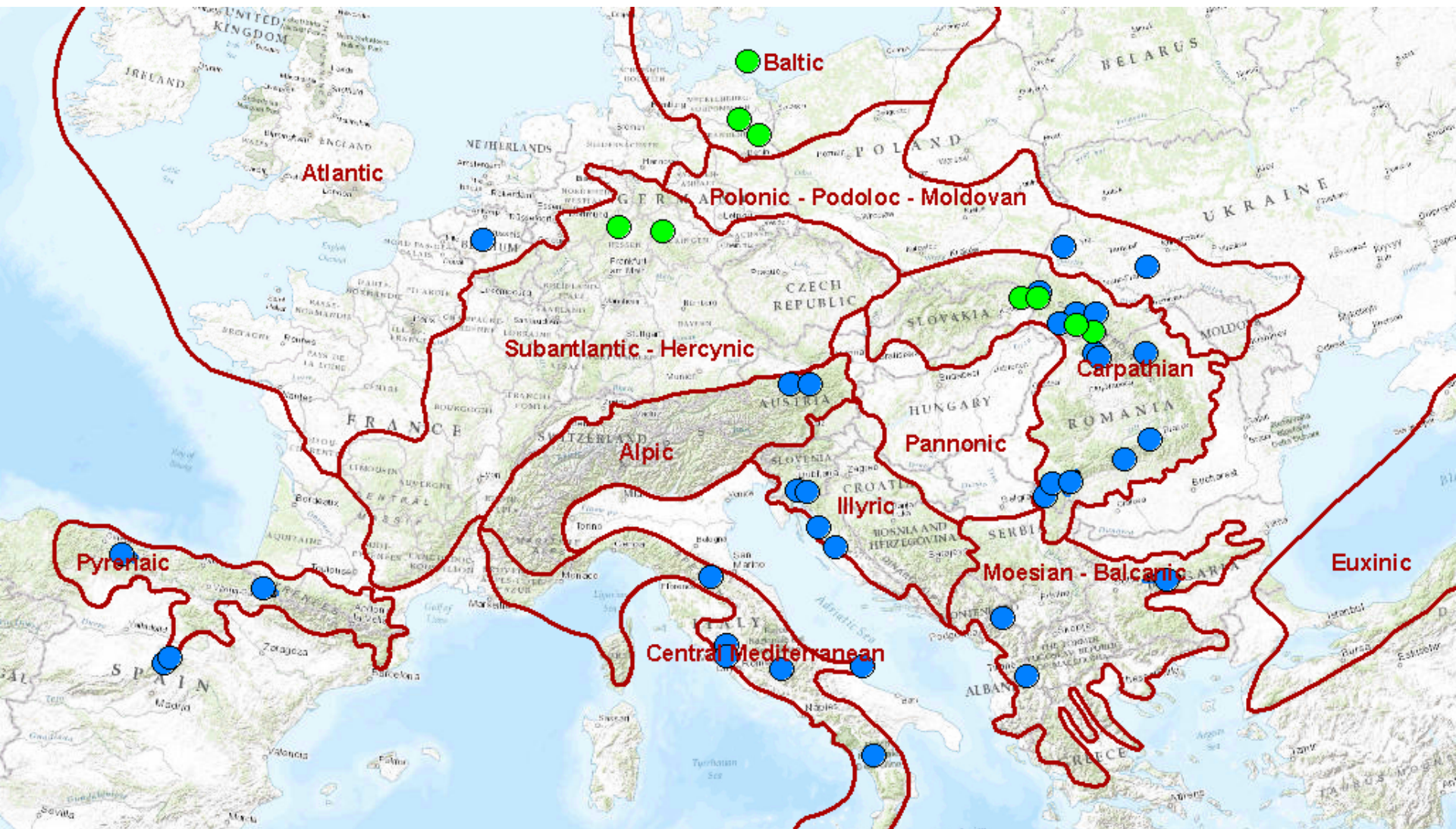


Short History of the process

- 2007: subscription of WH “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians”
- 2011: Subscription extension by 5 component parts in Germany
 - UNESCO WHC: subscription & recommendation:
 - Final extension including other State Parties
- 2012-2014: European Screening Process (financed by Germany)
- 2014-2016: European Nomination Process (financed by Austria)
- 2017: Evaluation report by IUCN and subscription by UNESCO pending

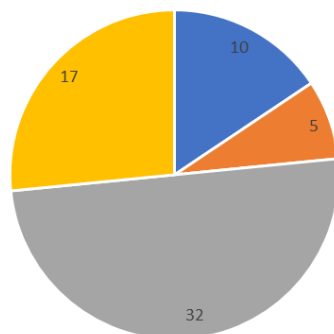


A European perspective: Network of sites



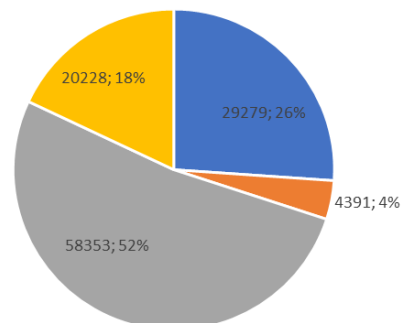
63 new sites between 60 and 5200 ha

Number of sites



■ listed 2007 ■ listed 2011 ■ nominated for 2017 ■ not participating now

Size (ha)



■ listed 2007 ■ listed 2011 ■ nominated for 2017 ■ not participating now

	Size of Country property (ha)	Number component parts
Albania	3.391	2
Austria	7.119	5
Belgium	269	5
Bulgaria	10.989	9
Croatia	3.321	3
<u>Germany</u>	<u>4.391</u>	<u>5</u>
Italy	2.127	10
Poland	3.307	4
Romania	23.983	12
Slovenia	795	2
<u>Slovakia</u>	<u>5.766</u>	<u>4</u>
Spain	890	6
Ukraine new	5.473	9
<u>Ukraine existing</u>	<u>23.513</u>	<u>6</u>
Sum new	61.664	67
Sum existing	33.670	15
Total	95.335	82



The selection process

■ Criteria

- Stand age and structure
- Size (100 ha in Western parts, 500 ha in Eastern parts), all component parts must show full spectrum of ecological development phases
- Time of non-intervention
- Protection status (equal to IUCN Cat. I or II, highly diverse)
- Ecological representativeness (Beech Forest regions)

■ The Vienna Shortlist

- 64 suitable sites selected for nomination process

■ Additional aspects during nomination

- Commitment of State Parties
- Appropriateness of protection status, minimum size and buffer zones



Dealing with management issues in the nominated property

- Integration into existing protected areas and their managements:
Strict non-intervention regime
- Different challenges between Eastern and Western parts
 - Small and strongly protected parts in the West, large and pristine but threatened areas in the East
- Management responsibility
 - Everyday management within authorities in charge
 - Coordinator and Joint Management Committee for transboundary cooperation and collaboration
 - Establishment of local thematic working groups for support
- Invasive alien species, bark beetle, game management and fire management



Conclusions and current status

- There are alternative or supporting ways to push the idea of wilderness
- Think big and use opportunities (12 country initiative!)
- Final decision in June – critical comments on behalf of IUCN - danger of breaking apart
- Opportunities:
 - Push cooperation and knowledge exchange between Eastern and Western protected areas at a European level
 - If successful would be a major push for European perception of wild (wilderness) areas and an initiative supporting wilderness promotion in Europe
 - Improving management standards and good practices amongst sites and joint responsibility for sites



Mini advertisement



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18.7. – 29.7.2017 in Klagenfurt Austria

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2017: The last steps

