

REC 3.107 Threats to the Danube Biosphere Reserve

ALARMED that threats of death and personal injury have been made against the long-time Director of Ukraine's Danube Biosphere Reserve (DBR) since the beginning of October 2004;

DISTURBED that computer equipment, records, and means of access to operating funds of the DBR were seized on November 2, 2004, by the Danube Transport Prosecutor's Office at the request of Ukraine's Ministry of Transport;

CONCERNED that these actions appear to be in retaliation for the outspoken positions taken by the Director against the construction of a navigation canal through the core of the DBR's most strictly protected area;

RECALLING that Resolution 2.37 *Support for environmental defenders* of the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000), called upon the IUCN Director General to speak out publicly and forcefully when environmental advocates are threatened and to discourage harassment or persecution of environmental advocates using all appropriate means;

FURTHER RECALLING that Resolution 19.28 *Environmental Impact Assessment* of the 19th IUCN General Assembly (Buenos Aires, 1996) called for "inclusion in law of provisions for meaningful public participation in the EIA process and full public access to relevant information" and that laws should ensure "that EIAs that are found to be inadequate are rejected";

CONVINCED that managers of protected areas who bring ecosystem threats to the attention of the public and national and international authorities should not suffer retaliatory actions directed against them personally or against their means of operation; and

INSISTENT that projects significantly affecting protected areas should go forward only after full environmental assessment meeting international standards, with sufficient opportunities for broad and effective participation by the public prior to, during and even after decision-making;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. ASKS the Government of Ukraine to provide adequate replacement operational equipment and means so that DBR officials can perform their duties to protect the Reserve;
2. URGES the Government of Ukraine and others to respect and guarantee the human rights of DBR officials and individuals who advocate for protection of reserves, and to ensure that they can perform their conservation and advocacy duties without fear of retaliation; and
3. ENCOURAGES all concerned to cooperate with international environmental institutions, conservation organizations, and governments in further measures to ensure proper public participation and assessment of impacts of projects involving the DBR.

State member Sweden abstained from voting on this motion for reasons given in the Swedish Government's general statement on the motions process (see page x).