

Hello friends!

Another month passed filled with events. We are waiting for July and we want to tell you about some events which are about to happen and then follows the June story.

FOR THE NATURE COALITION
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UPCOMING EVENTS

On **July 2**, you can join the demonstration "Let's make noise again for Irakli and Rila" starting at 17.30.

Beginning: The pylons of National Palace of Culture

End: The garden of St. Kliment Ohridski, next to Parliament

Come with spoons and instruments for making noise!!!

Leave Irakli and Rila alone!

We are saying goodbye to the criminal ruling coalition by not voting for them.

OUR DEMANDS at <http://forthenature.org/actions/205/>.



The first procession "Let's make noise for nature" gathered over 3500 people last year on October 7.

On **July 4-12**, Zhelen village (near Svoge) will host a 9-day fair dedicated to ecological agriculture and preserving the environment, nature medicine and prevention, adequate forms of education, upbringing and relationships. Main organizers are Trinoga Association and M.I.R. More information you can see here: <http://forthenature.org/news/808/>.

Vitosha Nature Park is looking for volunteers to be instructed on **July 3** how to carry out monitoring of high plants following the method of the [National system for monitoring of biodiversity](http://forthenature.org/news/810/). More on <http://forthenature.org/news/810/>.

And now follows the story for the past month June.

THE ECOLOGICAL POLICY OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT?

Having in mind the pre-election situation (this time for the Bulgarian Parliament) we begin again with information about our demands, grouped in 9 points. Six political parties took part in the discussion **The Ecological policy of the next government** that took place on June 16 in New Bulgarian University. The Bulgarian Socialist Party, The Blue Coalition, GERB, the Bulgarian Greens, Lider and Political Party "The Other Bulgaria" announced their commitments for protecting Bulgaria's forests and biodiversity. There was no one from the "National Movement Simeon the Second" (one of the three parties in the triple coalition that ruled Bulgaria for four years), because it appeared that their only environmental expert was not in Sofia.

Please see detailed information here: <http://forthenature.org/news/802/>. We won't allow the politicians' pre-election promises to remain just words, we plan to remain as committed to our cause as we have always been and visit the newly elected politicians regularly in the next 4 years with video records reminding them of their commitments to protect Bulgarian nature and the sustainable development of the country.

TROUBLING NEWS FROM RILA

On **June 6**, Citizens for Rila made a field investigation in Panichishte, results and pictures of which you can see here: <http://forthenature.org/gallery/162/>. During the research journalists from Financial Times learned more about the illegal constructions in Rila and the two-year attempts of people preserving nature to protect the mountain. The article of Financial Times about Super Panichishte can be read here: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c1fcd5bc-5c1d-11de-aea3-00144feabdc0,dwp_uid=6bfe44ba-5b10-11de-be3f-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1. In the end of the month we heard very troubling news that Rila Sport AD and Sapareva Bania Municipality are soon starting to build an as-

phalt road from the place, where the lift enters Rila National Park to the Rila Lakes Chalet!!!



The scandalous lift above Panichishte is working despite being in violation of numerous Bulgarian and European laws.

Again in Rila the public discussion of the general spatial plan for the yet another **mega ski resort project "Iskrovete"** near Govedartsi took place on **June 2**. Members of the Coalition made a common standpoint that the project for private resort of the businessman oligarch Hristo Kovachki (born in the village Madzhare, near Govedartsi) will cause many problems.

The project is economically groundless because of the low sea-level of the ski-tracks. Also it doesn't have the obligatory compatibility assessment with the Natura 2000 network, which can lead to an infringement procedure and sanctions for Bulgaria from the European Union. "Iskrovete – Govedartsi – Maliovitsa" is developed in immediate vicinity to the borders of Rila National Park and zone "Rila" which is part of Natura 2000. There are fears the Bansko scenario will be repeated: you give a finger to the dog and it bites your whole hand – very soon after the investors start building facilities and ski tracks near the National Park they will put pressure to enter the Park itself and place infrastructure there.

The general spatial plan foresees doubling the number of accommodation in the region from 878 to 13,000 beds. The population in the region is little over 2,000 people and such proportion will lead to unsustainable development.

Near the planned resort are planned two more resorts: Super Borovets and Super Panichishte, which will lead to a huge cumulative effect in the mountain and massive build-up on its Northern side – a problem about which everyone keeps silent. More about Iskrovete, the problems surrounding it and the forest swaps of Kovachki near Govedartsi and Maliovitsa can be found here: <http://forthenature.org/cases/27/>.

We soon expect the European Commission to start an infringement procedure against Bulgaria because of the systematic violations in Rila and protected areas there.

“VITOSHA SKI” AD CIRCUMVENTS THE LAW AGAIN

Another legal violation was uncovered in Vitosha on **June 25** – we found out from the website of “Vitosha Ski” AD an announcement that the public consultations of the report on the ecological assessment of the specialized detailed spatial plan of the “Tourist and Ski Zone Aleko” have started (<http://www.skivitosha.com>). This is the well-known idea for widening of the existing ski-tracks and facilities in Vitosha Nature Park, which violates the law.

The problem is that “Vitosha Ski” AD introduces for public discussion the ecological assessment of a detailed spatial plan, which is not approved by Sofia Municipality. Thus, the investor has no permission to prepare a project and puts to public discussion a project that is non-existent from legal point of view. More about the investor’s tricks and disrespect for laws: <http://forthenature.org/news/814>.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE STRANDZHA COURT CASES

Bluelink announced that the Supreme Administrative Court has declined the appeal of the non-governmental organizations against the ecological assessment of the general spatial plan of Tsarevo municipality. The adoption and implementation of the plan will lead to massive over construction of the whole Black Sea coastline of Tsarevo Municipality (except for three reserves), which is a border of Strandzha Nature Park.

We remind that before that the Supreme Administrative Court accepted the complaint of non-governmental organizations, with which they appealed the general spatial plan itself as a whole. Now the case is in the Supreme Administrative Court which has to refer a question to the Court of European Communities for interpreting the European legislation, as the non-governmental organizations asked in their complaint. We advise you to hear the interview with lawyer Svilen Ovcharov on the Bluelink site (<http://www.bluelink.net/index.shtml?x=41460>) with full and comprehensive explanation of the problems with the general spatial plan of Tsarevo Municipality and the court cases that are lead.

PIRIN NATIONAL PARK AND UNESCO

The annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO took place in Sevilla in the end of last week. After several inspections in Pirin Mountain, UNESCO took the decision – Bulgaria will either guarantee that the building of new ski-resorts will stop, or in February 2010 UNESCO will enlist the site in the list of “world natural heritage sites in danger” with all consequences for Bulgaria. In the beginning of 2009 Bulgaria has proposed that the ski-zones above Bansko, Razlog and Dobrinishte in Pirin Natural Park be excluded from the world natural heritage site. In this way the state admits it hasn’t managed to preserve the site. This is a serious diplomatic blunder and loss of reputation for Bulgaria. Read more here: <http://forthenature.org/news/816/>.

HOW SHOULD WIND ENERGY BE DEVELOPED?

On **June 19**, "For The Nature" Coalition took part in the discussion forum in Kavarna entitled "The development of wind energy parks in Bulgaria – hand in hand with protecting the environment". Our representatives stated again the Coalition's opinion that the priority development of the wind energy sector in Bulgaria with the aim to reach the EU aims of 20-percent share of renewable sources energy for all member states shouldn't happen to the detriment of another key EU priority – stopping the loss of biodiversity, which is extremely important for combating climate change successfully. Currently in Bulgaria the development of the wind energy sector is entirely unorganized, the wind energy parks are often placed on unsuitable places, in protected areas, where they cause serious damage to biodiversity. Permits for the construction of wind power generators are issued on a mass scale, very often without any environmental impact assessments whatsoever. More details here: <http://forthenature.org/news/806/>.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SAVE WATER

On **June 5**, the Coalition took part in an event that popularizes the economization of water and energy, organized by the company Electrolux for the International Environment Day. The event took place in the Botanic Garden in Sofia. Often we connect protecting the environment of Bulgaria with the responsibilities of the state or the municipalities, without taking into account the fact that each one of us can help through our everyday life in work or at home. Decreasing the amount of natural resources or energy we use will not only lessen our monthly bills for electricity, water or heating, but will also force the suppliers of those resources to lessen the pressure over nature.

Why it is important to save the water in Bulgaria, read here: <http://forthenature.org/news/791/>.

WE CAN SAVE THE BLUE PLANET

On **June 21**, more than 100 children from Sandanski and the neighborhood sent out the message: "We can save the blue planet!" The spectacle was organized by "Jasmine" ballet formation in partnership with "For The Nature" Coalition. The Earth was represented by four storms and four seasons: an air fairy-scene was changing with fire colors and stormy waters, golden fish and little mushrooms spelled out their appeal for cleaner sea and forest, we saw the colorful spring, the green summer, the bright autumn and the white snowy winter and we all wished they stay like that. More about this beautiful event and pictures you can see here: <http://forthenature.org/news/812/>.



MORE EVENTS

On **June 19**, a team from the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds saved a young Eastern imperial eagle. More on: <http://forthenature.org/news/811/> and <http://bspb.org/show/1220-33>.



Photo source

Here are a couple of interesting and useful **handbooks**: [«Handbook of the European mechanisms of filing complaints»](#), [“How does the European Union function”](#), [“How can our voice be heard in the European Union”](#)

On **June 27 and 28**, the first counting of bikers in the sea capital Varna took place, more about the event can be found here: <http://forthenature.org/actions/207/> .This event is organized by Bike Evolution Association and Drag bicycles.

So, dear citizens we finish with our digest of June and we count on your active position and curiosity about the problems and actions for protecting the nature in the next month.

Wishing you a fruitful, happy and sunny summer!
Yours sincerely: For The Nature Coalition