

PN-ABK-359
75777



PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS IN BULGARIA

ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs IN BULGARIA

SEPTEMBER 5, 1991

Prepared by:

Richard A. Liroff
World Wildlife Fund
1250 24th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

WORLD ENVIRONMENT CENTER

419 Park Avenue South, Suite 1800
New York, NY 10016

December 1991

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed herein are the professional opinions of the author and do not represent the official position of the Government of the United States or the World Environment Center.

Contents

- A. Introduction and Overview
- B. Executive Summary--Parks and Protected Areas
- C. Executive Summary--NGOs and Public Information
- D. Annex--Parks and Protected Areas
- E. Annex--NGOs and Public Information
- F. Schedule of Major Meetings and Events
- G. Selected Contacts
- H. Biographical Sketch of the Author

Appendices

- o Red Data Book of the People's Republic of Bulgaria--
Volume 2. Animals (English language summary)
- o Charter '89 for Preservation of the Bulgarian Nature
Heritage--Ecoglasnost
- o Policy Statement of the Social Movement Ecoglasnost (re
public information)
- o Report of the Bulgarian Delegation, Representing
Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodopi
Mountains, presented at Ecological Bricks Meeting,
Gyor, Hungary, May 1991
- o Information Bulletin of the Bulgarian Society for the
Protection of Birds, Issue No. 1, September 1990
- o Wilderness Fund (description of Bulgarian NGO)
- o Iankov and Profirov, "The Necessity and Prerequisites
for the Establishment of the East Rhodope National
Park," (excerpts from 1985 conference paper)
- o Spiridonov and Mileva, "Bulgarian Natural Heritage
Charter" program for future nature protection in
Bulgaria presented to National Assembly on behalf of
Green Party Parliamentary Group, 1990.
- o Bulgarian Parks and Protected Areas, according to IUCN
categories (list in French compiled by Dr. Jeko
Spiridonov, March 1991)
- o Spiridonov, "Le Systeme D'Aires Protegees (AP) Dans La

Region Frontaliere de La Bulgarie Du Sud," Paper presented at the meeting, "Transboundary Parks," April 1990, Perugia, Italy, hosted by IUCN and CEDIP (Centro Documentazione Internazionale Parchi [International Park Documentation Center])

- o Chapter on Bulgaria from Grimmett and Jones (eds.) Important Bird Areas in Europe, International Council for Bird Preservation, ICBP Technical Publication No. 9.
- o Excerpt on Bulgaria from IUCN, "Protected Areas in Eastern and Central Europe and the USSR--An Interim Review" (1990)
- o Spiridonov, Map of Proposed Rhodope and Strandja Mountain Trans-boundary Parks, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey (Note: This oversized color appendix is being provided only to AID, the World Bank, and WWF-International)
- o Rhodope Mountain Excerpt from "Ecological Bricks for Our Common House of Europe"

Introduction and Overview

This report summarizes my two week visit to Bulgaria in June 1991 as the NGO/protected areas specialist for a joint U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/U.S. Agency for International Development/World Bank environmental mission.

I owe an extraordinary debt to the major national NGO, Ecoglasnost, for arranging the field excursions described in this report. The success of Ecoglasnost's Dr. Elena Petkova in arranging meetings with industry representatives, government officials and others is a tribute to the high regard in which Ecoglasnost is held in Bulgaria. With grace and good humor, Dr. Petkova patiently responded to the multiple and changing demands of the mission's members, adapting her proposed schedule not only to my requirements but to those of other mission members. Ecoglasnost's role in assisting me and collaterally assisting other mission members is just another reminder of the important role NGOs can play in fostering international environmental cooperation and domestic policy change.

My original task was to work primarily on NGOs (and public information) and secondarily on protected areas. But during the mission I became the primary protected areas specialist and thus gave equal attention to both NGOs and protected areas. This report contains updated versions of the executive summaries and annexes on NGOs and protected areas presented in mid-July to AID and the World Bank for inclusion in their report to the Bulgarian government. This report also includes as appendices various documents provided by individuals with whom I met.

This report does not attempt to incorporate information about forestry management practices, about various industrial facilities, and about the health effects reportedly associated with industrial facilities, since much of this information was also presented to other members of the AID/EPA/World Bank accompanying me and is best left for incorporation in the trip reports of the specialists assigned to these topics.

Richard A. Liroff
Director
Central and Eastern
Europe Program
WWF-US
September 5, 1991

Executive Summary--Parks and Protected Areas

1. In terms of botanical biodiversity, Bulgaria is perhaps the third richest area of continental Europe. The Rhodope Mountains are especially noteworthy for their biodiversity. Many existing nature reserves need to be expanded to better protect their natural values.
2. Responsibility for identifying, designating, and managing protected natural areas is highly fragmented within Bulgaria. Major participants include the Institute of Ecology, Ministry of Environment, the Forestry Committee, and the Agrolesproject unit of the Forestry Committee. The existing allocation of responsibility is not conducive to strong identification and management of areas deserving protection.
3. Funds allocated to management of protected areas appear to be inadequate. Substantial cuts in funding for protected areas were reported to mission representatives during field visits. The Bulgarian government should explore new sources of funding for protected areas (e.g., from user fees and from surcharges on tourist facilities benefitting from such areas).
4. Insufficient attention has been paid to educating the Bulgarian public about the natural values of existing reserves and the benefits to be derived by expanding the existing reserve system.
5. Many government-owned facilities are present within existing protected areas. The Bulgarian government should consider placing a high priority on conversion of such facilities to visitor information centers, environmental museums, and the like.
6. Although it has nine national parks and many more protected areas, Bulgaria has not developed a team of trained nature protection and nature interpretation specialists such as those found in other countries.
7. A growing number of Bulgarian NGOs are demonstrating interest in expanding the existing system of protected areas and lending their support to the enhanced management of the system. These include The Wilderness Fund, the Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodopi Mountains, and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds.
8. Bulgaria's rich natural endowment will be at continued and perhaps increased risk in the future if Bulgaria fails to make a firmer administrative and financial commitment to nature protection. This should include redesign of existing authorities for planning and administering protected areas, enhanced training of park managers, an aggressive program for educating the public about natural values, and the creative involvement of NGOs in planning and administering parks and providing educational

services to the public.

9. Potential areas of technical assistance and training might include developing improved administrative structures for park management; developing a curriculum for training park managers; and sharing experience in involving the public in natural area education.

Executive Summary--NGOs and Public Information

1. Environmental NGOs have a major role to play in influencing Bulgaria's evolving environmental policies. The best known and most influential of the environmental NGOs is Ecoglasnost. The mission appreciates Ecoglasnost's assistance in arranging field visits to industrial facilities and protected areas.

Ecoglasnost's success in arranging these visits is a tribute to the high regard in which it is generally held throughout Bulgaria.

2. The free flow of information has been a central concern of Ecoglasnost from its initial foundation. But access to information remains a serious problem. Ecoglasnost leaders from throughout Bulgaria demonstrated great dissatisfaction with government policies concerning public information. The mission heard repeated complaints about information being hard to get, not reliable, and not trustworthy. Data reported as average values mask peak values that can constitute significant health risks. Scientists active in Ecoglasnost reported using their laboratories after hours to analyze samples, both to supplement or verify government data or simply to develop data where none had been developed by government.

3. At present, there appear to be few incentives for government officials to disclose environmental data; to the contrary, withholding of data has been a widely accepted principle of behavior. For this to change requires not only a strong legal requirement for public disclosure, but also strong signals sent from the highest levels of government that data must be routinely disclosed. There are some signs of increased openness, but much remains to be done.

4. The government of Bulgaria should consider an aggressive program of public information. Key elements might include:

- maps of "hot spots"

- simple to understand pollution alert systems

- maximum use of the press to disclose information.

Pollution information can become as routinized as weather reports (as exemplified in Katowice, Poland, where ambient air quality readings in relation to standards are routinely reported.)

- opportunities for review of data gathering and reporting techniques by outside experts and NGOs.

5. Several NGOs have been organized to advance the cause of nature conservation in Bulgaria. These include The Wilderness Fund, The Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodope Mountains, and The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds. Details on the activities of these organizations (and of Ecoglasnost) are found in the accompanying annex and the attached appendices.

6. Ecoglasnost representatives from throughout Bulgaria requested technical assistance and training related to environmental monitoring. These requests are symptomatic of distrust of government data. An aggressive public disclosure program such as that described above, together with technical assistance and training for equipment accessible to both government officials and NGOs could respond to the NGOs' request for environmental monitoring equipment.

7. Ecoglasnost representatives also expressed interest in identifying one town whose environmental problems are somewhat manageable, where a cooperative, community-wide problem-solving program can be developed, based on an integrated (air/water/soil) approach to environmental management.

8. Ecoglasnost representatives expressed interest in receiving training in organizational management, so as to enhance their ability to effectively organize and influence evolving environmental policies.

Annex--Parks and Protected Areas

1. The observations that follow are based on extended conversations with staff of The Institute of Ecology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, on briefer conversations with staff of the Forestry Committee and the Ministry of Environment, and visits to existing and prospective protected areas such as Vitosha National Park, the Rila Mountains, and reserves and special purpose forests in the Eastern Rhodopes Mountains and along the Black Sea Coast.

2. Staff of The Institute of Ecology advised that in terms of botanical biodiversity, Bulgaria is perhaps the third richest area of continental Europe (the other two areas are the Alps and a portion of Spain). The Rhodope Mountains are especially noteworthy for their biodiversity. The mission was advised by The Institute of Ecology that many existing nature reserves need to be expanded to better protect their natural values.

3. Pertinent legislation and a listing of protected areas is provided in a 1990 publication of IUCN's Eastern Europe Program, Protected Areas in Eastern and Central Europe and the USSR: An Interim Review. (Attached as an appendix to this report.) The list includes nine national parks, 28 botanical reserves, 3 forest reserves, 13 biosphere reserves and one World Heritage Site (Pirin National Park). (Note: Sreburna, Bulgaria's largest river lake and a very valuable wetland area, was declared a World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site in 1983. A March 1991 compilation by The Institute of Ecology's Dr. Jeko Spiridonov lists 17 biosphere reserves in Bulgaria, all declared in 1977. Dr. Spiridonov's list is attached as an appendix to this report.) Dr. Spiridonov has submitted to the National Assembly a chart of natural heritage areas, apparently in conjunction with the Assembly's consideration of nature protection legislation. The mission was advised that several versions of a new nature protection law has been introduced into the National Assembly. Although an English language text of these was not given to the mission, the mission was advised that Dr. Spiridonov's legislation would incorporate IUCN criteria for designation of protected areas and would specify minimum staffing requirements for protected areas based on their size.

4. Responsibility for identifying, designating, and managing protected natural areas is highly fragmented within Bulgaria. The Institute of Ecology recommends prospective protected areas to the Ministry of the Environment, the Forestry Committee reports on the potential limitations on timber production owing to preserve designation, the Ministry of Environment establishes protected areas by official decree, "zoning" of parks is conducted by Agrolesproject, the planning unit of the Forestry Committee, and management of the resulting areas may be the responsibility of either the Forestry Committee, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, or local units of government.

5. The Institute of Ecology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was organized about two years ago. Its four departments include functioning of ecosystems; ecological modeling and monitoring; environmental genetics and ecosystem protection; and regional development and environment. The Institute is the base for the organizers of several Bulgarian NGOs including The Wilderness Fund, the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, and the Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodopi Mountains. (Material from these NGOs is attached as an appendix to this report.)

6. The Agrolesproject is the planning arm of the Forestry committee. It has three basic design departments, for forests and game, parks, and roads. It also has a finance, planning and economics department and it has a laboratory facility for soil and vegetation analyses. On an annual basis it develops plans for approximately 350,000 hectares of forest, and for 150-200 kilometers of forest roads. Its recent annual budget was 6.5 million leva. It works on a contract basis for the forestry committee and other clients. The forestry committee is its main client, followed by the Ministry of Environment. It has five branch offices within Bulgaria and is attempting to market its planning services overseas in North Africa and the Middle East.

Agrolesproject has a staff of 280, of whom 20-25 work in the parks section. Two-thirds of the parks section is comprised of "park engineers". It also has a landscape architect, 3-4 surveyors, and one or more sewage specialists. The parks planning section works closely with the forestry academy at the University of Sofia and consults with biologists, botanists, and zoologists from various institutes. The park engineers get slightly different training from forest engineers, in that the former take park-oriented courses in recreation, landscape, vegetation, and architecture.

In 1990, Agrolesproject begin preliminary planning for the enlargement of Pirin National Park and for the expansion and consolidation of protected areas within the park boundary. Mission staff were briefed on the planning by Agrolesproject's Ludmila Jozeva. A new nature preserve within the park will be created in an area that has been closed to human interference for ten years, and a ten year closure will be imposed on another area projected to be a nature reserve. The existing Pirin park is 40,000 hectares. The boundary expansion in the proposed plan would yield a 65,000 hectare park. No new lodging is proposed for the park but the planners hope that 13,200 beds will be developed in tourist villages within the park's buffer zones. These could provide revitalization for some declining villages within the zones.

Agrolesproject also has been ordered by the Forestry Committee to being research on a national park in the West Rhodope mountains,

estimated to be larger than 100,000 hectares. The committee on forests provided 200,000 leva in 1991 to finance the delineation of the boundaries for the prospective park.

7. The Protected Areas Section of the Ministry of Environment, which consists of three to four individuals, works closely with the Agrolesproject and the Institute of Ecology on parks and protected areas. Presently, the section is conducting preliminary work on national parks in the Central Balkan range and the Rila Mountains; work is more advanced on the Rila plans. The Rila Park is about 100,000 hectares. The boundaries have been drawn to exclude ski areas in the mountains. Hotel development is expected along the fringes of the park. As part of the planning, plans for a water diversion project within the park were cancelled. The park will contain some managed forests that will be harvested at slow rates.

8. Responsibility for management of approximately 90 percent of Bulgaria's protected natural areas rests with the Forestry Committee, because most of the designated natural areas lie within mountain areas falling within the jurisdiction of the Committee. The Forestry Committee distinguishes between economic forests, where emphasis is placed on timber production, and "special purpose" forests, which include such places as protected catchment areas, nature preserves, and national parks.

The Forestry Committee was created in early 1991 and appears to be a response to the chronic overharvesting of Bulgaria's forests under previous regimes. The forestry committee is supposed to establish state policy in the field of forestry. The committee is comprised of 16 regions, within which there are smaller forest districts or "technical sectors". Historically, managers of protected areas have not had special status within the administrative structure of the Forestry Committee. The Forestry Committee recently established a special department for protected areas, comprised of three forest engineers and one biologist, apparently with the intent of changing the reporting structure for protected areas. The mission did not speak with members of this new department about their objectives and plans.

9. The planning process for protected areas is comprised of several phases. The first step is establishment of the boundaries of a protected area (e.g., a national park) by the Ministry of Environment. The major responsibility for detailed planning then lies with the Agrolesproject, which engages in a consultative process with experts, local authorities, and others. (The extent of participation by the general public in this process was not determined by the mission.) The planning process includes such steps as flora/fauna inventories; threat identification; preparation of zoning; and identification of pollution control needs associated with infrastructure development. (A Bulgarian "red data book" of threatened and

endangered species was published in 1985. An English summary of Volume 2--animals is attached as an appendix to this report.) After the planning is completed, the plan is adopted by the Ministry of Environment.

10. The history of the existing Vitosha National Park and the protected areas within it illustrates some of the problems associated with nature protection in Bulgaria. The Vitosha National Park is the oldest national park both in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula. The 1934 decree establishing the park decreed no construction of houses over 800 meters in the park, but this restriction was loosened in 1952. The mission was advised that there are a substantial number of illegally-constructed buildings within the park.

The park has two major biosphere reserves. In the 1980s, approximately 100 hectares were deleted from the edge of the Bistrizza Reserve (a UNESCO-designated reserve under the Man and Biosphere program) for construction of ski facilities. (A plan to take even more of the reserve for ski facilities was shelved after an international outcry from conservation organizations.) Aside from the protected areas, the park serves as a major recreation area for nearby Sofia. It contains several ski runs, the biggest of which is 3.5 kilometers in length. The amount of park use is uncertain; one estimate from a park official was 1,000,000 visitors last year.

Since 1952, Vitosha has been administered by the Sofia municipal authorities. Previously it was administered by national forestry authorities. The park has suffered from major budget cutbacks in recent years. The number of forest guards was reported as being cut from 44 to 6. The mission was advised that two years ago the park had a staff of 200 and that this has been cut to 100, of whom 70 are low level maintenance staff. Of the remaining 30, 6 are forest guards, 2 are forest engineers, and there are 8 supervisors (2 for each district within the park).

The mission was advised that until recently, the fee charged for one ride on the ski lift was 80 stotinki and that a one day pass for the ski lift cost 4 leva. These fees have recently been raised, but the recreational facilities may still not be self-supporting financially.

The mission was advised that two alternative plans have been discussed for Vitosha's future. One, favored at one time by the Sofia municipal authorities, calls for more aggressive development of recreational facilities. The other, advanced by The Wilderness Fund, emphasizes better protection of Vitosha's natural features.

11. The mission was advised that the "ecological bricks" proposal of a consortium of central and east European NGOs calls

for creation of a trans-boundary national park along the the Bulgarian-Greek border that might include the Pirin, Rila, and Rhodope Mountains, the northern Greek lake district, and the Nestos and other deltas on the Aegean Sea. Dr. Jordan Danchev, Chairman of the Bulgarian Society for the Conservation of the Rhodope Mountains, who is a scientist at The Institute of Ecology, provided the mission with considerable information about the Rhodope Mountains. 5/6 of the mountains lie in Bulgaria and the remaining portion lies in Greece. They contain 211 of the 732 endangered and rare species of plants listed in Bulgaria's Red Data Book and the densest Bulgarian population of raptors. Historically, a major threat to the mountains has been overcutting of timber. Another threat is extraction of low grade heavy metals and uranium, and quarrying of marble, stone and granite. These in turn have led to pollution of surface waters and depletion of groundwater. The groundwater depletion has contributed to drying up of water supplies for settlements and changes in vegetation. The Rhodopes are also the site of approximately 20 hydropower dams whose waters are subject to sedimentation. The eastern Rhodopes have been heavily deforested, largely as a result of overgrazing many decades ago; the Forestry Committee has launched a major program to reforest the area and control erosion. Despite the problems of deforestation in the Eastern Rhodopes, a suggestion has been made by Dr. Lubomir Profirov of the Ministry of Environment for establishment of an East Rhodope National Park to encompass an area especially rich in raptor populations and containing 168 protected species. This proposal is contained in a paper presented to a conference of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program convened in Bulgaria in 1985. (See appendices to this report for selected papers on the Rhodopes Mountains.)

The mission was also given a hand-drawn map of a prospective trans-boundary park for the Rhodope Mountains, encompassing other portions of Southern Bulgaria (including the Pirin National Park) developed by Dr. Jeko Spiridonov of The Institute of Ecology. (Copies of this map are attached as appendices to this report.)

As noted above, the Agrolesproject has begun preliminary work on planning for a West Rhodopes Park. Agrolesproject expressed interest in receiving satellite photos of the Western Rhodopes; currently it works from black and white photos taken from aircraft.

Dr. Spiridonov also provided the mission with a map of a prospective trans-boundary park along the Bulgarian-Turkish border, incorporating the Strandja Mountains. (Copies of this map are attached as appendices to this report.) Lubomir Profirov of the Protected Areas Section of the Ministry of the Environment noted that within this region exists a Turkish national park of 40,000 hectares and several existing or prospective nature preserves on the Bulgarian side. Ministry of Environment staff

advised that in botanical terms, this region is similar to the rich Caucasus region of the Soviet Union.

12. Funds allocated to protected area management appear to be inadequate. Substantial cuts in funding for protected areas were reported to mission representatives during field visits. The Bulgarian government should explore the potential of directing a portion of the proceeds from Balkantourist and other facilities adjacent to and in existing and potential park areas to park protection and education activities.

13. During field visits, mission members were alerted to the presence of government structures in existing protected areas that might be used as environmental education facilities. The government should consider placing a high priority on conversion of such facilities to visitor information centers, environmental museums, and the like. The government should also explore opportunities to involve the public in interpretive and education activities, including permitting NGOs to develop and staff exhibits at such facilities. For example, the mission was advised that the "Monument of Liberators" in Varna is being converted to an ecological museum. The NGO Ecoglasnost has been offered an opportunity to play a role in use of the facility although it is not clear that Ecoglasnost has the resources to do so.

14. Although it has nine national parks and many more protected areas, Bulgaria has not developed a team of trained nature protection and nature interpretation specialists. Responsibility for management of most areas is simply one more responsibility of personnel of the Forest Committee. While Bulgaria is proud of the substantial professional training these personnel receive in forest curriculum programs, there does not appear to be any specialized training for protection of natural areas that are not managed as economic forests. (That is, there is no training of a specialized corps of park rangers or refuge managers, such as are found in the United States and other countries.)

15. Insufficient attention has been paid to educating the Bulgarian public about the natural values of existing reserves and the benefits to be derived by expanding the existing reserve system. Mission representatives were repeatedly advised that brochures and other descriptive materials concerning reserves were not available, or such materials were made available only to selected foreign visitors such as ourselves. For example, even though the Rila nature reserve is well-marked by roadside signs, mission representatives were advised that the Forestry Committee has no funds available for brochures describing the reserve. If such brochures were available, perhaps the reserve would be more greatly appreciated by visitors to the adjoining Rila Monastery (the largest monastery on the Balkan Peninsula, which received an

11'

estimated 240,000 visitors in a recent year). A further symptom of the lack of information is the fact that the currently available map of protected areas in Bulgaria is ten years old.

16. A growing number of Bulgarian NGOs are demonstrating interest in expanding the existing system of protected areas and lending their support to the enhanced management of the system. These include the Wilderness Fund, the Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodopi Mountains, and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds.

17. Nature preserves, national parks, and other such protected areas can have significant economic value. Such areas can reduce flooding, provide pollution control benefits, protect valuable genetic resources that ultimately will be found to have great anthropogenic value, and serve as income-generating tourist destinations. These values ought to be recognized explicitly in the process of decisions to protect natural areas.

18.. Bulgaria's rich natural endowment will be at continued and perhaps increased risk in the future if Bulgaria fails to make a firmer administrative and financial commitment to nature protection. This should include redesign of existing authorities for planning and administering protected areas, enhanced training of park managers, an aggressive program for educating the public about natural values, and the creative involvement of NGOs in planning and administering parks and providing educational services to the public.

19. Potential areas of technical assistance and training might include developing improved administrative structures for park management; developing a curriculum for training park managers; and sharing experience in involving the public in natural area educati

Annex--Environmental NGOs in Bulgaria

Ecoglasnost is the largest and most well-known of Bulgaria's environmental NGOs. It was founded in April 1989, with the major objective of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about the ecological situation in Bulgaria.

In June 1989, Ecoglasnost's application for legal establishment was rejected by the District Court of the Municipality of Sofia on the grounds that it had not been endorsed by a competent government body. This rejection was overtaken by events; in the wake of demonstrations by Ecoglasnost in conjunction with the environment-oriented meeting in Sofia of the Committee on Security Cooperation in Europe in November 1989, the old regime fell.

Ecoglasnost has 70 chapters. Its leaders estimate they have 15,000 to 17,000 active members and approximately 500,000 supporters. Recent public opinion polls indicate it is highly regarded throughout the country. Ecoglasnost has two half-time paid employees; the expertise and activity of its volunteer activists is extraordinary.

The free flow of information has been a central concern of Ecoglasnost from its initial foundation. A policy statement issued by Ecoglasnost calls for full disclosure of pollution, abolition of classified status for all data related to human health and environmental conditions, publication of detailed statistical data on the medical status of the Bulgarian population, and other information disclosure measures. Ecoglasnost has also issued "Charter '89--For Preservation of the Bulgarian Nature Heritage", which contains a long list of proposals for new nature conservation initiatives and cessation of activities harmful to the natural environment. English language versions of both these documents were provided to the mission.

Ecoglasnost leaders indicated that access to information remains a serious problem. Much information remains classified, such as the sites of uranium slag heaps that were supposed to be shipped to the USSR but that remain in Bulgaria. Information is restricted also on so-called "economically-strategic" industries. Furthermore, when information is reported as average values, this may mask peak values that represent health risks. Data that are released frequently are not trusted; reliability of government data-gathering and analysis techniques is very uncertain.

In April 1990, Ecoglasnost registered a "Political Club 'Ecoglasnost'" for the purpose of participating in the scheduled parliamentary elections. The objective was to participate in parliamentary deliberations, but not in the executive body of the government. The political club participated in the parliamentary elections as part of the electoral list of the Union of Democratic Forces, and indicated that it would not participate in

the executive body even if the UDF prevailed in the elections. This political club is separate from the Green Party that had been founded by others in Ecoglasnost. Although there had been a plan to dissolve the political club after the national elections, the club was kept alive at the behest of some of the 17 deputies Ecoglasnost had elected to the National Assembly.

The question of political involvement clearly is a difficult one for Ecoglasnost. Five of its deputies joined with other deputies in a walk-out from the National Assembly. Some of the non-political leaders of Ecoglasnost characterize some of the deputies as "just politicians", and dislike the deputies' taking positions in the name of Ecoglasnost on issues that have not been fully debated within Ecoglasnost. They believe that Ecoglasnost is an ecological movement that is more than just another political party. At a June 1991 meeting in Sofia attended by nearly 150 representatives of Ecoglasnost groups, a proposal was made that the seven deputies who were viewed as most problematic should adopt a new name for themselves and not speak on behalf of Ecoglasnost. A decision was made that "political confidence" should be withdrawn from these deputies.

Ecoglasnost played an important role in arranging visits by members of the mission to various industrial facilities and protected areas. Its success in arranging these visits is a tribute to the high regard in which it is generally held throughout Bulgaria. Individual chapters of Ecoglasnost generally focus on local environmental problems. These include discharges from individual facilities and soil and food chain pollution. There is also concern about groundwater contamination associated with uranium extraction, and sound management of radioactive waste disposal sites throughout the country.

Mission members met with leaders of several different Ecoglasnost groups. The Bourgas group was organized in early 1990. Its council of 13 meets weekly. The chairman, a biologist, is the Dean of the new Free University of Bourgas. The chapter takes great pride in its expert councils and has sections on air, water, food, and other subjects. The chapter representative with whom mission members spoke is an analytical chemist, and indicated a desire to tie into western computerized data bases and expanded international contacts. The chapter's priorities include publicizing environmental data, some of which are treated as confidential by the government. The local group also campaigned for the trucking of clean water supplies to local schools, kindergartens and nurseries to substitute for contaminated local supplies. The local group also would like to open schools in small villages that have been declining in the nearby Strandja mountains. The schools have declining enrollments, but would provide an opportunity for children in areas of heavy air pollution to receive educations in relatively clean areas for a month. Two such schools are scheduled to open

later in 1991, funded by polluting industries.

Mission members also met with the head of Ecoglasnost in the small village of Vavarna (population 300) on the Black Sea coast. The major concern in this village is the nuisance and health threat associated with a local swine feed lot. The problem has persisted for years but government officials have been unresponsive to demands that the offending facility (which is not a major employer) be forced to clean up its activities. The entire village was characterized to the mission as being an Ecoglasnost village.

Ecoglasnost has a strong group in the Black Sea resort of Varna. Its priorities are the air emissions from the Devnia chemical facility, contamination of a local river by heavy-metal producing industries, and discharges from public sewage treatment plants. The local chapter also played a role in securing documentation of the failure of the local head of the water and sewage authority to properly maintain the local sewage treatment plant. This evidence has been provided to the local prosecutor. The local chapter has poor relations with the Ministry of Environment's regional inspectors, who it regards as being as too closely linked with major polluters in the region.

The Varna group labels itself the "Independent Society of Ecoglasnost--Varna." It keeps some distance from the main Ecoglasnost organization out of concern that the main organization is too political. That is, that Ecoglasnost activists elsewhere are using Ecoglasnost as a screen for non-ecologically motivated political activity. The Varna chapter has 549 members. Members pay a fee of 20 leva per year, with a special reduced fee of 6 leva for pensioners and students. The Varna chapter has a "managing board" of 9 people and an auditing council of 3. The council meets officially once each week but meets informally nearly every evening. The entire membership meets twice per year. The managing board is considering proposing that political party members cannot be elected as members of the managing board.

The Varna group has good relations with the local media. It is represented on a local environmental radio show broadcast once each week. In every few issues of the local newspaper there is an "Ecoglasnost Informs" or "Ecoglasnost Accuses" column.

The Ecoglasnost group in the region of the Srednogorie copper smelter was organized in late 1989. It includes teachers, doctors, chemical engineers, technicians, and other professionals. It has a coordinating council of 5 individuals, but maintains no membership records. The entire groups meets once per month and the coordination committee meets once each week. 60-70 percent of the local population depends on the smelter for their jobs, so there is some anxiety in the community

and among Ecoglasnost members about job losses due to possible cutbacks in production at the plant. Major issues for the group include episodes of excess air emissions (the group tries to informally spread word of these among teachers, so that young students can be warned), access to information on emissions and the health condition of workers, and pollution of local water supplies.

During the mission's conversations with various representatives of Ecoglasnost, a number of suggestions were made for technical assistance and training. For example:

--Because government environmental data are so unreliable and so mistrusted, repeated requests were made for monitoring equipment and training in its use. Ecoglasnost members would like to have the ability to conduct their own monitoring analyses.

--Ecoglasnost has been unable in recent months to publish its weekly tabloid newspaper. Before it ceased publication, its circulation was 20,000. Ecoglasnost says it requires 50,000 kilograms of paper to be able to publish for one year. The Varna group requested a copying machine, to help it publish its 100 page program for Varna's environment.

--Ecoglasnost's computer specialist, Svetoslav Icherewski, indicated an interest in building a computer-based information network within Bulgaria. Ecoglasnost would like to buy into Econet, have a larger computer in Sofia to develop an E-mail network, and would like to develop some expert systems.

--Ecoglasnost would like to identify one town whose environmental problems are somewhat manageable, and develop a cooperative, community-wide program to solve the problems based on an integrated (air/water/soil) approach to environmental management.

--Ecoglasnost's leaders expressed the strong need for management training for Ecoglasnost members, to strengthen Ecoglasnost chapters.

Ecoglasnost's address: 39 Dondukov Street, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria.
Phone: 881530. Fax: 802323. Secretary: Edwin Sugarev

The Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodope Mountains was founded in 1990. It consists of 10 local societies in the towns of the Rhodope Mountain region, comprising approximately 1,500 members. Ten more societies are in the process of formation. The mission was provided with an English language version of the Society's statutes, which state as the society's objective "the preservation of the natural and cultural wealth of the Rhodope Mountains region." The society's president, Dr.

Jordan Danchev, indicated that its biggest need is training in how to manage its organizational affairs. Dr. Danchev can be contacted at The Institute of Ecology, 2 Gagarin Street, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria. Telephone 70-51-78. Fax 70 54 98.

The Wilderness Fund was established in October 1989. It is a small society of 12-15 experts working on biodiversity issues and attempting to expand the nation's system of protected natural areas. Among its other activities, the fund has developed a draft nature protection act for Bulgaria, jointly with the Bulgarian Green Party. It also conducts field surveys, action plans for endangered species, and strategies for expanding protected areas in Bulgaria. It also works on developing trans-boundary protected areas along Bulgaria's borders with Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. The group also would like to organize a Balkan region biodiversity conference (Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria.) Mira Mileva of The Institute of Ecology is one of the core members of The Wilderness Fund and also serves as Chairman of the Program Advisory Group of IUCN's Eastern Europe Program. Ms. Mileva has suggested that to promote international cooperation and environmental education, Peace Corps volunteers could be used to teach environmentally oriented English courses to staff of the Ministry of Environment, the Forest Committee, and other groups. Dr. Jeko Spiridonov of The Institute of Ecology serves as president of the fund. Dr. Spiridonov indicated that there is a strong need for special ecological training of those having responsibility for guarding protected natural areas. He also indicated that NGOs might be a useful base for organizing volunteers to work in parks, but NGOs would need training in how to organize such efforts. Dr. Spiridonov can be contacted at The Institute of Ecology, 2 Gagarin Street, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria. Telephone: 71-91-38/22. Fax: 70-54-98.

The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds was established in June 1988. Its president is Dr. Taniu Michev of The Institute of Ecology. It constitutes the Bulgarian National Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP). As of March 1990 it had 232 members and chapters in several Bulgarian cities; it now reports more than 300 members. It published its first newsletter (including an English version) in September 1990. The society has working groups on storks, pelicans, birds of prey and passerines. Other elements of its structure are described in its newsletter, which was provided to the mission. Major activities include feeding of birds of prey, construction of artificial nests, and attempts to assist in the protection of birding areas. For example, in the Srebarna Reserve along the Danube, a World Biosphere Reserve that is home to the endangered Dalmatian pelican, the Society noted poaching of fish at night by fishermen, a threat to the birds' food supply. The Society approached the local municipality, which has jurisdiction, urging it to post more guards at night when poaching occurs. The Srebarna situation is indicative of a larger problem noted by

17

several members of The Institute of Ecology, namely, insufficient attention in Bulgaria to protection of wetland resources. Society address: 8 Blvd. Dragan Tzankov, 1421 Sofia, Bulgaria. Telephones: 63 301, ext. 320; 72 06 30; 88 51 15, ext 617,728; 70 51 78

The Bulgarian Federation for Environmental Protection is the new name of an organization that had a close 25 year affiliation with state-supported entities. It has sponsored educational programs, eco-clubs for youth throughout the country, youth work projects in natural areas, and summer camps for both Bulgarian youth and youth from other countries. It has five full-time workers, a managing council of seven members, and a council of representatives from 283 clubs throughout Bulgaria. Address: Denkoglu str. 7 ap. 6, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria. Phone and fax: 54-49-34.

Several other NGOs appeared during a mission meeting for NGOs on June 10. Several are quite new and few details about their activities and their leaders were obtained.

(Materials provided by Ecoglasnost and other NGOs mentioned above are attached as appendices to this report.)

Schedule of Major Meetings and Events

Friday, June 7

Depart Washington D.C. for Sofia, Bulgaria

Saturday, June 8

Arrive Sofia, Bulgaria

Sunday, June 9

Afternoon lunch and meeting with Eugeny Popov, Ecoglasnost

Monday, June 10

One hour morning meeting of full WB/AID/EPA mission at Ministry of Environment with ministry officials and others.

One hour morning meeting of full WB/AID/EPA mission at Ministry of Environment with NGO representatives.

Two hour afternoon "Break out" introductory meeting on parks and protected areas at Ministry of Environment, with miscellaneous representatives of Committee on Forestry, Ministry of Environment, Institute of Ecology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and NGOs.

Two hour late afternoon/early evening meeting of full mission with senior representatives of Ecoglasnost.

Late evening meeting with Svetoslav Icherenski, Ecoglasnost computer specialist.

Tuesday, June 11

Day-long meeting at The Institute of Ecology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, accompanied by AID's Lori Freer. Met with Director Christo Nikolov, Deputy Director Tanio Michev, and staff members Mira Mileva, Radi Radev, Jordan Danchev, Ivan Ianchev, and Vladimir Pomakov.

Tuesday evening reception at American Embassy.

Wednesday, June 12

One hour afternoon meeting at Committee on Forestry, Council of Ministers, with Committee President Dr. Ivan Raev and senior staff. Accompanied by AID's Ron Greenberg.

One hour evening meeting of full mission and one hour meeting

with Dr. Irene Murphy, Fulbright Scholar and water management expert at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Thursday, June 13

Morning excursion and lunch at Kremikovtzi Steel Company outside Sofia. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and guided by Ecoglasnost's Dr. Elena Petkova. Met with senior directors of complex, whose principal spokesmen were Atanas Bogdanov and Veselin Denev. Accompanied also by Lyudmila Dimitrova, an economist and Ecoglasnost representative who formerly worked at the plant.

Afternoon excursion to Vitosha National Park, one hour south of Sofia. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and guided by The Institute of Ecology's Jeko Spiridonov and Mira Mileva. Met with several park staff including Forestry Engineer Pavel Ivanov and facility manager Todor Chalokov. Also met with Diko Dixov, whose firm, Ozeleniavane, works on landscape architecture projects for the municipality of Sofia.

Friday, June 14

Full day excursion to Rila Mountains, hosted by Dr. Ivan Penkov, Chief Secretary of the Forestry Committee. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer, The Institute of Ecology's Jeko Spiridonov and Mira Mileva, Ministry of Environment's Ljubomir Profirov and staff of Forestry Committee. Toured forest research station, experimental forest, Rila Nature Preserve and Rila Monastery. Met with senior managers of forestry district within which the nature preserve and monastery are located.

Saturday, June 15

Excursion and half day visit to Srednogorie Copper smelter, just east of Sofia, with several members of full mission. Accompanied by visit coordinators from Ecoglasnost, Dr. Elena Petkova and Eugeny Popov. Simultaneous meeting with senior directors of smelter, headed by smelter director Boris Petkov, and local representatives of Ecoglasnost. The local leaders of Ecoglasnost (Drs. Velchev, Kinov, and Malchev) are physicians concerned about the heavy metal emissions from the smelter. Scheduled afternoon meeting at Plovdiv Lead and Zinc smelter and meeting with Plovdiv Ecoglasnost representative was cancelled. Overnight in Plovdiv, in south-central Bulgaria.

Sunday, June 16

Morning meeting at Higher Institute of Agriculture near Plovdiv with Vice-Rector Dr. Georgi Sengelevich to discuss his research

on the effects of pollution, especially heavy metals, on vegetables and other vegetation. Visit to experimental vegetation plots adjacent to Plovdiv smelter. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and Ron Redman. Accompanied also by visit coordinators Dr. Elena Petkova and Eugeny Popov.

Afternoon excursion to eastern Rhodope Mountains with full mission, hosted by Ivan Penkov, Chief Secretary of Committee on Forestry. Accompanied also by Ms. Mileva and Messrs. Danchev, and Spiridonov of The Institute of Ecology and Mr. Profirov of the Ministry of Environment. Met with local forestry district officials and toured reforestation and erosion control projects.

Overnight in Bourgas on Black Sea coast.

Monday, June 17

Excursion to Arkoutino Nature reserve and meeting with Ecoglasnost representative at coastal village of Varvara. Meeting also with leaders of Bourgas chapter of Ecoglasnost, including Mrs. Nikolova and a gentleman who's an analytical chemist at Bourgas Technical University. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and Ron Redman. Guided by Ecoglasnost's Dr. Petkova and Mr. Popov. Overnight in Bourgas.

Tuesday, June 18

Meetings in coastal city of Varna. Met with Georgi Zenev, who is the district president (mayor) of Varna, a former leader of Ecoglasnost, and an expert on water pollution. Met also with present Ecoglasnost Varna leaders and taped interview with Bistra Varneva, a reporter for Radio Varna. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and Ron Redman. Guided by Ecoglasnost's Dr. Petkova and Mr. Popov.

Wednesday, June 19

Morning meeting in Preslav with the mayor, deputy mayor, secretary, director of the local cultural museum and other local officials, and Ecoglasnost leader Hussein Dougan. Afternoon tourist visit to Veliko Tarnovo en route to evening arrival in Sofia. Accompanied by AID's Lori Freer and Ron Redman. Guided by Ecoglasnost's Dr. Petkova and Mr. Popov.

Thursday, June 20

Morning "debriefing" meeting at Ministry of Environment with full mission (except for EPA representatives).

Solo afternoon meeting with Ljubomir Profirov and Rayna

Atazdalova at protected areas section of Ministry of Environment. Discussion of issues and procedures associated with protecting natural areas in Bulgaria. Scheduled meeting at Committee on Forestry's Agrolesproject postponed to following day.

Solo evening dinner with research team from Georgia Tech (Krassamira Paskaleva and Phil Shapira), Penn State (Brent Yarnel), and West Virginia University, conducting environmental research in Bulgaria.

Friday, June 21

Morning meeting at Committee on Forestry's Agrolesproject, which conducts detailed planning for protected areas. Overview provided by Agrolesproject General Director Christo Soubev and briefing on plans for expanded Pirin National Park by Agrolesproject staff member Ludmila Jozeva. Accompanied by Ministry of Environment's Ljubomir Profirov.

Lunch with Alexander Sadovski, Director of Ministry of Environment's Environmental Monitoring and Information Center.

Taped interview with Albena Arnaudova, free lance journalist and contributor to Eco-Spectrum magazine.

Dinner with Georgi Tzekin, management professor who teaches environmental conflict resolution at the Institute for International Relations.

Saturday, June 22

Morning meetings with Ecoglasnost's Delcho Vichev, Eugeny Popov and Dr. Elena Petkova and with a representative of the Plovdiv chapter of Ecoglasnost.

Departure for airport, for Finland business and holiday.

Monday, July 8

Return to Washington from Finland.

Selected Contacts¹

Albena Arnaudova
Ecospectrum Magazine
113 Trakia Blv.
1184 Sofia
work phone 4344-430

Dipl. Eng. Atanas Bogdanov
Deputy General Director
and
Dipl. Eng. Veselin Denev
Deputy General Director
Kremikovtzi Iron and Steel Works
Botounetz
1870 Sofia
telephone: 89-19-03 (Bogdanov); 45-67-95 (Denev)
fax: 87-98-06
Telex: 22478

Dr. Jordan Danchev
Chairman
Bulgarian Society for Conservation of the Rhodopi Mountains
The Institute of Ecology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
2 Gagarin Street
1113 Sofia
work phone: 70-51-78
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
fax: 70-54-98

Ecoglasnost
39 Dondukov st
1000 Sofia
phone: 80 23 23
fax: 881530

Svetoslav Icharenski
Linguistic Modelling Laboratory
Center for Informatics and Computer Technology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Acad. G. Bonchev st. Bl. 25-A
Sofia 1113
work telephone 7131/607
(Mr. Icharenski is a computer specialist working with
Ecoglasnost.)

Ms. Mira Mileva
The Institute of Ecology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

¹ For telephone calls from overseas, the country code for Bulgaria is 359 and the city code for Sofia is 2.

23

2 Gagarin Str.
1113 Sofia
work phone: 70-53-79
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Rod Moore
Embassy of the United States
Sofia Bulgaria
APO-New York 09213-5740
work phone 88-48-01
[REDACTED]
fax 88 48 06

Irene Murphy
Institute of Water Problems
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Acad. G. Bontchev str. Bl. 1
1113 Sofia
phone 71-00-09 x29
fax 88-04-48

Dragostin Nikov
International Affairs Liaison
Ministry of Environment
67 Vl. Poptomov Str.
Sofia 1000
telephone: 87 47 77 or 87 61 51
fax: 52 16 34
telex: 221 45 KOPS

Eng. Ivan Penkov
Chief Secretary
Committee of Forests
Council of Ministers
Republic of Bulgaria
Antim I str. 17
Sofia-1040
phones 87-46-86 or 80-03-46
fax: 87-32-35
telex: 22809

Mary Ann Peters
Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of the United States
Sofia, Bulgaria
APO New York 09213-5740

Dr. Elena Petkova
Sofiiska komuna 10-A
Sofia-1000
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Eugeny Popov
Institute of Ecology

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
2 Gagarin str.
1113 Sofia
work phone 705379
fax 390710
[REDACTED]

Ljubomir Profirov
Ministry of the Environment
67, Vl. Poptomov str.
1000 Sofia
Bulgaria
telephone 66-14-94
fax 52-16-34

Dr. Ivan Raev
President
Committee of Forests
Council of Ministers
Republic of Bulgaria
Antim I str. 17
Sofia 1040
telephone: 88-08-75 or 80-20-21
fax: 87-32-35
telex: 22481, 22809, 22815

Pavla Rakovska
International Relations
Ecoglasnost
39 Dondukov St.
1000 Sofia
phone (ecoglasnost) 802323
fax (ecoglasnost) 88 15 30
phone (business) 44 29 17
telex (business) 23010

Dr. Alexander N. Sadovski
Head of Program
Environmental Monitoring and Information System
Environmental Research and Information Center
Ministry of Environment
industrialna Str. 7
1202 Sofia
work phone: 392 049
fax: 392-196
Telex: (67)23894

Dipl. eng. Christo Soubev
General Director
10, Sophrony str.
1303 Sofia
phone: 88-00-24 or 87-42-01

25

Jeko Spiridonov
President
The Wilderness Fund
The Institute of Ecology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Gagarin str. 2
1113 Sofia
work phone: 71-91-38/22
fax: 70-54-98

Ms. Bistra Varneva
Radio Varna
bul. Primorski 22
Varna, Bulgaria
(359-52) 22-81-52

Georgi F. Zenov
District President of Varna
26 N. vapzarov str.
9000 Varna
phone: (359 52) 23 42 00
fax: 24 11 08

Biographical Sketch of the Author

Richard A. Liroff joined World Wildlife Fund and The Conservation Foundation in 1979 as a Senior Associate. He earlier had been a Project Director at the Environmental Law Institute (1973-1978) and a Research Fellow and Guest Scholar at The Brookings Institution (1971-1973). Dr. Liroff received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University and a B.A. in Politics from Brandeis University.

Since 1989, he has directed WWF's Central and Eastern Europe Environment Program. He previously directed WWF's Great Lakes Project. He has also contributed to WWF's three State of the Environment reports, and to its industrial siting and national parks projects. Dr. Liroff has authored numerous articles and reports on environmental policy, and has written books on environmental impact assessment, air pollution control, and land use regulation in New York's Adirondack Park.

Dr. Liroff serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of The Environmental Professional. He has also served on the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board of the International Joint Commission of the United States and Canada, and on the Governmental Affairs Committee of the Air and Waste Management Association (formerly the Air Pollution Control Association).