

Press Release: Study Tour as Part of the LIFE Ukraine Project, September 2024

The study tour to the Czech Republic took place as part of the LIFE Ukraine project, organized by the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic ([NCA CR](#)) and co-funded by a grant from the [LIFE Ukraine](#) project.

This tour was organised as part of Work Package 4 (WP4) to familiarize Ukrainian specialists with nature conservation practices in the Czech Republic. The focus was on implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives, fostering professional connections between Ukrainian specialists from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, protected area managers, and their Czech counterparts. The program also included visits to Natura 2000 sites and will be covered in publications by Ukrainian journalists.

The study tour was held from September 23 to 27 and included participants from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, representatives of several Ukrainian nature conservation organizations, and journalists. In total, 21 participants with an interest in nature conservation and environmental protection attended the tour.

September 23, 2024

The group, accompanied by representatives from NCA CR, visited the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. Participants met Czech colleagues from the Department of Nature Conservation and the Public Relations Department, Michal Pastvinský (Director of the International Relations Department) and Petr Havel (Head of the Natura 2000 Department). Presentations were delivered on international cooperation in nature conservation, especially with Ukraine, and the Czech nature conservation system. The meeting included a lively discussion, followed by a guided tour of Prague's historic center.

September 24, 2024

The day began with presentations by NCA CR representatives on the agency's activities, the history of Natura 2000 implementation in the Czech Republic, and the agency's biodiversity monitoring efforts. The group then visited the [Křivoklátsko](#) Protected Landscape Area (PLA), located west of Prague. Petr Hůla (Head of the PLA Administration) presented challenges and opportunities in creating a national park within the PLA. Despite being planned since 2020, local resistance has delayed progress. The group toured key sites, including the U Ermita yew reserve and forest habitats overlooking the Berounka River Valley.

September 25, 2024

The group traveled to the Brdy PLA, a unique area that also serves as a military training ground. Bohumil Fišer (Head of Brdy PLA) and a representative from the local military unit showed how military activities influence the landscape and how it positively impacts biodiversity. Participants explored local part of the Natura 2000 network, viewed artillery craters filled with water, and learned about the area's flora and fauna. Photography was not permitted, but photo materials will be provided later by the administration.

The day concluded with a visit to the newly restored House of Nature in Brdy PLA, a historic landmark which used to be a hunting lodge “Tři Trubky.” The center has educational nature and history expositions, a playground, a souvenir shop. Participants also enjoyed the film about the region's nature throughout the seasons.

September 26, 2024

Participants visited the [České středohoří PLA](#), where Roman Hamerský, František Budský, and Vladislav Kopecký led a tour of the Natura 2000 sites. The group explored volcanic hills, steppe ecosystems maintained by grazing sheep and goats, and witnessed a shepherd demonstrating the use of trained dog for mixed sheep and goats herd management.

Later, the group visited two hydropower stations on the Elbe River with fish passages: the relatively new [Lovosice Station](#) near Litoměřice and the [Střekov Station](#), built nearly 100 years ago, which require modernization of its fish ladders.

September 27, 2024

The tour concluded with a visit to the Bohemian Switzerland National Park, where a major wildfire in July-August 2022 caused extensive damage. Petr Kříž (Director of the Park Administration) and Richard Nagel (Head of Public Relations) led a tour of the affected areas, showcasing nature's rapid self-recovery, including the regrowth of ferns and birches. Plans for park management, fire prevention measures, and a film on the park's unique biodiversity were also presented. Ukrainian participants noted the high quality of promotional materials and the engaging focus on wildlife behaviour rather than statistical facts in the film.

That evening, the group returned to Prague and departed for Ukraine.

The study tour successfully concluded with all planned activities carried out. Organizers received positive feedback from both Ukrainian and Czech participants. Networking between Ukrainian and Czech experts continues, strengthening professional ties and fostering future collaborations.

The tour provided participants with insights into Czech nature conservation practices, including:

- Protection of steppe and forest habitats,
- Management of protected landscapes with active military use,
- Restoration and management of natural areas affected by wildfires.

Czech colleagues not only demonstrated successful solutions in the field of nature conservation but also shared the challenges and issues they face daily. Ukrainian participants noted that they encounter similar challenges in their work, highlighting the shared experiences and objectives of both sides. This interaction helps reduce the idealized perception of the European model and establish closer collaboration between professionals from both countries. Joint problem-solving, experience exchange, and mutual support are crucial elements of successful cross-border cooperation.



“Conservation of Natural Heritage for Life in Ukraine”
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Particularly significant is the fact that this experience lays a strong foundation for future collaboration in international projects, especially those aimed at Ukraine's post-war restoration. This is exceptionally important for Ukrainians.

The sorted photo and video materials, accessible through the links provided above, will form the basis for further publications about this study tour.



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Name	Organization	Job position	Involvement in the Study tour
Marta Vojtková	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine- Project Manager	Organization of the Study tour
Oleksandra Rieznyk	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine - PR manager	Organization of the Study tour
David Lacina	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine -Project Leader	Organization of the Study tour
Tomáš Růžička	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine - Expert for Communication	Organization of the Study tour
Tereza Kušnírová	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine - Expert for NATURA 2000	Organization of the Study tour
Petr Roth	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine - Specialist for International Nature Protection	Organization of the Study tour
Eva Knižátková	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine - Expert for Special Nature Protection	Organization of the Study tour
Jindřich Chlapek	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine -Expert for governance and management, jindrich.chlapek@nature.cz	Organization of the Study tour
Zdenka Bohalová	NCA CR	ConNaturLIFE Ukraine- Financial Manager	Organization of the Study tour
Karel Chobot	NCA CR	Head of Monitoring Department	Lecturer
Petr Hůla	NCA CR	Head of Department of PLA Křivoklátsko, petr.hula@nature.cz ,	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA Křivoklátsko
Bohumil Fišer	NCA CR	Head of PLA Brdy, bohumil.fiser@nature.cz	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA Brdy



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Lucie Palivcová	NCA CR	Department of the PLA Brdy	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA Brdy
Vladislav Kopecký	NCA CR	Head of the Nature and Landscape Protection Department, vladislav.kopecky@nature.cz	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA České středohoří
Roman Hamerský	NCA CR	Department of Biodiversity Monitoring	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA České středohoří
František Budský	NCA CR	Director of Regional Department of the PLA České středohoří	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the PLA České středohoří
Petr Kříž	Bohemian Switzerland National Park	Director of the Bohemian Switzerland National Park, , p.kriz@npcs.cz	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the NP
Richard Nagel	Bohemian Switzerland National Park	Director of the Public Relations Department, r.nagel@npcz.cz	Preparation and provision of the program on the territory of the NP
František Brunclík	Pragotour	driver	bus driver
Illya Bey	Illya Bey	translator	translater



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Pastvinský Michal	Ministerstvo životního prostředí	ředitel odboru mezinárodních vztahů - директор департаменту міжнародних відносин, michal.pastvinsky@mzp.cz	Lecturer in Ministry
Havel Petr	Ministerstvo životního prostředí	vedoucí oddělení soustavy NATURA 2000 - начальник відділу NATURA 2000, petr.havel@mzp.cz	Lecturer in Ministry