

Supporting EuroNatur in preserving the heart of the Dinaric Karst: protecting nature and empowering communities as a path to sustainable management

Grantee: EuroNatur – Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe

Location: Bosnia and Herzegovina - Croatia, Europe

Grant Cycle: 2025 – 2028

Type of Grant: three-year program support,

Environment & Biodiversity Protection

Website: euronatur.org

EuroNatur is a non-profit foundation established in 1987 to protect species and habitats in Europe by supporting local conservation organisations and fostering international cooperation. Its key initiatives include advancing the European Green Belt, safeguarding European rivers and wetlands, protecting wilderness and cultural landscapes, and implementing species conservation projects, such as those focused on migratory birds.

EuroNatur has been active in the Balkans for over 15 years, working with local partners to protect karst fields and promote sustainable development in the region. Karst poljes, meaning “karst field” in Slavic languages, are widely distributed in the Balkans, with Bosnia and Herzegovina having the highest concentration. Karst poljes are characterised by a high biodiversity and a mosaic of different habitat types created by a combination of temporary natural flooding and grazing, functioning as fertile “oases” within predominantly arid karst landscapes. Karst poljes represent crucial ecological and social systems, with the present-day karst landscape being the result of natural and human interactions over thousands of years. The main threats to the high value nature habitats and biodiversity of the poljes are human-induced changes to the natural hydrological system, unsustainable land management, and abandonment of sustainable land management practices, the extraction of natural resources as well

as habitat destruction.

Over the past decade, EuroNatur, in close cooperation with local partners, has been actively engaged in addressing urgent conservation challenges and safeguarding the biodiversity of the karst poljes of the Balkans. Building on the success of these previous initiatives, including the project “[Sustainable Future for the Freshwater Ecosystem Livanjsko Polje in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)”, which was partially funded by the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation** (NaEPF) in 2024, EuroNatur aims to further strengthen long-term conservation and sustainable land-use practices across the region.

In 2025, EuroNatur, together with its local partners Biom, CZZS and Estavela, launched a three-year programme dedicated to the conservation and sustainable management of Livanjsko Polje, Glamočko Polje, Kupreško Polje, Mount Dinara, and the Cetina River region. Supported by the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, the project seeks to ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity by promoting sustainable resource management, advancing legal protection frameworks, and empowering local communities.

More in the detail, the project is structured around four objectives:

1. Strengthen long-term conservation and sustainable management of Livanjsko Polje, Glamočko Polje, Kupreško Polje, Mount Dinara, and the Cetina River region by advancing legal recognition and reinforcing administrative and governance frameworks.

2. Enhance the active role of local communities in conservation and sustainable land-use practices, recognising local stakeholders as key stewards of these landscapes.

3. Increase public awareness and understanding of the region's natural and cultural values at local, national, and international levels through targeted communication and outreach activities.

4. Ensure effective coordination, management, and implementation of the project through a structured, transparent, and collaborative governance framework that supports high-quality and adaptive project delivery.

Through this integrated approach, the project aims to deliver lasting environmental and social benefits, thereby contributing to long-term ecological resilience and regional stability.