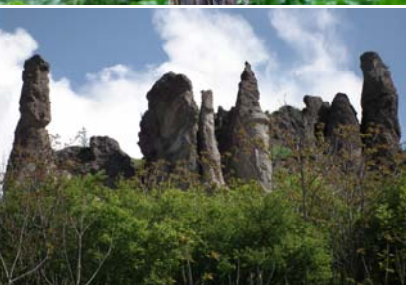


**REPORT**  
**AUSTRIAN-SLOVENIAN EXCHANGE STUDY TOUR IN ARMENIA**  
**23-28 May 2011**



## Trip Report

**Settlements visited:** Areni, Yeghegnadzor, Gnishik, Tatev, Kapan, Goris, Nerqin Hand, Shikahogh, Qajaran, Sisian, Vedi.

**Protected Areas visited:** “Khor Virap” State Sanctuary, “Gnishik” planned protected area, “Shikahogh” State Reserve, “Zangezur” State Sanctuary, “Plane Grove” State Sanctuary, “Khosrov Forest” State Reserve.

**Cultural monuments visited:** Khor Virap Monastery, Noravanq Monastery, Tatev Monastery, Khndzoresk cave town, Zorats Qarer megalithic monument.

**Departure Date:** 23 May 2011, time: 04:00AM.

**Arrival Date:** 28 May 2011, time: 04:40AM.

### Background

During the study tour in Austria (please, see previous report dated 20101001), 27 September - 1 October 2010, Armenian and Austrian counterparts agreed that exchange visit in Armenia was important to know better each other and to achieve continuous cooperation in environmental issues and in protected area conservation in particular. Dates for exchange visit of Austrian counterparts in Armenia were agreed 23-28 May. Upon agreement, Umweltbüro Klagenfurt GmbH was responsible for selection of members of Austrian delegation consisting of representatives of (i) federal government of Carinthia, (ii) protected areas administrations, including Triglav NP (Slovenia), and (iv) main organizers of study tour in Austria (Umweltbüro Klagenfurt GmbH and REVITAL Civil Engineers Ltd.).

Initial schedule and proposed topics were submitted to Austrian colleagues in mid-December 2010. Detailed schedule was elaborated taking into account desires and suggestions of Austrian participants.

The list of participants and accompanying persons of exchange study tour with contacts is attached as an **Annex 1** and **Annex 1a**, respectively. The list of local persons met during the tour is in **Annex 2**.

### Activities

Day, time	Route	Activities
<b>23 May</b> 04:35-05:30	Zvartnots international airport	Arrival, visas, luggage claim
05:30-06:00	Zvartnots airport – Yerevan State University Guest House	
06:00-10:00	Relaxation	
10:00-10:45	Breakfast	
10:45-11:00	Yerevan State University Guest House – Ministry of Nature Protection	
11:00-11:30	Welcoming by First Deputy Minister of Nature Protection	First Deputy Minister Mr. Papyan welcomed participants on behalf of Minister of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia and wished them interesting and useful days in Armenia ( <b>Photo 1</b> ). In his turn Dr. Bogner thanked Mr. Papyan for his time and introduced Austrian and Slovenian participants. On behalf of all participants Dr. Bogner presented to Mr. Papyan some gifts and souvenirs highlighting activities in Austrian

		<p>and Slovenian protected areas.</p> <p>At the end Mr. Papyan expressed his thanks for gifts and wished Austrian and Slovenian participants useful and pleasant time in Armenia.</p> <p>Mr. Ashot Avalyan, Deputy Head of the Staff of the Ministry of Nature Protection and National Coordinator of the UNDP-GEF MSP Developing the Protected Area System in Armenia took part in the meeting.</p>
11:30-14:30	Free time, lunch	<p>Upon request K. Jenderedjian arranged appointment of D. Bogner and J. Petutschnig with Director of “Jinj” Ltd., Dr. Eduard Mesropyan (<a href="http://www.jinjconsult.com">www.jinjconsult.com</a>) (<b>Photo 2</b>). The counterparts found huge field for cooperation: water and water supply management, wetland restoration, spatial planning etc. Both sides considered important joint participation in national and international tenders in above mentioned fields.</p> <p>Guiding tour in the center of Yerevan and lunch was organized by G. Amalbashyants and G. Navasardyan for the rest of guests (<b>Photo 3</b>).</p>
14:30-15:30	<i>Yerevan – Khor Virap Monastery</i>	
15:30-17:00	Khor Virap Marsh Ramsar site restoration project	<p>Hiking tour from Khor Virap Monastery to Khor Virap Marsh was guided by the Head of Khor Virap State Sanctuary, Mr. S. Haroyan. Khor Virap Marsh was declared by the Government Decree N 925-N of 25 June 2007 as wetland of international importance for inclusion in the list of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar). During the recent years the water level in the marsh has been decreased which has brought to significant loss of biodiversity. The project for restoration of Khor Virap Marsh was introduced and discussed with the participants of study tour (<b>Photo 4</b>). In particular, eb&amp;p Umweltbüro Klagenfurt GmbH which has significant experience in river floodplains management, expressed readiness to provide assistance in technical design.</p> <p>In addition, visit and brief introduction to Khor Virap Monastery was paid (<b>Photo 5</b>).</p>
17:00-18:15	<i>Khor Virap – Areni</i>	
18:15-19:15	Vine degustation	<p>During vine degustation offered by Areni Municipality and Vine Factory, participants were welcomed by the Head of the Staff of Vayots Dzor Marzpetaran Mr. S. Adamyan and Mayor of Areni Mr. Zh. Yeghyan (<b>Photo 6</b>).</p>
19:15-19:30	<i>Areni – Yeghegnadzor</i>	
19:30-21:00	Dinner	
<b>23-24 May</b>	<b>Overnight in Arpa Hotel, Yeghegnadzor</b>	
<b>24 May</b> 09:00-10:00	Breakfast	
10:00-10:30	Administration of	Governor of Vayots Dzor Mr. Bagratyan welcomed the



	Vayots Dzor Marz, welcoming by the Governor of Vayots Dzor Marz	<p>participants (<b>Photo 7</b>).</p> <p>In his turn Dr. Bogner thanked Mr. Bagratyan for his time and introduced Austrian and Slovenian participants. On behalf of all participants Dr. Bogner presented to Mr. Bagratyan some gifts and souvenirs highlighting activities of local inhabitants in and nearby Austrian and Slovenian protected areas, in particular information literature and food products.</p> <p>At the end Mr. Bagratyan expressed his thanks for gifts and in his turn presented to Mr. Bogner nicely illustrated folio on “ՀԱՅԱՒԱՐԱՆ” (Information on Armenia) in Armenian. He wished Austrian and Slovenian participants useful and pleasant time in Armenia and in Vayots Dzor Marz in particular (<b>Photo 8</b>).</p>
10:30-11:00	<i>Yeghegnadzor – Noravanq</i>	
11:00-11:45	Visiting Noravanq Monastery	Visiting Noravanq Monastery and newly opened museum with guided tour ( <b>Photo 9</b> ).
11:45-12:45	<i>Noravanq – Gnishik</i>	
12:45-14:00	Gnishik community managed envisaged protected area	About 4 km hiking with project introduction was done from Village Gnishik ( <b>Photo 10</b> ) to picnic lunch area. During the hiking information was provided to participants on ecological values of the site (including biodiversity) as well as on main activities and interests of local inhabitants.
14:00-16:00	Picnic lunch	Picnic lunch offered by administration of Vayots Dzor Marz was organized in the heart of envisaged Gnishik protected area with participation of Governor of Vayots Dzor, heads of community administrations of Areni, Arpi (Mr. Grigor Grigoryan), Khachik (Mr. Nersisyan Vardan) and Mozrov (Mr. Mesrop Melkonyan). As one can expect, the lunch was going on in a very friendly and lively atmosphere ( <b>Photo 11</b> ). The speeches were not just polite or nice speeches. Some discussions also took place during these speeches that quickly followed after each other, for instance, on whether establishment of Gnishik protected area should be done based on full community management module or management by the state organization. The Governor and heads of community administrations were unanimously in favor of full community management module, although financial support from the state was considered as important. The Governor of Vayots Dzor stressed that establishment of Gnishik protected area should not affect negatively on welfare of local inhabitants and development of planned socio-economic projects in the region.
16:00-18:00	<i>Gnishik - Yeghegnadzor</i>	During the stop in Agarakadzor mineral spring ( <b>Photo 12</b> ) discussion took place initiated by the Project Manager whether this area could be supported by establishment of Gnishik protected area. It was agreed that provision of

		appropriate services in the mineral spring along with bathing facilities and pool has great potential as source of significant incomes for the Village Agarakadzor. Restoration of balneological values of the area will costs ca. USD 30-50 thousands and the project could be supported by the GEF SGP project.
18.00-20.00	Free time	
20.00-21.00	Dinner	
<b>24-25 May</b>	<b>Overnight in Arpa Hotel</b>	
<b>25 May</b> 07:00-08:00	Breakfast	
08:00-10:00	<i>Yeghegnadzor - Tatev ropeway station</i>	
10:00-12:15	Visiting Tatev Monastery	<p>On the crossroad Goris-Tatev the Deputy Governor of Syuniq Marz Mr. Ara Dolunts met and welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the program of the day. Then, guided by Head of the Department of Agriculture and Environment of the Syuniq Marz Administration Mr. Armen Ishkhanyan transfer was made over 320 m deep canyon by 5.7 km long aerial tramway from Halidzor to Tatev (<b>Photo 13</b>). In addition, interested persons and a chance to discuss the importance and the technical characteristics of ropeway with representative of owner organization “Estate management and administration company” CJC.</p> <p>After excursion through Tatev Monastery participants were welcomed by Mayor of Tatev Mr. Murad Simonyan who also entertained to local specialties (<b>Photo 14</b>).</p>
12:15-12:45	<i>Tatev ropeway station – Goris</i>	
12:45-13:15	Administration of Town Goris	<p>The Governor of Syuniq Marz Mr. Suren Khachatryan welcomed participants in his office in Goris (<b>Photo 15</b>) and was interested in interests and expectations of participants in Syuniq Marz.</p> <p>Dr. Bogner thanked Mr. Khachatryan for his time, informed him briefly that this was return visit of Austrian counterparts in Armenia after the visit of Armenians in Austria and Slovenia in the fall of 2010 and introduced Austrian and Slovenian participants. On behalf of all participants Dr. Bogner presented to Mr. Khachatryan some gifts and souvenirs (<b>Photo 16</b>) highlighting activities of local inhabitants in and nearby Austrian and Slovenian protected areas, in particular information literature and food products.</p> <p>At the end Mr. Khachatryan expressed his thanks for gifts and wished Austrian participants useful and pleasant time in Syuniq Marz.</p>
14:45-16:30	<i>Goris-Nerqin Hand</i>	

16:30-17:15	Visiting “Plane Grove” State Sanctuary	Guided by the Director of “Shikahogh State Reserve” SNCO Mr. R. Mkrtchyan the participants had a chance to visit the tree nursery ( <b>Photo 17</b> ) and made hiking over the central part of the sanctuary ( <b>Photo 18</b> ).
17:15-17:30	<i>Nerqin Hand-Shikahogh</i>	
17:30-19:00	Dinner in “Shikahogh State Reserve” administrative building	The dinner was offered by administration of Syuniq Marz and administration of Shikahogh State Reserve SNCO. During the dinner only local specialties were served introducing ecologically clean products from surroundings of Shikahogh reserve and envisaged Khustup sanctuary. The dinner was attended by Mr. Ara Dolunts, the Mayor of Qajaran Mr. Vardan Gevorgyan, Director of “Arevik National Park” SNCO Mr. Surik Hovhannissian and the key staff of Shikahogh reserve ( <b>Photo 19</b> ).
19:00-20:00	<i>Nerqin Handi - Qajaran</i>	
20:00-21:30	Accommodation	
<b>25-26 May</b>	<b>Overnight in Hotel Complex, Qajaran</b>	
26 May		
08:00-09:00	Breakfast	
09:00-10:00	Municipality of Qajaran	Welcoming by the Mayor of Qajaran who introduced the mining industry of Syuniq: the past, the current situation and the future. After brilliant presentation Mr. Gevorgyan received numerous questions on socio-economic situation and environmental conditions, on health problems and measures to mitigate negative impact of mining industry, etc., and gave satisfactory answers on all of them ( <b>Photo 20</b> ).
10:00-13:00	High School N2	The Seminar “The role of communities in resolving environmental problems” was held in the modern environmental laboratory created due to municipal financial support. Total 3 presentations were done. (1) The Head of the Department of Environment of Qajaran Municipality Mr. Garegin Gabrielyan ( <b>Photo 21</b> ) introduced major ecological achievements of Qajaran Municipality, sources of funding (including charges for the use of natural recourses), as well as main challenges, drawing special attention to the gaps in legislation. (2) The Executive Director of the eb&p Umweltbüro Klagenfurt GmbH DI Dr Daniel Bogner ( <b>Photo 22</b> ) introduced project “Biodiversity Monitoring with Farmer” funded by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water of Austria. “Our cultural landscape is the result of the rural management. Only though further agricultural use it can be achieved the maintenance of ecologically valuable areas, such as meadows. The project ‘Farmers observe plants and animals’ has the target to

		<p>support the conservation of ecologically valuable areas by raising of awareness. We coordinate with partners the continuous operation of the monitoring and support the participant farmers”. Starting from 20 farmers, currently 600 farmers are involved in observation of plants and animals in all federal lands of the country. It is envisaged to increase the number of farmers involved in monitoring up to 1,000 by 2013. The main achievement is that the farmers recognize the real biodiversity which raises their awareness as well as responsibility for own and surrounding lands.</p> <p>(3) The Project Manager Dr. Karen Jenderedjian introduced to participants the UNDP/GEF project “Developing the Protected Areas System in Armenia” stressing special attention to two particular models of protected areas management: full community management and co-management.</p> <p>After questions and answers the wrap-up meeting “Steps for further cooperation” was held (<b>Photo 23</b>). All participants consider exchange tours in Austria-Slovenia and Armenia as an important step forward for cooperation. However, based on already established excellent relationships further cooperation is needed between protected area managers and other environmental experts of Armenia on the one side and Austria, Slovenia (and Italia) from another. After active discussions the following topics were identified as most realistic for cooperation:</p> <p>Environmental education; Public awareness; Exchange study tours for protected area managers and adjacent community managers; Advise on protected areas full and participatory management; Growing of oil pumpkin sorts and pumpkin oil production; Garlic without ‘after odor’ production; Eatable and medicinal plants collection and preprocessing; Farmer's and pupil's environmental monitoring; Sustainable pasture; Sustainable hay harvesting.</p> <p>The Seminar was attended by large number of interested people, including the staff of the municipality of Qajaran, Shikahogh State Reserve, Zangezur State Sanctuary, Arevik National Park, school teachers and mass media (<b>Photo 24</b>).</p>
13:00-13:15	<i>Qajaran - Old Qajaran Village</i>	
13:15-17:15	Zangezur State Sanctuary	<p>Introduction of the purpose of Zangezur State Sanctuary was done by the Director of “Shikahogh State Reserve” SNCO, responsible for management of sanctuary. During the hiking in sub-Alpian zone (<b>Photo 25</b>) participants saw great number of plants, birds and invertebrate animals, as</p>

		well as traces of large mammals: bezoar goat, bear, wolf, as well as badger, hare, stone marten, various rodents ( <b>Photo 26</b> ).
17:15-18:00	<i>Old Qajaran Village – Qajaran</i>	
18:00-21:00	Dinner	The dinner offered by the municipality of Qajaran consisted from local specialties was accompanied by live national music and dances ( <b>Photo 27</b> ), and as a consequence had very friendly atmosphere. Dr. Kurt Rakobitsch on behalf of all participants expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Mayor of Qajaran for organization of Seminar and hospitality.
<b>26-27 May</b>	<b>Overnight in Hotel Complex, Qajaran</b>	
27 May 07:00-08:00	Breakfast	
08:00-10:00	<i>Qajaran-Khndzoresk</i>	
10:00-11:45	Visiting Khndzoresk Cave Town	Visiting Khndzoresk Cave Town ( <b>Photo 28</b> ) was guided by the Head of the Department of Agriculture and Environment of the Syuniq Marz Administration. The history of Khndzoresk was introduced by the patriarch of the village, writer Arkady Tsaturyan. After introduction the participants had a chance for 1 hour long hiking and a group picture ( <b>Photo 29</b> ).
11:45-12:30	<i>Khndzoresk-Zorats Qarer</i>	
12:30-13:15	Visiting Zorats Qarer megalithic monument	Participants were welcomed once again by the Deputy Governor of Syuniq and the Mayor of Sisian Mr. Aghasi Hakobjanyan ( <b>Photo 30</b> ). Then after the Founder Director of Sisian Historical Museum Mrs. Tsovinar Petrosyan introduced the monument and invited to visit the Museum.
13:15-13:30	<i>Zorats Qarer-Sisian</i>	
13:30-14:00	Visiting Sisian Historical Museum	The Director Mrs. Petrosyan guided participants through the museum ( <b>Photo 31</b> ).
14:00-15:00	Lunch	The lunch offered by the Municipality of Sisian with participation of Deputy Governor ( <b>Photo 32</b> ).
15:00-19:00	<i>Sisian-Khosrov Forest</i>	
19:00-21:00	Visiting Khosrov Forest State Reserve	The Director of Khosrov Forest State Reserve SNCO welcomed the participants and guided hiking tour together with his Deputy for Science.
<b>27-28 May</b> 21:00-02:00 +1	<b>Farewell dinner and Overnight</b>	Farewell dinner in Khosrov Forest Visitors Center was offered by administration of Khosrov Forest Reserve SNCO. Participants were welcomed by the Director of reserve Mr. Varantsov Barseghyan ( <b>Photo 33</b> ). Dr. Kurt Rakobitsch and DI Dr. Bogner on behalf of all participants expressed their thanks and gratitude to the hosts for excellent organization of the exchange study tour and outstanding hospitality ( <b>Photo 34</b> ). DI Jürgen



		Petutschnig presented to Dr. Karen Jenderedjian very nice book “Under Wasser Welten” where he is co-author ( <b>Photo 35</b> ). Then the guests were presented with some keepsakes. At the end Mr. Ashot Avalyan, Deputy Head of the Staff of the Ministry of Nature Protection who took part in the farewell dinner, wished guests safe return home and further active cooperation with Armenian counterparts in the future ( <b>Photo 36</b> ).
<b>28 May</b> 02.00-03.30	<i>Khosrov Forest – Yerevan - Zvartnots airport</i>	
03:30-05:25	Zvartnots international airport	Registration and departure

### **Outcomes**

Overall, the study tour was extremely useful. In particular, Austrian and Slovenian participants learned about:

1. Armenian protected areas system;
2. Management of protected areas in Armenia;
3. The attitude of communities participation in protected area management;
4. Biodiversity conservation models implemented at protected areas;
5. Creation of new protected areas in Armenia within the frames of UNDP/GEF project “Developing the Protected Areas System in Armenia”;
6. Wetland restoration projects developed for Khor Virap State Sanctuary;
7. Tree nursery in Plane Grove State Sanctuary and tree planting activities;
8. The extend of practical implementation of lessons learned in Austria and Slovenia in Armenian protected areas;
9. Existing and planned tourism development in and around Armenian protected areas;

The following fields were identified as most realistic for cooperation between Armenian and Austrian-Slovenian counterparts:

- ✓ Environmental education and public awareness raising;  
*Knowledge about environment and its protection among inhabitants of Armenia could be improved. Educational and awareness rising contents (e.g. educational events, brochures) should be provided and local population needs to be included into the educational process and trainings; this could be achieved via exchange of know-how. It is of great importance that establishment of protected areas does not have a negative effect on the welfare of local population; ideally it should improve the economic situation in the region.*
- ✓ Farmer's and pupil's environmental and biodiversity monitoring;  
*Some of the regions in Armenia are facing environmental issues due to heavy industry. Environmental monitoring already takes place in the Municipality Qajaran. Municipalities with large industry capacities and environmental issues should also begin with the process of monitoring of the environment.*  
*After the process of awareness rising of the public the next step could be observing the nature - biodiversity monitoring with farmers or pupils (agricultural colleges or even on primary education level).*
- ✓ Exchange study tours for protected area managers and adjacent community managers;

*UNDP/GEF financed exchange study tour with Armenian, Austrian and Slovenian counterparts has proven to be useful and the participants learned a lot from each other's countries, cultures, PAs management, biodiversity conservation, touristic development of the individual regions etc. Further study tours are welcome since there are many different models of managing and protecting the PAs the participants can learn from and implement the best practice examples in their home country. It is also of great importance to keep good professional contacts between partners in the fields of establishment and conservation of protected areas and relevant environmental issues.*

- ✓ **Restoration of ecological values of Khor Virap Marsh;**  
*The water level in Khor Virap Marsh has decreased in the recent years, leading to significant decrease in biodiversity. Umweltbüro GmbH could provide assistance and technical support through cooperation with the Armenian expert organization at the project of restoration of Khor Virap Marsh. Knowledge shall be transferred via know-how and best practice examples studies from Austria.*
- ✓ **Advise on protected areas full and participatory management: sustainable tourism and infrastructure in PAs;**  
*There is currently very little adjacent tourist infrastructure in Armenian PAs; also foreign language skills (English) of the rangers on guided tours can be improved. Basic information and infrastructure should be made available for the hikers (maps, way marks, GPS tracks etc.) and later more advanced infrastructure construction could follow (thematic trails with interactive elements for experiencing nature, dedicated info centers). Directly related to this topic, Nature Experience Project is currently run between Austria and Slovenia and could be used as a best practice example for implementing further activities (e.g. infrastructure for experiencing nature in Armenia). Best practices examples from the project shall be studied and transferred to Armenian PAs.*
- ✓ **Sustainable pasture and hay harvesting;**  
*Most of Armenia's agricultural land accounts on mountain pastures. Therefore it is crucial to manage the pasture and hay harvesting in a sustainable way since good management is the key to productive pastures. Skillfully using livestock on the pastures leads to improved soil fertility, high level of biodiversity and also results in an extended grazing season. Trainings and seminars for farmers should be provided in order to learn about sustainable land cultivation.*
- ✓ **Wine industry**  
*Austria and Slovenia both have long tradition in producing high quality wines. Armenia also produces different wines. Especially semi-sweet and sweet wines have a huge potential for exporting. Measures of marketing and quality standards need to be taken into consideration prior to exporting agreements. This shall be achieved by transfer of know-how from Austrian and Slovenia in the form of excursions and trainings for Armenian wine producers.*
- ✓ **Growing of oil pumpkin sorts and pumpkin oil production;**  
*Austria has significant experience in oil pumpkin sorts growing and high quality pumpkin oil production. At the first stage provision of seeds of appropriate sorts of pumpkins for experimental growing could raise interest of Armenian farmers to perspectives of pumpkin oil production.*
- ✓ **Garlic without 'after odor' production;**  
*Very traditional meal 'khash' (hot soup prepared from cattle shins) has garlic as main ingredient. Therefore sorts of garlic without 'after odor' that are produced in Parco Naturale Prealpi Giulie (Italy) will have high demand in Armenia.*
- ✓ **Eatable and medicinal plants collection and preprocessing;**  
*The stocks of many species of medicinal plants and herbs (such as thyme, peppermint, St. John's wort, rosehips, etc.) in Armenia are underutilized. The main reason is lack of experience*

*in proper collection, preprocessing and culture of packing and advertising. This shall be improved by transfer of achievements in this field in Austria and Slovenia.*

- ✓ Defining and initiating negotiations for Qajaran sister city in Austria and in Slovenia.  
*This special request was received from the Mayor of Qajaran. Qajaran for several years successfully cooperates with sister city Zhodino (Belarus) mainly in the fields related to mining industry. Cooperation with potential Austrian and Slovenian sister cities are envisaged in environmental field.*

## **Acknowledgements**

The staff of the “Developing the Protected Area System of Armenia” UNDP-GEF Project wishes to thank:

Mr. **Sergey Bagratyan**, Governor of Vayots Dzor marz, Mr. **Suren Khachatryan**, Governor of Syunik marz, Mr. **Simon Papyan**, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Nature Protection, Mr. **Ashot Avalyan**, Deputy Head of the Staff of MNP for receiving the delegation and for the very warm welcome.

Mr. **Dolunts Ara**, Deputy Governor of Syunik Marz and Mr. **Adamyan Samvel**, Head of the Staff of Administration of Vayots Dzor Marzpetaran for excellent organization of the study tour in Syunik and Vayots Dzor marzes, respectively;

Mr. **Gevorgyan Vardan**, Mayor of Town Qajaran for perfect organization of the seminar on 26 May;

Mr. **Barseghyan Varantsov**, Director of the “Khosrov Forest” State Reserve SNCO, Mr. **Mkrtchyan Ruben**, Director of the “Shikahogh” State Reserve SNCO, Mr. **Hovhannisyan Surik**, Director of the “Arevik National Park” SNCO and Mr. **Sahak. Haroyan**, Head of Khor Virap State Sanctuary for exhaustive introduction of their “own” protected areas;

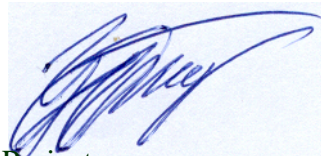
All mentioned above persons, as well as Mr. **Zhirayr Yeghyan**, Mayor of Areni, Mr. **Grigor Grigoryan**, Mayor of Arpi, Mr. **Nersisyan Vardan**, Mayor of Khachik, Mr. **Mesrop Melkonyan**, Mayor of Mozrov, Mr. **Murad Simonyan**, Mayor of Tatev, Mr. **Aghasi Hakobjanyan**, Mayor of Sisian for incredible hospitality;

Mr. **Armen Ishkhanyan**, Head of the Department of Agriculture and Environment of the Syunik Marz Administration, Mrs. **Tsovinar Petrosyan**, Director of Sisian Historical Museum, Mr. **Arkady Tsaturyan** for very interesting introduction of cultural and historical monuments of Zangezur.

The organizers wish to extend their thanks to DI Dr **Daniel Bogner** and M.MSc **Arpine Jenderedjian** for their efforts for selection of strong team consisting of highly skilled and experienced professionals and experts in different aspects of protected areas management in Austria and Slovenia.

And the last but not the least, the organizers wish to thank the Austrian-Slovenian international team for their active participation and sincere friendliness.

Karen Jenderedjian



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## PHOTOS



**Photo 1.** Mr. S. Papyan, First Deputy Minister of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia receives Austrian-Slovenian delegation.



**Photo 2.** DI Dr D. Bogner, DI J. Petutschnig and Dr K.Jenderedjian after meeting with Director of “Jinj” Ltd., Dr. Eduard Mesropyan.



**Photo 3.** Guiding tour in the center of Yerevan and lunch were organized by Mrs. G. Amalbasyants and Ms. G. Navasardyan



**Photo 4.** The project for restoration of Khor Virap Marsh was introduced and discussed with the participants of study tour.



**Photo 5.** Group photo in Khor Virap Monastery with biblical Mount Ararat on the background.



**Photo 6.** Mr. Zhirair Yeghyan, Mayor of Areni welcomes guests during the wine degustation offered on behalf of Areni Municipality





**Photo 7.** Governor of Vayots Dzor Mr. S.Bagratyan welcomes the participants of study tour in his office in Yeghegnadzor.



**Photo 8.** Mr. S.Bagratyan presents to participants nicely illustrated folio “ՀԱՅԱԴԱՐԱՆ” and wishes useful and pleasant time in Vayots Dzor.



**Photo 9.** Visiting newly opened museum of Noravanq Monastery with guided tour.



**Photo 10.** On opinion of experts currently almost abandoned Village Gnishik has great potential for agricultural tourism development.



**Photo 11.** As one can expect, the lunch in Gnishik envisaged protected area is going on in a very friendly and lively atmosphere.



**Photo 12.** Provision of services around mineral spring has great potential as source of incomes for neighboring Village Agarakadzor.





**Photo 13.** 5.7 km long transfer by aerial tramway over 320 m deep Vorotan Canyon from Halidzor to Tatev.



**Photo 14.** After excursion through Tatev Monastery participants were entertained to local specialties by Mayor of Tatev Mr. M. Simonyan.



**Photo 15.** The Governor of Syunig Marz Mr. Suren Khachatryan warmly welcomes participants in his office in Goris.



**Photo 16.** Dr. Bogner presents to Mr. Khachatryan some gifts and souvenirs from Austrian and Slovenian protected areas.



**Photo 17.** Director of “Shikahogh State Reserve” SNCO Mr. R. Mkrtychyan introduces tree nursery in Plane Grove State Sanctuary.



**Photo 18.** Hiking over the central part of Plane Grove State Sanctuary is especially important before dinner to be offered an hour later...





**Photo 19.** Mr. Ara Dolunts, the Deputy Governor of Syunig Marz raises toast for Austrian and Slovenian friends.



**Photo 20.** Mr. Vardan Gevorgyan, the Mayor of Qajaran introduces tutorial for pupils of 8 form "Qajaran: the Nature and the Ecology".



**Photo 21.** Mr. Garegin Gabrielyan introduces major ecological achievements and challenges of Qajaran Municipality.



**Photo 22.** Dr Bogner introduces "Biodiversity Monitoring with Farmer" project which supports the conservation by raising of public awareness.



**Photo 23.** Discussion. No doubts that further cooperation is needed between protected area managers of Armenia, Austria and Slovenia.



**Photo 24.** Mass media interviewing the Executive Director of the eb&p Umweltbüro Klagenfurt GmbH DI Dr Daniel Bogner from Austria.





**Photo 25.** Hiking in Zangezur State Reserve



**Photo 26.** Footprint and tree broken by bear.



**Photo 27.** The dinner offered by the municipality of Qajaran was accompanied by live national music and dances and had friendly atmosphere.



**Photo 28.** Khndzoresk Cave Town: view on the southern slopes.



**Photo 29.** Austrian-Slovenian participants with the project staff in Khndzoresk Cave Town.



**Photo 30.** Deputy Governor, Mayor of Sisian and Founder Director of Sisian Historical Museum welcome participants in Zorats Qarer.





**Photo 31.** Founder Director of Sisian Historical Museum Mrs. Tsovinar Petrosyan guides participants through the museum.



**Photo 32.** Dr. Bogner present pinecone snaps to Mr. Dolunts and pumpkin oil to Mayor of Sisian Mr. Aghasi Hakobjanyan and says goodbye.



**Photo 33.** In the visitor center participants were welcomed by the Director of “Khosrov Forest State Reserve” SNCO Mr. V. Barseghyan.



**Photo 34.** Mr. Rafayel Safaryan, project driver, receives famous pumpkin oil which except from medical use is excellent in salads and ice-cream.



**Photo 35.** DI Jürgen Petutschnig presented to Dr. Karen Jenderedjian his book “Under Wasser Welten”.



**Photo 36.** Mr. Ashot Avalyan, Deputy Head of the Staff of the Ministry of Nature Protection wishes guests safe return home.





## Annex 1. List of participants

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## Annex 1a. List of Accompanying Persons

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## Annex 2. The list of Local Persons with whom the group met during the tour (in chronological order)

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