

**Interview To
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Q: Which are the objectives of the TWReferenceNET Project and the importance of the Workshop held in Tirana on January 28th-29th, 2005?

A: The important international Workshop on: "Coastal lagoons and wetlands: a biodiversity heritage of Albania", was held in Tirana on January 28th-29th, 2005. The Project "TWReferenceNET" has been officially introduced to experts and representatives of the scientific world and Albanian and Italian administrative. The Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences and Technologies of the University of Lecce, in collaboration with the Puglia Region and the Ministry of the Environment, has put to point the ambitious objective to commit for the conservation, management of the coastal ecosystems of transition (estuaries, delta, lagoons, watertight ponds, and coastal lakes) in the Adriatic, Danube and South Eastern area of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

TWReferenceNET partnership includes 22 partners among Universities, Academies, Public Administrations, Research Institutes and Agencies, Ministry of Environment, Associations, Consortia and NGOs' of 5 countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania).

TWReferenceNET project has a total duration of 36 months, and financing through the Programme of Community Initiative INTERREG III B CADSES through which the European Union, in its effort to stimulate the territorial integration, it takes care beyond to the analysis and the prevention of the environmental risks, also to the conservation of the assets and the natural resources of which the water plays the main role.

Historically, for their ecological peculiarities and their positioning in coastal plains, the transitional ecosystems have always had an associate-economic role of relief for the local populations. Since the Roman age and also before, the transitional water ecosystems were among the environmental inheritance of great value for the human societies and were used for fishery and agriculture; all these services were offered from the ecosystem to the human societies, which contributed with a adaptive management to maintain ecosystem health. In the last centuries, the development of industrial activities and urbanization in the coastal area has drastically modified the relationship between human societies and ecosystems, compromising drastically the traditional models of management and increasing dramatically the anthropogenic pressures on these fragile ecosystems.

The result has been a progressive indifference and abandonment of such ecosystems that have determined in many cases serious pollution events, like the dramatic pollution event that has recently affected the Danube.

On account of it, the requirement of an important event, the workshop of Tirana, in which the importance of fishery and agriculture was highlighted, united to the tourism and the environmental education that represent the necessary bases and essential presupposed for the sustainable development of the transitional water ecosystems.

During the workshop, the "Transitional Waters Bulletin in the CADSES area" has been introduced. It is a Newsletter which represents electronic periodical of information on ecology, conservation and management of the transitional water ecosystems in the EcoRegion of Adriatic, Danube and South-Eastern area of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.