

Biodiversity preservation on military camps : Expertise exchanges at an international scale !

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Today, we face to a massive deterioration of biodiversity – that can be compared to the one that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs. In this context, we all have a role to play, especially military actors (of defence) : kept away from urbanization and intensive farming, thousands of hectares of military camps represent fantastic biosphere reserves.

The biodiversity preservation on military camps issue is shared by different international armies, and this was confirmed by the three days meeting, organized from 28 to 30 June in Nimes as part of the European Life Defense Nature 2mil project. On this matter, initiatives increase everywhere : dikes rehabilitation to protect the Audoin gull on the Aspretto naval base (France), improvement of the large rhinolophe hunting areas in the Hohenfels camp (Deutschland), restoration of 3000 hectares moors on the Standford training camp (United Kingdom) ... are part of the numerous actions discussed during the seminar.

This third and last day was more particularly devoted to experiments feedback. Four round tables were organized throughout the day and presented by stakeholders – specialists of biodiversity and army forces representatives – from 16 different nationalities : Hungary, Poland, Deutschland, the United States of America, Russia, Israel, Jordan, Switzerland, etc.

The participants compared their practices and share knowledge on very specific issues : natural spaces rehabilitation methods, vegetation management practices (for example by grazing)... Every time, exchanges showed that collaborative work between army forces and their partners allows a concrete and effective implementation of required measures to preserve biodiversity while respecting operational imperatives –the initial purpose of the camps.

While listening to the French expertise, the foreign delegations brought interesting testimonies that will inspire actors of the French Defence : development of monitoring and evaluation indicators of biodiversity on military areas, biodiversity/environment awareness and training programs/actions among military personnel, integrated approach of biodiversity on camps. That was the real challenge of this seminar: uniting a network of European actors in order to share experiments, to provide new ideas and so to be ambitious for the future !

Contacts presse :

**Conservatoire d'espaces
naturels Rhône-Alpes**

Nathalie Melcion

Tél : 04 72 31 84 50

06 18 52 75 44

[nathalie.melcion@espaces-
naturels.fr](mailto:nathalie.melcion@espaces-naturels.fr)

**Secrétariat général pour
l'administration**

Romain David

Tél : 09 88 68 62 36

06 31 18 93 14

romain.david@intradef.gouv.fr

DICoD

Centre de presse

Tél : 09 88 67 33 33

presse@dicod.fr