

II. WELCOME-

The following personalities gave welcoming remarks:

MS MARIANNE POPP,

Vice-President of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, and on behalf of the Austrian MAB National Committee she welcomed the participants of the EUROMAB Conference 2005 most cordially. She then drew attention to the fact that this meeting took place as a follow-up to the last EuroMAB Biosphere Reserve coordinators' meeting in Finland in 1997 and the EuroMAB 2002 meeting in Rome (Italy). She noted that biosphere reserves were suitable small scale tools to address global problems such as biodiversity loss, global warming. She acknowledged the work of the members of the local organising team and thanked all cooperation partners and sponsors who gave their generous support to realise the EuroMAB meeting 2005.

Last but not least she stressed the importance of considering the International Decade for Education for Sustainable Development launched in 2005, BSPs are ideally placed to act as model regions for genuine sustainability. This is what the Austrian Commission for UNESCO will strive for.

MS GABRIELE ESCHIG,

Secretary General of the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, gave a brief history of Schloss Herstein, dating from the 11th century and passing into the hands of the Habsburg family in the mid 19th century. It was decorated with care in the Tudor style similar to many buildings in nearby Vienna city. Today, the castle is a seminar hotel belonging to the Chamber of Commerce.

MS VIKTORIA HASLER,

Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Dep. II/4: Nature Conservation, National Parks, drew attention to the federal systems of responsibility for nature conservation in Austria, whereby her own Ministry was more concerned with funding activities of national and

international interest, including efforts under CITES and the CBD.

MR BERNHARD GUTLEB,

Office of the Carinthian Government, Dep. 20, Regional Planning, Subdivision Nature Conservation, spoke in particular of the Interreg project IPAM (Integrated Protected Area Management) being implemented in five neighbouring countries and for which a special workshop was being held as part of the meeting programme.

MS ILSE WOLLANSKY,

Urban Planning and Regional Policy Department (RU2) of the Office of the Lower Austrian Government also welcomed participants and wished to encourage exchanges of information amongst biosphere reserves in the EuroMAB countries.

MR ANDREAS JANUSKOVECZ,

Forestry Director, Municipal Department 49/ Forestry Office and Spatial Agriculture of the City of Vienna, spoke of the work to establish the Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve, approved by UNESCO in June 2005. The state governments of Vienna and Lower Austria submitted the park – which in 2000 celebrated the 1000th anniversary of its creation – in order to preserve the unique forest and meadow land and its historic cultural landscape for the future.