

## **DUNDEE EXHIBITION LEADS TO POLISH SANCTUARY PLEA**

An exhibition, staged in Dundee's Barrack Street Museum in 1994, and a book by Tayside wildlife artist, Keith Brockie, have led to questions being asked in the European Parliament about a motorway planned for Poland. SNP MEP, Ian Hudghton, is asking why a proposed motorway, linking Helsinki with Warsaw is has to be routed through the Biebrza National Park in north-east Poland, a marshland wilderness famous world-wide for its flora and fauna. Mr Hudghton said his actions were prompted following correspondence he received from a Dundee constituent who learned about the Biebrza area after visiting the "Portrait of a Living Marsh" exhibition in 1994, and who was anxious to prevent the risk posed to wildlife by the motorway.

Explaining the importance of Biebrza, Mr Hudghton said:

"Biebrza is one of Europe's last great wildernesses and is home to a wealth of animal and plant life. With its marsh and woodland habitats it supports well over 200 species of bird along with bears, wolves, lynxes, beavers and otters.

The Dundee exhibition reflected the ecological importance of this very special corner of Europe; Keith Brockie and the other exhibitors, who had visited the area capturing on canvass the beauty and diversity of its wildlife.

It had a profound affect on the lady who wrote to me, as I'm sure it had on the many other visitors who saw the exhibition. When she heard about plans to carve a motorway through the park, she wrote to me asking what could be done, given that the EU is funding its construction.

It appears that the highway, linking Finland with the Baltic states and Poland, was originally routed to the west of the Biebrza Park, but decisions have been taken which could result in this national reserve being decimated by a four-lane motor-way. One of the EU's stated aims is to protect and preserve habitats and bio-diversity. The Helsinki-Warsaw route, as it is currently planned, flies in the face of this. I have therefore tabled the following question to the Commission expressing my concerns and asking them what can be done to ensure that the ecology of this unique part of Europe is given the protection it deserves."

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION TABLED 28 NOV  
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To ask the Commission what consideration has been given to the environmental impact of routing the Helsinki to Warsaw motorway (the Via Baltica) through the Biebrza National Park in north eastern Poland, and the risk posed to the unique ecosystems of this area. To ask the extent to which the Commission has been involved in determining the proposed route of this important transport link and the decision to change the original plans which would have taken the motorway to the west of this national park. Finally to ask the Commission how the consequential loss of flora and fauna in the Biebrza National Park ties in with the EU's commitment to preserving natural habitats and the need for Poland, as an applicant country, to comply with such legislation.

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