

European Campaign for the Countryside

In the course of the end-of-year discussions on the budget, the Council of Europe authorities last year approved the organization of a European Campaign for the Countryside, scheduled for 1987–88.

This project is intended to ward off the dangers at present threatening the future of the countryside: the desertion of declining regions, the tendency for urban sprawl to invade the surrounding countryside and, generally, the growing imbalance between Man and Nature. The aim will be to foster public awareness of those problems and to seek solutions which make it possible to:

(1) Establish an acceptable standard of living in the countryside by means of appropriate spatial planning and the rational development of economic resources; this implies:

- Rethinking agricultural, forestry, and soil, policies;
- Diversifying economic resources by developing the 'agri-business' and services sectors, quality crafts, tourism, and new technologies; and
- Maintaining or creating the foundations that are necessary for such development—transport, communications technology, housing, training facilities, and public services.

(2) Protect the environment together with the natural, architectural, and cultural, heritages and combat all forms of pollution in order to preserve the quality and originality of country life.

(3) Promote policies designed to:

- Improve the status of women country-dwellers;

- Cope with young people's problems, and
- Create suitable structures for the elderly.

The Campaign will be organized and operated by a European Organizing Committee set up on a multidisciplinary basis within the Council of Europe (dealing with rural planning and development, natural heritage, cultural heritage and development, the condition of women in rural areas, youth work and training, rural community structures and finance, agriculture and forestry, demography and tourism).

The task of this Committee will be to coordinate the Campaign and decide on policy matters, leaving the principal activities to be carried out by national and regional committees which will be free to choose what aspects to stress, depending on the circumstances of each country.

It is also intended to illustrate the aims of the Campaign by means of pilot projects. The national committees—to be set up in 1986—will be seeking cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and voluntary bodies dealing with the problems of the countryside.

It is also hoped to explore possibilities of cooperating with other intergovernmental organizations—above all the European Economic Community, which has declared 1987 as 'European Environment Year'.

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Good Conservation News from Egypt!

A Law for Financing Nature Conservation in Egypt

From July 1985, 10% of the value of every travel ticket issued in Egypt in Egyptian currency is to be used for financing pollution prevention and Nature conservation in Egypt, specifically for:

- Development of touristic areas, hotels, and airports;
- Development and embellishment of archaeological sites; and
- Financing projects for pollution prevention and Nature conservation.

This is required by Article (1) of Law No 101/1985, signed by President M.H. Mubarak and thereby endorsing the approval of the People's Assembly, and 'holds for tickets for travel to outside Egypt, or for coming into Egypt, or for travel between two countries if the ticket is issued in Egyptian currency.'

Two New Protected Areas in Northern Sinai

The Prime Minister of Egypt issued, on 15 October 1985, a Decree on the establishment of two new Nature protection areas in the Northern Sinai Governorate. The first of these is in the Lake Bardawil area, comprising the areas of Zaranik and Sabkhet El-Bardawil (Bardawil salt-marsh), while the second one comprises the coastal sand-dunes, known as Al-Ahrash (scrub), between El-Arish and the international border at Rafah. The two areas are to be administered by an Executive Council presided over by the Governor of Northern Sinai and responsibility for policing the protected areas lies with the Governor. The Executive Council is charged with:

- Preparing programmes and studies for improving and developing the areas;

Monitoring environmental phenomena and surveying their terrestrial and marine faunas and floras, and keeping special registers for each of the two areas;

Managing and coordinating activities related to the two areas; and

Informing and educating the general public on the aims and objectives of establishing Nature protection areas.

Seminars Organized by the Department of Natural Resources

The DNR is organizing a series of Seminars on the Natural Resources of Africa and of Egypt, to mark its 15th Anniversary, during the Academic Year 1985–86.

Tentative Programme:

(1) A Seminar on Natural Resources. '*Natural Resources: Definitions, Concepts, Study, Management, and Conservation*'.

(2) A Seminar on Soil Resources: '*Survey and Evaluation of Soil Resources in Egypt and in Africa*'.

(3) A Seminar on Plant Resources: '*Aquatic and Desert Plant Resources in Northeast Africa*'.

(4) A Seminar on Animal Resources: '*Resources of Soil Fauna in Egypt and in Africa*'.

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