



# One Europe More Nature

## Sinca Noua and Țagla Mountains / Romania



### TOURISM

If Sinca Noua were in the Austrian or Swiss Alps, there is little doubt that the village would be a well-known tourism destination. But Sinca Noua is at the edge of the Southern Carpathians and is still undiscovered. However, it has the potential to become a hot tip for travellers, looking for a picturesque setting and the tranquillity of a small mountain village off the beaten track.

The careful development of sustainable tourism is one of the new economic opportunities. Local people could open a variety of businesses such as small guesthouses, cafés or restaurants, thereby creating income for local people. Such tourism could also support the extensive, traditional agriculture, and valorise the natural richness of the surrounding landscape

### STRÂMBĂ VALLEY

The Strâmbă Valley is a special place, with hay meadows in the lower parts and forests higher up. The meadows are rich in flowers, especially in spring, with several species of orchids. The valley is home to important bird species, including hoopoe, corncrake, black stork, and lesser spotted eagle. The Strâmbă creek stills follows its natural course on the valley floor and its water is free from pollution.

The meadows on the North side of the Strâmbă Creek are owned by people from the village of Sinca Veche. This is almost 10 km away and people have little interest in maintaining the meadows or putting manure on them. The South side of the Valley is owned by people from Sinca Noua and is used for potato or hay production and are much better looked after. But this too could change.

One way of keeping the landscape quality and biodiversity of the valley intact is the start up of new incentives to continue grazing and hay making in the valley. Possibilities for this are currently being explored.



### WATER SUPPLY AND HYDROLOGY

Presently every household in the village of Sinca Noua has its own well and/or takes ground water from small springs in the surroundings. Although the water is of high quality, this system does not work very well: many families experience a water shortage in summer droughts.

A larger number of tourists, combined with a gradual increase in living standards of the local people, will increase the demand for a larger and more secure water supply. Therefore the village will have to shift to a centralized water system, distributing running tap water to all the houses in the village, without compromising the natural hydrology of the area. A project proposal for the implementation of a centralized water system is in place, and funding is currently being sought.



### FORESTS

In the community of Sinca Noua and the surrounding areas, over 50% of the land is covered with forests. The forests are the watershed for the Strâmbă river and its tributary the Strâmbisoara on the West side, and the Gaunoasa river on the East side of Sinca Noua. Both rivers flow into the Sinca river, which runs through Sinca Noua village.

The forests are also home to an almost intact megafauna, including large carnivores like bear, wolf, and lynx. Wildcats also are present in the area.

The few open patches in these forests are extremely important for flora and fauna but only remain open as long as grazing pressure (currently mostly by sheep) inhibits forest encroachment. When grazing disappears, so will the biodiversity associated with it.



### SHEEP FARMING

Several families in Sinca Noua have a dozen or so sheep or goats. During summer the sheep are kept together in large flocks, in 'sheep camps' usually higher up in the mountains. This ancient form of livestock grazing will soon be under severe pressure. Hygienic conditions in these livestock camps will struggle to meet EU standards and once costs to run a sheep camp rise considerably, it will become more difficult to employ enough shepherds to guard the stock. For tourism, however, sheep farming has a special quality and could be used as a visitor attraction. In return, tourism could create additional income for sheep farmers.



### PASTURES AND MEADOWS

The pastures and hay meadows, interspersed with shrubs and woods, solitary trees and hedges, are situated just outside the boundary of the village. For centuries these grasslands have been used for daily grazing during the vegetation period and for hay making to assure the winter food.

A number of villagers have already chosen to get rid of their cattle. At the same time, most horses in the village have been replaced by tractors during the last 15 years. As a result, the encroachment of shrubs can already be seen on pastures and former hay meadows further away from the village, indicating the lower number of livestock.





# Sinca Noua and Tagla Mountains

A new, sustainable economy under construction



### THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE AT A CROSSROADS

The appearance of the European landscape is largely determined by agriculture – simply because this economic activity covers more than 50% of Europe’s land surface. Forestry comes a good second, covering 35%. Changes in agriculture and forestry therefore impact immediately on our landscapes and the animal and plant communities associated with them. And big changes in land use do lie ahead of us – especially in agriculture.

It has been estimated that as a result of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy several million hectares of land will no longer be needed for agriculture. In areas where conditions are good (soil quality and in particular access to resources and markets) farmers will intensify and upscale their activities, thus out competing colleagues in areas where conditions are less favourable. Without support, the latter will have no choice but to give up their farms, often leaving the land unmanaged. Both sides of the coin, intensification and land-abandonment, will induce drastic social changes in rural areas throughout Europe and will lead to enormous changes in landscapes, natural values and ecological processes.

The change has already started and will be accelerated by the extension of the EU. This demands reflection and action by all those who care about the quality of the European landscape and the wellbeing of the people whose lives are intertwined with them. Where agriculture disappears, new economies need to be developed. These should

- support people (socially, economically)
- support the conservation and/or restoration of landscapes and ecological processes.

Only initiatives, in which these two qualities are combined, will have a chance for implementation in the short term and at the same time will be sustainable in the long term.

### ONE EUROPE MORE NATURE

The fact that land-use is changing is no secret. Although the public at large may not yet be aware of it, policy makers and politicians know what’s going on. It is no coincidence that the Common Agricultural Policy

increasingly offers possibilities for ‘rural development’ in the broad sense, instead of being solely directed towards supporting agriculture. However, changing policies is one (important!) thing, changing practices is another. This is where One Europe More Nature comes in. One Europe More Nature aims to develop and/or highlight areas in which people are succeeding in making the transition from a (largely) agricultural economy to a (more diverse and sustainable) new economy. In the latter, agriculture might still play a role, but will no longer be the critical factor on which social life, incomes, natural values and landscape quality depend. By highlighting these working examples, WWF wants to change the spirit of the debate and demonstrate that changes in land use need not be treated as a problem. They can also be seen as an opportunity to develop new landscape qualities and new forms of income. Sure, grabbing these opportunities is hard work – but it can be done and it is rewarding. One Europe More Nature shows this.

### SINCA NOUA AND TAGLA MOUNTAINS

An example of a ‘new economy under construction’ is illustrated in this wall map. It shows how people living in Sinca Noua, Romania, are trying to build a new economy, which not only helps restore ecological processes and landscape quality but also creates new jobs.

Sinca Noua is not a blue print for sustainable development in other areas in Europe – every situation needs its own, tailor made solution. However, WWF firmly believes that the initiative undertaken here can be a source of inspiration for all those working towards a new future for Europe’s landscapes and ecological processes – and the people, plants and animals associated with them.

### MORE INFORMATION

This wall map shows you where to go if you want to see the various elements of the new economy developing in and around the community of Sinca Noua. More details on the background of these efforts and the people involved in them can be found in the Policy Field Guide ‘Sinca Noua and Tagla Mountains’, published by WWF in 2005.



One Europe More Nature works with field projects in 6 eu member states (yellow) and in one of the accession countries (brown). It also collaborates closely with the wwF’s European Policy Office in Brussels.



## One Europe More Nature

### European Challenges, Natural Solutions: A new perspective for nature and people in rural areas in Europe



### ONE EUROPE MORE NATURE

The central goal of One Europe More Nature is: *to identify, create and communicate practical examples of alternatives for rural development in Europe, mechanisms which are good for nature and good for people and which can significantly influence the reform of the CAP and enhance WWF’s nature conservation impact across Europe.* WWF does this by:

- setting up a network of pilot projects across Europe and acquiring experience with various regional partners of financing mechanisms for nature and landscape protection and restoration. These pilots also include non-wwF projects. In most cases pilots offer perspective on a European scale;
- using these results to influence public opinion and policy decision-making on European (agricultural) policy and its reform and implementation;
- creating awareness in European consumers that they contribute to the quality of nature and landscape by their (purchasing) behaviour in food, services, recreation, tourism and other sectors.

One Europe More Nature is a collaborative – integrated – project of the WWF European teams on agriculture, forestry, and freshwater and is funded by WWF Netherlands. For more information on One Europe More Nature, contact the Project Leader: Charlie Avis  
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By combining policy and market mechanisms, and by focussing on partnership, on stakeholders, and on new economies rather than on species and habitats, WWF believes that the One Europe More Nature projects offer potential for self-sustaining rural development in a time of change. Projects included in One Europe More Nature:

- Vainameri (Estonia), executed by Arhipelaag and WWF-Sweden;
- Gelderse Poort (Netherlands), executed by Stichting Ark and WWF-Netherlands;
- Sinca Noua and Tagla Mountains (Romania), executed by the village of Sinca Noua and WWF International;
- Ardennes (Belgium), executed by WWF-Belgium;
- Prespa (Greece), executed by WWF-Greece and Society for the Protection of Prespa
- Coto Doñana (Spain), executed by WWF-Spain;
- Tisza lowland floodplains (Hungary), executed by WWF-Hungary;
- Tisza upland headwaters in Maramures (Romania), executed by WWF-Danube Carpathian Programme.

