

Budapest Conference calls for action to make electric powerlines safe for birds

Title

On 13 April 2011, Budapest hosted a special Conference **?Power lines and bird mortality in Europe?**. This important event was co-organised by MME/BirdLife Hungary, the Ministry of Rural Development of Hungary and BirdLife Europe and was kindly hosted by MAVIR (the Hungarian Transmission System Operator Company Ltd.), as part of the official programme of the Hungarian EU Presidency. The aim of the Conference was to bring together nature conservationists, industry professionals and governments and to stimulate joint actions to address the problem of large-scale bird mortality on power lines at the European level. Power lines kill birds through electrocution on pylons or collision with wires. Electrocution, for example is one of the main threats to the vulnerable Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalbertii* and Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* as well as other threatened species listed in the EU Birds Directive. Electrocutions also disrupt electricity supplies causing economic loss and creating much extra work for the power utility companies. Thus everyone is interested to resolve this issue, but there is a lot to do. Fortunately, the problem can be almost completely eliminated from the outset through well-proven mitigation measures, bringing benefits for birds, grid operators and electricity consumers alike. Large scale 'bird-safety' measures and specific local actions are priority conservation actions in many EU bird Species Action Plans. Many grid operators and regulators have also realised the benefits of eliminating electrocution risks, often working with bird conservation organisations to ensure win-win solutions are found. The Conference was attended by 123 participants of 29 European and Central Asian countries, the European Commission, UNEP-AEWA, six energy and utility companies, experts, businesses and NGOs. The participants adopted a special **Declaration** calling the European governments and the EU institutions to ensure that the production and transport of our energy will not be the cause of unnecessary death of millions of birds. The conference documents and the declaration are available at a [dedicated website](#).
