**International Workshop for CEE Countries** 

## "Tourism in Mountain Areas and the Convention on Biological Diversity"

1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2002 Sucha Beskidzka, Babia Gora National Park, Poland



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International Workshop for CEE Countries "TOURISM IN MOUNTAIN AREAS"

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CASE STUDY

# The tourism potentials and impacts in protected mountain areas

### "GOLIJA-STUDENICA" BIOSPHERE RESERVE

SERBIA

**Jovan Popesku** Centre of Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Development Nemanjina 28 11000 Belgrad

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#### **1** General description of the area

The natural environment of the Golija-Studenica biosphere reserve has persisted to the present time, in spite of human activities. Different ecosystems, thereby high biodiversity, are controlled by non-uniform geology, varied surface configuration, and numerous geomorphologic features in co action with climatic factors. The region of Golija has been a habitat of refuge, where Tertiary flora survived, which adds to its importance of a centre of generic, specific, and ecosystem diversity on Balkan peninsula and in Europe. Floral biodiversity of Golija consists of about 900 plant taxa, of which number 728 are identified vascular plant species, 40 moss species, 117 algal species and varieties.

Local population cleared forests through centuries, transforming woodland into large pastures, meadows, and some fields. This land use is still practiced in the region. The development of secondary pastures and meadows involved natural growth of many plant species that enriched the vegetation of the region. In spite of human influences, this area has preserved its original plant communities.

The potential of "Golija-Studenica" as a biosphere reserve is in its natural forests (particularly use of secondary products), livestock and traditional agriculture, production of healthy food and promotion of sustainable tourism based on rural tourism and cultural sites. Studenica Monastery is listed on the UNESCO World List of Cultural Heritage. The Monastery of Studenica, with different cultural, ethnographic and natural characteristics and importance is a great support to the Biosphere Reserve.

#### 1.1 History of protection

Floral research on Golija was initiated by Josif Pančić, a known nature scientist, in 19th century. He botanized in 1856, 1866 and 1875 respectively on Golija, Javor and Mučanj mountains, as mentioned in "Flora of the Dukedom of Serbia" published in 1874 and its addition. From his visits to this region, Pančić mentions 29 plant species. Studies of flora and vegetation, and of algae and mosses, in the early 20th century are associated with Nedeljko Košanin. Particularly important is his work concerning hydrobiology of Dajić Lake that describes the initial state of the lake, which fifty years later was placed under governmental protection.

Research in flora and vegetation of Golija was discontinued from the time of Košanin to the sixties. It was resumed in the sixties. Studies of flora, phytogeography, phytocoenology and ecology by botanists and foresters in past decades increased the level of our knowledge of the vegetation life on Golija. The vegetation of juniper forests, meadows and pastures were studied by Blečić and Tatić. Systematic and comprehensive team and stationary research of Golija Mountain began in the seventies, guided by M. Gajić.

Studies of Golija, Radočelo and Čemerno mountain massifs, from 1996 to 1999, for an estimate of nature resources, include compilation of the natural history and social science information and collecting latest data, all of which are used in preparing the proposal for protection of the Golija Nature Park, an area of 75.183,967 hectares. Its core area (first degree protection) covers the best preserved ecosystems that are characteristic of the study region. A part of Golija Nature Park, which includes most of the core area, 53.804 hectares, is nominated as "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve.

This very interesting region attracted attention of nature-conservation followers. In 1950 the Institute of Nature Conservation and Study of Nature Rarities of Serbia made a decision on protection of mixed juniper, abies and beech species over 30 hectares on Golija mountain; in 1957, the same Institute decided to protect Jankov Kamen reserve of 8 hectares below Jankov Kamen peak (1.833 m); a decision of 1966 protected Dajić' lake of 2 hectares.

After several years of research and valorization of the area (1996-1999) by experts of the Institute for the Protection of Nature of Serbia, in July 2001 Golija was designated as Nature Park by the Decree which classified it in 1<sup>st</sup> category of protection, as an asset of exceptional significance.

By the Decision of UNESCO-MAB Committee, in October 2001, Golija became internationally recognized area – "Golija – Studenica" biosphere reserve.

#### **1.2** Ecosystems, flora and fauna and geographical borders

Golija-Studenica area (53.804 ha) is within the limits of the Golija Nature Park (75.000 ha). Terrestrial Core Areas comprise 496,60 hectares, terrestrial Buffer Zones 3.661,50 hectares while the size of terrestrial Transition area is 49.645,90 hectares. Golija Nature Park is a protected estate, one of a few mountainous regions of preserved nature. Moreover, it is a complex mosaic of different ecosystems (lake, aquatic, meadow, shrub, forest) forming a unified entity of closely related habitats, communities, populations, entire ecosystems and numerous transitional types.

Ecological significance of the protected Golija Nature Park is related to conservation of different plant and animal habitats and their communities. Undisturbed biological equilibrium is important for preservation of biocoenoses (and associated fauna) and their authenticity and representation.

Golija-Studenica is the core area of the Biosphere Reserve, given protection of the first degree, which means forbidden use of natural resources, forbidden practice of all activities but for research purposes and controlled education. The buffer zone coincides with the Golija Nature Park area which is given protection of the second degree that includes limited and strictly controlled use of natural resources, and allowed activities only toward improvement of the resources and preservation without adverse effects to the primary values.

Land use and activities in the transition zone are regulated by laws and plans (on soils, forests, waters, fishing, mining, construction, etc.). "Under the 3rd degree protection shall be selective and limited use of natural resources and controlled interventions and activities in accordance with functions of the protected resource or associated with traditional economic activities and residence including tourist facilities". (Law on Environment Protection, In: "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No 66/1 and No. 83/92).

Units of the core area are protected reserves (Below Ljute Livade 1950 and part of Jankov Kamen 1957) or natural monuments (Dajić Lake 1966) subject to the Law on Nature Conservation of the SR Serbia, effectively protected. This biosphere reserve is an area which differs in biogeography, vegetation, flora and fauna, entirely and in each component, from other regions in the country. Golija Nature Park is a mosaic of ecosystems (forests, shrubs, meadows, marshes, bogs) interrelated in a single entity. As a nature unit, this reserve and each ecosystem in it are important for study, teaching, economy, sports and recreation.

At the same place, there are ecosystems of mesophilic climate-zonal oak and oroclimatic European beech forests of Balkan subregion, Central European geographical region and

ecosystems of beech-abies, abies-juniper, and juniper woods, which belong to Balkan-boreal subregion, boreal biogeographical Region.

The integrality of ecosystems in the Golija Nature Park is expressed in their functional relationship. Relations between individual ecosystems result from their characteristics, or they provide living conditions for numerous species of wild fauna.

Protection of Golija-Studenica Biosphere Reserve in the **core area** of 496,60 hectares bans nature resource utilization and prohibits the use of any activities but those of research and controlled education. It is classified as a part of the Golija Nature Park (Law on Environmental Protection, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 66/91), earmarked only for conservation of biodiversity and natural functions of the ecosystems.

Ecosystems in core zone	Area in hectares
Below Jankov Kamen: Mosaic of forest ecosystems	60,80
<u>Pašina česma:</u> The Golija river source area	0,20
Karalići: Forest ecosystem including sycamore wood	34,00
Vodica: Polydominant forest ecosystem	63,60
Peat bog at Bele Vode: Bog vegetation	15,20
Dajić lake: Lake ecosystem - peat	1,00
Palez: Forest ecosystem	38,00
Isposnice: Relict forest ecosystem	20,50
Košanin lakes: Lake ecosystem and surrounding forest	26,80
Crepuljnik: Forest ecosystem	65,80
Radočelo: Forest ecosystems	44,00
Izubra: Part of the Izubra river area	66,10
Above Ljute Livade: Forest ecosystem	27,60
The Crna Reka: Canyon section of the Crna Reka	28,80
Radulovac: Springs and secondary pastures	4,00
The Crna Reka source area: The Crna Reka springs	0,20

Conversation measures in the **buffer zone** of Golija-Studenica Biosphere Reserve, which has a surface area of 3.661,50 hectares, consist of limited or strictly controlled use of natural resources; area activities are allowed only when enhancing the present situation or if presenting a resource without affecting its primary character. This buffer zone is assigned the second degree of protection on the national level as a part of the Golija Nature Park (Law on Environmental Protection, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 66/91).

Practices allowed in these areas have to be compatible with the conservation objectives formulated in Art 49 of the Law on Environmental Protection, which defines in § 5 "limited and strictly controlled use of nature resources and activities that contribute to improvement in the given state and presentation of the resource without affecting its primary character." Protection of the second degree specifies where particular improvements are needed in conservation of the genuine nature.

Tourism for presentation of the conservation reserve is allowed in the frame of seconddegree protection as activity which will improve the nature.

Ecosystems in Buffer zone	Area in hectares
Jankov Kamen Forest ecosystem	390,20
Bojovo Brdo Forest ecosystem	133,95
Jelića Strugara Forest ecosystem	2,00
Golijska Reka Forest ecosystem	851,00
Medjugorski Potok Forest ecosystem	390,20
Bele Vode Forest and meadow ecosystem	84,40
Dajići Forest and meadow ecosystem	55,80
Jelenovica Forest ecosystem	125,20
Orlov Kamen Forest ecosystem	132,35
Gradina Forest ecosystem and rock vegetation	226,70
Below Crepulinik Forest ecosystem	362,10
Radočelo II Forest ecosystem	82,40
Brusnica Forests Forest ecosystem	124,60
Ugliare Forest ecosystem	52,80
Ljute Livade Forest and meadow ecosystems	282,00
<u>Vlaški Most</u> Forest ecosystem	231,20
Suvi Breg Forest ecosystem	25,60
Odvraćenica Pasture vegetation	29,00

The outer transition area has a surface of 49.645,90 hectares, coincident with the Golija Nature park area of the third degree protection. This degree of protection "allows selective and limited use of natural resources and controlled intervention and activities which are compatible with the conservation objectives or are related to the inherited traditional economic and habitation practices including tourist housing (Law on Environmental protection, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 66/91 and 83/92). Development of tourist facilities in proportion with local capacities and potentials is permitted in outer transition area.

The region of "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve has characteristics of a particular nature resource. Ecological significance of the protected Golija Nature Park is related to conservation of different plant and animal habitats and their communities. Geomorphologic features are virtually autochthonous. The authenticity is manifested in preservation of the typical and specific nature:

- Preservation and diversity of the original hydrography (springs, mountain streams and rivers, lakes);
- Preservation of original plant species;
- Floral diversity and abundance and presence of rare or scarce plant species;
- Faunal diversity and abundance.

#### 1.2.1 Vegetation

The existing plant population is controlled by the microrelief or the total of environmental conditions. Golija mountain, southwestern Serbia, belongs to the inner zone of the Dinaric mountain system within the Mesian Province, also bordering on the Illyrian Province, as manifested in floral and vegetation characteristics. Vegetation of Golija Mt. has been studied over a century, beginning with the great Serbian botanist Nedeljko Košanin, a native of this region, and many other nature scientists who admired the beauty and peculiarity of Golija.

Golija varies in altitude from 415 m to 1833 m (Jankov Kamen), from hills to subalpine belt, in a climatogenic zone of forest vegetation. The mountain massif extends east-west over 32

km. Its slopes are different: northern slopes on Ivanjica side are under forests and mostly degraded and woodless southern, Novi Pazar side, slopes. The name of the mountain (Golija=Barren) is after the latter slopes (or from some earlier period).

Vertical profile of the mountain clearly shows successive zones of oak woods, beech woods, mixed beech, abies and juniper woods, and juniper woods in subalpine belt - at the top of the mountain. The presence of juniper in subalpine belt classifies it into the Mesian Province where vertical zoning of vegetation is of the Serbian-Bulgarian type. Gentle relief forms, dominant silicate subbase and relatively well developed soil, abundant and well distributed precipitations and numerous streams and springs, all account for making northern Golija slopes the most wooded mountain in this country. The diversity in abiotic factors is responsible for diverse vegetation and azonal and extrazonal types of forest vegetation: alder woods, durmast oak and European hornbeam woods, flowering ash and hornbeam shrubs, and Scotch pine wood.

Long and intensive, mostly detrimental, operation of human factors led to deterioration of the former forest vegetation: thinning woods, stunted trees, woody shrubs, bush, and non-forest vegetation of different mesophilic and acidophilic meadows from the mountain base to the highest peaks, and heath over small patches. As a result of historical factors, primary non-forest vegetation develops in peat bogs around glacial lakes or in places of old lakes, including: Acer heldreichii, Bruckenthalia spiculiflora, Ranunculus serbicus, Lycopodium clavatum, species of the genera Sphagnum, Iliex aguifolium, etc.

#### 1.2.2 Animal life

Brooks and rivers of the region are natural habitats for autochthonous fish species, the best known of which are common trout, grayling, barbell, chub, gudgeon, etc.

Among big animals, red deer is mentioned as an autochthonous representative of noble game, once very common in this region.

Besides red deer, the animal population includes wild boar, roe deer, and fox wild cat, badger, pine marten, stone marten, weasel, otter, or a total of fifty mammal species, there are app 150 bird species.

The above stated indicates that the biosphere reserve is important for survival of a diverse and abundant vegetative and animal life, which has disappeared forever from many regions of this country and Europe.

#### 2 The human dimension

#### 2.1 Population

The Transition Area, within the boundaries of the proposed Golija -Studenica Biosphere Reserve, has 42 dispersed rural communities characteristic of mountainous regions. They belong to Ivanjica and Kraljevo municipalities.

According to statistical data (1991), there were 11.000 people living in the villages of all the territory of nature park Golija. Since the last census is just finished, preliminary results are showing further declination of number of people, reflecting process of depopulation that was taking place there during last decades.

As a result of intensive migration, these villages are getting old, which may be also confirmed by the fact that in the territory of two municipalities there (Kraljevo and Ivanjica) the dominant group of inhabitants are of age between 50-69 years. They make more than half of all the population of nature park Golija, covering more than two third of whole the territory of nature park. In the territory of other three municipalities (Kraljevo, Sjenica and Novi Pazar) included in boundaries of nature park, younger population may be found, but not significantly different from the above described structure.

#### 2.2 Economic situation, land use and tourism

Principal **economic activity** of the inhabitants of those communities is livestock rearing and extensive farming, as well as collecting of secondary forest products (mushrooms, medicinal herbs, etc.). In last years, production of potato has been intensified, as well as fruit production.

Within the successful cooperation between Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia with representatives of Ivanjica municipality, which covers most of the biosphere reserve territory, first steps were taken in order to provide inhabitants with the official trade mark for well known "**Ivanjica's potato**", which would open new opportunities for economic development and improve people awareness of opportunities and benefits they may have after establishment of biosphere reserve in the area.

Years of economic crisis and lack of investments in this region caused the consequences to economic development of Golija, and sometimes even the **poverty of people** living there. The only positive side of this process is preserved and in some parts untouched nature, in all its authenticity. Rich sources of potable water, huge pasture complexes and good conditions for development of organic agriculture – make only some of the advantages of the area.

However, there is still visible gap between the potentials and its strategic and wise use and development. Sharing the destiny with village people from majority of mountain areas in Serbia, they are facing difficult life conditions, and lack of governmental, donors or other support for improving of their economic status and quality of life. Less and less young and active people, as the result of migrations, live and work there, which contributes to the fact that natural resources, and especially non timber forest products, are being used more by people and companies not belonging to the local communities.

**Potential benefits** to local communities from the existing of Golija-Studenica Biosphere Reserve may be better sale of local products and easier credit granting for development projects compatible with the biosphere reserve objectives. As the reserve is part of nature park Golija, established by Serbian Government, the government is expected to support its protection and improvement. Besides, with the status of a Biosphere Reserve given to this area, of both national and international importance, prospective investors may be more interested in it.

The likely **negative effect** of the Biosphere Reserve on local communities will be prevention of erecting production plants with technologies incompatible with the strict environmental requirements.

From all above mentioned reasons, there is strong need to work permanently with local people on development of understanding of their benefits and potentials of biosphere reserve, as well as to involve them in decision making on development of the area as the place they live.

The core area of "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve is completely protected. This area is devoted only for monitoring and researching. Buffer zones are dominantly (over 90%) covered by stable autochthonous forest ecosystems and the rest by pastures. The **principal land use** has been forestry, pasturing and collecting secondary forest products (medicinal, herbs, mushrooms, etc.). Major activities in transition area are forestry, hunting, extensive livestock rearing, and agriculture. **Tourism is in initial stage of development**.

**Forests** in the "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve are managed on the basis of Management Plans approved by competent Ministry of Agriculture, Water resources and Forestry. There are Forestry Management Plans for 11 areas within "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve. There are 30.445 ha of forests in Biosphere Reserve – 13.212 ha private and 17.233 state owned. Concerning basic types of habitat (oak woods, beech forests, deciduous coniferous woods and juniper woods) selective cutting is allowed. There is a problem of uncontrolled cutting of woods in private ownership. A monitoring programme in forestry has been effective from 1956.

Well-preserved nature is one of the fundamental **competitive advantages** for positioning of Serbian **tourism** on the international tourist market. Variety of natural resources is additional reason to consider development of ecotourism in Serbia as important tool for sustainable tourism development in Serbia and to represent consistent and long-term approach to achieve sustainability. The bases for development of ecotourism as a niche market for Serbian tourism are protected areas. At this moment five percent of Serbia's territory is regulated for nature protection. The Landscape Management Plan of the Republic of Serbia projects to include 10% of the territory for nature protection by the year 2010.

There are five national parks in Serbia (Djerdap, Fruska Gora, Kopaonik, Sar planina and Tara), three Ramsar sites (Ludasko jezero, Obedska bara and Carska bara) and one biosphere reserve – "Golija-Studenica" officially approved by MAB Board in 2001. There are 120 nature reserves, 20 nature parks and about 470 natural monuments in Serbia that have been protected so far, as well as 215 plant and 427 animal species designated as natural rarities. Further 156 plants and animal species are included under collecting and trading controls.

It is concluded by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) that the reduction of poverty, combined with environmental awareness-raising and improved understanding of environmental protection, would contribute to an improved environmental situation in the Republic of Serbia. Sustainable development should be introduced as a national strategy within the context of stabilization and economic liberalization. According to REC, effective utilization of natural resources represents another priority.

**Tourism potentials** of "Golija-Studenica" Biosphere Reserve are great, but very little used. Main tourist attraction is Studenica Monastery, certainly one of the best structures of Serbian creative art and one of the most important centres of medieval history, which is from 1986 on the UNESCO List of world cultural heritage.

An impressive number of churches were built over centuries on or near Studenica landed estates of medieval lords. From the Middle Ages through the 17th century, more than fifteen temples were built between Polumir and Pridvorica and from Savov to Rudno, half the number of which, excluding Studenica churches, have been wholly or partly preserved. Each village in the region, whatever its size, has at least one church. The reason for such unproportional number of places for worship may be the fact that Studenica Monastery, as a centre of spiritual and religious life not only of this region, played directly and successfully an essential missionary role.

Centrally situated in Raška, the medieval Serbian state, Studenica was for centuries the centre of major historical events. The Turkish conquest of the late 14th century soon provoked massive migration of Serbs that changed the ethnical picture of the region to that of the present time. The territory of Stari Vlah with Studenica was liberated from Turks in 1833.

The Studenica river basin was divided into two districts: upper, the Moravica district and lower, one of the two Ibar districts. Numerous toponyms and visible remains of mines and open casts are the evidence of medieval mining and artisan (stonecutting for instance) practices, which contributed to the economic development and power of the population, and certainly explains the construction of a numerous of sacral buildings.

In the vicinity of Studenica Monastery there is two-star hotel "Studenica" with 60 beds. In the villages near Monastery there are few house holds involved in rural tourism, but still there are no exact figures. Hotel "Studenica" registers approximately 7.000 tourist nights annually.

There is another hotel "Golijska reka" (two-star) with 150 beds, located at the altitude of 1400 meters in the transition zone near buffer zone, but now not in function. During last few years this hotel had about 12.000 overnights annually.

There are potentials for camping and recreation, study of flora and fauna, rural tourism, fishing, hunting, etc. Tourism development in Biosphere reserve will necessitate construction of infrastructural facilities. It is particularly important that local communities will benefit from tourism development through better sale of local products and easier credit granting for development projects compatible with the biosphere reserve objectives.

#### 3 Planning and Management and Institutional and Legal Framework

Management of protected areas in Serbia is primarily regulated by the Law on System of Environmental Protection (recently enacted in June 2002) and Law on National Parks. It makes the legal basis for the protection decrees, provided for every protected area.

Law on National Parks designate Public enterprises for each of national parks as managers of protected area. Managers of other protected areas categories are designated by protection decree (on national or local level).

#### 3.1 System framework

The main instruments of management of management are:

- a) Protection regimes (model of 3 degrees of protection is used for all the protected areas, following modern conservation concept and especially one established by Seville Strategy)
- b) Plans for protection, and utilization of space and natural resources (spatial and urban plans, forestry plans, water management plans, hunting and fishing plans, agriculture plans)
- c) Mid-term (5 years) and annual plans for protection and development of nature and nature protected areas (i.e. management plans)
- d) EIA
- e) Approvals of all stated above by Government or Ministry (ministries in charge)
- f) Institutions (expert's and scientific) on national level
- g) Monitoring
- h) Financial support
  - State budget

- Income from management organization (institution/organization appointed by the ٠ government)
- Taxes in protected areas (paid by different categories of users)
- Other sources.

#### 3.2 Status of management organizations

Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia is the main national agency responsible for nature conservation. It coordinates its activities with the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and cooperates with numerous national, regional and international experts and organizations This Institute is charged with the protection of natural areas and plant and animal species. Studies prepared by scientists and other experts working for the Institute are the basis for the designation of protected areas. The Law stipulates that this proposition also must specify a candidate for the position of manager of the protected asset.

The manager is an enterprise, organization, institution or natural person which meets all necessary conditions and accepts the principles of protection. The manager is obliged to carry out the regime and measures of protection specified in the expert proposition and act on protection. The manager is obliged to prepare a Management Plan which is approved by the competent government body after expert opinion issued by the Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia.

There are two large groups of managers:

- 1. Public Enterprises for National Parks (5)
- 2. Organizations, institutions and other public enterprises trusted with the management of categories of PAs other then national parks (more on categories in www.natureprotection.org.yu).

#### 3.3 Management of Golija – Studenica biosphere reserve

Within above described national regulations and nature conservation system in Serbia, Golija was designated as Nature Park by Government of Republic of Serbia – as mentioned before. By the same Decree, Public Enterprise "Srbijašume" was designated as manager of the nature park "Golija".

Public Enterprise Srbijašume ("Serbia Forests") is in charge of the management of stateowned forests. Its headquarters is in Belgrade, and its offices at the regional and municipal levels (network of forestry units). Srbijašume is the management authority for around 70 percent of the protected areas in Serbia because so many of these protected areas are forests.

Due to the fact that nature park was already managed by Srbijašume enterprise, decision was made to trust the same organization with the management of the biosphere reserve, after its designation in October 2001. For that purpose, a special Unit is initiated within PE Srbijašume structure, and its seat established in one of the forestry units from the existing network - in Raska municipality, Southwestern Serbia.

The general manager of the Unit was delegated by Srbijašume. Enterprise's internal organization and functioning of the Unit is still under development.

Protection of the area is through implementation of the Programme of Protection and Development designed by the manager, and other plans and programmes in agreement with the Programme and its protection measures and regimes:

- Law on Environment Protection;
- Regional Plan of Serbian Republic, Beograd, 1995, in: Official Gazette R.S.
- Water Management Plan of Republic of Serbia, 1997
- Town Plan of Ivanjica, Energoprojekt JUGINUS, 1988
- Detail Plan of the Golijska Reka, 1993

Forests in the Biosphere Reserve area are managed on the basic of Management Plans approved under competence of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Forestry. Individual by-laws on particular protection of land units of exceptional nature resources for which special conditions and measures are established, and all general and special statutes on protection of natural scarcities. There are no visitor management plans and information system yet in effect.

#### 4 References

As basic source of **Literature** was used "*The nomination of "Golija" Park of Nature for the Biosphere Reserve*", Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia (2001): Beograd.

List of Stakeholders:

1. Institute for Protection of Nature of Serbia

III bulevar 106, 11070 Novi Beograd, Serbia, FR Yugoslavia Tel: +381-11-142 162 / 138 062; Fax: +381-11-142 281; E-mail: nature@net.yu

2. Administering Entity:

Public Enteprise Srbijašume, 11070 Novi Beograd, Serbia, FR Yugoslavia

3. Centre for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Development

28 Nemanjina St., 11000 Belgrade, Serbia, FR Yugoslavia Tel: +381-11-361 96 40, Fax: +381-11-361 92 65, E-mail: <u>cenort@eunet.yu</u>, Web: <u>http://www.cenort.org.yu</u>