

## Transboundary academic cooperation for peace and sustainability in the Balkans

**28 August to 8 September 2013. The international DAAD course “Adaptive Conservation Management in the Transboundary Bjeshket e Nemuna/ Prokletije Mountain Area” is held in northern Albania. Master and doctoral students from Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro, together with international students from Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development, Germany, learn modern concepts and methods related to ecosystem diagnostics analysis and biodiversity conservation under global change. They are introduced to the so-called MARISCO approach factoring risk and vulnerability management into the planning for maintaining biological diversity and ecosystem services as a basis for a sustainable human wellbeing.**

The course is carried out in the framework of the project “Cooperative Transboundary Learning for Ecosystem Management” funded by the programme “Network Partnership South-East Europe” of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Project partners are the Centre for Economics and Ecosystem Management, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (Germany), the University of Shkoder ‘Luigi Gurakuqi’, the Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania), the University of Prishtina (Kosovo), the University of Montenegro, as well as the NGO *Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation* (CNVP).



Lecturers from all involved countries provide methodological and scientific inputs. Prof. Pierre Ibisch from Eberswalde and Dr. Peter Hobson from Writtle College, both co-directors of the Centre for Economics and Ecosystem Management, are the academic leaders of the course. The 25 student participants are requested to accomplish applied tasks related to the transboundary Bjeshket e Nemuna/ Prokletije mountains assessing ecosystem features and conservation status in the field and managing their joint knowledge in a workshop. Host institution of the workshop is the University of Shkoder, an Albanian city on the border to Montenegro.

The Eberswalde participants, originally coming from Germany, Nepal, Philippines and Tadjhikistan, are inscribed in the international Master programme *Global Change Management*. The interactive course is offered as a novel module that allows for the development of technical and soft skills. The

work in multicultural groups provides special learning opportunities. Advanced students are also able to improve their moderation and coaching skills for adaptive conservation management.

The MARISCO method was developed by the *Centre for Ecnics and Ecosystem Management*, among others, in tight cooperation with GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), and so far has been applied to various conservation sites in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

The course contents relates to the establishment of a peace park in the transboundary mountain area of Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo goes back to Pierre Ibisch's involvement in consultancy work for Dutch SNV. The local coordinator of the activities is Mark Rupa, a former student of Eberswalde university. He now is with *Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (CNVP)*, an off-spin of SNV efforts in Albania. The affiliates of the *Centre for Ecnics and Ecosystem Management* M.Sc. Daniela Aschenbrenner and B.Sc. Lena Strixner, former Eberswalde students of the *International Ecosystem Management (B.Sc.)* and *Global Change Management (M.Sc.)* study courses, are in charge of course organization and also participated as lecturers and coaches.

It is the second DAAD-funded Centre course implemented in Albania. The first one, in January 2013, targeted the Lake Shkoder ecosystem and involved mainly Albanian students from Tirana.

