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## **„GRIGORE ANTIPA” NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (BUCHAREST) AT 170 YEARS OLD – MISSION AND PERSPECTIVES**

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**Abstract.** At 170 years old, “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History (Bucharest) is an important centre of zoological research, with a valuable patrimony, and an intense educational activity for the environmental protection.

**Résumé.** Le Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle “Grigore Antipa” (Bucarest), à 170 ans, est un centre important de recherche zoologique, avec un patrimoine de grande valeur, et une activité éducative intense pour la protection du milieu.

**Key words:** mission, biodiversity, patrimony, data base, research, educational programmes, perspectives.

The mission of „Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History from Bucharest is the study of biodiversity and the transfer of the scientific knowledge towards the public, following its education with respect for nature, to make it responsible to the present problems of the protection of the environment, of the species and their habitat.

This mission can be realized by the three objectives of the museum: patrimony, scientific research and education-entertainment.

– **Patrimony.** Scientific patrimony of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History – the richest and more diversified museum of Romania – consists of almost 2 million specimens of invertebrates and vertebrates (present and fossils), now, originating in Romania and the most different geographical areas, grouped in about 130 collections. By these collections, the museum preserved a part of the Romanian and world biodiversity, representing the most important data base of the Romanian zoological research. Computerization of the collections, that means the creation of a data base, alongside their study, increases the museum importance as an information and documentation center of biodiversity.

– **Scientific research.** By its specialists, the museum is implied in the study of the state of the natural and arranged ecosystems, in the biodiversity conservation and nature health, therefore of the people.

The study of the terrestrial and aquatic fauna from Romania and, for some of the animal groups, all over the world, shows the importance of forming new specialists in systematics. It was proved that other studies lose their scientific support without the knowledge of the subject matter (plant and animal species). It has to be understood that the systematics is not just for the sake of purpose, it is the ABC of biology and helps all modern biological branches. By the specialists who carry on their activity in this institution, “Grigore Antipa” Museum is a real national center of zoological research.

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English translation by Mihaela Barcan Achim.

Along the time, faunistic estimations were made in the Danube Delta, Dobrogea, the Romanian Plain, Vrancea, Iron Gates, and lately in Banat, Maramureş, Piatra Craiului, Făgăraş, Jiu Gorges, the Danube Floodplain.

Some projects were carried on with internal finances (Ministry of Education and Research, National Council of Scientifically Research from Universities, Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Forest and Environmental Protection, S.C. Hidro-electrica S.A., “Danube Delta” National Institute of Research and Development – Tulcea, National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism, and so on). Others had external finances (World Bank, European Committee).

– Education. The offer towards the public is more and more rich and diversified. The visitors find in “Antipa” Museum a corner of nature where the education and documentation join the recreation.

The conference cycle which has been carried on for over 50 years is supported by the specialists of the museum or scientific personalities from Bucharest. Because each lecture is followed by discussion with the public, during the last years the conferences transformed in real round tables where the lecturer and the audience debate the present problems of the habitat and species conservation, of pollution, aspects referring the declaration of protected areas, environmental protection laws in general.

Temporary exhibitions are not simple presentations of species and habitats, but ample interdisciplinary and interactive manifestations, where the public is very much implied: „Story about bats”, „The tenants of my house”, „Haţeg County” are only some exhibitions with a large success.

Also, by educational, interactive and interdisciplinary programmes, “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History carries on its noble mission of educating by and for nature: contests like “Who knows?”, recently “The Sunday meeting”, “Fish Festival”, “Summer Entomological School” had a very great success.

As regards the *Perspectives* it has to be said that the mission of the museum, namely the biodiversity study and making the public sensitive to the present problems of the environment, species and habitat protection (being more than urgent) leads to the developing and additioning of new valences.

It has to be add a series of concerns of the board of directors of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History:

- the presence of “Grigore Antipa” Museum within the cultural market of Bucharest, by original activities, interdisciplinary and multimedia, where the visitor has not to be simple spectator, but active participants;
- reposition of the museum within the recreation institutes;
- inclusion of the museum within the local community and the extension of the services towards it;
- winning extra-budgetary funds continuously;
- volunteers’ recruiting;
- marketing activity for drawing attention of new segments of visitors (especially young people).

And, if we talk about perspectives, I have to underline the whole staff’s wish of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History to implement Governmental Decision no 656/28.09.98 which stipulates the extension of the building, the first request in this respect being submitted by Grigore Antipa himself, since 1911. This thing will permit a better organization of the activities.

Also included in perspectives there is the creation and equipping of a laboratory of genetical analyses of the biodiversity.

Finally I can say that the specialists’ implying in different study themes on biodiversity, the creation of a data base, as well as the complex and original educational activities demonstrates that in “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History everybody pays respect to the past, but lives in present and looks to the future.

MUZEUL NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE NATURALĂ „GRIGORE ANTIPA”  
(BUCUREȘTI) LA 170 DE ANI – MISIUNE ȘI PERSPECTIVE

REZUMAT

La a 170-a aniversare, misiunea Muzeului Național de Istorie Naturală „Grigore Antipa” – prestigioasă instituție de știință și cultură – este studiul biodiversității și transferul cunoștințelor științifice către public, în scopul educării acestuia în respect față de natură.

Aceasta se realizează prin cele trei funcții ale muzeului: funcția patrimonială, cercetarea științifică și funcția educativă.

În perspectivă, funcțiile muzeului se vor amplifica și căpăta noi valențe, instituția impunându-se ca o necesitate socio-culturală.

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