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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ



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Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

First meeting

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Item 6 (h) of the provisional annotated agenda

Secretariat note on spatial planning – Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention

Introduction

1. Article 3 of the Carpathian Convention states that Parties shall apply the approach of the integrated land resources management as defined in Chapter 10 of the Agenda 21, by developing and implementing appropriate tools, such as integrated management plans, relating to the areas of the Carpathian Convention.
2. In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Convention, Parties shall pursue policies of spatial planning aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, which shall take into account the specific ecological and socio-economic conditions in the Carpathians and their mountain ecosystems, and provide benefits to the local people. Paragraph 2 of Article 5 requests Parties to aim at coordinating spatial planning in bordering areas, through developing transboundary and/or regional spatial planning policies and programmes, enhancing and supporting cooperation between relevant regional and local institutions.
3. Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention states that the Parties shall apply, where necessary, risk assessments, environmental impact assessments, and strategic environmental assessments, taking into account the specificities of the Carpathian mountain ecosystems, and shall consult on projects of transboundary character in the Carpathians, and assess their environmental impact, in order to avoid transboundary harmful effects.
4. Article 14, paragraph 2 of the Carpathian Convention states that the Conference of the Parties shall discuss common concerns of the Parties and make the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention. In particular, it shall establish such subsidiary bodies, including thematic working groups, as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Convention.

Implementation

5. The “Agenda and Strategic Approach of the Carpathian Project”, prepared by the interim Secretariat, in consultation with Parties and Signatories of the Carpathian Convention, in

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cooperation with RTI Polska and other Carpathian Project partners, contains the basic rules of a spatial development strategy aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework.

5. The Carpathian Project is expected to produce a thorough analysis of the current conditions and state of the spatial development of the Carpathian region, by supporting the preparation of background documentation, the selected sectoral studies, and by contribution to the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO) as a multisectoral strategic environmental assessment. The Carpathian Project supports the preparation of a “Carpathian Spatial Development Vision”, based on the synthetic document „Visions and Strategies In the Carpathian Area” (VASICA) and the Carpathian Environment Outlook (KEO), to be submitted to the COP2 for consideration and endorsement.
6. The Carpathians Environmental Outlook (KEO) project has been initiated by UNEP’s Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA)/GRID-Geneva and the Regional Office for Europe (ROE). In support of implementation of Article 5 and Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention, KEO will provide the strategic environmental assessment contributing to the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision, to be submitted to the COP2. A progress report on KEO by UNEP DEWA / GRID Geneva is attached in the Annex to this note.
7. To facilitate the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention, the Carpathian Project will support a thematic Working Group, developing integrated strategies on spatial planning aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. The role of this working group shall focus on the cross-sectoral consolidation of the work and the results of other working groups, developed within the Convention framework, and to guide the elaboration of the “Carpathian Spatial Development Vision”.

Possible action by the Conference of the Parties

1. The Conference of the Parties may appreciate the concrete contribution of the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO) to the Carpathian Convention process, and take note of information submitted in the Annex to the present note.
2. The Conference of the Parties may decide to establish the Working Group on Spatial Planning and request the interim Secretariat to convene its meeting(s).
3. The Conference of the Parties may appreciate the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) into the Carpathian Project, as an important source of support for the Carpathian Convention implementation process.
4. The Conference of the Parties may request the Secretariat to inform the Council of Europe’s European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) of its activities promoting the implementation of Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention, and invite CEMAT to contribute to the meeting(s) of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Spatial Planning.

Annex

Progress Report on the 'Carpathians Environment Outlook' (KEO) December 2006

Background

The Carpathians Environment Outlook (KEO) report is a sub-regional examination and synthesis of the environmental situation in the greater Carpathian region, that includes parts of seven countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine). The project was initiated in early 2004 by UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA)/GRID-Europe and the Regional Office for Europe (ROE). Since then, a number of significant events have taken place (workshops, meetings of KEO National Focal Points (NFPs) and Steering Group (SG), consultation with stakeholders of the Carpathian region on the first draft report, etc.) and sub-processes are underway to produce the KEO Report by mid-2007.

The first draft of the KEO Report was prepared during July-September 2006, and reviewed by a large group of stakeholders from the entire Carpathian region. An internal review process was also conducted between September and November 2006. Following these processes and the reception of comprehensive comments on KEO first draft chapters, the second draft of the report is currently under preparation: the second draft of KEO Chapter II Environment and Economic/Societal Influences was already submitted by the responsible Chapter Lead Author (CLA). It is anticipated that the final document will provide greater knowledge about the unique ecology and related environmental and human problems of the Carpathians, along with an operational network of experts within/among the seven Carpathian countries for environmental reporting purposes, and better information for environmental decision-making in this unique region.

Another major activity within the KEO process concerns data collection at national and regional level and data integration. The designation of a KEO Lead Data Centre (LDC) based at GRID-Warsaw constituted an important step forward for the entire KEO process. The KEO LDC is responsible for the overall coordination of the data collection process at the regional level, primarily in coordination with the KEO NFPs; data aggregation, processing, and integration for the entire region; data storage and dissemination (creation of a KEO database); production of final map products for publication purposes; as well as providing technical assistance to KEO CLAs if/when needed.

KEO events during 2006

The KEO Regional Stakeholders Consultation (RSC) was held on 18-20 October 2006 in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, and represented a major opportunity in the lifetime of the KEO process to consult with a large and varied group of persons from (mostly within) the region and seven Carpathian countries on the draft one version of the KEO report and the broader KEO process. Up to 60 persons were invited, and over 40 persons participated in the three-day period of the meeting. The RSC was organized to allow both for extensive presentation of the overall process and draft one chapters of the report by CLAs, and then intensive discussion both via plenary sessions and three break-out groups (BoGs) covering each KEO Chapter. The full list of issues covered in the BoGs included identifying major policy messages from, and emerging issues in, each of the chapters, as well as any gaps and overlaps in material covered. Additionally, BoG I also focused on developing a concept for KEO Chapter 4 'Outlook 2005 to 2020'. During the last half-day session, a critique of the KEO process to date was conducted in plenary, along with a proposal for follow-up actions, "next steps" and near-future plans, that will lead to publication and launch of the final version of the KEO report by mid-2007. Among these, a KEO Final Draft Meeting will be organised in Romania in March 2007 to allow thorough content homogenisation and integration.

In July 2006, the third KEO Steering Group (SG) Meeting was held at the office of the Carpathians Framework Convention Interim Secretariat (staffed by UNEP/ROE) in Vienna. The meeting provided an opportunity to examine all aspects of progress made on the KEO reporting process since the previous SG meeting (7-8 July 2005), and discuss early phases of drafting with the six Chapter Lead Authors (CLAs). Several aspects/topics relating to the implementation of the KEO reporting process were reviewed, focusing in particular on links with the UNEP-led (and ROE managed) Carpathian Framework Convention (CFC) and its Vienna-based Interim Secretariat, and the new Carpathians CADSES Project prepared and led by the latter (which will assist KEO with co-financing), the status of data collection and integration work by the KEO Lead Data Centre (LDC) UNEP/GRID-Warsaw; organizational aspects and other issues relating to the preparation and launch of the report by mid-2007.

Earlier in 2006, an Orientation Session for KEO Chapter Lead Authors (CLAs) was organized by DEWA/GRID-Europe and held on 27 February, at UNEP's International Environment House in Geneva. The six KEO CLAs were invited for in-depth discussions on all aspects of the KEO report and its drafting/preparation, including the formation of Chapter Working Groups, data & indicators, etc. The meeting was essential to the progress of the project, providing an opportunity for the newest KEO project members (CLAs) to familiarize themselves with each other and the UNEP staff leading the process, as well as with the entire KEO process and its requirements, and to develop a near-term action plan regarding their immediate responsibilities.

Earlier events

The KEO "Kick-Off" Meeting was held for exploratory purposes at the Ministry of Environment and Water in Budapest, Hungary, in March 2004, and provided a strong rationale for producing a KEO report. Not only did all of the participants endorse the idea of the project, but the interim secretariat of the CFC also suggested that the KEO report would provide an excellent information source for, and support to the implementation of the Convention and its future protocols.

The first KEO Experts Workshop was held in Zakopane, Poland, on 11-13 April 2005, hosted by and in collaboration with GRID-Warsaw, in order to provide an opportunity to convene, discuss and finalise plans for the content of the KEO report, and define the role of national representatives and others in the process. Participants at this "brainstorming" event came from all seven Carpathian countries, as well as representatives of prominent regional NGOs and relevant UNEP offices. During the meeting, they were able to complete the proposed contents of the report, analyse possibilities and limitations in data gathering and processing, select indicators to be used for each of the themes covered in the KEO, and specify national inputs to the writing process.