



United Nations Environment Programme

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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

Kyiv, Ukraine, 11-13 December 2006

Item 6 (i) of the provisional annotated agenda

Secretariat note on cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation (Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention)

Introduction

1. Article 13, paragraph 1 of the Convention includes a provision that Parties shall pursue policies aiming at increasing environmental awareness and improving access of the public to information on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and promoting related education curricula and programmes.

Implementation

2. The Second Preparatory Meeting to the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties welcomed activities in the implementation of the REC/EURAC components of the EURAC/REC/UNEP Umbrella Project “Support for the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention” and the work by ANPED, which with the support of UNEP conducted stakeholder consultations in all seven Carpathian Convention countries.
3. Accordingly, the information documents UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.5, containing an information on the preliminary conclusions from the Regional Carpathian Convention Assessment, UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.6, containing the national assessments of the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to the Carpathian Convention in seven Carpathian countries, UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.7, containing the Draft Carpathian Convention Handbook, and UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.8, containing ANPED reports from the stakeholder meetings in the Carpathian region, have been submitted to the COP1.
4. In addition, the Annexes to the present note contain the following submitted documents: Progress report on the EURAC/REC/UNEP Umbrella Project “Support for the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention”, REC’s note on the preliminary conclusions from the Regional Carpathian Convention Assessment, REC’s vision for the future support to the Carpathian Convention and Public Participation to Support the Implementation of the

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Carpathian Convention - a Position Paper based upon consultations carried out in the region by ANPED.

Possible action by the Conference of the Parties

1. The Conference of the Parties may wish to provide its guidance on the subject matter and request the interim Secretariat to support public participation in decision-making relating to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention.
2. The Conference of the Parties may appreciate the contribution of ANPED, EURAC and REC to the Carpathian Convention implementation process and take note of information submitted in Annexes to the present note and in UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.5, UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.6, UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.7 and UNEP/CC/COP1/INF.8, and encourage and invite their further contributions to the Carpathian Convention process.
3. ANPED submitted to the COP1 the following recommendations for further action, drawing upon results from national consultations with stakeholders from civil society in the Carpathian region.

The Conference of the Parties is invited to decide:

- the establishment of an advisory, consultative and communication body in each country, to inform and involve stakeholders and civil society on the progress of the Convention;
- the establishment of national information centres, ideally located in the Carpathian region of each country, to function as a contact point and source of information for Carpathian matters;
- the strengthening the co-operation with the Aarhus Convention secretariat, and with the assistance of ISCC, and the involvement of ANPED and other interested partners, to ensure the practice and outreach of the Carpathian Convention follows Aarhus principles;
- to request the interim Secretariat to provide for opportunities for outreach, involvement and the active participation of civil society in the development of the Convention, through its official work, and development of protocols and projects;
- to request the interim Secretariat to work with ANPED and other interested partners to establish a communication system to provide for distribution of information on the progress of the Convention to the wider civil society;
- to seek ways that the Convention bodies build into their systems and procedures for the continued support for the role of observers.

Annex I

Umbrella project Support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention REC/EURAC project component

Progress Report

September 2006

Background

The Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea provided financial support for the umbrella project “Support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the framework of the Alpine-Carpathian Partnership”. The umbrella project consists of four components, two of which are implemented by UNEP and two by REC. EURAC is a partner for the implementation of the two REC project components and it is also part of the Steering Committee that has been set up for the overall coordination of the umbrella project. The REC/EURAC project has two components, one leading to the development of national assessments in each of the Carpathian Countries; and one to the development of a Carpathian Convention Handbook.

The progress registered under the project has been acclaimed by the first Preparatory Meeting to the Conference of the Parties and the results of the first phase will be presented during the first CoP.

National assessments

The process of developing the national assessments has been closely scrutinized by the Ad Hoc Expert Meetings held to date. The main steps were:

- developing a **methodology** for the national assessments, based on a comprehensive questionnaire; the main aim of the methodology is to ensure the comparability of data across the seven Carpathian countries; the questionnaire was submitted for review by the Signatories/Parties to the Carpathian Convention and presented during the 3rd Ad Hoc Expert Meeting of the Carpathian Convention in April 2005
- identifying in each country independent national experts to carry out the assessments
- **national stakeholder meetings** to review the draft assessments; a national stakeholder meeting was held in each country, bringing together the Carpathian Convention National Focal Points, sectoral ministry representatives, local authorities, representatives of civil society and international organizations; the meetings followed a similar format, including an introduction to the Carpathian Convention and working group sessions for the review of the draft national assessments; the meetings in Hungary, Romania and Serbia were organized in partnership with ANPED and their local partners, respectively CEEWEB, UNESCO Pro Natura and Young Researchers of Serbia. Reports of the meetings are available on request
- reviewing the national assessments in the light of the comments and input received during the national stakeholder meetings as well as comments from the project team members on compliance with the quality and content requirements.

Handbook on the Carpathian Convention

The REC, together with EURAC, has taken on the responsibility for preparing a Handbook on the Carpathian Convention to serve as a guidance document for stakeholders, mainly local authorities, on the implementation of the principles and concepts defined by the Convention. The Handbook is also designed to emphasize good practices under the sectors covered by the Convention and to review relevant international and European standards already in place. Thus it will also be a valuable reference document during the drafting process of specific protocols to the Convention.

The process of developing the Handbook has been closely scrutinized by the Ad Hoc Expert Meetings held to date. The main steps were:

- the definition of a thorough methodology and outline of the Handbook; these were presented to the 3rd Ad Hoc Expert Meeting of the Carpathian Convention in April 2005; the outline of the handbook follows the structure of the Convention and it covers the institutional aspects and operative provisions, analysed article by article
- REC and EURAC lawyers undertook extensive research on each of the topics covered by the Convention, reviewing relevant multilateral environmental agreements, international initiatives, the European acquis and case studies from the Carpathian and Alpine regions and drafted several of the sections of the Handbook: institutional aspects, analyses of article 2, article 4 (conservation and the sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity), article 6 (sustainable and integrated water/river basin management), article 8 (sustainable transport and infrastructure), article 9 (sustainable tourism) and article 11 (cultural heritage and traditional knowledge), and of Annex I on the status of participation in relevant multilateral agreements (a table of relevant agreements including data on their acceptance/ratification by the Carpathian countries).

Results to date:

- **five national assessments** of the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to the Carpathian Convention: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine, available in English and national-language versions
- **two draft national assessments** of the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to the Carpathian Convention : Czech Republic and Slovakia
- **seven national stakeholder meetings**
- the establishment of a successful partnership with ANPED for the organization of national stakeholder meetings and close coordination with ongoing initiatives: the FAO Initiative on Sustainable Forest Management, the Carpathian Environmental Outlook, etc.
 - **a draft Handbook on the Carpathian Convention**
 - **a project website** providing useful information on the Carpathian Convention and updates on the project implementation

Next steps

With the continuing support of the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, the second phase of the project will be implemented in the period 2006-2008. The next activities are:

- preparing and publishing a regional assessment of the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to the Carpathian Convention
- finalizing and publishing the Handbook on the Carpathian Convention
- organizing one training session in each of the Carpathian countries on a specific priority topic related to the Carpathian Convention
- side event to the CoP 1
- Omnibus Wrap-Up High-Level International Conference

Contacts:

For more information on the project, please visit the project website: <http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/environmentallaw/carpathian/> or contact us:

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Annex II

REC's vision for future support to the Carpathian Convention

This document summarises REC's vision on future support to the Carpathian Convention, based in part on the findings of the national assessments of the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks related to the Carpathian Convention and the results of national stakeholders meetings and in part on a large consultation within the REC with the Carpathian country offices and the topic areas. These ideas also take into account existing initiatives, such as the EU Carpathian Project, the SARD-M work in the Carpathians and the FAO work on sustainable forestry in the Carpathian Mountains.

For the implementation of the proposed areas of assistance REC shall partner and coordinate with other organizations active in the region, pursue the successful partnership with EURAC on specific activities and shall closely coordinate with the Carpathian Convention National Focal points and the Interim Secretariat. No specific funding source is identified at this point, but based on the feed-back of the CoP the proposed paper shall be amended and REC will actively consult with possible donors to identify possibilities for financing the activities supported by the Parties.

Vision for the future

REC's vision for future support encompasses several target areas of action: legal component, sectoral issues and civil society capacity building.

Legal actions to enhance implementation of the Carpathian Convention

The national assessments indicate the existence of a complex legislative system in each of the countries, where the basic principles provided for in the Carpathian Convention are recognised in legislation and are put into practice to very different extents, varying from country to country. The matters regulated by the Carpathian Convention are also addressed by various international legal instruments and the European environmental acquis. It is important that all these instruments are used in an efficient way to mutually support each other and ultimately lead to an improved state of the environment. There are several steps that can be taken to achieve this:

- **Capacity building workshops** at national and regional level involving representatives of ministries of environment and sectoral ministries competent in the areas covered by the Convention. These workshops will focus on the linkages between the Convention, other relevant MEAs, environmental acquis and existing national legislation and will have as main objective to promote an integrative approach in designing implementing measures for the Convention; the workshops will focus on specific matters covered by the Convention: water management, environmental impact assessment, industry etc. and will be organised at national level firstly and than at regional level, bringing together representatives of all Carpathian countries
- **Specific legal assistance** for the developing of implementing measures for the Carpathian convention, based on an integrative approach; the assistance shall be targeted at national level and address national priorities based on requests from the National Focal Points; the assistance may take various forms depending on the needs: gap analysis, legal drafting, review of national drafts, capacity building for legal drafting etc.

Sectoral assistance

Prevention principle

Carpathian region is home not only to valuable natural and cultural heritage, but also to a great number of industrial hot spots. Prevention is one of the key principles to achieve sustainable development, and it is emphasised in article 2 of the Convention, requiring parties to take this into account when taking implementing measures under articles 4 to 13. One of the instruments for implementing the prevention principle is environmental impact assessment. In order to promote compliance with the prevention principles, countries in the region should have in place state of the art rules on environmental impact assessment, reflecting the requirements of the EC EIA Directive but also requirements of the Espoo Convention. Most of the national assessments provide that the countries have in place a good legal system for EIA but problems often occur in practice, mostly on procedural aspects. REC may provide expertise for addressing these issues through the following type of actions:

- Trainings on EIA and industrial risk prevention and management in the Carpathian region, based on training resource materials already developed. The trainings will focus on the national legislation and provide also background information on EC requirements and Espoo Convention and the Helsinki Industrial Accidents Convention.
- Pilot case studies for applying EIA requirements
- Grant giving for NGOs and public interest lawyers to monitor and take legal actions against violations of EIA regulations
- Background report on EIA requirements in the Carpathian region, investigating the options of developing a Protocol on EIA to the Carpathian Convention

Branding of local products

This activity touches upon several articles of the Convention, namely article 4 (conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity), article 9 (sustainable tourism) and article 11 (cultural heritage and traditional knowledge).

Branding (certification) of local products helps to draw attention to the protected area within the Natura 2000 Network and to benefit from its advantages which are, undoubtedly, healthier environment, higher-quality and more careful area management. This is valued particularly by tourists, but also by local people who, in addition to the above benefits, are able to support “their” local producer. Certification helps to compete imported products with a doubtful mark of origin. Certified products are promoted together in tourism, at local fairs, markets and retail.

Local entrepreneurs, farmers, small and medium-size companies benefit from certification particularly because:

- attention is drawn to their products and advertisement
- they get an advantage as against to their competitors and their sale will increase
- cohesion with the region and mutual co-operation is enhanced

The product can be awarded the brand only if it is:

- of high quality
- environment-friendly
- made in the delimited area
- linked directly with the region (in terms of exceptional quality, local tradition, materials, handicrafts, motive of the region, representation of the region)

Civil society capacity building

All national assessments identified as a common problem the low level of awareness regarding the Convention and one way to address this is to provide support to civil society to undertake activities that contribute to the implementation of the Convention. The following activities would lead to increased capacity of civil society in the Carpathian region:

- Grant programme for NGOs in the Carpathian region for projects aiming at sustainable development of the region and having different priority areas depending on the country specific conditions; the programme would also have a regional component to enhance crossborder cooperation. The grant programme should target projects that aim at developing best practices in the region for sustainable local development, focusing on sustainable tourism, promotion of cultural heritage, sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry etc.
- Training for young environmental leaders in the Carpathian region – The aim of this programme is to build the capacities and capabilities of NGO/CSO's members in the area of organizational and project management. In the long term the programme is aiming at building sustainable environmental organizations with professional staff and effective and efficient programmes. Organizational management, project management, media relations, public participation, campaigning and advocacy are just a few of the training topics delivered. The methods used for training delivery are: interactive training by experienced trainers, site visits to projects or NGOs to share good practice; group or individual work assignments.
- Organizational viability – With financial assistance of SIDA, REC is currently developing an Organization Assessment Tool (OAT) for West Balkan countries. The OAT can be used in the Carpathian region on a group of pilot civil society organizations with the aim to help NGOs to become more effective in their activities, strengthen their organizational sustainability and increase their relevance towards the citizens in their communities.
- Education: the REC Green Pack Educational package is a multi-media environmental education curriculum kit primarily intended for secondary school teachers and their students, and it can also be used at other levels of education. Each Green Pack is adapted to a particular country, with national and regional information supplementing the core material. National experts are consulted to determine the level of the materials according to the needs of the target country. The exception is an English-language version that contains general information on the European environment. Every Green Pack focuses on particular aspects of environmental protection and sustainable development and includes a variety of educational materials, including: a [teacher's handbook](#) with lesson plans, fact sheets and work sheets for students; a [video cassette](#) with animated clips and educational films; an interactive [CD-ROM](#) with extensive information on various environmental topics; a role-playing [game](#) based on environmental dilemmas; and other printed materials (specific to country version). Green Pack has been already launched in several Carpathian countries, namely Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia. This experience can be further extended to the other Carpathian countries and similar educational packages may be developed with a specific focus on the Carpathian convention. Trainings can be held for teachers and staff of protected areas in charge with educational activities specific educational materials regarding the natural values of the given area.

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Annex III



Public Participation to Support the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

A Position Paper based upon consultations carried out in the region by ANPED

Background

This position paper has been prepared by ANPED, and draws upon results from national consultations with stakeholders from civil society in the Carpathian region, coordinated by ANPED members and partners. It aims to highlight issues relevant for consideration in ensuring and strengthening public participation, for the first Conference of Parties of the Carpathian Convention.

The Parties to the COP 1 are invited to consider:

1. The establishment of an advisory, consultative and communication body in each country, to inform and involve stakeholders and civil society on the progress of the Convention.
2. The establishment of national information centres, ideally located in the Carpathian region of each country, to function as a contact point and source of information for Carpathian matters.
3. Strengthening the co-operation with the Aarhus Convention secretariat, and with the assistance of ISCC, and the involvement of ANPED and other interested partners, to ensure the practice and outreach of the Carpathian Convention follows Aarhus principles.
4. For the ISCC to provide for opportunities for outreach, involvement and the active participation of civil society in the development of the Convention, through its official work, and development of protocols and projects.
5. For the ISCC to work with ANPED and other interested partners to establish a communication system to provide for distribution of information on the progress of the Convention to the wider civil society.
6. Seek ways that the Convention bodies build into their systems and procedures continued support for the role of observers.

1) Rationale

The Convention in its aims and articles recognises the need for public participation to enable successful development and implementation. To achieve this, the Convention will need to establish mechanisms to inform and involve civil society in its on-going work and decision-making. Fully engaging the public in its work will assist the Convention by:

- increasing its credibility and relevance
- achieving more effective implementation
- reaching key groups, sectors and communities, and securing their support
- building trust and understanding between stakeholders and decision-makers at local, regional, national and international levels

2) Project Activities

A programme of stakeholder consultations and roundtable events, co-ordinated by ANPED, has been carried out in all of the seven Carpathian countries. The project activities in the region focused on stakeholder events to inform and involve stakeholders in the Convention process. National co-ordinating organisations undertook activities to:

- establish the level of information known about the Convention
- identify stakeholder priorities and recommendations for successful implementation
- lobby for its ratification and incorporation into national plans
- stimulate interest and practical activities with civil society in each country
- establish liaison with the official Convention focal point
- consult on future plans for the implementation of the Convention

3) Summary of main results from the stakeholder consultations

Promotion of the Convention

Some stakeholders had in-depth knowledge of the status and progress of the Convention. However, many key stakeholders had little or no knowledge of the existence of the Carpathian Convention. Thus all meetings were helpful in providing detailed and up to date information on the Convention, and opportunities for real future involvement.

Lobbying for Ratification

During the time of the consultations, in those countries yet to ratify, some stakeholders were lobbying for ratification, encouraging governments to move ahead with this, to enable all countries to play an active part in the Convention.

Regional Strategies and Practical Activities

In all countries the Convention was seen as an instrument to promote regional development, a particularly important issue for mountain areas. It was felt the Convention offers opportunities to highlight, focus and promote sustainable rural development, but ways should be found to promote practical, tangible projects, supporting and strengthening existing rural and local development strategies.

Information Provision

Stakeholders strongly expressed the need for more information about the Convention, and to establish local and regional information and exchange points, to provide timely information on its progress, and support consultation on future plans.

4) Recommendation for Future Activities

Three areas were identified for future activities: the Interim Secretariat for the Carpathian Convention, the National Government Focal Points for the Convention, and work carried to be out by civil society in the next phase of the project.

For the National Focal Points: To expand and support their role, and recognising they are already over-stretched, we propose to collaborate with them, actively seeking funds and staff to create an information centre for the Carpathians in each country.

The National Focal Points should:

- establish an information centre, ideally located within the Carpathian region of each country, to become a contact point and source of information for all Carpathian matters
- establish a consultative body with NGOs and civil society to consult on plans for the Convention
- create a list of organisations to be informed and involved, including a wide range of NGOs and Civil Society organisations
- involve other departments such as Agriculture, Transport and Tourism, in the Convention process
- publish an annual summary report on national implementation plans and the involvement of the public and civil society
- relate the national strategy to the international implementation plan and protocols of the Convention

The lack of an internal framework for implementation, and no clear compliance mechanism for the Convention at the national level were identified. Stakeholders seek to co-operate with the Focal points to work towards this as a way to establish successful overall implementation of the Convention.

5) Recommendations for Priority Actions for successful implementation

- To take steps to ensure the active participation of civil society organisations in the creation of protocols, its official work, and projects of implementation of the Carpathian Convention
- Establish a communication system to provide for distribution of information on the progress of the Convention
- Provide opportunities for outreach, involvement and the active participation of civil society in the development of the Convention and its projects
- Work with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat, ANPED, and interested partners to ensure the practice and outreach of the Carpathian Convention along Aarhus principles
- Seek ways that the Convention bodies build into their systems and procedures support for the role of observers.

This paper draws upon stakeholder consultations and events carried out in the Carpathian countries, coordinated by ANPED and delivered by a team of ANPED members and partners:

Overall coordination - ANPED

Czech Republic - Institute for Environmental Policy

Hungary - CEEWEB (Central and East European Working group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity)

Poland - Polish Green Net and League of Nature Protection

Romania - UNESCO Pro-Natura and Pro Conventia Carpatica Association

Serbia - Young Researchers of Serbia

Slovakia - SOSNA

Ukraine - 'Our Home' Association and Green Dossier

For full details and results from the stakeholder process please see the country reports.