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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON THE
PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE CARPATHIANS**

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Item 4 of the provisional annotated agenda

Progress report on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Summary

The present report is being submitted to Conference of the Parties through the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and provides information on progress in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention on:

- (a) Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity (Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (b) Spatial planning (Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (c) Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management (Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (d) Sustainable agriculture and forestry (Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (e) Sustainable transport and infrastructure (Article 8 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (f) Sustainable tourism (Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (g) Industry and energy (Article 10 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (h) Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge (Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (i) Awareness raising, education and public participation (Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention)
- (j) Belgrade Conference 2007

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(a) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 4 - Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Carpathian Convention*

1. Report on the activity of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity

Background

Article 4 paragraph 1 of the Carpathian Convention requests the Parties to pursue policies aiming at the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biological and landscape diversity throughout the Carpathians. The Parties are also called upon to take appropriate measures to ensure a high level of protection and sustainable use of natural and semi-natural habitats, their continuity and connectivity, and species of flora and fauna being characteristic to the Carpathians, in particular, the protection of endangered species and large carnivores.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the provisions on biodiversity, the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided to support the establishment under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (decision COP1/4 paragraph 1) and requested the interim Secretariat to convene its first meeting (decision COP1/4 paragraph 2).

The First Conference of the Parties submitted to the working group for consideration and finalization the Draft Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity (decision COP1/4 paragraph 6).

The First Conference of the Parties welcomed and endorsed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) and the United Nations Environmental Programme Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna - ISCC). With the purpose of strengthening the cooperation between the two Secretariats aiming at providing a durable basis for the collaboration in the field of information and experience exchange.

Implementation

As stipulated in the decision COP1/4, paragraph 2 the interim Secretariat convened the first meeting of the Working Group (26-27 March 2007, Vienna, Austria). The Meeting agreed that its main goal is to finalize the Draft Protocol on Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity as mandated by the First Meeting of the Parties in Kyiv (decision COP1/4, paragraph 6). The Meeting Report is contained in the Annex of the present report.

Based on article 18, paragraph 1 of the Carpathian Convention which stipulates that any Party may propose Protocols to the Convention, the Government of Ukraine had submitted a draft proposal for Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the First Conference of the Parties (decision COP1/4 paragraph 5) in order to facilitate the implementation of the goals of the Convention. Poland, at the first meeting of the working group, offered its assistance and expertise to Ukraine and to the Secretariat in preparing a revised draft of the draft Protocol, along with a Strategic Action Plan for its implementation. All the Parties were invited to submit their comments and proposals which were incorporated in a new draft text by the interim Secretariat.

Furthermore, the meeting had a first discussion on the terms of reference of the working group prepared by the interim Secretariat (decision COP1/4, paragraph 2). Their final version elaborated by the interim Secretariat with the incorporated suggestions and comments by the Parties were adopted at the first

meeting of the Extended Bureau (17-18 October, 2007, Vienna, Austria). The Terms of Reference of the working group are contained in the Annex of the present report.

At the second meeting of the Working Group (19-21 November 2007, Budapest, Hungary) the Parties discussed and finalized the Draft Protocol.

Furthermore, the legal proofreading of the text of the Protocol requested by the Parties was offered and performed by Czech Republic. As stipulated by Article 18 of the Framework Convention the draft Protocol was circulated through the interim Secretariat to all Parties (on 19 December 2007). The Parties agreed and reiterated the conclusion of the Extended Bureau Meeting that for the implementation of the Protocol a Strategic Action Plan would be needed and further developed after its adoption by the Second Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. The first draft of the Strategic Action Plan was prepared together with the first draft of the Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity; therefore, it will need to be harmonized with the Protocol once adopted and signed (see Annex).

The activities of the working group benefited from the continuous support of the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) (see detailed report in the Annex).

The Conference of the Parties has before it the Final Draft Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity, which is contained in the Annex to the present report.

2. Report on the activity of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas

Background

Article 4, paragraph 5 of the Convention stipulates that the Parties shall cooperate “in establishing and supporting a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA)”.

In order to facilitate and encourage cooperation between the Protected Areas of the member countries, the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties decided to establish a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas as a thematic network of cooperation of mountain protected areas in the Carpathian region (decision COP1/4 paragraph 12) guided by a Steering Committee composed of the CNPA Focal Points of each country (decision COP1/4 paragraph 13). As such, the CNPA should provide a platform for joint communication and outreach, knowledge, know-how and experience-sharing with other interested institutions and organizations, in particular with the Alpine Network of Protected Areas.

The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention requested the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity in consultation with the CNPA Steering Committee to prepare the terms of reference of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (decision COP1/4 paragraph 14).

Pending the establishment of a permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the interim Secretariat was requested to service the CNPA and its Steering Committee, and to coordinate its activities with other relevant bodies of the Carpathian Convention (the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity and the Conference of the Parties) (decision COP1/4 paragraph 15).

At the First Conference of the Parties, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Alpine and the Carpathian Conventions, calling upon the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and the UNEP Vienna - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to continue with their efforts for enhancing networks of protected areas in the Alps (ALPARC) and in the Carpathians (CNPA) as well as the ecological linking-up between the two mountain ranges, and their close cooperation on the issue of conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity.

Implementation

According to the decision COP1/4, paragraph 15 the interim Secretariat convened the first meeting of the CNPA Steering Committee (26 March 2007, Vienna, Austria). The Meeting Report in the Annex of the present report.

The activities of the CNPA Steering Committee are supported through the programme “2012 Protected Areas Programme” (renamed “Protected Areas for a Living Planet”) coordinated by the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and the BBI-Matra Project “Development of a Carpathian Ecological Network” coordinated by the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI).

The Carpathian Network of Protected Areas benefits from the ongoing support of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas / Task Force Protected Areas – Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. The outcomes of the one year-project “Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation – Creation of Communication Tools for CNPA” were an Internet web site - www.carpathianparks.org, and an information brochure published in English with a 6 page description in each Carpathian language. The two communication tools are intended to raise public awareness and to further develop the cooperation between the protected areas as well as between the Alpine Network of Protected Areas and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas.

The draft CNPA terms of reference developed by the Secretariat on the basis of outputs produced by the previous activities of the CNPA Steering Committee, and in particular - by the Third Meeting of the CNPA Partnership Steering Committee, held on 13-14 May 2004 in Zakopane, Poland were discussed and adopted by the Meeting, and submitted for approval to the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity.

Furthermore, the Parties agree on the following:

- to elect an interim chair, in the person of Mr. Mircea Verghet from Romania, who will represent the CNPA to related CNPA meetings, especially those organized by ALPARC;
- to apply *mutatis mutandis* the Rules of Procedure of the Carpathian Convention in the CNPA Steering Committee proceedings;

The agreement on the aforementioned decisions was reiterated on the occasion of the Extended Bureau Meeting (17-18 October 2007, Vienna, Austria).

The Extended Bureau Meeting (17-18 October 2007, Vienna, Austria) approved the terms of reference for the CNPA (see Annex of the present report).

The second meeting of the CNPA Steering Committee agreed upon the development, under the coordination of the interim Secretariat, of two key documents: a Working Plan and the mid-term Strategy (developed for a period of five years starting 2009), which should be ready by the Protected Areas Conference in September 24, 2008. Furthermore, the terms of reference for the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas coordinator to be linked to the (interim) Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention should be drafted and submitted for approval to the Steering Committee. ALPARC offered to support and advice at every stage of the process. The Meeting Report is contained in the Annex of the present report.

3. Report on the activity of Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity sub-group – the Carpathian Wetland Initiative

Background

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative was established by the decision of the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (decision COP1/4 paragraph 1), as a sub-group of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity. The group is composed by the National Focal Points for the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions.

The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties requested the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity in consultation with the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Steering Committee to prepare the terms of reference of the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (decision COP1/4 paragraph 14).

Implementation

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative was initiated by the Slovak Republic as Party to both the Carpathian Convention and the Ramsar Convention.

As requested by the decision COP1/4 paragraph 14, the terms of reference of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative prepared by the interim Secretariat were discussed at the First Meeting of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity. The terms of reference of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative were adopted by the Extended Bureau Meeting (17-18 October 2007, Vienna, Austria) (see Annex).

The Meeting also clarified and agreed upon the status of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative as a voluntary partnership that seeks guidance from the Carpathian Convention bodies, especially from the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity. Moreover, the Carpathian Wetland Initiative comprises a network of National Focal Points of both conventions and is an informal constituency with a mission to contribute to the implementation of the Memoranda of Cooperation and the collaboration between two conventions.¹

Furthermore, during the First Meeting of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity an operational link has been established with the WWF Danube – Carpathian Programme activities, especially the MAVA project “Protected Areas for a Living Planet” – implementing the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, through the coordinator of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative.

The Carpathian Wetlands Initiative participated actively in the development of the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project initiated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).

The Wetlands International Black Sea Programme was expanded to the Carpathian region and the participation of the Black Sea Regional Office in Kyiv was officially confirmed in February 2007. The cooperation with the Wetlands Initiative was further discussed and reinforced during the 6th Meeting of the Association of Members of Wetlands International (November 2007, Shaoxing, China).

A detailed report on the developments and activities of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative prepared by the coordinator of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, as well as a “Framework for Project Development for Carpathian Wetland Initiative” and a Work Plan of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative for the information and consideration of the COP2 of the Carpathian Convention are contained in the Annex.

¹ The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) and the United Nations Environmental Programme Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention was signed on 13th of December 2006, in Kyiv on the occasion of the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/1

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity – Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological and Landscape Diversity for its work and report; appreciates the valid contributions by CERI, REC and WWF;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by this Working Group;
3. adopts the Protocol on Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity and invites governments to sign and ratify the Protocol;
4. urges Parties pending the ratification and entry into force of the Protocol, to start its implementation and to report on the progress to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee;
5. requests the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate the preparation of a Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the Protocol, taking into account the work done under the auspices of the Working Group;
6. adopts the proposal for a permanent arrangement for the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) established under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, and requests the (interim) Secretariat to oversee and service the implementation of the arrangement;
7. requests the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate and facilitate the preparation of a Work Plan and Medium Term Strategy for CNPA, with the support of the ALPARC and in collaboration with the other CNPA partners, and invites the Protected Areas Conference to consider and provide inputs to the documents;
8. recognizes the need for additional human and financial resources to service the Protocol and manage the CNPA arrangements, approves the related arrangement and budget implications proposed by the interim Secretariat, and expresses its gratitude to ... for their generous contribution;
9. welcomes the establishment of the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI) as an effective partnership for advancing the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions;
10. endorses the Framework for Project Development and Work plan of the CWI and calls upon all partners to ensure proper implementation and funding.

(b) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 5 – Spatial planning of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

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.

In its decision COP1/11, the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) welcomed the concrete contribution of the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO) to the Carpathian Convention process and 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. Furthermore, COP1 decided to support the establishment of a Working Group on Spatial Planning under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, and requested the Secretariat to initiate cooperation with Europe's European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and to contribute to the work of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Spatial Planning.

Implementation

The Carpathian Project produced, inter alia, the following:

- VASICA (Vision and Strategies for the Carpathian Area) is a synthetic document, aiming at presenting the results of the other actions, constituting a strategic document formulating a Carpathian Spatial development vision. VASICA is based on the Carpathian Project's deliverables that provide a harmonized data basis and reflects findings on current situation, problems and challenges in different topics in the Carpathians. These deliverables are and will be used for further protocol development. To the Spatial Planning Work Group the deliverables supported by the Carpathian Project will further provide state-of-the art data, maps, documents and recommendation that provide a comprehensive basis for informed decision on spatial planning activities, comprising different sectors;
- Carpathian Atlas and databases – on topics such as: ethnic structure, religious structure, cultural landscapes, cultural heritage, population development, age structure, educational structure, employment, land use, tenure in agriculture, SMEs, tourism infrastructure, density of the transportation network, accessibility, natural hazards;
- The KEO-Carpathian Environmental Outlook provides a profound overview and harmonized data on the environmental situation in the Carpathians;
- Databases and GeoPortal on the Web for information and teaching purposes;
- Several sector analysis with recommendation (e.g. Cultural heritage, Socio-economic- analysis, transport networks, water management and risk prevention, forestry and timber industry, human settlement and an analysis of) were prepared under the overarching umbrella of the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision, national spatial development strategies and plans review;
- In six different, topic-related Working Groups findings and documents of the project were – together with new issues or project ideas discussed;
- Several pilot actions produced best practice examples that are compiled in documents and are disseminated via Handbooks and other communication channels;
- Follow-up platform: It has the aim to be a standing follow-up platform for regions, local authorities and non-governmental organizations. The Carpathian Convention interim Secretariat

provided the platform for the coordinated identification and drafting of possible spin-off and follow-up projects. Within this task the Secretariat also prepared lists of project ideas, assessed the future funding potential and gave recommendations for further action to be taken. Furthermore, the Secretariat supported project development and assessed funding and participation possibilities. This follow-up platform shall be further active also after finalization of the Carpathian Project in autumn 2008. It shall be an open platform, facilitated by UNEP Vienna ISCC, for consultation of project ideas and giving input on other topics or project ideas considered to be of importance for a sustainable development of the Carpathian Space. Thus, it shall strengthen common Carpathian Space-focused project idea development, idea-coordination and cooperation for and between Carpathian countries on this topic.

Due to the required preparations of key documents resulting from the Carpathian Project's implementation, the Carpathian Convention Working Group could not meet prior to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) meeting. Therefore, the CCIC decided to organize the Working Group's work through a Carpathian Space Strategic Stakeholders Workshop on Spatial Planning, held in Vienna on 26 to 27 of May 2008.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/2

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Spatial planning – Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Carpathian Space Strategic Stakeholders Workshop on Spatial Planning for its work and report;
2. recommends the continuation of the activity of this Working Group, and urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper implementation of follow-up activities;
3. welcomes the results of the Carpathian Project, in particular its contributions to integrate European spatial development policies with the management of the Carpathians' fragile ecosystem in a transnational context;
4. notes and welcomes the VASICA and its background documents as a strategic basis for the future sustainable development of the Carpathian region, including international, regional and transboundary cooperation;
5. calls upon spatial planning / development authorities of the Carpathian countries to continue the cooperation on issues relevant for spatial planning to achieve the territorial cohesion of the Carpathian region, including inputs and support to the development and implementation of relevant projects and the possible future establishment of a Carpathian Space Programme;

6. welcomes the Follow-up Platform established by the interim Secretariat as a useful tool for information-sharing and coordination of projects developed for application to European programmes or other relevant funding sources.

(c) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 6 – Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

Article 6 paragraph 1 of the Convention requests each Party to promote policies integrating sustainable use of water resources, with land-use planning, and aim at pursuing policies and plans based on integrated river basin management approach, recognizing the importance of pollution and flood management, prevention and control, and reducing water habitats fragmentation.

In its decision COP1/ paragraph 1 the First Conference of the Parties welcomed and appreciated the concrete contribution of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) and Ramsar Convention to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and requested the Working Group Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to further address these issues (decision COP1/5 paragraph 8) in close collaboration with Ramsar Secretariat and CWI.

Furthermore, the Meeting welcomed the fruitful cooperation (decision COP1/5 paragraph 4) with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and requested the interim Secretariat to further coordinate their activities (decision COP1/5 paragraph 5), including the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two Secretariats (decision COP1/5 paragraph 6).

Implementation

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) established by the decision COP1/4 paragraph 1 of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention as a sub-group of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity. CWI is composed by the National Focal Points for both Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions and is a voluntary partnership that seeks guidance from and contributes to the implementation of the two aforementioned Conventions. A detailed report on the developments and activities of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative prepared by the coordinator of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, as well as a “Framework for Project Development for Carpathian Wetland Initiative” and a Work Plan of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative are contained in the Annex.

The interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention organized and met with the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) on several occasions where discussions were carried out on issues concerning the two parts (UNDP/GEF project, Tisza River Basin, development of future projects). Further consultations will follow in order to develop and agree upon a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two Secretariats.

The UNDP/GEF project “Integrating multiple benefits of wetlands and floodplains into improved transboundary management for the Tisza River Basin” developed in cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) aims at integration of water quality, water quantity, land use, and biodiversity objectives into an integrated water resources/river basin management plan (IWRM/IRBM) under the legal umbrella of the European Union. The activities under this project will promote implementation of the Danube Protection Convention and the Carpathian Convention.

The Tisza River Basin Report 2007 presents the area’s problems related to water supply, severe flooding, droughts, landslides and erosion, accidental pollution by industrial and mining activities as well as pollution from agricultural sources, and provides valuable information for a future development of an integrated river basin management plan which will enable the countries of the basin to manage their land and water to the benefit of the people and environment as well.

The INTERREG IIIB Carpathian Project produced a Report on water resources and natural disasters (climate change) and flood risk mapping. The document provides a comprehensive insight on the status of

waters in the Carpathians, pointing out the three main areas of importance for water management: water use, drought and flood problems, and the legal transposition of European Union policy.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/3

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management – Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. welcomes the Report on water resources and natural disasters (climate change) and flood risk mapping produced by the INTERREG IIIB Carpathian Project;
2. reiterates desirability and requests the (interim) Secretariat to develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with ICPDR, to be submitted to COP3 for endorsement, and requests the (interim) Secretariat to continue the fruitful cooperation with ICPDR, in particular in the UNDP/GEF Tisza River Project;
3. requests the (interim) Secretariat to continue its cooperation with and make inputs to the Tisza River Group established under ICPDR;
4. requests the (interim) Secretariat to give priority to the further development and joint programming in the area of integration of water resources and land use planning, in particular concerning wetlands, natural water resources, springs, lakes and ground water resources, as well as biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change, taking into account experiences made in sustainable and integrated water/river basin management and land use planning of the relevant river basins of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea catchment areas in the Carpathians;
5. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of these recommendations.

(d) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 7 – Sustainable agriculture and forestry of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

The Carpathian Convention treats Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development together with Forestry under the same article and precisely under art. 7.

Article 7, paragraph 1 of the Convention requests the Parties to maintain the management of land traditionally cultivated in a sustainable manner, and take appropriate measures in designing and implementing their agricultural policies, taking into account the need of the protection of mountain ecosystems and landscapes, the importance of biological diversity, and the specific conditions of mountains as less favoured areas.

Article 7, paragraph 3 and 4 calls upon the Parties to pursue policies aiming at promoting and supporting the use of instruments and programmes, compatible with internationally agreed principles of sustainable development and apply sustainable mountain forest management practices in the Carpathians.

In order to facilitate the implementation of Article 7 of the Convention, the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided to establish under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry (decision COP1/7 paragraph 3). Moreover, the interim Secretariat was requested to convene its first meeting (decision COP1/7 paragraph 4) in order to define its terms of reference and initiate the concrete work of the working group.

Implementation

1. Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

As stipulated in the decision COP1/7, paragraph 4 the interim Secretariat convened the first meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry (9-10 July 2007, Vienna, Austria). The agenda included discussion both on SARD and on Forestry although most of the time was devoted to SARD.

Thanks to the support of the FAO SARD-M project, the Secretariat hired national consultants who wrote National Assessments on Policy, Institutions and Processes on SARD in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Serbia which completed the work started in 2005 with Romania, Slovakia and Hungary.

The SARD-M national policy assessments conducted in the Carpathian region were presented and discussed upon; the national reports provide a solid base for defining the main objectives of the working group, general recommendations for national authorities and the path to follow (e.g. follow-up activities) for a successful activity. A draft Regional Assessment, prepared by the Secretariat was also discussed and further elaborated thanks to the support of the European Academy.

Furthermore, the Parties had a first discussion on the draft terms of reference of the working group prepared by the interim Secretariat (decision COP1/7, paragraph 4). The Meeting agreed that the final terms of reference will be submitted for approval to the Bureau of the COP1. Their final version elaborated by the interim Secretariat with the incorporated suggestions and comments by the Parties, and harmonized with those of the other six working groups were adopted at the meeting of the Extended Bureau (17-18 October, 2007, Vienna, Austria).

The Meeting agreed on the work plan and outcomes of the working group activities that should be achieved. The following priorities and key issues to be handled before the Second Conference of the Parties were identified: terms of reference of the Protocol on SARD; cooperation with partner organisations; the future of the working group after COP2. The Meeting Report is contained in the Annex of the present report.

2. Sustainable Forestry

As said, the Vienna Working group meeting discussed also about Sustainable Forestry and in particular Padua University (sub-contractor in the CADSES Carpathian Project) presented the methodology to be applied for the preparation of the Regional assessment on the Carpathian Forests and invited the national experts to meet in S.Vito di Cadore to further discuss the issue. The objective has been to provide a general overview of the current state of forest resources in the Carpathians and to highlight the challenges and priorities for adapting the management of the Carpathian forests to new environmental and socio-economic conditions. The study has been carried out through a bibliographic research, information requests and experts of each country, field trips and meeting organization.

Following a brief discussion on the possibility of merging a Sustainable Forestry and the Biodiversity Protocols, FAO SEUR kindly offered to host and organize the Workshop “Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forests, Biological and Landscape Diversity in the Carpathian region” (19-20 September 2007, Budapest, Hungary) which had as objective to further consult on the aforementioned proposal. The participants discussed in detail the opportunities and obstacles for a common protocol and concluded that a specific Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management should be elaborated independently from a Protocol on Biodiversity.

Following this decision the second meeting of the Working Group was convened at the premises of the Centre for Alpine Ecology of Padua University (22-23 November 2007, San Vito di Cadore, Italy).

The working group firstly revised and provided guidance on the study produced by Padua University and secondly agreed on the necessity of starting the discussion on a possible protocol on Sustainable Forestry.

With the support of the Secretariat and of the Padua University, the participants elaborated a first draft of the Protocol on Forestry. At the proposal of the interim Secretariat, the participants agreed upon the establishment of a drafting committee composed of Poland, the University of Padua and the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention which integrated and revised the text.

The work also greatly benefited from the outcomes of the Network of Mountain Forests project in which the Carpathian Convention participated. The next project might be extended into the new programme period aiming at the establishment of a European Platform of Mountain Forests.

The revised draft Protocol on Sustainable Forestry, after a further revision and comment from the countries, was submitted to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee for reporting to the Meeting of the Second Conference of the Parties. The Draft Protocol on Forestry is contained in the Annex of the present report.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/4

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Sustainable agriculture, rural development and forestry – Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry for its work and report;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by this Working Group;
3. welcomes the Adelboden Group Declaration and appreciates that the SARD-M project was presented by Switzerland as a successful example of cooperation between FAO and the Carpathian Convention at the CSD 16,
4. welcomes the National Policy Assessments conducted by Parties, as well as the Regional Assessment prepared by the interim Secretariat, as a basis for the establishment of a regional platform for policy exchange and development, in collaboration with and with the support of FAO;
5. appreciates the preparatory work towards the development of a Protocol on Sustainable Forestry, requests the (interim) Secretariat to further coordinate and service the negotiation process, and urges Parties to nominate delegates for this process.;
6. calls upon countries and relevant institutions, including the Padua University, as well as the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests (MCPFE), to support the development of the Protocol, and/or future projects/programmes (European Platform of Mountain Forests).

(e) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 8 – Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

Article 8, paragraph 1 of the Convention stipulates that Parties shall pursue policies of sustainable transport and infrastructure planning and development, which take into account the specificities of the mountain environment, by taking into consideration the protection of sensitive areas, in particular biodiversity-rich areas, migration routes or areas of international importance, the protection of biodiversity and landscapes, and of areas of particular importance for tourism. In paragraph 2 of Article 8, the Convention requests the Parties to cooperate towards developing sustainable transport policies which provide the benefits of mobility and access in the Carpathians, while minimizing harmful effects on human health, landscapes, plants, animals and their habitats, and incorporating sustainable transport demand management in all stages of transport planning in the Carpathians.

In order to facilitate the implementation of Article 8 of the Convention, the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided to establish under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee the Working Group on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and infrastructure (decision COP1/9 paragraph 3). Moreover, the interim Secretariat was requested to convene its first meeting (decision COP1/9 paragraph 4) in order to define its terms of reference and initiate the concrete work of the working group.

The First Conference of the Parties welcomed and endorsed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Executive Secretariat of the Central European Initiative (CEI-ES) and United Nations Environmental Programme Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna - ISCC) aiming at providing a durable basis for the collaboration between the two Secretariats in the field of information and experience exchange for the development and coordination of activities and projects covering common fields of interest (e.g. sustainable transport and infrastructure, energy issues in the mountains, sustainable agriculture and rural development, etc.).

Implementation

As stipulated in the decision COP1/9 paragraph 4 the interim Secretariat convened the first meeting of the working group (22-23 March 2007, Bolzano, Italy). The activities of the working group were financially supported and benefited from the specific expertise of the Central European Initiative (CEI), as well as from scientific support by the European Academy in Bolzano (EURAC).

The participants agreed upon the aim and purpose of the established working group, which is supporting the Parties towards their cooperation for the implementation of Article 8 (“Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure”) and Article 10 (“Industry and Energy”) of the Framework Convention; moreover, it would guide and advise the work of the European Academy (EURAC) in preparing a Study on the Transport Network in the Carpathians.

The meeting had a first discussion on the terms of reference of the working group prepared by the interim Secretariat (decision COP1/9, paragraph 4). Their final version elaborated by the interim Secretariat with the incorporated suggestions and comments by the Parties were adopted at the first meeting of the Extended Bureau (17-18 October, 2007, Vienna, Austria). The terms of reference of the working group are contained in the Annex of the present report.

Furthermore, the Meeting approved the terms of reference of the study submitted by EURAC; the participants ensured to support the project and provide the necessary relevant data (see the Meeting Report in the Annex).

The Second Meeting of the working group (11-12 December, Trieste, Italy) discussed and delivered further recommendations to the study on the Carpathian transport system. The Conference of the Parties has before it the latest draft of the study which is contained in the Annex of the present report.

Furthermore, the European Academy (EURAC) presented the recommendations (based on the aforementioned study on Sustainable Transport) for a Protocol on Sustainable Transport in the Carpathians (See Annex).

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/5

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Sustainable transport and infrastructure – Article 8 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on sustainable Transport, Energy and Industry its work and report, and welcomes the recommendations of the Study on the Transport System in the Carpathians elaborated under the lead of EURAC, Italy;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by this Working Group;
3. appreciates the ongoing cooperation with and technical support from EURAC, CEI and UNIDO;
4. appreciates the preparatory work towards the development of a Protocol on Sustainable Transport, requests the (interim) Secretariat to further coordinate and service the negotiation process, and urges Parties to nominate delegates for this process;
5. calls upon countries and relevant institutions, including EURAC, to support the development of the Protocol through relevant projects.

(f) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 9 – Sustainable Tourism* of the Carpathian Convention

Background

Article 9, paragraph 1 of the Carpathian Convention stipulates that Parties shall take measures to promote sustainable tourism in the Carpathians, providing benefits to the local people, based on the exceptional nature, landscapes and cultural heritage of the Carpathians, and shall increase cooperation to this effect.

In order to facilitate the implementation of Article 9 of the Convention, the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided to establish under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (decision COP1/10 paragraph 2). The working group would aim at the elaboration of a Tourism Protocol and a Strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians.

Moreover, the interim Secretariat was requested to convene its first meeting (decision COP1/10 paragraph 3) in order to define its terms of reference and initiate the concrete work of the working group.

Implementation

As requested by the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision COP1/10 paragraph 3) the interim Secretariat in collaboration with Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB) convened the First Meeting of the working group (2-5 April 2007, Lopenik, Czech Republic); the activities of the working group contributed to as well as benefited from the EU INTERREG IIIB CADSES Carpathian Project.

The objective of the meeting was to start the concrete work towards the elaboration and negotiation of a Tourism Protocol and a Strategy (Tourism Strategy) for the future tourism development of the Carpathians as requested by the First Conference of the Parties (decision COP1/10 paragraph 2). The preparation of the two documents was recommended by the background document on “Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians” elaborated by CEEWEB/ETE in consultation with the interim Secretariat in the framework of the EU-INTERREG IIIB CADSES Carpathian Project submitted to the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It was stressed that the two documents are interconnected and equally needed in order to accomplish the desired outcomes. The protocol would represent the legally binding commitment of the Parties, while the strategy would represent the implementing tool.

As encouraged by the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision COP1/10 paragraph 3), the Meeting was attended by governmental delegates, non-governmental organisations, administrators of protected areas, international tourism experts and other observers.

Czech Republic, proposed opening an electronic forum (www.chm.nature.cz) through the Czech Clearing House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity which would serve for (electronic) consultations between the parties involved in the process of implementing the Article 9 (“Sustainable tourism”) of the Framework Convention.

The Meeting discussed and adopted the draft terms of reference (see Annex) of: the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism, the Tourism Strategy and the draft Tourism Protocol. Moreover, the draft structures

(see Annex) of the Tourism Strategy and Tourism Protocol were agreed upon, as well as on the responsibilities for the further elaboration of the Tourism Strategy's chapters. The aforementioned documents were prepared by CEEWEB in close cooperation with interim Secretariat. The detailed report of the Meeting is contained in the Annex to the present report.

Furthermore, CEEWEB and the interim Secretariat were asked to prepare, based on the inputs provided during the first meeting of the working group, a draft Tourism Protocol and draft Tourism Strategy to be submitted to the Extended Bureau Meeting (17-18 April 2007).

The Extended Bureau Meeting (17-18 October 2007, Vienna, Austria) review the draft texts of the documents and decided that further contributions from the member countries would be needed; therefore, the two documents were circulated to the Parties for their inputs, redrafted and submitted for discussion to the Second Meeting of the working group (23-25 April 2008, Krakow, Poland). The results of the Krakow Meeting were circulated to Parties and observers.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/6

Agenda item Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Sustainable tourism – Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism for its work and report, welcomes its recommendations and appreciates the valid contributions by CEEWEB;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by the working group;
3. appreciates the preparatory work towards the development of a Protocol and Strategy on Sustainable Tourism, and requests the (interim) Secretariat to coordinate the further development and negotiation process, and urges Parties to nominate delegates for this process;
4. calls upon countries and relevant institutions to support the development of the Protocol, and/or future projects/programmes (including the "Via Carpatica").

(g) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 10 – Industry and Energy of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

Article 10, paragraph 2 of the Convention includes a provision that Parties shall pursue policies aiming at introducing environmentally sound methods for the production, distribution and use of energy, which minimize adverse effects on biodiversity and landscapes, including wider use of renewable energy sources and energy-saving measures, as appropriate.

The First Conference of the Parties (COP1) submitted to the follow-up work of the Working Groups on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure the “Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of Article 10 of the Carpathian Convention with regard to Energy Policy, Sustainable Energy Use and the Development of Distributed and Efficient Energy Sources” (decision COP1/8 paragraph 2). Furthermore, COP1 requested the interim Secretariat to pursue the cooperation with DG TREN of the European Commission, with the Secretariat of the Energy Community and with the Secretariat of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEP), in the fields of mutual interest.

Implementation

The Working Group on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure was convened by the interim Secretariat twice (first meeting was held on 22-23 March 2007 in Bolzano, Italy; the second meeting was held on 11-12 December 2007 in Trieste, Italy) since its establishment by the decision COP1/9 paragraph 3 of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. During the working group meetings the discussions were concentrated more on the activities undertaken for implementation of Article 8 of the Carpathian Convention – Sustainable transport.

The concrete work on sustainable energy under the Carpathian Convention framework was initiated through a “Regional Workshop on Renewable Energy in the Carpathians” (6-7 May 2008, Lviv, Ukraine) organized as a joint initiative by the interim Secretariat and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The event was also supported by the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, Ministry of Environment of Ukraine, Lviv State Regional Administration and Ministry of Economy and Transport of Hungary. Due to required preparation and coordination of the event, it could not be held prior to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) (2-4 April 2008, Sibiu, Romania) which welcomed the initiative and decided that the outcomes of workshop will be presented for consideration to the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (17-19 June 2008, Bucharest, Romania).

As part of the follow-up platform of the Carpathian Project, the interim Secretariat is working with the UNIDO and the FAO on the development and submission of follow-up projects in the field of renewable energy for the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme as well as the GEF and/or other funding sources.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/7

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Industry and energy – Article 10 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure for its work and report;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by this Working Group;
3. welcomes and encourages further cooperation between the (interim) Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on the issue of renewable energy;
4. welcomes the results of the “Regional Workshop on Renewable Energy in the Carpathians” as a contribution to the Carpathian Convention implementation process;
5. requests the (interim) Secretariat to pay special attention to the issue of sustainability in the production of renewable energy, as well as the issue of energy efficiency, in the development and implementation of projects;
6. endorses the regional project on renewable energy developed jointly by UNIDO, FAO and UNEP, being submitted to the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, and requests the (interim) Secretariat, in cooperation with UNIDO, to assist the Carpathian countries with the development of additional proposals for the submission to the GEF and/or other funding mechanisms.

(h) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 11 – Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

Article 11 of the Convention requests Parties to pursue policies aiming at preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage and of traditional knowledge of the local people, crafting and marketing of local goods, arts and handicrafts. The Parties are called upon to aim at preserving the traditional architecture, land-use patterns, local breeds of domestic animals and cultivated plant varieties, and sustainable use of wild plants in the Carpathians.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the provisions on cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, the First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention decided to support the establishment, under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, of a Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge (decision COP1/6 paragraph 2). Moreover, the interim Secretariat was requested to convene its first meeting (decision COP1/6 paragraph 3) in order to define its terms of reference and initiate the concrete work of the working group.

Implementation

As stipulated in the decision COP1/6, paragraph 3 the interim Secretariat convened the first meeting of the working group (27 – 28 August 2007, Venice, Italy). The first meeting of the working group was organised in cooperation with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) and The Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) and contributed to as well as benefited from the EU INTERREG IIIB CADSES Carpathian Project.

The meeting had a first discussion on the terms of reference of the working group prepared by the interim Secretariat (decision COP1/6, paragraph 3). Their final version elaborated by the interim Secretariat with the incorporated suggestions and comments by the Parties were adopted at the meeting of the Extended Bureau (17-18 October, 2007, Vienna, Austria). The terms of reference of the working group are contained in the Annex of the present report.

Furthermore, the Parties received a presentation and discussed ongoing activities (and their intermediate outcomes) related to the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge in the Carpathians. The Meeting Report is contained in the Annex of the present report.

Czech Republic presented the outputs of a meeting (see the Meeting Report in the Annex) held in June 2007 with emphasis on two important issues: the definition of the Carpathian Cultural Heritage and the need to create a Carpathian Heritage List.

The First Meeting of the working group agreed on a definition of the cultural heritage of the Carpathians as follows: “The Carpathian heritage is the diversity of natural and cultural and mixed tangible and intangible assets, and their interaction, which serve for maintaining Carpathian Unity and Identity”.

The representatives of UNESCO informed the Parties of the guidelines on the “UNESCO World Heritage Sites”, underlining that a Carpathian Heritage List can comprise many other sites which are considered unique in the Carpathian context in addition to those considered as world heritage sites of outstanding universal value. The Meeting agreed that further development would have to be carried out in close collaboration with the UNESCO Focal Points from each Carpathian country.

The Parties decided that a second meeting would not be convened, instead ANPED would receive further support to organize stakeholder consultations in all the Carpathian countries, and in close cooperation with

the interim Secretariat would deliver to the Second Conference of the Parties the terms of reference of a strategy encompassing the existing national and international mechanisms on cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, including recommendations on possible funding mechanisms or opportunities.

The interim Secretariat participated in the workshop (8-10 February 2008, Kutna Hora, Czech Republic) which launched the ELBARN project. The aim of the project - "European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net" (ELBARN) – is to prepare, in every European country, the required infrastructure and logistics for the worst case scenario. EURONATUR, SAVE Foundation and partners are running this project as a concerted action with financial support of the European Union. In this pan-European network, existing Ark farms and Rescue Centres shall also have their product marketing and other possibilities of use of rare breeds promoted. The subject is of particular interest to the Carpathian Convention process as the text of the Convention (Article 11), as well as the Draft Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (Article 23), mentions clearly the importance of preservation of the local breeds of animals and cultivated plants.

The stakeholder consultations were carried out by ANPED between January and March 2008 in the Carpathian countries (plus a summary meeting held in Prague, Czech Republic (mid-March)). An intermediate report (including draft recommendations) highlighting the outcomes of the meetings, is contained in the Annex. The final report, as well as future proposed programme would be prepared and circulated to the Parties.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/8

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge – Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge for its work and report; appreciates the valid contributions by ANPED;
2. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by the working group;
3. welcomes the definition of Carpathian Heritage as "the diversity of natural and cultural and mixed tangible and intangible assets, and their interaction, which serve for maintaining Carpathian Unity and Identity" developed by the Working Group, as a useful instrument for delineating the work and responsibilities in protecting and managing the Carpathian heritage;
4. welcomes the Report and recommendations based on consultations carried out in the Carpathian Region by ANPED, and encourages Parties to collaborate and support the development of an

Inventory of Carpathian Heritage as well as a programme of practical activities in support of Carpathian heritage, as proposed in the report;

5. urges parties and relevant stakeholders to continue to support the preservation of local breeds and cultivated plants in the Framework of the Carpathian Convention;

6. calls upon national UNESCO Focal Points to be involved in this work.

(i) Progress report on the implementation of *Article 13 – Awareness raising, education and public participation of the Carpathian Convention*

Background

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.

The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention appreciated the concrete contributions of ANPED, EURAC, REC and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea to the Carpathian Convention implementation process and welcomed their further initiatives and activities facilitating the Carpathian Convention process (decision COP1/12, paragraph 1).

Implementation

“The Handbook on the Carpathian Convention” (published April 2007) was prepared by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) in partnership with the European Academy of Bolzano (EUARC). The Handbook wants to be a practical tool for local authorities assisting them in implementing the principals and concepts defined by the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. The handbook was produced as the first component of the umbrella project “Support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the framework of the Alpine-Carpathian Partnership” financially supported by the Italian Ministry Environment, Land, and Sea. The second component of the project aforementioned is a series of stakeholder consultations in all the seven Carpathian countries. The workshops were carried out between April and June 2008 and were indented to increase awareness of the Carpathian Convention and provide detailed explanation of some of the Convention articles, guidance and discuss ample case studies (the reports of the meetings are available upon request). Moreover, under the same project REC/EURAC is finalizing (to be published soon) a Regional Assessment which covers the institutional, legal and policy frameworks related to the obligations under the Carpathian Convention.

The Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) carried out stakeholder consultations in the seven Carpathian countries between January and March 2008 (plus a summary meeting held in Prague, Czech Republic - mid-March). An intermediate report was submitted to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee highlighting the outcomes of the meetings, as well as draft recommendations for further actions (see Annex). The final report, as well as future proposed programme will be prepared and submitted to the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (17-19 June 2008, Bucharest, Romania).

ENSI¹ (Environment and School Initiatives) organized a workshop (9-10 November 2007, Göncöl House – Vác, Hungary) which evaluated the possibilities of cooperation in the field of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) among the Carpathian countries. The participants of this kick off meeting

¹ ENSI (Environment and School Initiatives) is a decentralised international network under the umbrella of OECD's Centre for Educational Research & Innovation which supports educational developments that promote environmental understanding, active approaches to teaching and learning, and citizenship education through research, policy development and the international exchange of experiences and knowledge.

agreed to establish a learning network in a sustainable way to exchange information, practices and to find common project possibilities - the Carpathian Sustainable Education Network – CASALEN.

Possible action taken by the Conference of the Parties

Decision COP2/9

Agenda item 4

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties – Progress Report by Secretariat, Report of the Implementation Committee

Cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation – Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. welcomes the important contributions by ANPED, REC, ENSI and EURAC to awareness raising, education and public participation in the Carpathian Convention implementation process, and expresses its gratitude to the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea for its support;
2. supports and appreciates the Carpathian Sustainable Education Network (CASALEN) initiative and requests the (interim) Secretariat to assist its further development and implementation; and appreciates the related financial support provided by OMV;
3. welcomes and supports the public participation strategy prepared by ANPED;
4. re-iterates its recommendation to establish and develop national mechanisms to foster the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including information, involvement and capacity building of relevant stakeholders and civil society related to the process and the future development of the Carpathian Convention;
5. urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of these recommendations.

(j) Belgrade Conference (2007)

Background and implementation

The First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (11-13 December 2006, Kyiv, Ukraine) welcomed (decision COP1/17 paragraph 1) the inclusion of the Agenda item on “Mountain initiatives” into the draft agenda of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade Conference).

Ministers and Heads of delegation from 51 countries in the UNECE region and the Representative of the European Commission, met at Belgrade, Serbia, from 10 to 12 October 2007, in the sixth of a series of Ministerial Conferences held as part of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process. UNEP ROE has submitted a draft category II (information) paper on “Mountain Initiatives” to the 3rd meeting of the UNECE Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) (12-13 October 2006) as a contribution to the item “Mountain initiatives” of the draft agenda of the Conference.

The First Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (decision COP1/4 paragraph 2) welcomed the initiatives undertaken in other regions aiming at the protection and sustainable development of trans-boundary mountain ranges and reiterated the readiness of the Carpathian Convention partners to continue to share experiences in the development of mountain related partnerships and frameworks. Moreover, the Meeting expressed the hope that the Belgrade Conference 2007 would underline the importance of the Carpathian Convention and related initiatives of the International Mountain Partnership for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions in the world.

The Belgrade Conference (Ministerial Declaration paragraph 22) welcomed “the mountain partnerships within and between the Alps, the Carpathians, the South-Eastern European mountain region, the Caucasus and the mountain regions of Central Asia”. It recognized “the benefits from the existing legally binding instruments for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions like the Alpine and the Carpathian Convention”, welcoming “the initiative of South-Eastern European and Caucasian countries to develop such instruments”, and encouraged the international Global Mountain Partnership “to promote and foster exchanges of experience and expertise with other mountain regions in the world”.