



Workshop Shaping the Carpathian Region in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

**3rd Annual Forum EUSDR 2014
27th June 2014
Vienna City Hall, Room 8**

REPORT

The UNEP Vienna Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna-ISCC), with the assistance of the European Academy Bolzano (EURAC), coordinated the organization of the workshop “Shaping the Carpathian Region in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region”, organized within the 3rd Annual Forum EUSDR 2014 at the Vienna City Hall on 27 June 2014 from 12.00 to 13.00.

The Carpathian Convention is strongly involved in strengthening the territorial cooperation in the Carpathians at different levels and plays an important role in the implementation of the EU Strategy of the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The Workshop aimed at further profiling the Carpathian Region in the EUSDR, and at providing inputs to the consultation process on the implementation of the Strategy and its Operational Programme 2014-2020.

The EUSDR National Contact Points of the Carpathian countries, the representatives of the Carpathian Countries, regions and local authorities, of EU institutions and bodies, stakeholders active in the Carpathians, NGOs, and associations acting in the Carpathian Region, participated in the Workshop.

The meeting benefited from the inputs of the workshop “Stressing the role of mountains in European macro regional strategies”, Portorož, 16-17 June 2014, organized by UNEP Vienna-ISCC, which brought together the representatives, experts and national focal points of the Alpine, Adriatic-Ionian and Danube EU macro regional strategies to discuss on the possible ways for mainstreaming and profiling mountains at a more regional level.





OPENING REMARKS

Harald Egerer, Head of UNEP Vienna-ISCC, welcomed and thanked the Workshop participants for their presence at the meeting. He started his presentation underlining that the Danube and Carpathian Region, twin regions belonging to one main area, are also recognised by WWF as Global 200 Ecoregions, representing two of the world's most outstanding natural areas, with hundreds of protected areas, world heritage sites, with virgin forests, mountain peaks, ski slopes, hiking trails, wooden churches, and mountain bike trails.

He then presented the actual situation and involvement of the Carpathian Countries in the framework of EU strategies and funding programmes. In October 2013, the European Commission recommended to the Carpathian countries to make use of the EUSDR, which provides a framework of cooperation in eleven priority areas covering a large spectrum of relevant issues. The Commission also stated that Poland - which is not directly covered by the EUSDR and which is pushing for the development of a Carpathian Strategy - can also benefit case by case on the basis of the functional approach.

According to this approach, it would be more useful to reach a wider coordination among Carpathian Countries to better define the existing territorial tools, like the Strategy for the Danube Region and the future Danube Operational Programme. Furthermore the Carpathian Convention, with its strong local and regional ownership in the area, ongoing activities, projects, network of contacts, partners, scientific support, should be considered a strategic tool, complementary to the EUSDR, for the sustainable development and the better cooperation in the area.

This also because not all the priority actions and possible projects, which are significant for the Carpathians, are included in the available EU instruments and in the EUSDR, and, for example, the reference to bio agriculture, forests, tourism, rural development and climate change is missing.

Also for this reason, Mr. Egerer stated that the need for a better governance at EU level should build on existing structures. This means that, in addition to the use of the Carpathian Convention as a strategic tool complementary to the EUSDR, it is important to strengthen the ownership of the regions and stakeholders by offering them an already existing and holistic strategic instrument like the Convention. It is furthermore necessary to make sure that Danube Operational Programme 2014-2020 will address and take into consideration the Carpathian substantive priorities.





PARTICIPANTS CONTRIBUTION

Ms. Carmen Podgorean, Director General of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Coordinator for EUSDR, took the floor and affirmed that the involvement in the EU governance processes, and in this case in the EUSDR and Danube Operational Programme definition, depends on the countries involvement in the work of the Programming Committee, formed by the representatives of all the Danube partner states. Ms. Podgorean emphasised that a strong cooperation between all the EUSDR countries as well as non-EUSDR neighbour countries is important to face common challenges in the future because of thematic and regional overlapping issues.

Furthermore, she underlined that EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention should have the same goal and both aim for a flexible, cross-sectorial approach. Ms. Podgorean stressed the fact that domestic tourism is an unutilised resource in the region and it would be one important perspective of cooperation between EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention. She also emphasised the existing synergies for the creation of a Carpathian Strategy. According to her, it is necessary to enhance the dialogue between the EUSDR coordinators and the Carpathian Convention for further successful cooperation and common activities.

Ms. Margareta Gajdosova, Representative of Presov Self Governing region, stressed the importance of a greater involvement of the Carpathian regions in the EUSDR governance and expressed the full support of her institution to the Carpathian Convention, which is also working to achieve this goal.

Mr. Sandor Szalai, Szent Istvan University, expert on climate change related issues in the Carpathian region, underlined the importance of the cooperation between EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention for scientific research. The consequences of climate change in the Carpathian have a great influence on the Danube basin, therefore common scientific research should be encouraged.

Mr. Volodymyr Domashlinets, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, stressed on the complementarity and common tasks of both Carpathian Convention and the Danube Strategy and underlined the importance to further enhance and widen cooperation between these two international instruments.

Mr. Nikodem Szczyglowski, Pro Leopoldis organization, underlined that a wider extension of the scope of the EUSDR to a wider territory of Ukraine which will include Lviv could be beneficial for the Strategy as well seen the strong cultural, touristic, economic and cultural relation between Lviv and other areas and cities of Central-Eastern Europe included in the EUSDR territory.

Finally Mr. Zinovyi Broyde, "EcoResource" Centre in Ukraine, gave a presentation on the common roots of the Carpathian Convention and the Danube Strategy, taking also into consideration the overlapping of the EU macroregional Danube and Baltic Strategies and the





importance of the Poland involvement in the EUSDR. It was demonstrated direct conformity between 10 of 11 EUSDR Priority Areas and provisions of the key Articles of Carpathian Convention, as well as a number of such conform projects, e.g. already started large scale “East Avert” for floods prevention and risks modelling. Furthermore he focused the presentation on the benefits of the extension of the scope of the EUSDR to a wider territory of Ukraine which will include the oblasts in Dniester Basin, as well as on the benefits of the development of a European Mountain Convention
Mr. Egerer thanked all the participants for their participation and active contribution to the Workshop and the Danube Annual Forum organizers for hosting the event.

The presentations are available at:

<http://www.carpathianconvention.org/eventdetailothers/events/workshop-shaping-the-carpathian-region-in-the-eu-strategy-for-the-danube-region.html>

LIST OF ACRONYMS

<u>EU</u>	<u>European Union</u>
<u>EUSDR</u>	<u>EU Strategy for the Danube Region</u>
<u>NGO</u>	<u>Non-governmental Organization</u>
<u>UNEP</u>	<u>United Nations Environment Programme</u>
<u>UNEP Vienna – ISCC</u>	<u>UNEP Vienna Office – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention</u>
<u>WWF</u>	<u>World Wide Fund for Nature</u>

