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Consiliul Județean Brașov

9th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism 12 - 14 Septembrie 2017

DRAFT MEETING REPORT

Opening of the meeting, election of the Chair, adoption of the Agenda

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, with a generous support and hospitality of the Ministry of Tourism of Romania and the Brasov County Council, organized the ninth meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Tourism), held in Brasov, Romania, 12 -14 September 2017 (see full list of participants in Appendix 1).

Mr. Silviu Zeleniuc, Counsellor from the Ministry of Tourism in Romania, and Ms. Alina Szász, Public Manager from Brasov County Council, opened the meeting and made welcome remarks.

Mr. Silviu Zeleniuc and Ms. Alina Szász were proposed as Chair and Co-chair for the meeting and the Agenda was adopted by WG Tourism.

Presentation of the Parties of the National Tourism Task Forces and discussion on the transfer of information on the national implementation of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Strategy to the CSTP

Each Party presented their work on the NTTFs.

- **Poland** established the NTTF in May 2016 through the letter of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism. The NTTF includes 28 representatives from Ministries, regional tourism organisations, the tourism industry, the sciences, including universities and schools in the field.
- **Czech Republic** considers that given the fact that the Carpathians are only 10% of the country's area, they do not need to create a separate Task Force, but rather use the existing bodies working on the matter, including the agency Czech Tourism and the Ministry of Regional Development. More information can be provided in writing upon request.
- **Slovak Republic** is in process of discussing the NTTF. The country has held a number of meetings in the Ministries related to the Carpathians. The Slovak Republic is the only country that has all its territory in the Carpathian Convention. The country has done important work on how to implement the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Strategy, although at the moment the work is not being followed up due to changes in personnel.
- **Hungary** will continue to work in the NTTF after the reorganisation of the Ministry. The last meeting on the NTTF was held in September 2014. In 2014 there were around 30 bodies involved in the NTTF.
- **Romania** has 12 full members working on the NTTF. The country plans to extend the NTTF. Last year two general meetings were held, the second one opened to more

members. Romania is engaged in following the values of sustainable tourism, particularly the conservation of the natural heritage and cultural identity. Romania is currently preparing a law on tourism. Another NTTF meeting is planned after the COP5 to start working on the CSTC Work Programme.

- **Ukraine** started working on the NTTF as soon as the Strategy was adopted. After extensive consultations between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Economic Development, Ukraine held the first meeting on the NTTF on the 22nd of August, 2017, with more than 20 people involved. The next NTTF meeting will take place in Ushgorod.

Presentation of the Documentation of the process on elaborating and implementing the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians

Mr. Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe, presented the document. The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany requested a documentation of the methodology of the project “Development of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians” to set an example to other regions on how a supra-national strategy involving seven countries can be done. The documentation will be printed by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany and distributed on the COP5.

Members of WG Tourism thanked for the presentation and expressed that this document will be very useful, not only for readers from other mountain regions, but also for the stakeholders in the Carpathians. Therefore, it might be necessary to translate the text into Carpathian languages. The Czech Republic will send a review of the document, which will be incorporated into the final version.

Presentation of the tourism specific Databases on handbooks, projects and funding, and discussion on the handing over to the CSTP

Ms. Krisztina Campbell, CEEweb for Biodiversity, presented information on a Database with information on projects in the Carpathian region. The objective of this Database is to facilitate the implementation of sustainable tourism by sharing the information and the lessons learned from previous projects. It is a way to avoid repeating mistakes and wasting financial resources. The upcoming task is to expand the contents of the database adding more projects, and consulting additional experts.

The development of this database has proven to be very challenging, as in many cases it is very difficult, or almost impossible, to find information on the projects. There are as many as 200 projects that have not yet been included in the database due to lack of information, and this is a recurring problem in all the seven countries of the Carpathian Convention. Only 87 projects are now included. Furthermore, Ms Campbell presented the other two databases on financial instruments for the financing of sustainable tourism and on handbooks and guidelines.

The Parties agreed that this is an excellent tool but there is a need to overcome the issues related to the lack of information.

Presentation of the progress on the operation of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Centres (CSTC) under the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP).

Romania: During the 8th WG Tourism meeting in April 2016, it was decided to have the CSTP with 3 centres, Poland, Ukraine and Romania. Since this moment Romania has worked on the establishment of their centre in Brasov.

- In October 2016 the Brasov County Council signed a Protocol with the Ministry of Tourism to establish the centre and make it functional.

- In November 2016 the country started a campaign to raise awareness on the Strategy and the Protocol, aiming at public institutions and NGOs
- In February 2017 the first meeting of the NTTF was held
- The CSTC in Brasov officially opened on 10th of May 2017
- In May 2017 the second meeting of the NTTF was held with new members also
- In June 2017, a CSTC meeting with all the 27 County Councils and 7 regional development agencies of Romania took place. The meeting aimed to discuss what the centre can offer and how they can all work together, and how can these counties contribute to the implementation of the strategie
- In August 2017 there was a training session held by Mr. Michael Meyer, from ETE. All the members working in the centre received training to work on the elaboration of a work programme for the next 3 years of the CSTC and the reporting format, which are available online.

The centre functions in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Brasov County Council. There are 2 employees from the Brasov County Council working for the CSTC and 3 from the Ministry of Tourism.

Ukraine: After the decision on establishing the CSTP with 3 centres, a joint proposal with the European Wilderness Society and ETE for the establishment of the CSTC was presented. The centre is now established.

- The CSTC Ukraine has a website, which they are happy to share with the other centres.
- At the moment they have an office and people working in the centre.
- The members of the CSTC are having discussions on how to support the CSTC at the national and regional levels.

The CSTC counts with the full support from the Ministry of Economy and the National Tourism Organisation. Ukraine is aware that they will not have a Ministry of Tourism. For this reason, and under the advice of UNWTO, the country created the National Tourism Organisation and Regional Tourism Organisations.

At the moment, Mr Valentyn Voloshyn is leading the CSTC in Ukraine. The National Tourism Organisation is responsible for the position.

Poland: The Association Carpathian Euroregion Poland, a large organisation with partners in Romania, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine, decided to establish the CSTC. The CSTC was established on March 2016 in Rzeszow. Mr. David Lasek is in charge.

Discussion on the progress made in establishing the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP)

The WG Tourism discussed on how to formulate an agreement between the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and each CSTC centres. The Secretariat was asked to draft an agreement and send it for review to the Carpathian Convention Focal Points and members of WG Tourism.

Poland announced that the Ministry of Sports and Tourism is considering signing the CSTP memorandum, which has been already signed between Ukraine and Romania.

The Secretariat was asked by the members of WG Tourism to send the final detailed versions of the Country Action Plan and Joint Action Plan as they were agreed upon after the 8th meeting of the Carpathian Convention WG Tourism in Brasov.

Discussion on the draft COP5/6 Decisions

The WG Tourism agreed on the final version of the draft COP5/6 decisions. The document is included in the Appendix 2 and will be integrated into COP5 decision text.

Discussion on future priorities for the WG Tourism

The WG extensively discussed on this issue and agreed on as in the document attached in Appendix 3.

Project opportunities and initiatives

Mr. Walter Hauer and Ms. Elisabeth Mattes presented a “The Great Carpathians” Europe’s longest Mountain bike -Trail Tour for Cyclists. The project consists of a bike tour across the whole Carpathian Mountains, departing from Vienna and travelling through all the Carpathian nations. This tour could serve as a sustainable source of economic income with little natural and socio cultural impact.

Mr. Michael Meyer delivered a presentation on INSIGHTS – Integrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies. The project aims to find integrated sustainable tourism strategies to make the Carpathian region more attractive to tourists while preserving the local natural and cultural resources. He pointed out that this project is very similar to the one submitted to DTP in May 2017 (CAPIN). Approval is pending and expected by the end of October.

Ms. Adrienn Dunnay, Ministry of Tourism, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary, introduced the project Hucul Magistral, which aims to develop an international equestrian route along three Visegrad countries employing the Carpathian Pony. The project would build on existing infrastructure to offer a service that can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in the area.

Presentation on the draft “A common set of indicators measuring the positive and negative impacts caused by tourism in the Carpathians” and discussion on involvement of Parties for integrating the set of indicators into their monitoring systems.

Mr. Michael Meyer presented a set of indicators measuring the positive and negative impacts caused by tourism in the Carpathians. This set of indicators was developed by ETE in cooperation with experts from e.g. UNWTO and with the support of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

The document presents a set of 20 core indicators and additional voluntary indicators. It has been developed with the aim of providing a feasible tool to measure and compare the positive and negative effects of tourism along the Carpathian countries.

An application to DTP from May 2016 will deal with a project (DANOST) on testing these indicators in selected destinations and to establish a number of observatories. Approval is expected for October 2017.

Summary of the discussion and next steps

Mr. Harald Egerer suggested holding meetings of the WG Tourism on demand rather than yearly and emphasised the need for stronger CCIC implementation.

Venue and date of the next meeting of WG Tourism

The date of the 10th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism will be decided after COP5.

Other businessesThe Secretariat will circulate a list of WG Members and current observers.

Closure of the meeting

Mr. Harald Egerer made the concluding remark and together with Mr. Silviu Zeleniuc thanked the participants for their contribution to the meeting discussion.

DECISIONS

Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (COP5)

DECISION COP5/10 Sustainable tourism Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Welcomes* the progress made in establishment of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) by signature of the memorandum by Romania and Ukraine, initiating the cooperation, *appreciates* the efforts made by the Parties directly involved in the process, and *encourages* all the Parties to actively participate in implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention (hereinafter Tourism Protocol) and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, and *requests* the Secretariat to elaborate collaborative agreements with the centers;
2. *Encourages* the WG Tourism, the CSTP and its centers to contribute to the Carpathian wide report on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols;
3. *Welcomes* cooperation with Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE) and CEEweb for Biodiversity implementing the project Support for the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, and *appreciates* the financial support of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, provided to ETE for this purpose;
4. *Welcomes* the Set of Indicators for measuring the positive and negative effects of tourism in the Carpathians, developed within the same project, and *invites* the WG Tourism to consider the Set of Indicators as a useful source for the implementation of Article 24 of the Tourism Protocol;
5. *Takes note of* the organization of the Workshop on the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into the National Law on 12 – 13 December 2016 in Vienna, Austria, funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and acknowledges involvement of the ETE and the Secretariat in related preparations to the Workshop;
6. *Welcomes* the approval of the project CARPATHIAN TOURISM: Cooperation of V4 Countries, financed by the Visegrad Fund which aims at empowering local entrepreneurs to improve handicraft workshops as tourism services and to increase quality and visibility of other rural tourism initiatives, which contributes to the implementation of Article 11 of the Tourism Protocol;
7. *Appreciates* the activities undertaken by the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland, in cooperation with Swiss partners, in the area of creating the Carpathia brand, and *invites* the CSTP and its centers to further elaborate on the development of the common Carpathian brand.

Appendix 3

9th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism

FUTURE PRIORITIES WG TOURISM

1. To coordinate activities with the CSTP & its centers (currently in Brasov, Ushgorod and Rzeszow) and to consider information and reports provided by the centers
2. To consider and further elaborate on the Set of Indicators prepared under the project *Support for the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians*, as a useful source for the implementation of Article 24 of the Tourism Protocol in the member states of the Carpathian Convention
3. To facilitate the work on a consolidated version of the Joint Action Plan to be implemented by the CSTP and its centers, with special emphasis on:
 - a. Develop, maintain and keep up to date a common online Carpathian platform on sustainable tourism, including products and services database, trans-boundary products and mapping, as well as good practices, with continuous updated information, and including the preparation of a Carpathian touristic map
 - b. Develop a Carpathian-wide quality standard system for local products and local services (e.g. “Local food”, “Local accommodation”, “Local experience – how to guide tourists”, “Code of Conduct for Tourists in the Carpathians”)
 - c. Design, where applicable, a common system of marking trails throughout the Carpathians
 - d. Initiate resource mobilization for the implementation of the strategy at national and international level involving all relevant stakeholders
 - e. Initiate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned from the operation of DMOs in terms of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians
 - f. Analyze the touristic resources of the Parties based on research, to identify the key-areas and products to be involved, and undertake further detailed research
 - g. Develop a methodology for monitoring the impacts of existing and planned tourism development on biodiversity and landscapes, including the social, economic and cultural impact
4. To facilitate the work on the general tasks of the centers, with special emphasis on:
 - a. Compiling a list of stakeholders from all Carpathian countries
 - b. Compiling information on finding sources, projects, handbooks and guidelines on sustainable tourism
5. Identify funding sources and exchange information within the working group on potential projects for the implementation of, but not limited to, the above identified activities

6. Take part in the promoting of World Heritage Sites in the Carpathians with an aim to support sustainable tourism development in the region