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# **Report of the Second Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee**

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Poland**

**April 22-25, 2008**

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE  
WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
UNDER THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

22-25 April 2008  
Kracow and Sucha Beskizka, Poland

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## I Attendance

The first Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (later on referred as Tourism Working Group or TWG) was attended by governmental delegates from all the seven Carpathian Countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Serbia, and Ukraine), NGOs, administrations of protected areas as well as international tourism experts and observers.

More than 40 participants from the following countries attended the workshop: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Serbia, Ukraine as well as Austria, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The full list of participants can be found in Annex 1, p. 20.

## II Opening of the Meeting

The meeting officially opened at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Welcome remarks were made on behalf of the Chair of the Working Group, Martina Paskova, Head of the Settlements and Human Ecology Department, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic by Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany.

Michael Meyer reminds the participants of and agrees on keeping the rules of an official meeting, giving official delegates the right to speak before observers are stating their opinions.

In addition, Prof. Witkowski from the Academy of Physical Education in Krakow welcomed the members of the Working Group on behalf of the Academy's Rector, who hosted the meeting.

The official opening of the meeting was followed by a short introduction round of the participants. The introduction included the question, what the individual member is most proud of in the Carpathians. The list of answers reads as follows (no priority order):

- traditional landscape patterns and people that take care of them and thus ensure their endurance
- people living in the Carpathians
- opportunities for (cross-country) skiing and the Carpathian winter
- diversity in the broad sense
- environmental conservation / nature protection
- good status of nature & the resulting tourism potential (sustainable use of the Carpathian nature)
- development of sustainable tourism beyond national borders
- people who are proud of the Carpathians
- uniqueness
- diverse national parks all over the Carpathians
- opportunities for mountain tourism
- NGOs willing to work for a change towards sustainability
- large carnivore species (wolves, bears, etc.)
- nature
- high biodiversity (flora & fauna)
- culture and traditions (e.g. local crafts)
- opportunities for mountain tourism
- multi-national corridor with cultural & historical heritage
- development/progress in development of rural green tourism
- good trans-boundary cooperation
- many regions of real wilderness, pristine forests
- globally seen the C. are an amazing area of great importance (culture/biodiversity/history)
- sustainable development efforts
- people that want to have ST instead of fast profit
- different nationalities living peacefully together
- best forest railways in Europe

An introduction of the meeting agenda by Kristina Vilimaite, CEEweb, Hungary concluded the opening of the meeting. Due to rescheduling, however, the agenda has been altered in the course of the meeting. The agenda included into the Annex 2, p. 27, shows the final schedule of the meeting.

### III. Update of the Tourism Working Group

- ▶ Presentation on the activities of the TWG to date; summary of the decisions relevant to the work of TWG that were taken by the Carpathian Convention Extended Bureau and Implementation Committee; short-term plans: Timeline till Carpathian Convention COP2
- ▶ Terms of References
  - ▶▶ Tourism Working Group
  - ▶▶ Draft Tourism Protocol
  - ▶▶ Tourism Strategy

#### **Presentation on the activities of the TWG to date**

Kristina Vilimaite presented the activities undertaken by the Tourism Working Group within the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the TWG in April 2007 and today. The presentation included

#### ***Summary of the presentation***

##### Background information about TWG

- COP1 (December 2006, Kiev): decision COP1/10 to establish Working Group on Sustainable Tourism under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee
- Goals of TWG: a) elaborate a strategy for the future tourism development of Carpathians and of a tourism protocol, b) act as a cooperation platform for implementation of Article 9 of the Framework Convention
- TWG is Chaired by the Czech Republic
- TWG is moderated/facilitated by CEEweb and ETE

##### The first meeting in the White Carpathians

- The first meeting of the TWG: April 2007 in CZ
- Supported by the INTERREG IIIB CADSES Carpathian Project
- Two documents related to the Draft Tourism **Protocol** were developed and adopted:
  - Terms of Reference
  - Structure
- Development of the **Tourism Strategy** has started. The following documents were developed and adopted at the meeting:
  - Terms of Reference
  - Structure
  - Chapter 1: Purpose
  - Chapter 2: Vision Statement
  - Part of Chapter 5.1: Objectives
- Vision Statement:

The Carpathians are a living region with a common identity where people enjoy quality of life with rich traditions and in sound environment.

This natural and cultural heritage builds the basis for a competitive sustainable tourism destination.

Good cooperation, local management and partnerships contribute to the high quality of tourism, which ensures continuous benefits for local people and economies.
- Main differences btw documents:
  - Where regulation is needed – Protocol
  - Strategy – inspires all stakeholders in making the Carpathians a sustainable tourism destination
  - The Protocol will be developed by ETE/CEEweb and international experts
  - The Strategy will be a document elaborated by the Parties and stakeholders together

##### After the 1st TWG meeting

- The first draft of the Strategy was developed with the contribution of the Parties and stakeholders
- The first draft of the Protocol was developed by ETE/CEEweb

- The documents were submitted to the Carpathian Convention Extended Bureau (October 2007)

#### Decisions of the Carpathian Convention Extended Bureau

- The draft protocol is too extensive and technical
- The strategy should be the implementation document for the protocol
- The Parties confirmed that without a protocol the strategy will not be implemented
- The Extended Bureau requested to rewrite the documents and reformulate the ToRs

#### Decisions of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee

- CCIC meeting in Sibiu (April 3-4, 2008) was a preparatory meeting for COP2
- COP2 will take place in Bucharest on 17-19 June 2008
- CCIC drafted decisions for COP2, the most important ones for the work of TWG are the following:
  - The Working Groups were supported by the Carpathian Project that finishes in August 2008, the next Implementation Committee meeting will decide which groups should continue working
  - Meanwhile the work on protocols can be continued and the governments are requested to nominate delegates to the working groups that are developing protocols

#### Draft decision on tourism for COP2

- Thanks the WG on Sustainable Tourism for its work and report; appreciates the valid contributions by CEEweb;
- Urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by the working group;
- 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;
- Urges Parties to nominate delegates for the development of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism;
- Calls upon countries and relevant institutions to support the development of the Protocol, and/or future projects/programs (Via Carpatica).

#### Short-term plans: Timeline till Carpathian Convention COP2

- The following docs will be submitted to the COP2 by May 6:
  - Draft report from the 2nd TWG meeting (the report of the secretariat already includes the report on the 1st TWG meeting)
  - Draft Tourism Protocol
  - Outline of the Strategy
  - Information about follow up projects (Via Carpatica)
- ! TWG may suggest the modifications to the decision text

#### **Terms of References**

Due to the decisions of the Carpathian Convention Extended Bureau, the ToRs elaborated and adopted on by the TWG in April 2007 had been subject to some changes. Based on the prior presentation, Michael Meyer, ETE, explains the alterations in the ToRs to the members of the TWG; however, he points out that there is no need to again adopt these documents as they are not going to be adopted by the ISCC and the COP2.

#### *ToR Protocol*

The TWG will not submit the draft protocol for adoption to COP2. The draft protocol will be submitted as an information document. The reasons are time constraints due to a) the need to have the final draft of the protocol 6 months before the COP (the final draft version should be agreed at a meeting of the governmental experts that have credentials for negotiation); b) busyness of the Parties with the finalisation of the Biodiversity Protocol; c) some delays in the preparation of the draft protocol.

It is now planned to finalise the draft Tourism Protocol at the earliest date possible, so that it can be submitted for COP3 in due time. The sooner the protocol will be submitted, the more time will be available for those in charge to consult about it. In addition, the protocol will be less competing with other working groups handing in their protocols shortly before COP3.

### *ToR Strategy*

It was initially aimed at submitting a full-size strategy to COP2. This goal could not be achieved firstly, due to missing input from part of the Parties, secondly due to far-reaching recommendations of the ISCC to link the strategy to the protocol and, thirdly, the resulting time constraints.

Instead, it was decided to submit an outline of the strategy for acknowledgement to COP2 without showing the incorporated input of officials and stakeholders to the delegates of the COP2 yet. This approach was chosen in order to avoid a situation where the delegates refuse to support the development of a proper – and legally binding – protocol, based on the excuse that having a good strategy would be sufficient. By submitting only the outline of the strategy, the TWG will have enough time to work towards the finalisation of the strategy before COP3, where the tourism strategy shall be finally submitted for adoption.

After Michael Meyer's explanations, the participants were asked to go through the altered ToRs and give their comments. However, the comments were not related to ToRs, but to the contents of both protocol and strategy. Therefore, they will be shifted to the next chapter V.

The ToRs of the Working Group, the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy have been acknowledged by the members of the TWG.

## **IV. Finalisation of the Draft Tourism Protocol**

Michael Meyer gives a short introduction to this point of the agenda, by explaining the original purpose of a protocol and a strategy.

Main problems:

- ▶ Finding a compromise between developing a protocol that has the power to cause changes, while at the same time not being so harsh that it doesn't get adopted by the Parties
- ▶ Governments are busy implementing national legislation. Therefore they do not really want to go beyond national laws and regulations; however, a protocol for the Carpathians clearly exceeds national limits. Besides, very often national legislation is good, but not implemented properly.

Aim of this meeting is to help finding a good solution, with delegates of the countries and observers (NGOs, other organisations) having the mandate to work together on a joint protocol. Of course, the protocol will be adjusted when entering COP3; still, this is a great chance for developing a protocol that satisfies everybody involved. What we as TWG want to achieve is to help governments finding the path to go beyond national legislation and thus to really try to ensure what you/we are all proud of in the Carpathians.

### **General Discussion of Contents**

In the following the protocol was discussed by the TWG, the topics of discussion being the following:

#### 1. Monitoring

Stefan Szabo from the NGO Sosna/Slovakia points out the need for a good monitoring system that ensures the compliance of the parties, giving examples from the field where national legislation is not implemented or neglected due to lacking or missing monitoring and non-compliance measures.

Michael Meyer explains that the Implementation Committee has the mandate to monitor the implementation of both, protocol and strategy; however, a mechanism of this monitoring system is not developed yet. Michael Meyer advises NGOs to submit their information and the resulting recommendations to the IC, which can forward the issues to the COPs.

The problem of long time periods between COPs and the continuous progress of adverse impacts on the environment due to unsustainable tourism developments in that time is a great problem that needs to be tackled by an additional mechanism.

Ombudsmen and the possibility of sanctions are discussed within the group, resulting in the agreement that this important issue of monitoring and implementation should be raised at COP2 for discussion.

Furthermore, the necessity is stated to include the obligation of developing a good monitoring and reporting system in the tourism strategy. In this context, Prof. Witkowski points out that cooperation with scientific institutions (scientific research/education) is very important and should not be forgotten.

Michael Meyer calls again attention to the complementary functions of protocol and strategy: the protocol needs to state the need for a monitoring system in the frame of a legally binding document; the strategy shall explain how this monitoring system shall look like.

Pam McCarthy, ANPED and John Jones/FEDECRAIL/NERMT support the idea of placing more emphasis on monitoring already in the protocol – also in consideration of a too great work load in the Implementation Committee, being left alone with this problematic and important issue.

John Jones proposes a sentence on monitoring/reporting, which was included in the draft protocol text (see below, p.13).

## 2. Incentives for Politicians

Mihai Zotta, Romsilva/Romania proposes to include more incentives and positive attributes to consider into the strategy. In order to convince the parties of supporting the documents, they need to see the benefits they might gain from their compliance. An important decision factor for the delegates in this context is the economic potential of sustainable tourism.

Mihai Zotta further points out two particular problems related to that: a) the abuse of “sustainable tourism” as marketing strategy for products and activities that have nothing to do with sustainability, and b) the problem that a lot of benefits of sustainable tourism are only to be seen in the long run.

It is agreed that in order to avoid these two problems, best practice examples should be included in the tourism strategy that more effectively visualise the positive outcomes of sustainable tourism development. In addition, Michael Meyer proposes to use (economic) incentives also in the frame of the monitoring mechanism.

Further, Mihai Zotta stresses the need to highlight sustainable tourism development as opportunity for protected areas and their vicinities.

## 3. Cooperation/Interrelation with other protocols under the Carpathian Convention

Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID/Poland raises the issue on how to deal with the question of streamlining the individual protocols. As the biodiversity protocol shall be submitted for adoption at COP2, all subsequent protocols might need to adapt to its structure.

Michael Meyer explains that up to now the Implementation Committee is in charge for this process. UNEP didn't want to have a ready-made structure, but supported to have a growing structure that get adjusted within a longer process.

Kristina Vilimaite tells that RTI Polska, a project partner of the INTERREG Carpathian Project, plans to organise the first meeting of working group on spatial planning, which specifically aims at the interlinkage of the working groups and possibly of the individual protocols; the meeting is planned for the end of May. Further, members of the cultural working group are participating in the meetings of the TWG.

## 4. Stakeholder Involvement

The concern was raised that the stakeholders might get overloaded with work with all the protocols that are there to be developed and adopted, depending on the participation of stakeholders. The process on how to ensure a smooth stakeholder process is discussed.

Michael Meyer indicates that not all protocols will be ready at the same time, so that stakeholders will have enough time to read through everything. That way they will get a good overview of the broad developments taking place. The contributions of these stakeholders will be very valuable, when feeding into the monitoring process. Not only, but also for this reason,



it will be of great importance to have a broad dissemination and a good mechanism of stakeholder involvement.

Pam McCarthy and ANPED will play a vital role in this process. Further, Stefan Szabo/Sosna offers his help and suggests using LEADER networks for synergizing with local action groups.

### **Specific discussion of articles / process**

Michael Meyer reported to the TWG how difficult a task it was to find qualified experts to work on the protocol as there is both, the knowledge about tourism and biodiversity as well as the knowledge about legal requirements needed.

The experts that were invited and contributed to the protocol elaboration were:

- Scott Muller
- Jano Rohac
- Oliver Hillel
- Rainer Schliep

After finalisation of a first draft of the protocol text, it was then submitted to three experts for review:

- Gabor Verezi, UNWTO
- Stefanos Fotiou, UNEP-DTIE
- Oliver Hillel, CBD

All of them gave recommendations, generally stating that it is a very good, though challenging protocol. As soon as the draft protocol is finalised for submission to COP3, all these experts from international organisations will write official statements on the value of the protocol. This will hopefully help us when entering the negotiation process.

### **Preamble**

The preamble is not part of the draft tourism protocol; it is normally being developed by the Parties themselves.

### **Chapter 1**

#### Article 1

##### Definition of Sustainable Tourism

Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID/Poland raises concerns that the definition of sustainable tourism is too broad, making the misuse of it possible.

Kristina Vilimaite tells that it has to be general so that people can adapt it to their own national and local circumstances.

Michael Meyer points out that the definition as it is used here is already a lot more precise than any definition in other international agreements.

Gabor Kiss, Ministry of Environment and Water, Hungary recommends including the terms of geodiversity and landscape diversity in the definition, which is accepted.

#### Article 2

##### Geographical Scope

Mihai Zotta, Romsilva/Romania and Yuri Zinko/Ivan Franko National University Lviv/Ukraine have the feeling that the text only refers to trans-boundary tourism; the word "including" is being inserted before "trans-boundary tourism".

Michael Meyer states that the protocol has to stick to the designated areas, whereas the strategy can go far beyond. The TWG will thus not deal with the topic of geographical scope. This is supported by John Johnes, who proposes the term "outside but serving", a term used in the EU sphere.

Kristina Vilimaite informed the TWG that at the ISCC meeting in Sibiu it was stated that there will be no decision on the geographical scope during COP2; instead the protocols can decide by themselves where they set their geographical scope and lay their limitations. Therefore, it will get necessary for the TWG after COP2 to deal with this issue.

» **Chapter 1 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 2**

Article 3

Yuri Zinko proposed to change the order of f and h according to the title of the Convention. This proposal was accepted by the TWG.

Following the proposal of Prof. Witkowksi the amendment “and protect important habitats and species” has been included in 3a. Further the wording had been changed: “Develop and manage tourism in a way that it helps to... conserve...”

It was further discussed to include the issue of spatial planning (based on a concern of Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID); however, this proposal was not followed.

Article 4

No changes

Article 5

Sector policies was changed into “sectoral policies” in the title (English)

Article 6

The order of items 1 and 2 had been changed.

Article 7

The term “Collaboration” had been changed to “Cooperation” in the title

Article 8

No changes

Article 9

The inclusion of the European Landscape Convention was proposed. This raised the issue of two countries out of the seven being no EU member states (Non-Schengen countries).

Michael Meyer proposed to include an indicator to this problem in the preamble by submitting a proposal to the parties. Though the protocol and the strategy don't want to point out the differences in the seven Carpathian Countries, the topic will have to be dealt with.

» **Chapter 2 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 3**

Article 10

After discussion on the existence of proper zonation schemes and their persistence in the individual countries, it was proposed by Yuri Zinko, Ukraine to include “zoning and regulation schemes” instead of “zonation”.

Taking into consideration changing or future protection statuses, Tomasz Lamorski/Friends of Babia Gora, Poland recommended to remove “existing” before zonation, which was accepted as well as to include “in and around” protected areas.

These changes have been agreed for all passages in the protocol where “zonation” has been mentioned.

Further, it was agreed to include the terms geodiversity and landscape diversity wherever the term biodiversity is mentioned and a logical relation is given. (Gabor Kiss/Ministry of Environment and Water, Hungary)

Article 11  
No changes

Article 12  
No changes

Article 13  
No changes

▶ **Chapter 3 is accepted by the TWG**

#### **Chapter 4**

Article 14  
No changes

Article 15  
No changes

Article 16  
On proposal of Prof. Witkowski, Gabor Kiss and Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID the term “landscapes” has been included in item 2. Thus, item two reads “ecosystems and landscapes”.

Article 17  
According to the earlier decision (see article 10) “zonation” has been changed into “zoning and regulation schemes”.

Article 18  
The article has been changed according to the comment from Oliver Hillel, including the reference “inter alia the ministries responsible for tourism and environment”.

▶ **Chapter 4 is accepted by the TWG**

#### **Chapter 5**

Article 19  
No changes

Article 20  
No changes

Article 21  
No changes

Article 22  
In item 1 Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID suggested to use the phrase “and EU legislation where applicable”, which has been accepted by the TWG. The term “directives” has been additionally changed into “regulations”.

In this context, again the discussion about the problem of law enforcement and monitoring (e.g. forbid mass tourism investments in protected areas of IUCN categories I and II) was raised by Pam McCarthy and others.

Michael Meyer emphasised that this topic will be subject to further discussion and that it will be tried to find a solution latest between COP2 and COP3. However, so he points out, the draft protocol text already represents a challenge to the countries, when mentioning the crucial need of implementation of regulations. This after all implies that currently the countries are not taking into consideration the

regulations they should obey to. That way, the protocol is going already beyond the interference of Brussels.

He reminds the TWG that this protocol is not about offending delegates, but about finding a viable solution that satisfies everybody involved as good as possible. Therefore, a diplomatic approach has to be chosen.

Article 23  
No changes

Regarding the contents of articles 20-23 a discussion was taking place on Natura 2000 as example of EU legislation and potential problems related to the fact that two out of seven Carpathian countries are not EU member states. (see also under article 9)

▶ **Chapter 5 is accepted by the TWG**

## **Chapter 6**

Article 24  
The article was changed according to the comment by Stefanos Fotiou, UNEP.

Article 25  
No changes

Article 26  
The article was changed according to the comment by Oliver Hillel, CBD.  
→ The order of article 24 and 25 has been changed following the proposal of Yuri Zinko, Ukraine.

▶ **Chapter 6 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 7**  
Article 27 – 32  
No changes

▶ **Chapter 7 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 8**  
Article 33  
The examples mentioned in the brackets have been deleted.

Article 34  
The article was changed according to the comment by Oliver Hillel, CBD.

Article 35  
The article was changed as follows” proven to be environmentally friendly through a certification scheme”.

▶ **Chapter 8 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 9**  
Articles 36 - 41  
No changes

▶ **Chapter 9 is accepted by the TWG**

**Chapter 10**  
The title of the chapter has been changed from “Capacity Development” into “Capacity Building”.

Article 42

No changes

Article 43

According to the change in the title, the term “capacity building” was used in the brackets.

» **Chapter 10 is accepted by the TWG**

## **Chapter 11**

Article 44

No changes

Article 45

No changes

Article 46

Based on the discussion led on the issue of monitoring, a new paragraph has been included in item 6. The proposal to the item has been submitted by John Jones/ FEDECRAIL/NERMT (see p. 8)

*add 6*

*A mechanism for monitoring the tourist strategy and its implementation shall be developed such that the signatories to the Protocol undertake their best efforts to the resolution of problems as soon after their notification to the Carpathian Convention (Interim) Secretariat as possible. These efforts and the problems they deal with shall be reported back to the following COP. The efforts undertaken shall engage at least one member co-signatory not involved directly in the problem as an observer.*

*John Jones/ FEDECRAIL/NERMT(FEDECREAIL/NERMT)*

*- on behalf of tourist and museum railways -*

Pam McCarthy stresses the importance of frequent reporting as part of the monitoring system. Another problem highlighted is the time gap between the COPs and the overloading of the ISCC with work.

Piotr Mikolajczyk, UNEP-GRID suggests finding an umbrella solution for the monitoring/reporting issue for all protocols and supports the idea of a common mechanism. The biodiversity protocol could be taken as example, once it is finished.

Kristina Vilimaite states that from legal point of view, the compliance issue has to be integrated into the very protocol and cannot be in a separate document.

Michael Meyer recommends NGOs, e.g. Pam McCarthy from ANPED to additionally making use of the opportunity of submitting INF docs to the COP in order to emphasise the issue of compliance and non-compliance.

Article 47

No changes

» **Chapter 11 is accepted by the TWG**

## **Chapter 12**

Articles 48 - 52

No changes

» **Chapter 12 is accepted by the TWG**

The protocol was thus accepted by the TWG and closed for discussion for the moment. In May, however, it will be opened again for public consultation.

Based on the proposal of Kristina Vilimaite it was decided to support the National Focal Points in their task of implementing the public dissemination in their countries. Therefore, recommendations will be drafted by the TWG. ANPED will contribute to this task.

## V. The Tourism Strategy

### Introduction

Michael Meyer recalls the purpose of protocol and strategy with their different indications and functions. It is agreed with the working group that the protocol fulfils the function of being a restrictive and legally binding document, whereas the strategy is rather supportive, offering incentives and tools on how to implement the regulations set by the protocol.

The strategy shall provide a catalogue of measures, actions, initiatives, etc. for supporting sustainable tourism development in all seven countries. As an example trans-boundary cooperation was mentioned, in which context the strategy can call for a set of projects strengthening cross-country cooperation.

What the strategy is needed for:

- The strategy as a tool to create a certain image for the Carpathians (Michael Meyer reminds the participants of the presentation by Laszlo Puczko given at the 1<sup>st</sup> TWG meeting in April 2007). So far, the Carpathians do not have a common marketing concept; each country is launching its own marketing initiative.
- The strategy will support the marketing and the development of products, e.g. labelling, certification, hiking trails, info centres, etc.
- The strategy will ensure the necessary capacity building and training of stakeholders, enhancing the knowledge of people involved in tourism.
- The strategy will provide for more concerted actions, help to avoid parallel and double work without any references and interconnections; it will support processes to join forces for achieving a better and more cohesive impact in the countries.

### Discussion on the further development of the strategy – Contents

#### *Coordination*

The implementation of the strategy will be up to the countries, with the NGOs supporting them in their work.

The coordination of the countries and the activities, however, will be rather problematic. The Implementation Committee won't be in charge of this task. An independent implementing body will be needed.

If the TWG continues its work, it might take responsibility for observing the projects that come up in order to get an overview of what is going on in the countries. The goal will be to achieve more quality and less competition for the sake of sound tourism development all over the Carpathians.

#### *Time constraints*

Due to the recent unsustainable tourism development throughout the Carpathians, actions that aim at opposing these developments cannot wait until strategy and protocol are finalised. Thus, during the elaboration of both documents, it will be one of the tasks of the TWG to keep track of the developments in the countries.

In the strategy, recommendations need to be included about the establishment of a continuous implementation body.

One recommendation, resulting out of discussions in the TWG is to target on projects that take place in hotspots threatened by unsustainable tourism development. Similar to the Global 200 Biodiversity Hotspots (developed by WWF), a map of those tourism-related hotspots should be developed. This map should be based on district layers and will be a guiding paper for the development of targeted sustainable tourism projects in the future.

In this context, John Jones/ FEDECRAIL/NERMT points out the need for a sound cadastral base, which includes besides the hotspots also no-go-areas, hydrographical information (mineral resources), etc. This map should be the basis for the Carpathian Convention and will help to turn identified threats

into opportunities. Moreover, this cadastral base will be very important with regards to property right and land titles, as this is an increasingly difficult issue in the Carpathians.

#### *Protocol vs. Strategy*

Michael Meyer repeats the strategic approach chosen to present first a draft tourism protocol together with an outline of the tourism strategy (see also p. 5)

#### **Discussion on the further development of the strategy – Process**

Jana Urbancikova/ Bile Karpaty Education and Information Centre, Czech Republic suggests to take into consideration the support offered by her on behalf of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA). She proposes to present a draft of the strategy to CNPA, as their input might be very valuable, in particular as the protected areas will be one of the main stakeholder groups that are going to take care of implementing the strategy in their areas. They CNPA will have a meeting in September 2008; at this meeting a draft of the strategy could be discussed.

Michael Meyer agrees to use this offer if a draft of the strategy is ready in September to be submitted to the CNPA meeting.

Barbora Šafářová from the Czech Institute for Environmental Policy also offers help in ensuring a broad participation and dissemination of the strategy, based on a network of stakeholders that the Czech Republic has already established. Regarding the dissemination, Pam McCarthy/ANPED suggests to discuss cooperation.

Jon Marco Church/EURAC notes that the tourism working group is overlapping in its working scope with other working groups. This is partly true, but as Michael Meyer elaborates, tourism is a cross-cutting issue where many topics dealt with in other working groups (e.g. forests, clean air, sound environment) play an important role as they set the frame for every tourism development.

Moreover, Jon Marco Church calls attention to the fact that the Alpine Convention under the lead of the French Presidency is currently working on a “soft tourism” strategy. Michael Meyer agrees that cooperation and the request for contact and an information exchange is very welcome. It is decided to put the request for initiating contact into the recommendations to be provided to the COP2.

Kristina Vilimaite promises to keep the TWG updated about the process of strategy development and the received input in the future.

#### **Presentation of the draft strategy text**

Kristina Vilimaite presents the draft strategy text, including the input from stakeholders so far to the participants of the meeting. This text, however, will not be submitted to the COP2.

Based on the recommendations by the ISCC, the strategy will be subject to change regarding structure and a stronger relation to the protocol. However, it is attempted to re-structure the document in a way that it still complies with what has been adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> TWG in April 2007.

## **VI. Recommendations of the TWG to COP2**

The recommendations drafted by Kristina Vilimaite on the basis of results and decisions elaborated during the meeting, will be submitted in their final version to the Implementation Committee together with the draft protocol and the outline of the strategy to be submitted to the COP2 through the ISCC.

Kristina Vilimaite presents the draft recommendations to the TWG. After a short discussion, the recommendations read as follows:

*The Working Group appreciates the work done by CEEweb/ETE in developing the draft Tourism Protocol and acknowledges the valid input of international experts, including:*

- a. *Oliver Hillel, Programme Officer, Sustainable Use, Tourism and Island Biodiversity at the Secretariat of CBD (Canada)*
- b. *Stefanos Fotiou, UNEP DTIE (France)*
- c. *Gabor Vereczi, UNWTO (Spain)*

- d. *Laszlo Puczko, Xellum Ltd. (Hungary)*
- e. *Jan Rohac, Amber Trail (Slovakia)*
- f. *Scott Muller, Codesta (Panama)*
- g. *Rainer Schliep, Environmental Information & Communication Services (EICS) ; (Germany)*
- h. *Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe (Germany)*

*The Working Group has revised the draft Protocol and has reached a consensus about the formulation of the Articles at its second meeting.*

*The Working Group acknowledges the need for developing a Tourism Strategy for the implementation of the protocol.*

*The Working Group has identified the adverse impacts of unsustainable tourism practices on natural and cultural resources throughout the Carpathians, resulting inter alia from poor enforcement of existing legislation and lack of planning for sustainable tourism on national level.*

*The Working Group finds it valuable to continue its activities according to the decision COP1/10.*

*The Working Group looks forward to the cooperation with those responsible for the Alpine Convention Soft Tourism Strategy.*

*Recommendations:*

1. *The Working Group urges Parties and other stakeholders to plan, develop and manage tourism in the Carpathians according to the principles of sustainability pending the finalisation and adoption of protocol and strategy.*
2. *The Working Group recommends the Parties to start the process for the final negotiation and signature of the protocol.*
3. *The WG recommends the Parties to continue the development of the tourism strategy with the involvement of relevant stakeholders in parallel to the finalisation of the protocol.*
4. *The WG recommends the Parties to start implementing the strategy once it is developed and approved by the WG even if the adoption of the Strategy by a COP is pending.*
5. *The WG recommends the Parties to continue the activities of the Working Group under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee as per decision COP1/10, including the following function: act as a coordination body for the implementation of the Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention; and monitor and assure the quality of the initiatives, programmes and projects relating to sustainable tourism which are developed under the framework of the Carpathian Convention.*
6. *Recommends the (interim) Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to establish cooperation with those responsible for the Alpine Convention Soft Tourism Strategy.*

Based on the request, to include an extra paragraph on cooperation with stakeholders, it was stated to use the list of participants of the meeting (as attached as annexe to the report) as first listing of relevant stakeholders for future cooperation.

Kristina Vilimaite summarizes what kind of documents will be submitted to the COP2:

- Recommendations (cover sheet)
- Cover sheet from ISCC
  - o Recommendations
  - o Draft tourism protocol
  - o Outline of strategy
  - o Reports of TWG meetings I and II

Mihai Zotta/Romsilva, Romania highlights the lack of planning in the Carpathians as one of the main problems for any future tourism development. This problem is added to the Recommendations.



He further suggests including a statement on the potential of sustainable tourism as incentive for the Parties into the Recommendations. This statement didn't find approval of the other delegates; finally, consensus was reached that this suggestion is not going to be added to the recommendations.

## VII. Presentations of TWG members

### Presentations

#### Izabela Gostisa/ Central European Initiative

Ms. Gostisa presented the structure and activities of the Central European Initiative. Her presentation can be downloaded at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

#### Stefan Szabo /Sosna

Mr. Szabo presented the initiative of the organisation Sosna of developing a biking trail in the eastern part of Slovakia connecting Ukraine and Hungary. His presentation can be downloaded at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org).

Yuri Zinko/Ukraine notes that there is an initiative "Green Bike", which already disposes of a biking trail network that connects Slovakia, Ukraine and Poland. He proposes to foster cooperation with this initiative. Both, Stefan Szabo as well as Michael Meyer welcome this proposal and will follow up on it.

## VIII. Future Steps – The Vote of the TWG to Continue

Michael Meyer calls attention to the fact that for the strategy, there won't be any external experts hired. It is the strategy of the countries. Therefore, smaller working groups shall be established that will work intensively on the elaboration of the document. CEEweb and ETE will support this process and contribute to the success of the document development.

Asked about their commitment to the working group and the related activities, the participants confirm their interest and will to continue the work in future. A way how to practically ensure the continuation is yet to be found. Possibly one additional meeting of the tourism working group can be funded by the Carpathian CADSES project.

Horatiu Popa/Green Echoes Association, Romania stresses the impact NGOs can and should have by making all the ministries aware of the ongoing processes related to the Carpathian Convention and the Tourism Working Group. NGOs need to support the governments, i.e. by guaranteeing proper communication. NGOs can further be seen as watchdogs for the success of the protocol. Michael Meyer strongly supports this statement.

One of the biggest fears of NGOs, so Horatiu Popa, is the already mentioned time gap between today and the implementation of the protocol and the strategy. The estimated time till the enforcement of the protocol is about three to five years (acc. to Michael Meyer). In this time a lot of adverse developments will be taking place, severely worsening the situation in the Carpathian countries.

Michael Meyer confirms that this fear is justified. However, also here a strong NGO community can make an impact.

### Report to COP2

The participants reviewed the report to COP2 and decided to reformulate point 2 and 4 (see: Report to COP2).

## IX. Follow-up Projects and other Initiatives

### Via Carpatica

Kristina Vilimaite gives a presentation on the elaborated project components of the Via Carpatica idea. The presentation can be downloaded at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

## Comments

- Joachim Jaudas/ISF München, Germany supports the approach of splitting the project into two rounds, each of them putting emphasis on different countries. He recommends active partners in the Carpathians, e.g. FORZA in the Ukrainian Carpathians, Salvamont in RO and National Parks in general.
  - John Jones/ FEDECREAIL/NERMT points out that the pilot sites developed in the frame of the project will lead to better justification of future investments; they will serve as best practice examples that convince future donors. One donor he specifically recommends is the regional operational programs.
  - Jon Marco Church raises the issue of mapping and providing visual material within the frame of the project. Kristina Vilimaite explained that it is planned to provide material that allows to clearly identifying the gaps in the regions (WP1).
  - Legal implications will be topic of the Via Carpatica project, in particular thinking about trans-boundary cooperation; at least 1-2 model sites will be cross-border. Generally, it will have to be decided how to tackle the issue. Michael Meyer proposes to maybe chose one or two countries (where the chosen trans-boundary model projects take place) and provide a comprehensive legal analysis of these.
  - Jana Urbancikova, Czech Republic calls attention to the Green Ways network. Michael Meyer explains the reasons why EPCE won't be part of the project. However, he points out that the Slovak Bikers Association is interested to participate, with Jano Rohac helping them out as external consultant.
  - A discussion was led about a suitable lead partner. The Czech Ministry for the Environment is the favourite candidate, but it is not decided yet whether they are in the position to take that role. Another possibility is the Slovak Ministry of the Economy.
  - In order to meet the request of several participants of the meeting and according to discussions led in the TWG meeting, it was decided to include investment already in the first phase of the project in all countries in order to offer incentives to the parties.
  - John Jones/ FEDECREAIL/NERMT recommend a contact in Poland as partner for the project. Michael Meyer will follow up on this.  
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- Other recommended partners such as Kosice RDA and North-Hungary RDA are contacted already.
- Horatiu Popa/Green Echoes, Romania, proposes "Adopt a Trail" initiatives (e.g. taken by institutions, schools, etc.) as self-financing mechanism .
  - Marking system of trails: it was decided to strive for a common system of trail marking throughout all seven countries. That doesn't imply that national trail marking systems loose their value, but that cross-country trails should have the same signage (comparable to the GTA system). Joachim Jaudas further reminds that one trail can also use more than one signage, e.g. Via Carpatica and the local/national trail marks.
  - Mihai Zotta/Romsilva, Romania, propose to write a parallel or even pre-starting project, addressing the structural fund for tourism in Romania. Such a project could already start now and be joined with the Via Carpatica afterwards. Michael Meyer, on behalf of the TWG, offers him help in writing the project if needed and Mihai Zotta promises to talk to the Romanian department of tourism for follow-up.
  - Jana Urbancikova reminds to plan the project, e.g. WP 1, in a way that is sustains itself. Approaches as the Carrying Capacity and the Limits of Acceptable Change should be insisted on. One important example are trails that cut through protected areas.
  - Ms Gostisa/CEI Executive Secretariat, Italy, points out that the Central European Initiative would be interested to cooperate on the "Via Carpatica" project, specifically in those activities related to transfer of best-practices, awareness raising and institutional dissemination.

Kristina Vilimaite invites all participants of the meeting that would like to participate in the project to send a written letter of interest, indicating their experience, expertise and special interest in parts of the project. They are also welcome to comment on the proposal or identify potential gaps. This invitation includes also those meeting participants that would like to become subcontracted or associated partners. The deadline for sending this informal letter to Kristina Vilimaite and Michael Meyer is May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **UNESCO Bresce – Capacity Building for Biosphere Reserves**

Michael Meyer explains the intention of UNESCO-Bresce to launch a series of 3 trainings on sustainable tourism in biosphere reserves in CEE/SEE. Therefore, he gives a short presentation on the UNEP/GEF project run by ETE in the three biosphere reserves of Babia Gora (PL), Aggtelek (HU) and Sumava (CZ). This project and the very good results out of it will build the basis for the following trainings.

Michael Meyer asks the attending delegates, possibly in consultation with NGOs and protected area administrations, to propose participants to these meetings from their countries. Target groups of the training are protected area managers, NGOs working in protected areas and governmental representatives with special interest in these areas as well as community leaders and other stakeholders that might act as multipliers. In particular the last issue, i.e. the multiplier effect, should be one of the main reasons for a person to be sent to the training. Mainly participants from Biosphere Reserves are addressed; however, also protected area staff may apply.

The probable time period for the training is September 2008 – March 2009. Criteria for the selection of participants need to be developed. The selection process will be finalised by end of May.

### **Presentation from the Cultural Working Group (ANPED Input)**

By Monika Ochwat – Marcinkiewicz/ Ecopsychology Society, Poland

Download at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

### **Presentation GEF Project**

Michael Meyer presented the GEF Project on Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Three Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic). Kristina Vilimaite urged to check the website of the project [www.tourism4nature.org](http://www.tourism4nature.org) for detailed information on specific results of the project.

Download at [www.ceeweb.org](http://www.ceeweb.org)

### **Closing remarks**

CEEweb and ETE promise to the members of the TWG to provide all documents elaborated within the frame of the meeting as well as the meeting report by May 1<sup>st</sup> for commenting. The timeframe for commenting from part of the TWG will be May 1-4. On May 5, CEEweb/ETE will have to submit all documents including the changes proposed by the TWG to the IC.

A meeting of the Via Carpatica project might be possible before the COP2 (back-to-back), if there is enough commitment from part of the parties interested.

All members of the TWG who are not going to participate in the COP2 will be updated with all information resulting from the meeting.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**OF**  
**THE SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**  
**UNDER THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION**  
 23-25 April 2008  
 Krakow, Poland

**OFFICIAL DELEGATES*****Czech Republic***

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**AGENDA**  
**OF**  
**THE SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**  
**UNDER THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION**  
23-25 April 2008  
Krakow, Poland

**April, 22**

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Arrival of the participants to Krakow

19.00            *Dinner*

**Day I - April, 23**

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**9.30 – 18.00**

- Opening of the meeting and introductory round
- Update on the Tourism Working Group (TWG) activities to date, including:
  - Summary of the decisions relevant to the work of TWG that were taken by the Carpathian Convention Extended Bureau and Implementation Committee
  - Short-term plans: Timeline till Carpathian Convention COP2
  - Terms of Reference of the TWG, of the Protocol and the Strategy

12.30-13.30    *Lunch*

- Finalisation of the Draft Tourism Protocol

19:00            *Dinner and sightseeing in Krakow*

**Day II - April, 24**

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**9.30 – 17.00**

- The Tourism Strategy – introduction and discussions
- Recommendations of the TWG to COP2
- Presentations of TWG members
  - Izabela Gostisa/ Central European Initiative
  - Stefan Szabo /Sosna
- Future steps

12.30-13.30    *Lunch*

- Follow-up projects and other initiatives
  - Via Carpatica
  - Launching UNESCO-BRESCE capacity building on tourism management planning in the Carpathian biosphere reserves
  - Presentation from the Cultural Working Group (ANPED input)
  - Presentation GEF/UNEP Project *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Sound Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe*, [www.nature4tourism.org](http://www.nature4tourism.org)

17:30            *Departure to the meeting venue in Sucha Beskidzka (Babia Gora National Park)*

20:00            *Diner and Carpathian Evening with the performance of local folklore music band*

**Day III - April, 25**

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**9.30 – 16.00**

- Study trip to Babia Gora National Park and Biosphere Reserve, including information of the achievements of the GEF/UNEP project on sustainable tourism presented on day II

18.00            *Return to Krakow, departure of the participants*