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Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge within the framework of the Carpathian Convention

Report and Recommendations based on Consultations carried out in the Carpathian Region by ANPED

Introduction

This document draws upon previous work presented at COP1, and the results of regional consultations held between January and March 2008, as part of the activities of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathian Convention. These regional and national consultations in each of the seven Carpathian countries, were co-ordinated by ANPED, and organised by ANPED members and partners. This document aims to briefly summarise the results of this consultation process, and highlight some key issues for consideration in protecting and promoting Carpathian Heritage, for the second Conference of Parties of the Carpathian Convention.

Rationale

The Carpathian Convention recognises, in its Article 11, the need to preserve and promote the Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathians. To achieve this, the Convention will need to establish a mechanism to inform and involve civil society in its on-going work and decision-making, recognising social and cultural heritage issues, as well as economic and environmental ones. We strongly believe that these aspects are connected, and that by supporting the rich culture and heritage traditions of this region, this will also protect natural biodiversity, and promote sustainable development practices within the region.

Carpathian Region

The identity of Carpathians has been formed by the unique stories of its communities and by its many particular qualities, which comprise the core of Carpathians and give the region its special character. The Carpathian landscape, created by traditional patterns of land use and living examples of cultural heritage, is vital to the identity of its people. The cultural and natural aspects are bound together in the landscape and the rich biodiversity of the region. The Carpathians are rich in value, not in spite of, but due to the presence of people.

Challenges in the Carpathian Region

The threats facing the Carpathian cultural and natural heritage are many. It is endangered by the current changes of attitude and lifestyle (over-commercialization), dynamic growth and changing economies and land use, movement from 'traditional' consumption and production patterns to more unsustainable ones and growth in poverty and recreation (visitor pressure). These factors all highlight the vulnerability of

Carpathian Heritage. Moreover, they give rise to a sense of urgency to establish activities to support, strengthen and build pride in the Carpathian Heritage.

ANPED Project Activities

ANPED is co-ordinating a project to support a process of outreach and involvement of key target groups and stakeholders necessary for the identification, protection and promotion of Carpathian Heritage, and the effective implementation of the Carpathian Convention as a whole. The main tasks of this work are to:

- Carry out regional consultations on this topic in the Carpathian countries
- Clarify the linkages between safeguarding biodiversity, Carpathian heritage and sustainable development
- Carry out an investigation of the status of experts, local materials and knowledge on the cultural heritage of the Carpathians
- Prepare a summary plan for the establishment of a 'Carpathian Heritage List'
- Prepare recommendations for a strategy and programme of practical activities to support Carpathian Heritage

This work is being carried out as part of the activities of the Working Group of Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathian Convention.

The results, materials and recommendations from this process are to be presented at the Second Conference of Parties for the Carpathian Convention.

The Working Group of Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathian Convention, at its First Meeting, agreed a definition of Carpathian Heritage :

„Carpathian Heritage is the diversity of natural and cultural and mixed tangible and intangible assets, and their interactions, which serve for maintaining Carpathian Unity and Identity”.

Between January and March 2008 the ANPED consultations were held in the countries of the Carpathian region, and final reports and results of this work have been prepared, and are available. A summary meeting was held in Prague, Czech Republic in mid March to provide an overview of results, which is presented here.

Key Issues from the Stakeholder Consultations

- The key stakeholders in the management of culture and natural heritage include local people and communities, experts, different levels of government, NGOs, businesses, private landowners, teachers, youth and young people. The challenge is to create a positive social perception of Carpathian heritage conservation and a constituency for co-operation.
- The essential role of individuals and communities in sustaining values was stressed. There is a need to put local people at the heart of management, and engage them in stewardship of the areas in which they live. Engagement of communities enhances understanding and support for conservation that is relevant, builds commitments and shares benefits and responsibilities.
- There is a need for committed leaders among stakeholders, who share a vision of sustainability, and seek to co-operate with local and regional government and regional and international networks.

- The fostering and co-ordination of expert work and research heritage programmes is required. A lack of information exchange among experts and institutions was declared. Many research programmes run in a parallel manner, and there is a lot of overlaps.
- In many cases local governments and authorities for cultural heritage are not fully exercising their responsibilities (e.g. the toleration of illegal building practices and weak implementation of planning laws and regulations were cited).
- Consultation and co-operation is needed in the case of regional development strategies and national planning. There is a need to fully integrate cultural and natural heritage issues into all the aspects of the region's development and into sustainable tourism strategies.
- Stakeholders have proposed regional and local promotion and education campaigns for Carpathian heritage. These could cover a broad range of topics including local history, knowledge of places (nature conservation areas and built heritage), as well as local crafts and traditions. It was felt that information and education activities should also be aimed at local communities to help them recognize and appreciate their resources and foster pride in Carpathian heritage. The best promotion is word-of-mouth from the region's residents.
- There is a huge opportunity to develop proper marketing of cultural and natural heritage. Locally important innovative economies and win-win solutions should be supported (for example incentives for local producers, traditional local products and regional trademarks).

Summary of the Process

We would like to state that the results from the stakeholder consultations are from a first stage of activities, and provide suggestions for debate and future stages.

The ANPED project held a summary meeting in Prague, Czech Republic on 14th March, to collate the results from the regional consultations, and discuss, propose and define the overall priorities and recommendations. This meeting was hosted by the Czech Institute of Environmental Policy and the Czech Ministry of the Environment, and held in the Ministry offices. ANPED is very grateful for the support and contributions of Ms. Jana Vavrinova, at this Prague summary meeting, in her role as Chair of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge.

ANPED is aware and welcomes the activities of other organisations and partners, in this area, under the Working Group of Culture and Heritage and elsewhere, including REC Slovakia, EURAC, Polish Institute of Urban Development, UNESCO, REC Szentendre, WWFDCP, CERI and others. ANPED hopes to continue co-operation with these organisations and partners to further develop this work. We are also interested to share results and experience with the other Working Groups where we see inter-linkages and cross-over, such as the Working Groups for Biodiversity, Sustainable Tourism and Agriculture.

Results and Proposed Carpathian Heritage Inventory

ANPED proposes to develop and establish a Carpathian Heritage Inventory.

We have decided to modify the original name from 'Carpathian Heritage List' to 'Carpathian Heritage Inventory' as we see it as a tool, for the identification, protection and promotion of Carpathian heritage. It would be a first step of implementing this in practice. As well as a method of education and presentation of the particular qualities (to tell the stories) which give the Carpathians their special character and provide a collective memory. The Inventory would be a resource - with it many things can be done,

without it there is no a clear place to start. We also hope it would assist a more common understanding of terms. The Inventory would be a mechanism for practical conservation and a basis for the management of heritage and its promotion.

The Inventory would be created by local stakeholders proposing items. Experts could also propose items. It would be an open and on-going process. The criteria and categories would be based upon UNESCO's categories but developed by consultations with stakeholders within each country, to give freedom to reflect national characteristics. We felt that across the Carpathian region there were many similarities and common aspects, but also many unique and valuable variations and differences.

We understood that the UNESCO Heritage List aims to 'highlight the jewels of culture and heritage', whilst we felt that our proposed Carpathian Heritage Inventory should be used to protect and promote the wide diversity of Carpathian Heritage, across the mountains, which give the region its special character.

ANPED also seeks to develop a programme of practical activities to support Carpathian Heritage and the Carpathian Heritage Inventory. This would highlight the importance of Carpathian Heritage as part of Sustainable Development strategies, and is set out here.

Proposed Programme of Supporting Practical Activities

- 1) Catalogue and map the good examples of Carpathian heritage.
- 2) Create an on-line catalogue and map of Carpathian heritage. This would build into a database and be a research resource and forum for debate and promotion.
- 3) Prepare an on-line calendar of Carpathian events.
- 4) Identify where local community support for Carpathian Heritage is strong and promote this.
- 5) Develop a grant small programme for local communities and make a Carpathian Heritage award for local communities leading good practice.
- 6) For communities where support for heritage can be strengthened there is a need for raising awareness concerning its value, and showing alternatives and offering concrete examples that demonstrate the social and economic benefits.
- 7) Promotion of the Carpathians as a vast enclave of wild, unspoiled nature, located in the heart of Europe, with its characteristic cultural qualities which is the result of co-existence of many nations. This would be a promotional campaign and the local level and the regional level. The Carpathian Heritage Inventory would also promote this at the international level.
- 8) Promote regional and local education campaigns to involve young people. And develop local education materials in an accessible form, to make local communities more aware of the special heritage in their region.
- 9) Instigate co-operation with local authorities and involve them in the process. They can and should be a key player in this process. Both from working to include heritage into their planning processes and also in promotion of their region. Build upon the local authorities existing landscape registers and policies, spatial plans and cultural policies.

- 10) Traditional farming practices are key to the biodiversity and heritage of the Carpathian region. So support for this should form a key part of all these proposed activities. Also specifically to further strengthen the connections with those working to advise farmers on the support available for small, balanced farming, and those who are working on the links between traditional land-use practices and heritage.
- 11) Active support and grants for local craftspeople in their work, and training and apprentice schemes for young staff to continue to learn the skills. Advice for craftspeople on how they can fit into rural tourism activities, and advice for craftspeople so authentic products can find a market.
- 12) Strengthen support for existing regional trademark schemes for regional and local products to ensure they can be sustained. Utilise past experience and existing advice to promote the expansion of such schemes to further regions. (Branding of local products can help to draw attention to a specific protected area, and thus demonstrate the benefits and advantages of its existence). Regional trademarks aims to assist and promote traditional means of production. This is very strongly linked to promotion of the region and sustainable tourism.
- 13) Carpathian Heritage can be included into promotion of sustainable tourism activities in across the region. However, we feel it is important that this should be developed moderately, and with judgement and expertise. Since when displaying Carpathian heritage, marketing can not be the decisive factor. And there are concerns regarding over-popularity, over-marketing and turning values into goods, which can destroy the local values. A balance should be found, and aspects offered and shared with genuine visitors, which should be a faithful mark of the traditional culture.
- 14) Establish 'regional ambassadors' – people native to the region, cultivating its traditions and imparting local knowledge in a systematic way.

Recommendations for the 2nd COP Meeting of the Carpathian Convention and Future Action

- 1) ANPED proposes to develop and establish a "Carpathian Heritage Inventory".
- 2) We invite and welcome the Parties to consider ways they can support and develop this proposal at the national level, within each country.
- 3) We invite and welcome UNEP ISCC to consider ways they can support and develop this proposal and activities on Carpathian Heritage across the Carpathian region.
- 4) We appreciate that this first stage of activities has brought together actors from the environmental and cultural sectors. We recommend the Parties to continue actions to inform and co-operate with other Ministries and sectors, particularly their Ministries of Culture and UNESCO National Focal Points. We welcome this co-operation and hope that it continues and develops to support the next stage of activities.
- 5) We welcome the opportunity to continue the co-operation with UNEP ISCC, in line with the Report from the First Meeting of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage in Venice, on assessment of and investigation into the financial possibilities to support the proposed Carpathian Heritage activities.
- 6) As ANPED we propose to develop a programme of practical activities to support Carpathian Heritage, and the Carpathian Heritage Inventory. We invite and welcome the Parties and UNEP ISCC to be a partner in these activities and consider ways they can be involved.

- 7) We recommend UNEP ISCC and the Parties to continue to support stakeholder consultation and continue to provide opportunities for this.
- 8) We invite the Parties to consider how Carpathian Heritage can be proposed as an additional category in the already existing support programmes of their Ministries of Environment, Culture and Regional Government programmes.
- 9) We believe strategic planning and co-ordination is vital to achieve a useful realisation of the aims of the Carpathian Convention. We encourage UNEP ISCC and the Parties to further develop strategic planning, and to promote and strengthen co-operation between sectors.
- 10) We welcome this first stage of co-operation with UNESCO, and we seek to continue and develop this co-operation with them in the next stages of this work. We welcome further opportunities to co-operate and learn from UNESCO's experience, expertise, knowledge and resources.

ANPED Members and Partners

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

Czech Republic - Institute for Environmental Policy

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

Poland – Ekopyschology Society

Romania - Pro Conventia Carpatica Association and UNESCO Pro-Natura

Serbia - Young Researchers of Serbia

Slovakia – REC Slovakia

Ukraine - Green Dossier

Overall co-ordination: ANPED

The full reports and results from the consultation process in each countries are available upon request.

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