



Public Participation within the framework of the Carpathian Convention

Recommendations prepared by ANPED

Introduction

This document draws upon the previous work and the experience of ANPED and its members and partners. This document aims to highlight key issues and recommend future steps for the second Conference of Parties of the Carpathian Convention.

Rationale

The Carpathian Convention states, in its Article 13, that :

1. The Parties shall pursue policies aiming at increasing environmental awareness and improving access of the public to information on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and promoting related education curricula and programmes.

2. The Parties shall pursue policies guaranteeing public participation in decision-making relating to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and the implementation of this Convention.

This presents an opportunity and a challenge. To achieve these goals the Convention will need to establish a mechanism to inform and involve civil society in its on-going work and decision-making.

Recommendations for action were set out in the Decisions from the First Conference of Parties. Some requirements have been met, whilst in other areas, there is work to be done.

Proposals for Future Activities

ANPED offers its knowledge and experience to advise what could be done and propose actions. To be effective this work would need to address the role and contribution of several sectors :

- Governments and National Focal Points,
- Interim Secretariat (and any future Permanent Secretariat)
- NGOs and civil society
- Local and Regional government
- Private Sector
- Research and other institutions

Some proposed activities are indicated :

International level with the co-operation of UNEP ISCC / Permanent Secretariat

- Support for the Secretariat to continue and develop activities to inform, consult and involve stakeholders and agencies in the work and processes of the Convention
- Consider and develop an appropriate Public Participation strategy
- Short summaries of key document in National languages
- Practical support for the role of Observers

National Level with the co-operation of the Governments and Focal points

- Support for the National Focal Points to develop activities to inform, consult and involve stakeholders in the national requirements and activities of the Convention
- Establish a network of informed organisations that can, in co-operation with the Focal Point, promote and distribute information within each country about the Convention
- Support and capacity building for the National Focal Point to develop public participation activities

National and Regional level with co-operation from Civil Society

- Support and capacity building for Observers and stakeholders, to be able to understand the processes of the Convention and contribute in useful and appropriate ways
- Prepare and promote guidelines for public participation for stakeholders and agencies
- Prepare and promote examples of good practice in public participation regulation and operation
- Continue and develop outreach activities at informal events and activities across the Carpathian region

These are activities which ANPED proposes it can now initiate and support for public participation for the Convention Carpathian.

We are aware that several other NGOs and organisations are undertaking activities which inform and involve a range of stakeholders in the Carpathian Convention. We welcome and encourage this, and hope to continue co-operation with them.

Also we appreciate the support and advice received from the Aarhus Secretariat, and we welcome their on-going advice for the proposed activities for the Carpathian Convention.

Recommendations for the Second Conference of Parties

- We invite and welcome UNEP ISCC to consider ways they can support and develop the above proposed activities on public participation across the Carpathian region.
- We invite and welcome the Parties to consider ways they can support and develop the above proposed activities on public participation at the national level, within each country.
- We welcome the continued co-operation with the Aarhus Secretariat, to benefit from their expertise and advice, particularly in their Public Participation in International Forums Taskforce. We believe this co-operation will encourage the above proposed activities and work of the Carpathian Convention is based upon the Aarhus principles and supports the Almaty Guidelines.

ANPED Members and Partners

This document draws the previous work and experience of ANPED and its 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 and Polish Green Net

Romania - Pro Conventia Carpatica Association and UNESCO Pro-Natura

Serbia - Young Researchers of Serbia

Slovakia – REC Slovakia and SOSNA

Ukraine - Green Dossier