

Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) and its contribution to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in 2007

Introduction

Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) is a network of member organizations from all the seven Carpathian countries working towards its vision to achieve the long-term conservation of the unique nature of the globally important Carpathian Mountains, while supporting its economy and culture for the lasting benefit of people through international partnership. CERI's mission is to promote international cooperation, to support and coordinate activities relevant for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Carpathian region and thus to contribute to the long-term objective being to provide a Carpathian-wide network to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable development within the framework of Carpathian Convention.

The members of CERI share the same objective and recognize that each member alone cannot achieve this objective. The members of CERI have therefore have formed CERI to help them work together to achieve this shared objective in recognition that the collaboration will achieve more than the sum of all the individual efforts by the members.

The activities of the CERI network in 2007 were a baseline towards the tasks the network has set for the next five years (2008 – 2012), which will be a building bricks built on the principles of the Carpathian Convention. During the period 2008 – 2012, CERI will have led the design and development of a robust ecological framework for a Living Carpathians and supported and inspired its implementation in all seven Carpathian Countries.

A Living Carpathians is a region where natural and socio-economic processes flow harmonically, where human society planning its development takes into account interests of wild nature, where interests of humans are considered not only from economic profit point of view, but its ecological requirements are taken into attention in equal measure.

The objectives for CERI are, to built a network:

- a Convention Network
The CERI will have contributed and influenced the achievement of a strong, focused Carpathian Convention. The Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.
- a Network for Sustainable Development
The CERI network will support sustainable development in the Carpathians linking it always to the creation of a Living Carpathians.
- a Scientific Network
CERI is the recognized first-stop regional source of data and information and the centre of expertise for biodiversity and biodiversity conservation in the Carpathians.
- a Network Support
The CERI membership is an effective and efficient organization with the capacity to deliver on its objectives through its „5C“ approach providing support and equal opportunities to all its members.

Activities in 2007

Through the funding from the on-going projects aimed at the building Carpathian Biodiversity Information System and a design of a Carpathian Ecological Network, CERI was supporting several international and regional treaties in 2007 (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity, PEBLDS, Natura 2000, Pan-European Ecological Network, Ramsar Convention, Carpathian Convention, Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, Carpathian Wetland Initiative) and processes e.g. „Environment for Europe“. However, the strongest link is established with the Carpathian Convention. The activities supporting implementation of the Carpathian Convention address the following issues, which are described in detail below:

- Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape diversity
- Building Carpathian Biodiversity Information System and the design of the Carpathian Ecological Network
- Steering Committee to the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA)
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWA)
- 2012 PAP project (WWF DCP)

Based on the Decisions of the COP 1 to the Carpathian Convention (11-13 December 2006, Kiev) CERI was appointed to be an observer to the process of the activities of the Working Group on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. One of the main tasks of the Working Group is to finalize and negotiate the Protocol on Conservation of Biological and Landscape Diversity (“Biodiversity Protocol”) to the Carpathian Convention. Thus CERI participated at 1st and 2nd Meeting of the Working Group on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, as well as at the Meeting of the Extended Bureau of the Carpathian Convention, held 17-18 October 2007 in Vienna.

The 1st meeting was held 26-27 March 2007 in Vienna. The agenda of the meeting included also the inputs from the BBI Matra Project which were presented by Project Director Jan Seffer and head of the Work Group on Ecological Network Design Mike Baltzer. Jan Seffer introduced the components of the project and explained the work on the Carpathian Biodiversity Information System. The Meeting agreed that the outputs of the project could potentially become a part of the annexes of the draft “Biodiversity Protocol”. Mike Baltzer focused on details linked to the concept and approaches to develop the Carpathian Ecological Network, being an interactive map with zonation and management recommendations, a comprehensive management tool for the governments.

The 2nd meeting was held 1—21 November 2007 in Budapest. The objective of the meeting, as recommended by the Extended Bureau of the Carpathian Convention, was to finalize the draft of the “Biodiversity Protocol”, to be proposed for the approval by COP2. CERI delivered comments to the draft of the Protocol and suggested two Annexes – Carpathian Red List of Habitats and Carpathian Red List of Species. CERI’s ongoing projects funded by the Dutch Government (BBI-Matra) and Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) as well as its overall expertise for biodiversity research and conservation in the Carpathians enable to deliver to this issue. CERI also strongly supported the idea of the work on the draft of the Strategic Action Plan for implementation of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of

Biological and Landscape diversity to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, to be done in parallel run with the work on the Protocol.

The gathering of the data on biodiversity of the Carpathian territory in Ukraine, Serbia and Romania in 2007 under the BBI-Matra project enabled to enrich the Carpathian Biodiversity Information system by the following number of entries:

Summary of CBIS (status in March 2008)

| | items in list | number of orounits | gis layers | old CBIS |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Alliances | 143 | 3847 | 74 | 2927 |
| Plants | 202 | 2030 | 9 | 1150 |
| Animals | 182 | 6728 | 25 | 12876 |
| TOTAL | 527 | 12605 | 108 | 16953 |

References in CBIS

| | Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------|
| Vegetation | 23 | 20 | 17 | 60 |
| Plants | 42 | 12 | 0 | 54 |
| Animals | 7 | 52 | 54 | 113 |
| water | 0 | 28 | 9 | 37 |
| abiota | 0 | 8 | 14 | 22 |
| maps and geodata | 22 | 8 | 10 | 40 |
| TOTAL | 94 | 128 | 104 | |
| existing databasess | 0 | 7 | 1 | |

Alliances

| | all alliances | alliances with annex I codes | alliances with annex I codes-priority |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Romania | 89 | 74 | 33 |
| Serbia | 43 | 32 | 11 |
| Ukraine | 108 | 82 | 31 |
| TOTAL | 143 | 111 | 43 |

| Number of orographic units | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 1534 | 242 | 2319 | 3847 |

| Number of GIS layers | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 32 | 11 | 31 | 74 |

Plants

| Number of species in the List of Plants | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | all species | annexII species | priority species |
| Romania | 165 | 31 | 3 |
| Serbia | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| Ukraine | 101 | 16 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 202 | 36 | 3 |

| Number of orographic units | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 1427 | 27 | 736 | 2030 |

| Number of GIS layers | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 9 |

Animals

| | all species | | | focal species | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | total | annexII species | priority species | total | annexII species | priority species |
| Romania | 151 | 96 | 11 | 68 | 13 | 5 |
| Serbia | 99 | 53 | 8 | 55 | 9 | 4 |
| Ukraine | 117 | 62 | 6 | 68 | 13 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 182 | 106 | 13 | 90 | 14 | 6 |

| Number of orographic units | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 3843 | 560 | 2640 | 6728 |

| Number of GIS layers | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|-------|
| Romania | Serbia | Ukraine | TOTAL |
| 10 | 8 | 7 | 25 |

The work on the design of a Carpathian Ecological Network in 2007 was focused on the following activities:

- Collation of threat and opportunity data

The main activity during this period has been the collection and collation of the situational data required to provide the context for building the ecological network. This data is being collected to create an information base on the threats and opportunities for achieving the conservation targets in the Carpathians.

- Data confirmation

In December 2007, members and experts of the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative (CERI) met in Brasov, Romania. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss threats and pressures for

Carpathian EcoRegion based on the maps of all the data collated on the threats and opportunities. These maps were prepared in the preceding weeks and printed in time for the meeting. During the meeting, the experts broke out into national teams. Each team then scanned and examined the maps for missing data and inaccuracies. Information from the experts was compiled and discussed by the Work Package team and was collected by Irene Bouwma of Alterra. Irene Bouwma then made arrangements for the GIS work required to amend the data and prepare more accurate and complete information base. Based on the revision of these maps a new set of maps shall be finalized to be ready for target setting meeting in April 2008. These maps shall be 1×1 km, 1:200000 scale.

- Steps to improve Ukrainian land-cover map

In order to supplement the general collection of the data mentioned above, a number of sub-contracts have been made to collect and analyze specific pieces of vital data and information. Data is particularly lacking in Ukraine. Therefore cooperation with Humboldt University team working on this issue was established.

Another important set of data is the location of Natura 2000 sites. As protected areas supported by the European Union, Natura 2000 sites represent an increased feasibility of successful conservation and therefore will represent the key places for conservation opportunity within the Carpathian EcoRegion.

Through the activities of the projects on the Carpathian Ecological Network, CERI is also an observer to the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of the Protected Areas (CNPA), a thematic network of mountain protected areas in the Carpathian region, established by the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention 1/14. CERI participated at the Meeting of the Working Group on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, 26-27 March 2007, Vienna, the agenda of which was also the Draft Terms of Reference for the CNPA. The draft was submitted for consideration and approval of COP1 Bureau/Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. During the reporting period CERI supported also the activities linked to creation of CNPA identity and network of Protected Area managers and supporters.

CERI's ongoing work on the Carpathian Ecological Network supports the Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI), which aims to operate as a Regional Initiative within the framework of the Ramsar Convention. The CWI facilitates collaboration between the Ramsar Convention and the Carpathian Convention after the Memorandum of Cooperation between the two Conventions was signed on 13 December 2006 in Kyiv. The Draft Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Wetland Initiative was also discussed during the already mentioned meeting of the Working Group on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, 26-27 March 2007, Vienna.

CERI is the member of the Steering Group to the 2012 Protected Areas Programme – the Carpathian Mountain Region. The objectives of the project is to establish a mechanism to drive, support and coordinate the implementation of the PoWPA's, ensure that Carpathian Protected Areas are supported by a network of skilled professional practitioners, increase participation of key stakeholders, ensure that critical gaps in the Protected Area network are filled and improve capacity for the valuation of Protected Area goods and services and for cross-sectoral planning for effective management and benefit realization as well as increase public awareness. The main elements of the 1st meeting agenda were to define the structure of the Carpathian Clearing House Mechanism – main themes, to draft the structure of the

CHM and discuss the issues of languages, hosting and administration etc. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the issues of the Matra BBI project and meet further potential co-workers from the Carpathian region (Romania, Serbia, Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine). At the 2nd meeting, held 22-23 November 2007 in Budapest, CERI contributed to the Clearing House Mechanism, the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool, the CNPA logo and the Training Needs Assessment, discussion on the Scorecard developed by WWF International, project baseline data and the communication and advocacy strategy, further to discuss the work plan for 2008, EUROPARC Federation/CNPA Annual Conference in Romania, 24-28 September 2008 and the 9th COP to CBD.

Contribution to the program of the COP 2 to the Carpathian Convention

The Management Team of the ongoing BBI-Matra project „Development of a Carpathian Ecological Network“ – Strengthening the Capacities of the Carpathian Eco-Region Network (CERI) in supporting the implementation of the Carpathian Convention is very pleased to organize a side event to the COP 2 to the Carpathian Convention, 17-19 June 2008 in Bucharest. The agenda would include presentation of the achievements in the frame of the ongoing projects leading to the building of Carpathian Biodiversity Information System and a design of a Carpathian Ecological Network. It would also include the project Steering Committee Meeting. Members of the Steering Committee are the National Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention of the three project countries: Ukraine, Serbia and Romania, ECNC representant, further Mr Harald Egerer (Interim Secretariat of CC), Mr Jan Seffer (Chair of the CERI) and Mr Henk Zingstra (International Programme Manager). The meeting would be open for other participants as well. Estimated time: 2 hours

Summary

The on-going projects significantly contribute to strengthening of organisational structure and capacities of the CERI to support the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and to support and monitor sustainable development in the Carpathians.

The Development of Carpathian Biodiversity Information System (CBIS) will be the most tangible output of the project as an indispensable tool for the development of the Ecological Network.

A clearing house mechanism will be developed to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation both nationally and internationally. Full access to information will be available to organisations which will significantly contribute to the CBIS, including the CERI members and governmental organisations responsible for nature conservation in the Carpathian countries.

The capacities of the CERI network will be strengthened through providing training and supporting the elaboration of a long term strategy for the organization.