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CEEWEB SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

STATEMENT ON THE CARPATHIAN TOURISM STRATEGY

We the members¹ of the STWG of CEEweb having a meeting at Kiralyret, Hungary on 9th November 2012, would like to address the following points to the focal points of the Carpathian Convention:

1. Taking note of the current draft Carpathian Tourism Strategy elaborated during the second meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism in May 2008.
2. Taking note of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism adopted at the 3rd COP in May 2011 in Bratislava.
3. In the light of these two documents, the STWG of CEEweb would like to emphasize the following topics to be taken into consideration, while drafting, adopting and implementing the Carpathian Tourism Strategy:
 - When dealing with tourism development in the Carpathians, governments in charge should consider a larger **territory**, than currently considered in the Convention as proposed geographical scope (for marketing purposes and product development).
 - It is necessary to elaborate a **common strategic view** of tourism development in the Carpathians based on the existing natural and cultural values and the limitations of their sustainable use.
 - **Cultural heritage** of the Carpathians and the **Carpathian identity** should be maintained and further enhanced in the context of tourism development.
 - Tourism in the Carpathians should mean that the Carpathian **biodiversity, ecosystems** functions and services should be maintained considering the **carrying capacity** of the territory as fundament for long-term planning of sustainable tourism development.
 - Cooperation and **exchange of experiences** should be enhanced between the Alpine and the Carpathian Convention countries and stakeholders in order to increase understanding on common tools and methodologies applicable to the Carpathians and in order to learn from the lessons.
 - Governments involved in the Carpathian Convention should prioritize **transboundary cooperation** with their neighboring countries in order to implement the Carpathian Tourism Strategy.

¹ Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine

- The regional tourism agencies should advocate for the inclusion of activities under the Carpathian Tourism Strategy into their **regional development strategies** and **innovation programmes** in order to reach the Objective 2² of Carpathian Tourism Strategy.
- Beside of National Tourism Agencies, the **regional tourism agencies** as well as other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, private sector) should be involved, which are acting within the Carpathian range for developing the Tourism Strategy.
- For developing and implementing the Carpathian Tourism Strategy an **expert platform** should be established consisting of institutions dealing with tourism in the Carpathians.
- The Carpathians represent with its multi-diverse culture and nature the last wilderness in the centre of Europe, which provides a unique **competitive advantage** compared to other mountain regions. The Carpathian Tourism Strategy should fully integrate this unique selling proposition when drafting the marketing strategy.
- A Carpathian-wide **tourism marketing scheme** has to be supported by a set of sustainability criteria and indicators leading to a certification of tourism goods and services.
- The Carpathian Tourism Strategy should incorporate activities on enhancing **green infrastructure**³ development throughout the Carpathians.
- Countries of the Carpathians should allocate realistic **financial resources** for implementing the Carpathian Tourism Strategy. This financial allocation should be seen as an investment producing much higher revenues if the Carpathian Tourism Strategy is implemented effectively.
- Monitoring tourism development and the carrying capacity of the concerned territory should be done on the **landscape level**, and should not be limited to protected areas only.

- The Carpathian Tourism Strategy should serve as a **good example** to be followed e.g. by the Balkans when developing a common tourism strategy for trans-boundary mountain regions.

² Objective 2 of the current draft of Carpathian Tourism Strategy reads as „*Developing an innovative tourism management at all levels, fully integrating the needs of local populations and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage*”

³ Green infrastructure in this case is defined as e.g. investment in public transport, renewable energies, local supply of building material.