



## **9<sup>th</sup> Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Transport**

**1-2 April 2019, Budapest, Hungary**

### **MEETING REPORT**

#### **Item 1: Opening of the WG meeting, adoption of the Agenda and tour de table**

Ms. Eleonora Musco, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (SCC)-Eurac Research opened the meeting together with Mr. Csaba Mezei, Secretary General of CEEweb for Biodiversity, host of the meeting. Ms. Musco presented the agenda, which was adopted by the working group members with the inclusion of a presentation of Ukraine during the second day. A tour de table was then held.

#### **Item 2: Introduction to the main objectives of the WG meeting, link to the TRANSGREEN Project and timeframe**

Ms. Musco provided participants with a brief overview on past activities, achieved results and the planned way forward in the field of Sustainable Transport within the Carpathian Convention and the link to the EU Danube Transnational Project (DTP) TRANSGREEN-Integrated Transport and Green Infrastructure Planning in the Danube-Carpathian Region for the Benefit of People and Nature.

At the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4), held in Mikulov, Czech Republic in September 2014, the Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Carpathian Convention was adopted. The Protocol entered into force on 14 January 2019, following the ratification by Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Decision COP5/9 para 2. of the Fifth Conference of the Parties recommends “the Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Infrastructure, Industry and Energy (hereinafter WG Transport) with support of the TRANSGREEN project, to develop a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for fostering the implementation of the Transport Protocol, invites other Working Groups and relevant stakeholders to support the process”.

The Transport SAP started to be elaborated during the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Transport and further developed within a joint Carpathian Convention Working Group meeting (transport, biodiversity, spatial planning), which was held back to back to the TRANSGREEN Mid-Term Conference in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 5-6 September 2018. In case of consensus among the Carpathian Convention Countries, the Transport SAP is expected to be adopted at COP6 in 2020 in Poland.



Ms. Hildegard Meyer, WWF Danube Carpathian Programme (DCP), lead partner of the TRANSGREEN Project, gave an overview of the Project, presenting its outline, policy context, highlights so far, pilot areas, links to the Carpathian Convention activities, and next steps. Furthermore, she better explained the link between the project activities and outputs (like the State-of-the-art Report, In-depth analyses and catalogue of measures of specific pilot areas, and Guidelines on Integrated Transport Developments) and the development of the Carpathian Convention Sustainable Transport Action Plan. Finally, Ms. Hildegard Meyer informed participants about TRANSGREEN Final Conference, to be held in Bucharest, Romania on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019, under the EU and EUSDR Romania Presidency. She gave a short overview of the agenda, the status of invitations and confirmations by contributors. The link to the registration is: <http://transgreen-register.com/>. Carpathian Convention experts were invited to contribute to the panel discussions and workshops.

### **Item 3: Presentation of the draft Guidelines on Integrated Transport Development of the TRANSGREEN project and discussion**

Mr. Václav Hlaváč, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, presented the final version of the Guidelines on Integrated Transport Development, developed within the TRANSGREEN Project. Transport infrastructure and traffic itself are among the most important threats to wildlife. To prevent and to diminish these threats and pressures on nature, the guidelines are an easy understandable and generally accepted basis for discussion for biologists, architects, planners, officials and decision makers. Carpathian Convention experts had the chance to comment the guidelines and get their comments integrated. So far, TRANSGREEN partners are working on the document proofreading, layout and translations in Carpathian languages.

### **Item 4: Brainstorming on the Transport Strategic Action Plan (SAP): Presentation of countries comments**

As highlighted at the WG opening, one of the main objectives of the meeting was the discussion about the possible development of a Transport SAP, implementing the Sustainable Transport Protocol to the Carpathian Convention.

Mr. Filippo Favilli and Mr. Federico Cavallaro, Eurac Research, chaired the sessions focused on the Transport SAP brainstorming.

The first part of the brainstorming sessions was focused on the presentation of the Status of the Transport SAP development and comments received by the Carpathian Countries experts to the second draft.



As agreed at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Transport Working Group, at the TRANSGREEN Mid-term Conference and at the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, the Transport SAP is planned to mirror the achievements of the TRANSGREEN project, which are relevant for political decision-making. Based on this assumption, the Action Plan was developed to delineate the roadmap to integrate transport issues into other topics such as spatial planning and wildlife conservation, highlighting the main issues of international cooperation for moving from national views to a Carpathians-wide one, using the experience of regional authorities and local stakeholders. The Action Plan is also connecting the Protocol's articles with the TRANSGREEN results and it highlights the potential contributions of the project activities to the definition of the concrete actions on the ground.

During the discussion phase, Mr. Favilli and Mr. Cavallaro presented all the comments received to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft and replied to each of them, to explain the work done towards the development of the third draft.

During the session, countries raised some main issues on the content, procedure and responsibilities. It was clarified that, the Transport SAP is planned to be developed within the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Transport but, if necessary and requested by its cross-sectoral aspects, joint meetings of the Biodiversity, Transport and Spatial Planning WGs will be organized. The Lead Partner of the EU Project ConnectGREEN, WWF Romania, mentioned that the project might support the organization of a joint meeting of the different Working Groups in Autumn 2019. Once there is a final agreed draft of the Transport SAP, it's responsibility of the Carpathian Convention National Focal points to share it with involved and responsible Ministries to get the green light for its final adoption at the Conference of the Parties. Indeed, the key role for the implementation of the Convention between the COP meetings is played by the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) <sup>1</sup>- a subsidiary body established by COP1, pursuant to COP Rule 21 in correspondence with Article 14 paragraph 2-point e and Article 16 of the Convention. The CCIC consists of National Focal Points to the Convention.

Contrary to the Convention and its thematic protocols, such strategic action plans (SAPs) or strategies are not legal acts binding the Parties, therefore do not require the signature and ratification - such documents are adopted by a decision of the Conference of the Parties. Implementation of international strategic action plans or strategies depends mainly on the current priorities of the Parties to the Protocol, and the availability of financial resources for carrying out activities determined in these documents. Upon the expiry of the validity period, based on implementation progress evaluation and current common priorities of the Parties, a subsequent SAP or strategy can be adopted for the next planning period.

An international strategic action plan, common to all Parties, cannot, for obvious reasons, consider the realities and priorities of, or progress made by any individual country but can be

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<sup>1</sup> The CCIC meets at least once a year, and its task include preparation of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, monitoring the progress and recommending activities towards the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, recommending the adoption of additional protocols and strategies, as well as the preparation of the next COP meetings.



a useful guidance instrument to develop National Action Plan. Therefore, each country in its own interest, and for its internal planning needs, should elaborate its own National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Protocol. National action plans should be approved by the competent authority of the central government.

It was agreed that a short-term Transport SAP with few, but concrete and feasible actions is better than having a longer and too ambitious Transport SAP.

Countries requested to clearly add information about the process of adoption and explain the link of the Transport SAP to the Carpathian projects in the document preamble/introduction, in order to have clear indication once reporting back to the Ministries. Furthermore, countries suggested to modify the title of the Transport SAP to better clarify its purpose (see 4<sup>th</sup> Draft of the Transport SAP).

#### **Item 5: Brainstorming on the Transport SAP: presentation of the third draft and country feedbacks**

Mr. Favilli and Mr. Cavallaro opened the session, aimed at presenting the third draft of the Transport SAP, developed according to comments and inputs of the Countries.

Before this, Ukraine made a statement confirming the relevance and coherence of the Transport SAP focus with the transport policies of the country. It was then highlighted the high strategic importance of developing a grounded financial/ resources component within the SAP, which will be developed as soon as the objectives are finalised. Finally, for Ukraine, the Transport SAP is considered another strategic document towards the integration process.

Based on the countries request, Ms. Hildegard Meyer, WWF Danube Carpathian Programme (DCP), made a presentation on the EU DTP ConnectGREEN project-Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin, and its planned outputs:

- methodology for identification of ecological corridors;
- state of the Art report on the exiting planning systems and their application for ecological corridor identification and management;
- GAP analysis report on the identification of the needs for improving the planning processes and tools;
- set of recommendations developed together with spatial planners to avoid/minimise fragmentation of ecological corridors and Natura 200 sites;
- ecological connectivity related database under the CCIBIS;
- maps with the distribution of target species, core areas, ecological corridors and critical barrier sites in each pilot areas;
- strategy on the identification, preservation and management of eco-corridors, to be developed within the Carpathian Convention Biodiversity WG.

The Secretariat clarified that the Carpathian Countries supported the development of ConnectGREEN project from the very beginning, through discussions within relevant Working Group meetings, adopted COP Decisions and participation as Associated Strategic Partners



within the project. The Secretariat will be involved in the project through a subcontract made by the lead partner, to carry out project related policy activities.

After the presentation of the ConnectGREEN project, Mr. Favilli and Mr. Cavallaro presented the third draft of the Transport SAP, developed according to comments and inputs of the Countries, in order to collect further feedbacks.

Some main points were raised by national experts:

-Once developing the Transport SAP component on “financing/resources and responsibilities” it would be important to refer to national institutions and agencies competent for nature conservation and transportation, which would be then responsible for developing activities;

- Some actions will be achieved until the adoption of the Transport SAP so it is suggested to delete them;

- Common definitions are important for a mutual understanding. It is suggested to share a document of definitions, which are based on EU definitions, Carpathian Convention Sustainable Transport Protocol’s definitions or on the ones developed under the EU DTP TRANSGREEN and ConnectGREEN projects (to be adopted by COP6)

-It is suggested to refer to the Biodiversity Action Plan of the Carpathian Convention since some actions of the Transport SAP might be cited already there;

-Another joint meeting of the Transport, Biodiversity and Spatial Planning WGs is welcomed, in order to finalise the Transport SAP and agree on next steps. The cross-sectoral aspects of the Transport SAP are requesting a cooperation among several Ministries sharing responsibilities, which requires new approaches/ mechanisms at national level.

#### **Item 6: Brainstorming on the Transport SAP: discussion for finalizing the SAP “actions”**

Moderated by Mr. Favilli and Mr. Cavallaro, countries went through the Transport SAP Actions and worked on their modifications, according to the discussions held in the previous sessions.

#### **Item7: Brainstorming on the Transport SAP: discussion on “expected results”, “responsibilities”, “resources”, “monitoring”**

Due to the time required for the discussion on Transport SAP’s objectives and the specific actions, it was not possible to work on their related “expected results”, “responsibilities”, “resources”, “monitoring”. This will be done through online email consultation and, if needed, at the next Carpathian Convention Transport Working Group.

#### **Item 8 and 9: Summary and Next steps**



Participants agreed that the SCC will circulate the fourth draft of the Transport Strategic Action Plan, developed with the support of Eurac Research, integrating comments collected during the WG meeting. This draft will be also shared with CCIC members for further consideration. In case necessary, a joint meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups on Biodiversity, Transport and Spatial Planning will be held, in consultation and possible cooperation with the ConnectGREEN project partners.

#### **Item 10: Closure of the meeting**

The meeting was closed by the Secretariat.