

Joint Session of the Carpathian Convention and the Centrum GRID/Warsaw



The session offered a review of Carpathian projects and initiatives dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity, ecological, traditional land use, spatial management and sustainable local development.

The session mainly focused on the results of projects of the following projects:

- a) LIFE *Green-Go! Local initiatives for deployment of green infrastructure within Natura 2000 sites in the Carpathians* (LIFE16 GIE/PL/000648 - implemented by UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre);
- b) brief review of other selected Carpathian initiatives implemented by UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre under the common “Carpathians Unite” mission;
- c) ConnectGREEN – (implemented/coordinated by WWF Romania, co-financed within INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme);
- d) TransGREEN – (implemented/coordinated by WWF CEE, co-financed within INTERREG Danube Transnational);
- e) SaveGREEN - (implemented/coordinated by WWF CEE, co-financed within INTERREG Danube Transnational);
- f) Central Parks - (implemented/coordinated by EURAC Research , co-financed within INTERREG Central Programme);

After delivering presentations, the participants were invited to **break-out group discussions** on possible synergies, transfer, replication and dissemination of the outputs and results of the above initiatives throughout the Carpathian region and their incorporation into the process of implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its relevant thematic Protocols.

MINUTES from BREAKOUT GROUPS

1. Biodiversity, spatial planning, land use, landscape management

- Carpathian Convention as a possible Platform for utilizing results of various projects.

- One of ideas (to ensure compatibility across borders) would be e.g. elaborating of a uniform methodology for ecological corridors identification. That would “put the puzzle pieces together”;
- To ensure complementarity across projects, such complementarity should be addressed early, e.g. at project design stage;
- Carpathians do have their networks and initiatives, e.g. CNPA or CWI – however, how to provide conservation and proper management of areas outside and between CNPA/CWI sites and other protected areas?
- Pan-Carpathian Information System needed as a “hub” for the multitude of project results/outputs/data; involving national authorities to share and exchange data related to INSPIRE
- Carpathian Strategy development [should include the above topics of harmonizing and dissemination of project results];
- Before CC, the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative as an attempt to harmonize efforts on the pan-Carpathian scale;
- Currently, CC Working Groups have proven to be quite effective, although more horizontal, interdisciplinary liaisons needed.
- CC is not a panacea for all detailed activities, it cannot cover everything. Hence, the stakeholders themselves need stake out and take charge/control over more specific foci.
- Research / expert involvement: difficult, since researchers are being evaluated based on their specialized scientific activity and publications, hence it’s not easy to make the research results practical, for example / at least through more user-friendly review articles or publications.
- Case studies and best practices are a valuable tool – they “travel” more effectively and are easier to be absorbed and received by other stakeholders / counterparts more eagerly than manuals, strategies, or scientific data.
- We should focus on results, not source data used to produce those results (on the other hand: valuable data themselves are project results).
- If we talk about barriers for wildlife, we should consider social barriers as well.
- As a follow up, a revision of the Atlas of the Carpathian Macro-region or KEO or Status Report by CERI should be put into a new Status report on the Carpathian Region in 2025.
- In a nutshell, the cooperation should be on science and tools, capacity building including e-learning, cross-sectoral cooperation in order to reduce conflicts of nature conservation and spatial planning and transport infrastructure development.

2. ESD – education, awareness, public involvement

- Role of leaders, champions, etc. – individuals bringing many stakeholders together.
- Communication strategies – or at least messages – should be well tailored, planned and addressed to appropriate target groups.

Currently, there seems to be no common communication strategy for the Convention

- Would it work to have a common strategy, or would it need to be adapted for each country?
 - Perhaps, the strategy can be prepared as main advice points, and can be used in each country based on the national context and needs
- It is unclear for CC network members, what target groups they should address in their communication
 - Do the communication tools used reach the relevant target groups?
 - How can groups, who are not yet interested or informed about CC activities, be reached?
 - To which extent do we draw on the knowledge of local groups and citizen knowledge?

- To-date, there is limited involvement of local action and citizen groups, due to a number of barriers
- We can make an impact by focusing on communication with the local stakeholders
- Local decision makers can benefit from the knowledge of the Convention and its project results, and the networks' activities
- What are the Carpathian specifics in these processes? What knowledge can the Carpathian Convention contribute to the international community?
- There is a need to establish a co-production and exchange process between the project partners, local stakeholders and other target groups, general population, and decision-makers.
 - For example, there are good examples of citizen science, participatory action research in the Carpathians. They are not widely known in the CC networks, and Focal Points or the Secretariat are not always aware of them. How can better networking help to share such examples?
 - FYI, There was a call after FC 2021 for S4C to integrate more action research, participatory approaches, and citizen science, it is integrated into the recommendations into the research agenda
- What could ESD experts contribute to solving the above-mentioned challenges?
 - They could help identify target groups
 - Tools for enhancing communication and participation, and participatory integration and co-production of knowledge
 - Participatory research on perception and acceptance
 - Links with educational projects and institutions
 - Sharing information across projects
- Practical questions: 1) which information to communicate, 2) to whom and 3) How?

