



**Carpathian Convention Working Groups
on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity
and on Spatial Development**

**First Joint Meeting¹
22 - 24 October 2014, Kluszkowce, Poland**

DRAFT MEETING REPORT

Opening of the meeting

The head of the UNEP Vienna Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna Office – SCC), Mr. Harald Egerer together with Mr. Zbigniew Niewiadomski, UNEP/GRID Warsaw and Ms. Monika Ochwat - Marcinkiewicz, Ekopsychologia Association as representatives of the meeting organizers, opened the meeting and welcomed the meeting participants.

Introductory presentations

Following the opening of the meeting, the round of introductory presentations took place starting with the overview of the Carpathians Unite project – mechanism of consultation and cooperation for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention presented by Ms. Monika Ochwat – Marcinkiewicz and followed by the explanation of the reasons for selecting Pieniny mountains as the meeting venue, and aims of the first ever joint meeting of the two CC Working Groups, which was done by Zbigniew Niewiadomski. Next, Mr. Harald Egerer delivered a presentation on the Carpathian Convention and its main activities with a special focus on biodiversity and spatial planning/development.

Presentation of case studies

Next session of the meeting was devoted to the case studies from the Carpathians involving interesting discussion about problematic issues in the region.

¹ co-organized by UNEP Vienna – ISCC, Ekopsychologia Association and UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre within the project “Carpathians Unite – mechanism of consultation and cooperation for implementation of the Carpathian Convention”, supported by Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union.



The presentation by Ms. Ewelina Zajac, Pieniny National Park on the role of spatial planning in protection of biodiversity and landscape values, taking as example the Pieniny region, began a discussion on conflicts between local communities and the PA authorities resulting from contrary interests. In order to deal with these problems, some recommendations were given such as: rising people's awareness on landscape protection as an necessity for saving landscape values; national legislation should integrate nature and landscape related issues into spatial development planning policies; introduction of a common landscape policy for the entire Carpathians. Furthermore, it was underlined that a strong transboundary cooperation and compatible legislation are crucial for an effective protection of biodiversity and landscape values.

An Important issue is also ecological continuity and connectivity in spatial planning, since even developments outside buffer zones of protected areas can have influence on ecological corridors, which are inside PA.

Presentation of relevant EU legislation, approaches and relevant programmes

Next, Ms. Monika Rusztecka, UNEP/GRID Warsaw, presented the progress made in drafting the "Carpathian Code of Good Practice in Spatial Planning" which is being developed by the Polish Working Group on Spatial Planning working under the Carpathians Unite project. The Code could possibly help as a set of non-binding recommendations and inspiring positive case studies, which could be voluntarily adopted and used by spatial planners/spatial planning authorities. The main objective of the "Code" is to enhance the ecological continuity/connectivity and protection of cultural landscapes. Even though, the Code is focused on Polish Carpathians, it could be used as a good example for other Carpathian countries and could be a basis for one comprehensive Code of Good Practices in Spatial Planning for all the Parties, taking into account different problems, cases and solutions from the region.

In the following, Mr. Vaclav Hlavac, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, delivered a presentation on ecological connectivity and spatial planning in the Carpathians stressing the necessity of protection of migration corridors in spatial planning, especially currently when building of new transport infrastructure, growing intensity of traffic and spreading of new development are progressing fast.

Mr. Andreas Beckmann, WWF DCP, gave a presentation on improving the ecological connectivity in the Carpathians presenting at the same time two important projects for the Carpathians - the BioREGIO Carpathians project and the Alpine – Carpathian Corridor project. During the following discussion it was stressed that, in most of the cases, there is a



lack of political will to make transport projects consider biodiversity in a proper and sufficient way, as well as the value of ecological services in constantly underestimated.

Further, Ms. Monika Rusztecka presented the INSPIRE Directive as an instrument providing access to spatial data for sustainable spatial planning in the Carpathians giving also an example of development of spatial data infrastructure for Karkonosze, transboundary area shared by the Czech Republic and Poland, “Karkonosze in the INSPIRE – common GIS for the nature protection” project. Then Mr. Maciej Borsa, TUP, SGH, delivered a presentation on differences between spatial planning and spatial development, stressing that access to data is a basis for policy makers, planners and society.

Discussion

After the round of presentations, a discussion on possible synergies and proposed joint activities, which can be undertaken by the two Working Groups, took place. The meeting participants discussed five main issues related to spatial development/planning and biodiversity such as: eco-connectivity, landscapes, transboundary cooperation on planning, incorporation of the Protocol on Biodiversity into spatial planning and spatial planning/development tools.

Regarding eco-connectivity, Mr. Beckmann briefly presented a concept of a project idea “I-ECONNECTICS” which focuses on activities related to linear transport infrastructure development while maintaining and/or restoring ecological connectivity in the Carpathian Region, asking the meeting participants for their inputs and comments to the concept based on their national experiences and needs.

While discussing the transboundary cooperation on spatial planning, the importance of spatial planning system on the local level was emphasized. There is a need of identification of differences and similarities, as well as common understanding of the article 5 of the Carpathian Convention on what spatial planning is, amongst Carpathian countries. Furthermore, few actions which should improve cooperation on spatial planning between the parties were proposed, such as: development of a Carpathian Indicators of spatial planning, development of an inventory of spatial documents and coverage (a tool for that could be INSPIRE), development of an inventory on source of funding, development of a transboundary best practice and code, as well as a transboundary project on development of harmonized spatial plans for selected border communities of neighboring Parties, adjacent to each other across the state border (pilot studies) with diversification of financial sources to support project’s implementation.



However, one of the main essential actions to be undertaken is making information on spatial planning available for people and raising awareness on the issue by trainings on spatial planning data preparation, which could be done in collaboration with EEA (SEIS).

The meeting participants emphasized the need of good communication between the Carpathian Convention Working Groups and exchange of information/ best practices, which could be done with a support of the Secretariat.

It was also suggested to invite the WG on Sustainable Transport for the next meeting of the Joint WG on Biodiversity and WG on Spatial Development. The meeting suggested as well to prepare a table of upcoming parliamentary elections in the Carpathian countries. The table is annexed to the report.

Closure of the meeting

Mr. Harald Egerer closed the meeting and thanked the participants for their active contribution to the discussion.



ANNEX

Parliamentary elections in the Carpathian countries :

Country	Last elections	Next elections -according to the national law - should take place in :
Czech Republic	24 – 25 May 2014	Before/in 2017
Hungary	6 April 2014	2019
Poland	9 October 2011	October 2015
Romania	9 December 2012	December 2016
Serbia	16 March 2014	2018
Slovak Republic	10 March 2012	2016
Ukraine	26 October 2014	2019