Minutes of the Workshop on the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into National Law

Vienna
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12 – 13 December 2016

Partners:

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MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TO THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION INTO NATIONAL LAW

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EDITORS:
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Michael Meyer

1. Attendance

The Workshop on the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into National Law was attended by governmental delegates of five out of seven Carpathian Countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine), NGOs, as well as tourism experts and observers.

22 participants from the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Germany, Hungary, Lichtenstein, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

2. Opening of the Meeting

The opening remarks were made by Mr. Harald Egerer, UNEP Vienna Office – SCC, who stressed the importance of implementing sustainable tourism in the Carpathians. Mr. Egerer pointed out the substantial progress on tourism in the Carpathian Convention, which has been made thanks to the commitment of the Parties and stakeholders and the continuous financial support of the German government.

Then, Mr. Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E), welcomed the participants. He thanked the representatives of the five Carpathian countries for their attendance. He pointed out that the essence of the workshop was to move forward with the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into national law in each of the countries. He forwarded greetings of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation for a successful workshop.

3. Content

3.1. Presentation on the assessment of National Tourism Strategies in the Carpathians
(Ms. Agnes Zolyomi, CEEweb)

Ms. Agnes Zolyomi, CEEweb, gave a presentation on the analysis of the sustainable Strategy of National Tourism Strategies in each of the seven Carpathian countries with the view on integrating biodiversity conservation concerns. She pointed out that all of the seven National Tourism Strategies refer to sustainability but that there is a lack of concrete steps concerning targets, financing, and monitoring.

After the presentation Mr. Meyer reminded participants that there is a background document to the Strategy with the recommendation to look at the CEEweb assessment methodology. Future tasks could be to go through national tourism strategies and look at

their focus – it would be possible to complete the methodology and integrate e.g. cultural heritage and sustainable infrastructure.

Mr. Egerer pointed out that the Carpathians are only a small part in some of the countries and asked whether countries have different strategies for different regions.

Ms. Zolyomi replied that there is only one Strategy in each country.

Mr. Meyer added that Serbia has a very good Master Plan with the emphasis on mountain areas. He stressed that it is crucial to implement the Sustainable Tourism Strategy all over the country, not only in one part. There are many items in the Strategy that can be applied to the entire country.

Mr. Ivan Liptuga, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ukraine, asked if CEEweb Strategy corresponded with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from UNWTO. Since countries have to implement the SDGs into national law as well, it would be good if they had the same framework.

Mr. Meyer explained that at the time the Strategy was developed, it was the time of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), not that of the SDGs. However, the SDGs are in line with the MDGs and also included in the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians. Hence, if countries implemented the Strategy, they would implement the SDGs and MDGs at the same time.

Ms. Tamara Mifrofanenko, UNEP Vienna Office – SCC, asked whether there were initiatives of national governments of the Carpathian countries to inform locals about the Strategy.

Mr. Meyer referred to Poland where the Strategy and Protocol were translated into Polish language and there were discussions about it with stakeholders. The documents were communicated to the four Polish provinces.

3.2. EEA work on Tourism: Building 'Tourism and environment reporting mechanism"
(Mr. Andreas Littkopf, EEA-ETC/ULS)

Mr. Andreas Littkopf, EEA-ETC/ULS, presented the "Tourism and Environment Reporting Mechanism" (TOUERM) which aims to assess environmental impacts and sustainability trends of tourism in Europe. He concluded that tourism is an important sector for the European economies but also a major driving force determining pressures and impacts on the environment.

Mr. Meyer emphasised that the Carpathian countries want to contribute to minimizing the impacts of tourism on the environment. Currently there are experts working on Carpathian-specific indicators (about 20 indicators) for sustainable tourism. The first step would be to apply indicators to all of the seven countries to gather data which are comparable. The

final goal would be to achieve international comparability. UNWTO and EEA are part of the Carpathian expert team to develop indicators that allow the comparison of sustainable tourism around the world. These indicators would go far beyond tourism satellite accounts (TSA) which are part of economic statistics.

3.3. Discussion on the content of the National Reporting Format for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism
(Mr. Michael Meyer, ÖTE)

Ms. Klaudia Kuras, Vienna Office – SCC, informed the participants about possibility to reconsider format of the National Report on the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism, since the Secretariat was informed by the Parties about difficulties in completing the National Report on Biodiversity Protocol, which follows the same format as the Report on Tourism Protocol. Therefore, she suggested to possibly circulate the current Report Format to the WG Tourism asking for feedback in the light of future finalization of the document.

Mr. Meyer suggested to even go one step further back. One of the recommendations of the Tourism Strategy is to establish National Tourism Task Forces (NTTFs) which most countries have done. Another recommendation in this Strategy is that NTTFs to report back to the WG Tourism. In order to prevent the creation of too many reports, Mr. Meyer had the idea to combine them – the report of the NTTFs could also be used on the international level.

Mr. Olivér Fodor, Hungarian Tourism Agency, agreed that an easy reporting format would be beneficial and that it would be good to use the same report on the national and international level.

Mr. Meyer pointed out that the Terms of References (ToRs) of the three centres that have been established in Poland, Romania, and Ukraine state that the centres should help the seven countries in reporting and establishing the NTTFs. Mr. Meyer added that the best way would be to sign the agreement first and then work on the reporting format. He also addressed the SCC with the question, whether it would be feasible to have a different reporting format than the other protocols have.

Ms. Kuras replied that the reporting format can be different, if it is useful for the WG Tourism and does not create additional work for the WG Tourism and SCC.

Mr. Littkopf raised the question whether there are indicators included in the Report.

Mr. Meyer replied that currently indicators are not included in the report. However, the plan is that the three CSTCs should agree on a set of indicators.

3.4. Presentation of the joint proposal of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Coordination Platform and opening of discussion
(Harald Egerer, UNEP)

Mr. Egerer gave a presentation on the Joint proposal of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP), its vision, added value, as well as institutional and legal arrangements. He stressed that the aim of the CSTP is to promote the intensive cooperation of the tourism sector actors from all the Carpathian countries in implementation of the tasks listed in the Strategy through an active network of relevant partners.

A discussion took place after the presentation on a possible agreement between the centres and SCC, which should be followed up with before the next meeting of WG Tourism.

3.5. Presentation on the implementation of the Tourism Protocol under the Convention on the Protection of the Alps
(Wolfger Mayrhofer, Secretariat of the Alpine Convention)

Mr. Wolfger Mayrhofer, Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Austria, gave a presentation on the legal arrangements of the Alpine Convention. He said that the Carpathian Convention and the Alpine Convention were very similar concerning the legal basis. Furthermore, he stressed that there were no sanctions if the Protocol of the Alpine Convention was not implemented by countries. He concluded that compliance procedures allow the detection of shortcomings in the implementation of the Protocol and that the implementation is still a work in progress.

Mr. Ginkul raised the question of who had signed the Protocol of the Alpine Convention and how it was led.

Mr. Mayrhofer replied that the Protocol was signed by all Alpine state and that Italy was the leader in charge at that point.

3.6. Challenges and opportunities of Alpine tourism in the light of the Alpine Convention
(Mr. Christian Baumgartner, CIPRA International)

Mr. Christian Baumgartner, CIPRA International, Lichtenstein, talked about the practical implementation of the Alpine Convention. He stressed that it was important for the Tourism WG of the Alpine Convention to have a clear mandate and procedures. He concluded that a common Strategy was missing among the Alpine countries since there were only national strategies.

Mr. Meyer added that it is not possible to compare the Protocols of the Carpathian and Alpine Convention. Since the Alpine Protocol was elaborated two decades ago it had a

different texture than the Carpathian Protocol. He pointed out that countries learned a lot over the two decades and that the Carpathian Protocol was written with respect to the new developments.

Mr. Zolyomi asked how CIRPA International was involved in meetings of the Alpine Convention.

Mr. Baumgartner explained that CIPRA International started out by working together with schools and then developed a youth parliament which is involved in the meetings and also presents to the ministry.

Mr. Meyer raised the question whether there are frequent reports on tourism of the Parties.

Mr. Marhofer replied that there was an in depth report on the implementation of the Protocol every ten years. This report also focussed on the lacks within the Protocol.

Mr. Meyer raised the concern that Alpine countries would not know from their neighbouring countries how they were implementing the Protocol. Furthermore, he asked why they had reports every ten years only, while the CBD reported back every four years.

Mr. Mayrhofer explained that countries answered questions on the status quo of implementation and effectiveness and that they received the information from neighbouring countries. Furthermore, he said that in the beginning countries reported every four years but that changes were so small that it did not make sense to report that often. That is why they were now focusing on the in depth report every ten years.

Mr. Meyer addressed the issue that they had applied for four projects concerning “Via Carpathica” over the past eight years and that they had all been rejected by the European Commission. He stressed that extensive resources were used for the proposals and that good consortia with many stakeholders had been involved. Hence, it would be beneficial if the Carpathian Convention and the Alpine Convention work together to apply for projects concerning “Via Carpahtica”. He stressed that this would be a much better chance for the Carpathians to receive funding for such projects.

Mr. Baumgartner emphasized that they would be definitely willing to cooperate. He was already thinking about how to establish a closer link between the two mountain areas.

Mr. Meyer concluded that since participants at this meeting are supporting this idea, this would be a good point to discuss the support for “Via Carpathica” more closely in the near future.

3.7. Presentation of national legal experts / national focal points on the status quo of implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Meyer asked the countries to report on the status quo of implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism.

Mr. Octavian Arsene, National Authority for Tourism, Romania, stressed that the Romanian Environment Ministry was responsible to implement the Protocol and that there had been legislations to do so since 2014. In order to prevent having too many legislations Romania took their legislations on mountains, which includes many actions on agriculture, tourism, and culture, and tried to combine it with the Carpathian Strategy. However, since they had elections the week before a new government was elected. He already sent a letter to the government asking whether the Strategy could be included in the existing legislation on mountains. Furthermore, the centre in Brasov had already been established. As far as the agreement was concerned, he did not know whether Romania could sign it at that point because of the new government.

Ms. Delila Dolmagic, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Serbia, explained that there had not happened much in Serbia over the last months. Since they had elections and a new government was in charge at that point they now had amendments to the tourism law. She stressed that the Carpathian region in Serbia only constituted a small part but that the Ministry of Environment had a Tourism Development Strategy until 2025.

Mr. Biedrzycki reported that the NTTF, consisting of 30 people, had been established in Poland the previous year. Furthermore, Poland was on the way to implement the Strategy and their tourism organisation was implementing projects in the Carpathians. Moreover, they had the plan to develop local tourism products in the Carpathians. Also the Ministry of Agriculture was planning to establish a programme on holiday on farms in Poland. Yet, Mr. Biedrzycki mentioned that the main focus of the government at that moment was not sustainability but safety in tourism.

Ms. Orsolya Deme, Hungarian Tourism Agency, Hungary, explained that Hungary is not a mountain country but that it could represent a transit country for joint projects. She said that high schools should take part in the projects.

Mr. Liptuga explained that there had been changes in the structure of governmental authorities in the Ukraine since the approval of the Protocol in 2013. The Ministry of Economics had taken over the tourism department. The Tourism office had only been established in September 2015. However, they were now working on the approval of the Protocol by Parliament so that they can sign the agreement and start activities. He pointed out that the National Tourism Organisation had been established two weeks ago. He explained further that due to the political structure it was easier for them to work through NGOs. As soon as they have a response from the Ministries they will get back to the SCC. The Ukraine hopes to play an important role in achieving sustainable tourism in the Carpathians.

Mr. Meyer thanked the participants for the presentations and stressed that he was happy to see all the progress and commitment. He highlighted that Romania was even including

the Strategy into their national legislation. He concluded that countries were moving ahead substantially.

3.8. Discussion round on possible actions of the seven Parties to the Carpathian Convention concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Meyer started the discussion by stressing that some changes needed to be made in the Memorandum of Understanding, which was discussed between Poland, Romania and Ukraine during the evening on 12th December and further on in the morning session on 13th December: "EWS" will be replaced by "National Tourism Organisation of Ukraine". Furthermore, the rotation of leadership should be mentioned in the text of the agreement, not only in the Annex. If the countries would like additional changes they should send them to the SSC. The agreement would then be signed by the SCC, the National Tourism Authority (Romania), the Carpathian Euroregion (Poland), and the National Tourism Organisation (Ukraine). He added that they should work fast on the international level because they missed already two calls for proposals; two calls are still ahead so they could make it if they work quickly.

Mr. Ginkul raised the question if the steering committee of the four parties would be included. Furthermore, he raised the concern that a consensus by all four signatories would be difficult to achieve. Hence, he suggested that ETE could join as fifths party and then decisions could be taken on the basis of a 2/3 majority voting.

Mr. Egerer explained that they would put all elements into the MoU/agreement but would try to make it as informal as possible. He also suggested sticking to the consensus principle as long as only three centres are established. Once more centres join they could think about majority voting.

Mr. Meyer agreed and said that ETE is an organisation which is not located in the Carpathians and hence would not be eligible to sign the MoU/agreement.

4. The next steps

Mr. Liptuga suggested setting the deadline for agreeing on the text of the MoU/agreement by the end of January 2017. The SCC should circulate the draft text possibly before Christmas holidays, so that the potential signatories have suitable time to consult the draft in their countries.

Mr. Ginkul proposed to hold the Tourism WG meeting in Ushgorod, Ukraine, before the end of February 2017.

Mr. Egerer replied that Poland proposed to host the meeting but the dates are not yet confirmed.

5. Closure of the meeting

The workshop was closed with remarks from Mr. Egerer and Mr. Meyer on December 13, 2016. They both thanked the participants for the good participation and the progress that had been made.

Annex I

List of Participants

	Last Name, First Name	Institution	Country:
1.	**Andra**, Marius	Ministry of Economy	Romania
2.	**Arsene**, Octavian	National Authority for Tourism	Romania
3.	**Baumgartner**, Dr. Christian	CIPRA International	Lichtenstein
4.	**Biedrzycki,** Karol	Ministry of Sport and Tourism	Poland
5.	**Deme**, Orsolya	Hungarian Tourism Agency	Hungary
6.	**Dolmagic**, Dalila	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	Serbia
7.	**Egerer,** Harald	Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Austria
8.	**Fodor**, Olivér	Hungarian Tourism Agency	Hungary
9.	**Ginkul**, Andriy	Ukraine Active and Eco Tourism Association	Ukraine
10.	**Koßmann**, Christina	Ökologischer Tourismus in Europa (Ö.T.E) e.V. (Ecological Tourism in Europe, ETE)	Germany
11.	**Kuras,** Klaudia	Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Austria
12.	**Liptuga**, Ivan	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Ukraine
13.	**Littkopf**, Andreas	Environment Agency Austria / European Environmental Agency	Austria
14.	**Mayrhofer**, Wolfger	Secretariat of the Alpine Convention	Austria

	Last Name, First Name	Institution	Country:
15.	**Meyer**, Michael	Ökologischer Tourismus in Europa (Ö.T.E.) e.V. (Ecological Tourism in Europe, ETE)	Germany
16.	**Musco,** Eleonora	Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Austria
17.	**Pridun**, Anna	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Ukraine
18.	**Rossberg,** Max	European Wilderness Society	Austria
19.	**Voloshyn**, Valentyn	European Wilderness Society	Ukraine
20.	**Zolyomi**, Agnes	CEEweb for Biodiversity	Hungary
21.	**Popovich,** Vitaliy	Transcarpathian Business Association	Ukraine
22.	**Mifrofanenko,** Tamara	Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Austria

Annex II

Final Agenda

Workshop on the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into National Law

12 – 13 December 2016, Vienna, Austria

Monday, 12 December 2016

13:00-13:30 Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks by the UNEP Vienna – SCC and Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E.)

13:30-14:00 Presentation on the assessment of National Tourism Strategies in the Carpathians (Agnes Zolyomi, CEEweb)

14:00-14:30 EEA work on Tourism: Building 'Tourism and environment reporting mechanism " (Andreas Littkopf, EEA-ETC/ULS)

14:30-15:30 Discussion on the content of the National Reporting Format for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break

16:00-17:00 Presentation of the joint proposal of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Coordination Platform and opening of discussion

Tuesday, 13 December 2016

09:00-10:00 Experience from the Alps

- Presentation on the implementation of the Tourism Protocol under the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Wolfger Mayrhofer, Sec. of the Alpine Convention)
- Challenges and opportunities of Alpine tourism in the light of the Alpine Convention (Christian Baumgartner, CIPRA International)

10:00-11:00 Presentation of national legal experts / national focal points on the status quo of implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

11:00-11:45 Discussion round on possible actions of the seven Parties to the Carpathian Convention concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

11:45-12:00 Linking the Alpine and Carpathian Mountains: possible joint projects on tourism and overview of funding opportunities

12:00-12:30 Summary of the discussion and the next steps

12:30 Closure of the meeting