



Dear Madam, dear Sir, dear Colleagues and Friends of the Carpathians

The **European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy** (Competence Centre Macro Regions and European Territorial Cooperation) and the **Presidency of the Carpathian Convention (2014 – 2017)**, represented by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic are pleased to invite you to the

EXPERT WORKSHOP

MACRO REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND MOUNTAIN DIMENSION

From the Carpathian Convention to other European Mountain ranges, prospects, challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation

To be held in Brussels on 25th November 2015, from 9:30 to 17:00

At the Centre Albert Borschette, Rue Froissart 36, Brussels

The concept explaining the objectives of the meeting and preliminary agenda are annexed

Please confirm your participation by email to the following address: REGIO-EU-DANUBE-STRATEGY@ec.europa.eu by 10th November 2015



Foto: František Jaskula, Protected Landscape Area Beskydy, Czech Republic



Ministry of the Environment
of the Czech Republic

Brussels, 25th November 2015

EXPERT WORKSHOP

Mountain dimension in the Danube region, the case of the Carpathians. Challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation in mountain areas.

The Carpathians, Europe's largest range of mountains, extending over 450,000 KM², are an important biodiversity reservoir and a recreational and living ecosystem in the heart of Europe. In 2003 an international multilateral agreement – the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) was signed by seven countries (SK, CZ, HU, PL, RO, RS and UKR) and entered into force in 2006.

Despite requests having been addressed to the Commission on several occasions to consider the establishment of a macro-regional strategy for the Carpathians, there is a prevailing general view that setting up of a new Carpathian specific macro-regional strategy and its administrative and governance structure would not be cost and benefit effective, in light of the existence of both the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the Carpathian Convention. International cooperation on sustainable development and protection of the Carpathians is already ongoing within the framework of the Carpathian Convention. With the exception of Polish Carpathians, the mountain range is located within the Danube Region. Thus strengthening synergies between the Carpathian Convention and EUSDR, avoiding overlaps and possibly including Poland as a partner of EUSDR on specific Carpathian related topics seem to be the most efficient way forward. Beside the better integration of the mountain issues into the EUSDR, it is also crucial to enhance the possibilities for inclusive transboundary cooperation of stakeholders from all the Carpathian countries in relevant financial instruments. The workshop will discuss on options in order to how best ensure a close cooperation, in particular through a **Danube - Carpathian collaboration mechanism**, as well as a **memorandum of understanding** which could be signed between the Carpathian Convention and the relevant priority areas of the Danube Strategy and its implementation overviewed by the Danube – Carpathian collaboration mechanism, with the support of the Danube Strategy Point. This would also facilitate the preparation of **high quality project ideas** to be submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) and other relevant EU co-funded Programmes (e.g. H2020, LIFE, Cosme), bearing in mind that there is currently no territorial funding programme covering the entire Carpathian region.

Due to the cross-cutting interest for sustainable development of mountain regions, this meeting gives the chance to discuss about **sustainable mountain development in Europe in a general way**. Therefore, **representatives of other territorial cooperation schemes and organisations from other European regions** (Alps, Dinaric arc, Balkans) are also invited to this meeting. A distinct session of the meeting, involving **stakeholders from regions and regional associations and civil society** will be dedicated to this topic.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

9:30 Registration

10:00

- Welcome by European Commission, UNEP and Carpathian Convention Presidency
- Agenda of the meeting (M. Wemaere, Attorney, expert in EU and International Affairs)

SESSION 1 Mountain dimension in the Danube region, the case of the Carpathians

10:15: Basis for Danube-Carpathian cooperation

- The EU Strategy for the Danube Region – on overview (M. Onida, DG REGIO)
- The Carpathians – Backbone of the Danube Region (Z. Tollrianová, Czech Ministry of the Environment – H. Egerer, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention)

10:45: Synergies between priority areas of the EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention: a mutually supportive Danube-Carpathian approach

- Inputs on relevant Priority Areas of EUSDR
- Input by Carpathian Convention Secretariat
- Discussion

12:00: Sharing information and implementing projects – Danube-Carpathian collaboration mechanism

- Presentation by European Commission and Carpathian Convention Secretariat
- Discussion

13:00-14:00 Lunch break

14:00 Draft Memorandum of Understanding between EUSDR and Carpathian Convention

- Presentation by the Danube Strategy Point (M. Vilfan)
- Discussion

SESSION 2: Challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation in mountain areas

15:00: Mountain dimension, cooperation and regional policy (macro regional strategies)

- Short introduction (DG REGIO)
- Presentation on EU relevant policies and instruments (DG CONNECT, DG AGRI, DG ENV)
- Transnational programmes and cross border programmes
- Examples of possible projects of common interest for mountain areas
- Discussion on cooperation on mountain-related issues

17:00 Conclusions and next steps

- **Wrap-up by the moderator**

Working language: English