

Annex 4 - Carpathian cultural heritage context

to the Background document for the re-drafting of the proposed Protocol on Carpathian Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

Based on excerpts from the "World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians" - Background document No 25 for the CC COP5.

In addition to the wealth of biological and landscape diversity, another distinctive feature and important asset of the Carpathian region is the rich **cultural heritage**, reflecting many centuries of human presence in the Carpathian mountains. The richness of local cultures in the region constituting a melting pot of Roman and Byzantine rites, developed from interactions and exchanges between various nations and ethnic groups, including Vlach shepherds who migrated and settled along the range between the 13th and 17th century.

Today, this cultural diversity is **increasingly threatened** due to changing social and economic conditions, migration, and globalization. In particular, the depopulation of rural areas has aggravated the loss of traditional land management, agricultural practices, arts, crafts and occupations. Some of the open landscapes and semi-natural habitats, in particular those of mountain pastures used throughout the past centuries for traditional shepherding, are seriously threatened due to the spontaneous forest succession.

The population of the Carpathian region accounts for some 18 million people, the prevailing part of which inhabits small towns and mountain villages. The distribution of the population is uneven throughout the region, and the socio-economic conditions vary among the different countries. The local economies, often based on forestry and small-scale agriculture, can no longer provide enough workplaces to keep the younger generations in the region, if not supplemented by the services sector, in particular tourism-related services. Fortunately, the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathians constitute **assets for sustainable tourism development**, and determine the unique tourist attractiveness of the region. Many treasures of cultural heritage of the Carpathian region have not yet been discovered by tourism, which determines an enormous potential for the development of culture tourism in the near future.

The Carpathians indeed have many heritage-related 'unique selling points'. These include different objects of the Carpathian **tangible cultural heritage**, such as historic castles, towns and towns centers, sacral and secular buildings, and historical monuments.



Spišský Hrad castle

Photo: Pierre Bona / Wikimedia Commons



Spišská Kapitula

Photo: Pierre Bona / Wikimedia Commons



Banská Štiavnica in autumn

Photo: Ralle7 / Wikimedia Commons

Most attractive for the visitors are the objects of **wooden folk architecture**, following traditional design patterns typical for particular sub-regions of the Carpathians. The vast majority of these objects can still be seen in their original place of construction.



Vlkolínec

Photo: Sebastian Mierzwa / Wikimedia Commons



Hollókő, main street

Photo: Batomi / Wikimedia Commons

Some other historic buildings are to be seen in **ethnographic parks and open-air museums** of traditional wooden folk architecture (being important tourist attractions themselves), quite common in the region, e.g. in the Wallachian Open Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm (Czech Republic), the Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok, the Orava Ethnographic Park Museum in Zubrzyca Górna, the Sądecki Ethnographic Park and the Galician Town in Nowy Sącz (Poland), Skanzen Vychylovka - Museum of Kysuce Village, and the Open-air Museum of Liptov Village in Pribylina (Slovakia), or the Museum of Folk Architecture, Art and Life in Uzhgorod (Ukraine).

Wooden temples of great historical and aesthetic values are probably the best known and most typical manifestation of the Carpathian cultural heritage, probably the most valuable contribution of the region to the treasury of world art.



Bârsana - Church of the Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple (1720)

Photo: Luminita / Wikimedia Commons



Haczów (1459)

Photo: Lucekbb / Wikimedia Commons



Kwiatoń (17th century)

Photo: Krzysztof Suszkiewicz / Wikimedia Commons

Despite that a large number of historic buildings disappeared forever in the conflagration of the two world wars, the Carpathians region still harbours several hundred wooden temples of different rites. Very few of them are inscribed to the **World Heritage List** (14 objects in the Polish part of the Carpathians, further nine in Slovakia, eight in Romania and eight in Ukraine).



Chotyniec (1615)

Photo: Paweł Mazurkiewicz / Wikimedia Commons



Uzhok (1745)

Photo: Elke Wetzig / Wikimedia Commons



Turzańsk (1801-1803)

Photo: Ewa Szewczyk / Wikimedia Commons

This is neither much, nor enough, as e.g. only the Polish part of the Carpathian region encompasses as many as 278 Roman Catholic and Evangelical **wooden churches**, plus over 160 Greek Catholic and Orthodox **wooden 'tserkvas'**. The Slovak part of the Carpathian region harbours 38 wooden Greek Catholic tserkvas (incl. three on the World Heritage List), eleven wooden Roman Catholic churches (two already on the World Heritage List), six wooden Evangelic churches (three on the World Heritage List) and four wooden Orthodox tserkvas. The Tentative List by Hungary includes the wooden churches of the northern part of the Carpathian Basin.

Some other wooden churches had also been nominated by respective Parties, but failed to meet the World Heritage criteria for inscription (but, could still gain the international recognition by their inclusion to the planned Carpathian Cultural Heritage Inventory). Most of these wooden temples can be visited, as valuable elements of thematic cultural tourist trails and routes (e.g. trails of wooden architecture or icons).

An important element of the tangible cultural heritage of the Carpathians, determining their tourist attractiveness, are the **cultural landscapes**. Some of them include well-preserved historical urban and rural architectural arrangements, other are the result of traditional agricultural land-use and land management patterns, e.g. mountain pastoralism practices, common throughout the region in past centuries.



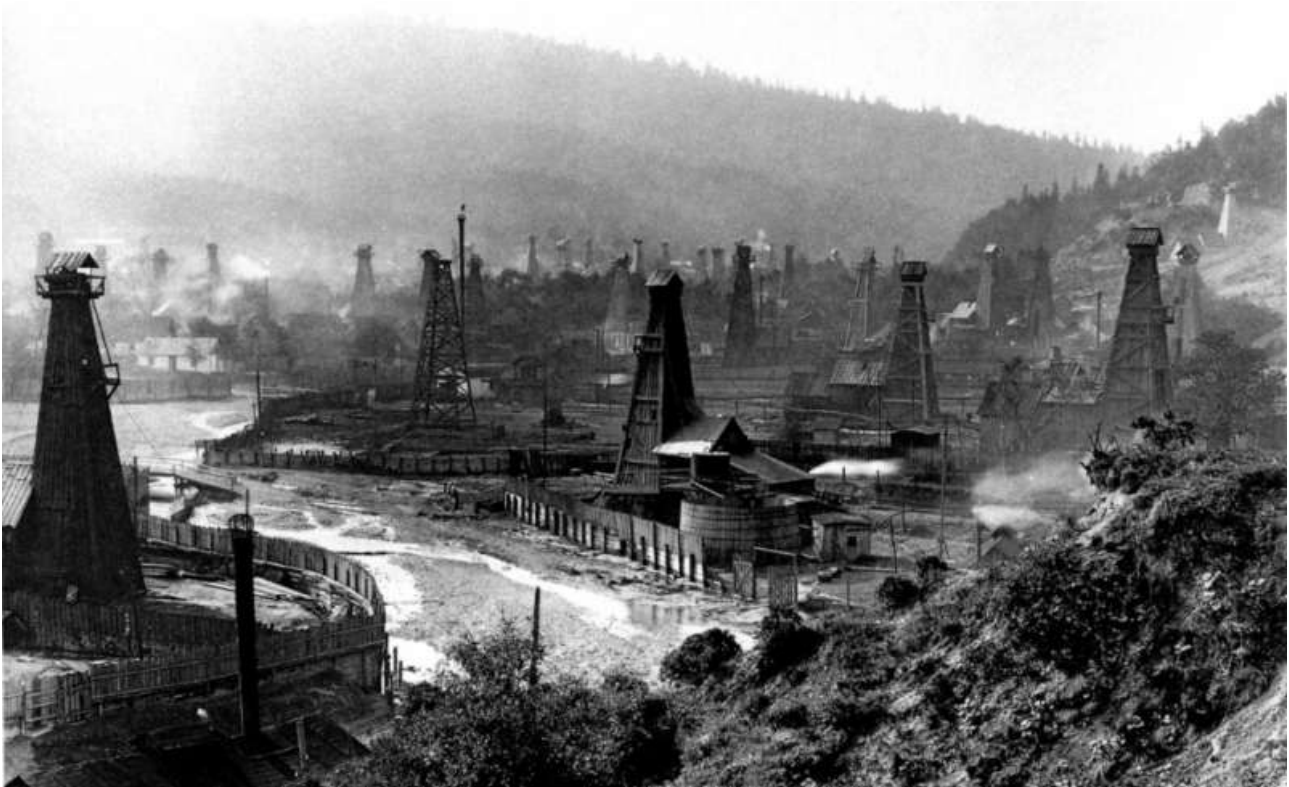
Rural landscape of Transylvania

Photo: ©Zbigniew Niewiadomski

The 'tangible' category includes also other elements of cultural heritage, quite attractive for the tourists, related to traditional crafts and vanishing occupations, in particular **products of local traditional arts and handicrafts**, as well as **traditional local agricultural and regional cuisine products**.

Carpathian **intangible cultural heritage** includes beliefs, representations, practices, rituals, ceremonies, expressions, traditional knowledge, skills, dialects and cants, music, oral and dance traditions, as well as the accessories, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith. This cultural and spiritual heritage not only provides the sense of identity and continuity for the local communities inhabiting the Carpathians, but is also another source of tourist attractiveness of this region. Visitors are attracted to different folk **festivities and celebrations** (e.g. related to Easter and Christmas traditions, traditional weddings, sheep round-up events), as well as traditional **folk music, song and dance festivals**, reflecting the whole diversity of cultures of many nations and ethnic groups inhabiting this mountain region.

Almost unknown in the world (and still untapped for the marketing of the Carpathian cultural heritage) is that the Carpathians are the original cradle of the **oil mining and refining industry**, currently one of the most important sectors of the global economy (which also allowed the development of two other large global industries, so much dependent on the combustion engine - aviation and automotive industry).



Crude oil drilling towers in Borislav, one of the former centres of the world's oil industry

Photo: © R. Nater / Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

In the 19th century this region became one of the centres of the world's oil industry (in 1909 the annual oil extraction in the Carpathians exceeded two million tons). The boom in the oil industry created demand for timber (for the construction of drilling towers, wells, pipelines, tanks and barrels), which transportation from the Carpathian forests required the development of a dense network of narrow gauge forest trains.

Mountain **narrow gauge forest trains and railway networks**, some of them preserved by the law as historical monuments but still in operation, are another great tourist attraction of the Carpathian region, of immense potential for sustainable culture tourism development. In the first half of the 20th century the narrow gauge forest railway network in the Carpathians accounted for some ten thousand kilometres of track, and accounted for some 10% of the whole railway network in the region.

Nowadays, the few remaining narrow gauge railways which are still in service, in particular those which continue to use the steam locomotives, are the famous flagship tourist products in respective sub-regions of the Carpathians, attracting tourists from other countries and continents (e.g. Japan). The best known and most frequently visited are Čiernohorská railway in Čierny Balog (Slovakia), Vișeu de Sus (Romania), Bieszczady Forest Railway in Cisna-Majdan (Poland), as well as eight narrow gauge lines in Hungary (in Nagybörzsöny, Kémence, Királyrét, Gyöngyös, Felsőtárkány, Szilvásvárad, Miskolc and Pálháza).



Vișeu de Sus narrow gauge railway, the last of the Carpathian forestry railways in Romania

Photo: CFF Vișeu de Sus official website (<http://www.cffviseu.com/content/en>)

Some of the treasures of the Carpathian cultural heritage are already used for developing the tourist industry (in a quite sustainable manner) along **thematic tourist trails and routes**. Many thematic trails in the Carpathian region are building on the tangible cultural heritage, by highlighting traditional **wooden architecture, icons, the oil industry, traditional crafts, regional cuisine and local products**, each offering its own touristic appeal.

The **Wooden Architecture Route** in the Polish part of the Carpathians, developed since late 1990s, is primarily targeted at motorised tourism, mainly due to its significant length (over 1400 kilometres in the Małopolska Province, further 1202 km in the Podkarpackie Province, and another 113 km in the Silesian part of the Carpathian region). Several smaller routes in the Małopolska section link as many as 252 most valuable and interesting historical wooden objects (incl. 125 wooden churches, 49 'tservkas', 30 other buildings like old manors or bell towers, 23 groups of buildings, 16 museums and nine open air museums). The nine tourist routes of the Podkarpackie section link 127 wooden architecture objects, and the Silesian section includes 18 single objects and 6 regional museums. Only 14 out of several hundred of these wooden buildings are inscribed to the World Heritage List by UNESCO, while the vast majority of other historical monuments of traditional wooden architecture deserves inclusion to the planned Carpathian Cultural Heritage Inventory.

Some of the already existing thematic tourist trails and routes in the Carpathians have a **transboundary** character. The **Oil Industry Route** is linking Polish and Ukrainian parts of the Carpathian region, where the world's first oil mines and refineries were operating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the Museum of Petroleum and Gas Industry in Bóbrka (near the city of Krosno).

The transboundary **Gothic Route**, resulting from the common Polish-Slovak cooperation initiative, links numerous historical gothic monuments (including gothic castles and wooden churches) in the border regions of Poland and Slovakia (Podhale and Spisz/Spiš), many of them already inscribed to the World Heritage List by UNESCO.



Niedzica Castle in Poland, on the Gothic Route

Photo: Łukasz Śmigajewicz / Wikimedia Commons

Other transboundary thematic cultural heritage tourist trails in the Carpathians refer more to the **intangible heritage**, like e.g. literature. A perfect example here would be the transboundary tourist trail **On the tracks of Good Soldier Švejk**, linking as many as six countries of the region: Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine, referring to the famous novel by Jaroslav Hašek (*The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk During the World War*), which is the most translated novel of Czech literature, considered to be one of the first anti-war novels, predating Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Another trail linked with a famous writer (Aleksander Fredro Trail) links the Kamieniec Castle in Poland with Lviv in Ukraine.

Some other heritage trails refer to the ancient history of the region, e.g. the **Amber Trail** Greenways running from Budapest in Hungary through Banská Štiavnica in Slovakia, Krakow in Poland to the Baltic Sea coast, jointly developed by three independent NGOs operating in Poland (Fundacja Partnerstwo dla Środowiska), Slovakia (Nadacia Ekopolis) and Hungary (Okotárs Alapítvány). This cycling trail resembles the prehistoric trade route (from at least the sixteenth century BC) along which the Baltic amber (called "the gold of the North") was transferred to the Mediterranean and Middle East markets, including not only the relatively "young" Roman Empire, but also older civilizations in e.g. Egypt or Syria. This heritage trail, consisted of the international cycle trail and local thematic loops, links famous historical towns and UNESCO world heritage sites with spectacular rural landscapes rich in natural values, cultural tradition, colorful trade fairs, local handicrafts and delicious local cuisine.

But, fortunately, many other treasures of the Carpathian historical and cultural heritage are not yet broadly known to visitors, or heavily promoted. Fortunately - because such still have to be discovered !

Potential for sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians

Increasing popularity of travelling to mountain regions is one of the recent trends in the world tourism market. The reasons for the above can partly be explained by the process of urbanization, accelerating on the global level. Every day urban areas grow by almost 150 000 people, either due to migration or births. Between 2011 and 2050, the world's urban population was projected to rise by 72 % (i.e. from 3.6 billion to 6.3 billion) and the population share in urban areas from 52 % in 2011 to 67 % in 2050¹. People still move to urban areas in the hope of finding a better job and enjoying a higher standard of living. However, for several reasons, they prefer not to stay in cities for their vacations.

The European Union is already one of the most urbanised areas in the world. Today, according to Eurostat, more than 70% of Europe's citizens lives in urban areas, while the UN projects that by 2050 this share will reach 80%. Thus, this growing number of city-dwellers might be attracted to the clean air and water, pristine open landscapes, well preserved wildlife, vast mountain forests, local cultures and their products (incl. handicrafts, 'slow food' and regional traditional agricultural products), and the whole multitude of recreational opportunities that mountain destinations offer.

Other global trends in tourist markets, potentially advantageous for the Carpathians, are the shift from large hotels designed for group tourism to individual tourism, requiring smaller accommodation facilities (e.g. B&B, pensions and chalets) as well as the growing interest of tourists in nature, wildlife, rural areas and culture. This can help to generate awareness and support for conservation and local cultures. Moreover, it can create economic incentives for communities to protect natural and cultural resources, due to synergy effects between tourism, heritage conservation and rural development.

Several years ago it was estimated² that the actual Carpathian region (i.e. considering only those regions and counties that are geographically located in the mountain range) receives approximately 45 million overnight stays (including domestic and international travelers) in a year. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the Carpathians are expected to become one of the three most attractive European destinations, in particular for 'ecotourism', nature-based tourism, and culture tourism.

The outstanding natural and cultural features of the Carpathians are those which make this region "special" and worth a visit. Therefore, protection of cultural heritage of the Carpathians directly contributes to maintaining and building the tourist attractiveness of towns and municipalities in the region, and creating new jobs to handle tourist traffic. It is worth noting that tourism based on the cultural and natural heritage resources of the Carpathians can yield profits all year round, which could partially reduce the negative impact of the seasonality of tourist traffic during the winter season.

Sustainable tourism in the Carpathian Convention

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention the Parties shall take measures to promote sustainable tourism in the Carpathians, based on the exceptional nature, landscapes and cultural heritage of the Carpathians, providing benefits to the local people. The Parties committed to promote transboundary cooperation facilitating sustainable tourism development, e.g. on coordinated or joint management plans for transboundary or bordering protected areas, and other sites of touristic interest.

¹ International Electrotechnical Commission (2014) *Orchestrating infrastructure for sustainable Smart Cities. White Paper*. Geneva, Switzerland.

² Ecological Tourism in Europe - ETE (2014) *Background Document of the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism development of the Carpathians*

The provisions of Convention Article 9 were further enforced by the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism (Bratislava, 2011) to the Framework Carpathian Convention, which came into force in April 2013, and is already (since June 2017) in force for all Parties to the Convention.

Article 9.2 of the Protocol perceives the common natural, cultural, traditional and historical heritage of the Carpathians as specific Carpathian competitive advantages for sustainable tourism development. Other provisions of the Protocol aim at providing economic incentives for heritage preservation and promoting thematic cultural-heritage routes and trails, which can generate demand for tourist services and local employment also in the off-seasons.

Furthermore, pursuant to Article 17.3 of the Protocol, each Party shall encourage channeling part of the tourism revenues towards the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the local communities in the Carpathians, in particular for the preservation and revitalization of traditional architecture objects, traditional handicraft, land-use patterns, local breeds of domestic animals and cultivated plant varieties.

For more information on relevant provisions of the international law and strategic documents concerning the cultural heritage - please refer to Annex 1 on legal background

Recommended further reading

Cultural landscapes

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>

European Year of Cultural Heritage

https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/european-year-cultural-heritage_en

UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism/>

UNESCO World Heritage List

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit

<http://whc.unesco.org/sustainabletourismtoolkit/>

UN Environment, Vienna Programme Office - Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (2017) World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians. Background document No 25 for CC COP5.

http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/Implementation%20Committee/CCIC_Modra%202017/documents/Doc.%2025_World%20Heritage_Sustainable%20Tourism_Carpathians.pdf

UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme (*brochure*)

<http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-669-7.pdf>

UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme Action Plan 2013-2015

<http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-669-6.pdf>

World Heritage Convention (2014) Decision 38.COM/8A. Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties as of 15 April 2014, *in conformity with the Operational Guidelines*

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6085>

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/>

World Heritage Convention (2012) Decision 36.COM/5E. World Heritage Tourism Programme

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4613>

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2012/whc12-36com-5E-en.pdf>

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2012/whc12-36com-19e.pdf>