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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARPATHIANS**

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Item 3 of the provisional annotated agenda

Progress report on the implementation of Article 5 – *Spatial planning* of the Carpathian Convention

Report of the Secretariat

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to Conference of the Parties decision COP1/11 on ***Spatial planning – Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention*** and provides information on progress in the implementation of the decision.

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Background

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Convention, Parties shall pursue policies of spatial planning aimed at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, which shall take into account the specific ecological and socio-economic conditions in the Carpathians and their mountain ecosystems, and provide benefits to the local people. Paragraph 2 of Article 5 requests Parties to aim at coordinating spatial planning in bordering areas, through developing transboundary and/or regional spatial planning policies and programmes, enhancing and supporting cooperation between relevant regional and local institutions.

In its decision COP1/11, the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) welcomed the concrete contribution of the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO) to the Carpathian Convention process and the contribution of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) into the Carpathian Project, as an important source of support for the Carpathian Convention implementation process. Furthermore, COP1 decided to support the establishment of a Working Group on Spatial Planning under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, and requested the Secretariat to initiate cooperation with Europe's European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and to contribute to the work of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Spatial Planning.

Implementation

The Carpathian Project produced, inter alia, the following:

- Follow-up platform: It has the aim to be a standing follow-up platform for regions, local authorities and non-governmental organizations. The Carpathian Convention interim Secretariat provided the platform for the coordinated identification and drafting of possible spin-off and follow-up projects. Within this task the Secretariat also prepared lists of project ideas, assessed the future funding potential and gave recommendations for further action to be taken. Furthermore, the Secretariat supported project development and assessed funding and participation possibilities. This follow-up platform shall be further active also after finalization of the Carpathian Project in autumn 2008. It shall be an open platform, facilitated by UNEP Vienna ISCC, for consultation of project ideas and giving input on other topics or project ideas considered to be of importance for a sustainable development of the Carpathian Space. Thus, it shall strengthen common Carpathian Space-focused project idea development, idea-coordination and cooperation for and between Carpathian countries on this topic;
- VASICA (Vision and Strategies for the Carpathian Area) is a synthetic document, aiming at presenting the results of the other actions, constituting a strategic document formulating a Carpathian Spatial development vision. VASICA is based on the Carpathian Project's deliverables that provide a harmonized data basis and reflects findings on current situation, problems and challenges in different topics in the Carpathians. These deliverables are and will be used for further protocol development. To the Spatial Planning Work Group the deliverables supported by the Carpathian Project will further provide state-of-the art data, maps, documents and recommendation that provide a comprehensive basis for informed decision on spatial planning activities, comprising different sectors;
- Carpathian Atlas and databases – on topics such as: ethnic structure, religious structure, cultural landscapes, cultural heritage, population development, age structure, educational structure, employment, land use, tenure in agriculture, SMEs, tourism infrastructure, density of the transportation network, accessibility, natural hazards;
- Databases and GeoPortal on the Web for information and teaching purposes;
- Several sector analysis with recommendation (e.g. Cultural heritage, Socio-economic analysis, transport networks, water management and risk prevention, forestry and timber

industry, human settlement and an analysis of) were prepared under the overarching umbrella of the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision;

- National spatial development strategies and plans review;
- The KEO-Carpathian Environmental Outlook provides a profound overview and harmonized data on the environmental situation in the Carpathians;
- In six different, topic-related Working Groups findings and documents of the project were – together with new issues or project ideas discussed;
- Several pilot actions produced best practice examples that are compiled in documents and are disseminated via Handbooks and other communication channels.

Due to the required preparations of key documents resulting from the Carpathian Project's implementation, the Carpathian Convention Working Group could not meet prior to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) meeting. Therefore, the CCIC decided to organize the Working Group's work through a Carpathian Space Strategic Stakeholders Workshop on Spatial Planning, held in Vienna on 26 to 27 of May 2008.

Possible action to be taken by the Conference of the Parties

1. thanks the Carpathian Space Strategic Stakeholders Workshop on Spatial Planning for its work and report;
2. recommends the continuation of the activity of this Working Group, and urges Parties and other stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up and implementation of the recommendations produced by this Working Group;
3. welcomes the results of the Carpathian Project, in particular its contributions to integrate European spatial development policies with the management of the Carpathians' fragile ecosystem in a transnational context;
4. notes and welcomes the VASICA and its background documents as a strategic basis for the future sustainable development of the Carpathian region, including international, regional and transboundary cooperation;
5. calls upon spatial planning / development authorities of the Carpathian countries to continue the cooperation on issues relevant for spatial planning to achieve the territorial cohesion of the Carpathian region, including inputs and support to the development and implementation of relevant projects and the possible future establishment of a Carpathian Space Programme;
6. welcomes the Follow-up Platform established by the interim Secretariat as a useful tool for information-sharing and coordination of projects developed for application to European programmes or other relevant funding sources.