

Actions

In 2003, the Carpathian Convention was signed, calling for the development of coordinated spatial planning policies aiming at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. Actions under the project cover an area which has not been so far comprehensively examined by spatial factors and for which no consistent vision of sustainable development has been created.

The project will provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs, strengths, weaknesses and constraints of the Carpathian region and its people. It will analyze mountain constraints in the context of economic transition and European integration, and deliver strategies and best practices for development, building on the region's potentials while safeguarding its natural and cultural heritage. Elaborated strategies can be forged by the meetings of the **Intergovernmental Platform** into agreed policy instruments, such as thematic Protocols to the Carpathian Convention.

Without the thematic Protocols related to particular sectoral policies, the Carpathian Convention would remain only the "framework" for cooperation between the Convention's Parties, and

might have little influence on shaping the future of the Carpathian region.

Therefore, Carpathian Project will facilitate and contribute to the development of proposed Protocols to the Carpathian Convention, such as in the fields of biological and landscape diversity, sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development and related action plans. The Protocols and regional strategies will support the harmonized implementation of all relevant EU legislation and policies across EU borders, in particular the Natura 2000 network or the 6th Environmental Action Programme, through planning and management measures, as well as of other sector EU policies (Water Framework Directive, Trans-European Transport Networks) in the overall spirit of CEMAT.

The project generates a comprehensive data platform through preparation of the Carpathian Atlas and collection of environmental information, which will be consolidated in databases and made publicly accessible through the project website's GeoPortal.

A general strategic process produces multi-sectoral strategic environmental assessments and the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision.



Expected results and follow-up

1. The Carpathian Project will contribute to the implementation of the work programme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1 September 2005-31 August 2008.
2. The Carpathian Project will result in the improvement of the information base through the collection and systemizing of the presently scattered information on the Carpathian region, including environmental information. The transnational cooperation process and its outreach as well as information campaigns will strengthen regional implementation mechanisms for the future.
3. The Carpathian Project will create networks of partners aimed at cooperation and interaction in a long-time perspective.
4. Deepened analysis of key socio-economic sectors as well as the preparation of informal Strategic Environmental Assessments of those sectors will result in a Carpathian Spatial Development Vision and a Carpathian Environment Outlook. Results and experiences of pilot activities will provide the best practice examples for implementing the policy instruments.
5. Based on the generated comprehensive information base and strategies, appropriate policy instruments will be developed and agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Platform in a participatory process, in continuous interaction with local and regional stakeholders.
6. The Carpathian Project will develop proposals for follow-up investments, and concrete regional strategies and policies, to be endorsed by the Intergovernmental Platform.
7. The Carpathian Project will submit the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision to the Second Meeting Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP2) constituting the project's Intergovernmental Platform, which will launch the follow-up programme.

CarpathianProject

partners:

- UNEP Vienna ISCC, **Austria**
- RTI Polska, **Poland**
- Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Centre for Regional Studies, **Hungary**
- REC Slovakia, **Slovakia**
- Retecamere, **Italy**
- Podkarpackie region, **Poland**
- Prefecture Authority of Drama – Kavala – Xanthi, **Greece**
- University of Olomouc, **Czech Republic**
- UNEP GRID Warsaw, **Poland**
- WWF DCP, **Austria**
- Academia Istropolitana Bratislava, **Slovakia**
- Institute of Urban Development, **Poland**
- Institute of Spatial and Cadastral Systems, **Poland**
- ISF Muenchen (Social Research Institute), **Deutschland**
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Carpathianproject



Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework
 Promoted by the programme INTERREG III B/ CADSES of the European Union



The Carpathians are one of Europe's largest mountain ranges and are shared by seven Central and Eastern European countries. The objective of the Carpathian Project is to enhance the sustainable development of the Carpathian region based on its rich natural and cultural heritage. The project will analyze the available information base, develop strategies and policy instruments and implement pilot activities together with regional and national stakeholders. The project builds on the transnational framework established by the Carpathian Convention to apply EU policies through the Carpathian region.

Agenda and Strategic Approach of the Carpathian Project

1. Background

The Carpathian region – which spans the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine – is one of Europe's largest mountain ranges, harbouring a unique natural and cultural heritage, providing a haven for wildlife and acting as an ecological link within Europe. The diversity of the natural heritage is one of the biggest assets of the Carpathian region with a view to sustainable development. The Carpathians are a living environment for millions of people in the heart of Europe, yet their biodiversity and natural heritage are subject to a variety of threats and adverse impacts from land abandonment, habitat conversion and fragmentation, deforestation, large scale migration on the one hand, and from industrialisation, pollution and overexploitation of natural resources on the other.

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians enshrines a common vision, integrates developmental and environmental goals, provides objectives for action and constitutes the strategic framework for cooperation to address these challenges in a transnational context.

The Carpathian Project has been developed in 2005 by UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and RTI Polska together with Carpathian Convention Signatories and the broad project consortium of partners from 11 countries. The project builds on the intergovernmental cooperative platform of the Carpathian Convention. UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention leads the project with the support of the seven Carpathian Convention Parties and Signatories.

In establishing priorities and elaboration of the project, the aims and objectives of the **EU Neighbourhood Programme** have been taken into consideration. Its main objectives are:

- promoting sustainable economic and social development in the border areas;
- working together to address common challenges, in fields such as environment, public health, and the prevention of and fight against organised crime;
- ensuring efficient and secure borders; promoting local, "people-to-people" type actions².

¹ Full title of the project is "Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework"
² "Paving the way for a new Neighbourhood Instrument" (COM (2003) 393 final).



The concept of the Neighbourhood Programme is to support the cross-border and transnational cooperation along the external borders of the EU in the framework of existing INTERREG programmes.

The Carpathian Project supported by the EU Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB CADSES³ Neighbourhood Programme supports the implementation of the Carpathian Convention as a transnational tool for regional cooperation and spatial development. The project originates from a fusion of the Carpathian Convention process with the conclusions of the INTERREG II C Vision PlaNet project⁴.

A comprehensive preparatory process was conducted by the Carpathian Convention as well as the Vision PlaNet and European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT)⁵ cooperation networks. The preparations include assessments, preparatory research, governmental consultations, participative stakeholder meetings and international conferences, drawing upon the resources of a wide range of organizations and partner institutions.



³ **CADSES** – Central Adriatic Danubian South Eastern European space. Among the INTERREG III B areas, the CADSES – is the largest and most complex in Europe. It includes 18 countries, from the Baltic Sea – Poland and Germany – to the Mediterranean, through Austria, western Italy and the Balkans, down to Greece, touching the eastern countries from Ukraine to the Accession Countries.

⁴ **Vision PlaNet** is an INTERREG IIC-CADSES project initiated by Austria, Germany and Italy, comprising the Central European, Adriatic, Danube and partly the Southeast European space. This project aimed at a better mutual understanding of spatial development processes, instruments and institutions in this part of Europe. Within the Vision PlaNet a challenging identification of the CADSES transnational areas, including the Carpathian Development Region, has been elaborated. The Carpathian Development Region was identified as a transnational development area for future actions.

⁵ **CEMAT** – Conférence Européenne des Ministres responsable de l'Aménagement du Territoire/European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning. The Council of Europe's CEMAT brings together representatives of the 45 Member States of the Council of Europe, united in their pursuit of a common objective: sustainable spatial development of the European continent. The activities of the Council of Europe, relating to spatial planning, began in 1970 in Bonn where the first CEMAT was held.

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2. Integration of the EU spatial development policies: Carpathian Space vision

The Carpathian Project follows a strategic approach. In this respect, its first task is to determine the **common strategic vision** in order to build consensus and develop strategies and policies according to the principles of the Carpathian Convention, aiming at achieving higher territorial and economic integration within the co-operation area, and promoting a more balanced and harmonious protection and sustainable development of the "Carpathian Space".

The strategic approach aims at the development of an innovative Carpathian area – the **Carpathian Space** with a common strategic vision of environmental protection and sustainable development. In this regard, the project will analyze and consolidate the information base, develop strategies and policy instruments, implement and test pilot activities in continuous cooperation with local and regional stakeholders.

The project builds on the existing structure of the Carpathian Convention, providing a transnational framework for the application of EU standards across EU borders.

Starting from European transnational and national spatial development concepts, ensuring regional and local anchorage and by applying a proper transnational spatial development approach, the project will integrate European spatial development policies with the management of the Carpathians' fragile mountain ecosystems in a transnational context.

Consequently, the historically marginalized mountain regions of the Carpathians, partly situated in remote border areas, should become powerful unifiers across borders between nations and peoples, in one of the most dynamically developing regions of Europe.

Experiences e.g. of the **Alpine Space** clearly demonstrate that mountains can offer considerable potentials for development respecting the value of rich natural and cultural heritage and its preservation for the future.

Full participation and the involvement of mountain communities in the development of policies implemented on local, regional, national, international and European levels will be crucial to balance interest of stakeholders involved. The Carpathian Project will provide an interface between top-down and bottom-up approaches.



3. Objectives, actions, expected results and follow-up



Overall objective: The project will develop the Carpathian Convention into an operational and truly transnational platform, allowing for the implementation of the most relevant EU policies across the Carpathian region. The project will demonstrate that environmental and developmental objectives can go hand in hand, if the future is built upon the region's advantages and potentials and typical mountain challenges are addressed in a coordinated manner.

The long-term objective of the project is to strengthen the protection and to accelerate the sustainable development of the Carpathian region by improving the internal as well as European cohesion of the area and by preserving its natural and cultural heritage for future generations.