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Report of the First Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee

Lopenik, White Carpathians,
Czech Republic

April 2-5, 2007



REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
UNDER THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION

2-5 April 2007
Lopenik, White Carpathians, Czech Republic

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I Introduction

On 22 May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine, the Ministers of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic and Ukraine signed the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians.

The Carpathian Convention provides the framework for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development, and a forum for dialogue between all stakeholders involved.

On the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP1), 11-13 December 2006, in Kyiv, Ukraine, the Parties decided

“to support the establishment of a of a Working Group on sustainable tourism under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, aiming at the elaboration of a strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians and of a tourism protocol;” (Decision, COP1/10; article 9, §2)

From April 2 to 5, 2007, the first meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism under the Carpathian Convention (from now on referred to as Tourism Working Group or TWG) took place in the White Carpathians, Czech Republic.

The main goal of the meeting was to open the work towards elaborating and negotiating the strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians (from now on referred to as Tourism Strategy) and of a Draft Tourism Protocol, to be submitted to the Bureau of COP1 / Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, with a request for submission to COP2.

The 35 participants of the meeting elected the Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Tourism Working Group, discussed and adopted the draft ToRs of the Tourism Working Group, the Tourism Strategy and the Draft Tourism Protocol. Further, the draft structures of Tourism Strategy and Protocol were adopted, and responsibilities for the further elaboration of the Tourism Strategy's chapters were agreed.

II Attendance

The first Meeting of the Tourism Working Group was attended by governmental delegates from four of the seven Carpathian Countries (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Ukraine), NGOs, administrations of protected areas as well as international tourism experts and observers.

From the following countries, participants attended the workshop: the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukraine as well as Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. The full list of participants can be found in Annex 1, p. 31.

III Opening of the Meeting

The meeting officially opened at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, April 2nd.

Welcome remarks were made on behalf of the Government of the Czech Republic by Martina Paskova, Interim Chair of the Working Group and Head of the Settlements and Human Ecology Department, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic.

Regarding the attendance of governmental delegates from four out of seven Carpathian Countries, Martina Paskova pointed out the need to prepare a constructive “letter of emergency” to be sent to the National Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention, in order to stress the need of full participation from all seven Parties of the Convention.

This proposal was supported by Solomiya Omelyan, representative of the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, UNEP-Vienna.

The official opening of the meeting was followed by a short introduction round of the participants.

IV Organisation of Work

1 Facilitation of the Tourism Working Group Meeting

The Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, with its National Focal Point Jana Brozova, hosted the Tourism Working Group in the White Carpathians, Czech Republic and had the overall responsibility for the organisation of the meeting.

Kristina Vilimaite from CEEWEB, Hungary, and Michael Meyer and Katrin Gebhard from Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany, were responsible for the co-organisation, the preparation of the meeting as regards to content and the overall facilitation of the meeting.

2 Agenda

The Tourism Working Group adopted the agenda on the basis of a tentative agenda, and preparatory documents and materials that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop.

Due to rescheduling, however, the agenda has been altered in the course of the meeting. The following agenda (short version; the long version of the agenda is presented in Annex 2, p. 39) shows the final schedule of the meeting.

Day I/ April 2

- Introductory Session for NGOs on the Tourism Working Group
- Introduction and General Aspects (Official Opening of the Meeting)
- Tourism in the Carpathians – Opportunities and Threats: Introductory presentations
- Carpathian Evening

Day II/ April 3

- Adoption of the ToRs of the Tourism Strategy
- Preparation of the Tourism Strategy
- Adoption of the Structure of the Tourism Strategy
- Elaboration of the First Two Elements of the Tourism Strategy (Purpose of the Strategy & Vision Statement)

Day III/ April 4

- Excursion in the White Carpathians
- Protocol Development
- Adoption of the ToRs of the Draft Tourism Protocol
- Adoption of the Structure of the Draft Tourism Protocol

Day IV/April 5

- Conclusions
- Miscellaneous (time and place of the second meeting)

3 Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Tourism Working Group

Martina Paskova, Head of the Settlements and Human Ecology Department, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, by then Interim Chair of the Tourism Working Group was confirmed in her position and elected Chair of the Tourism Working Group by the participants of the meeting.

Nominated by the Chair of the Working Group, Czesary Molski, Ministry of Economy, Poland, was elected Vice-Chair of the Tourism Working Group by the participants of the meeting.

Nominated by the Chair of the Working Group, Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany, and representative of CEEWEB, Hungary, was elected as Rapporteur of the Tourism Working Group by the participants of the meeting.

V The Tourism Working Group in the frame of the Carpathian Convention

1 The Carpathian Convention Process

Solomiya Omelyan shortly introduces the essential characteristics and the process of the Carpathian Convention as well as the role of UNEP-Vienna as Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

She strongly points out the participatory approach of the Convention. This approach allows the early involvement of non-governmental bodies and institutions in the discussion process and it focuses on trans-boundary and international cooperation, e.g. taking into account lessons learnt and best practices. In this respect the close cooperation with the Alpine Convention has to be mentioned.

Further, Solomiya Omelyan underlines that the Carpathian Convention profits in a considerable manner from the project "Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework" under the INTERREG IIIB CADSES Neighborhood Program.

She acknowledges the ambitious goal of the Tourism Working Group to prepare the Tourism Strategy and the Draft Tourism Protocol for submission to COP2 and sees a very big potential for tourism as perfect showcase for COP2.

For more information, please check: www.carpathianconvention.org

2 Tourism Working Group activities, timeframe and tasks until COP2

By means of a MS Power Point presentation, Michael Meyer introduces the role of the Tourism Working Group in the scope of the Carpathian Convention.

Michael Meyer stressed that the actual geographical scope of the Carpathian Convention is not of importance for the work of the Tourism Working Group as the impacts of tourism development go far beyond the discussed borders.

Summary of the Presentation

The relevant timeframe for activities of the TWG is the period between April 2007 and May 2008 (COP2). During this time, three meetings are taking place (April 2007, October 2007, and January 2008) which will aim at the elaboration of the Draft Tourism Protocol and the Tourism Strategy. In addition to the participation of the TWG members, an electronic consultation process will be held to ensure the broad involvement of stakeholders.

1st TWG Meeting

- Development and approval of the structure of Tourism Strategy and Draft Tourism Protocol
- Elaboration and adoption of the Vision of the Strategy as well as of the Purpose of the Strategy
- Agreement on the further elaboration process of the contents of the documents
- Distribution of responsibilities for the elaboration of the documents

Period between 1st and 2nd TWG Meeting (6 months)

- Compilation of comments from the TWG participants on the outcome of the 1st meeting (e-mail)
- Starting of the inter-ministerial consultation process in all countries
- Development of the draft chapters of the Tourism Strategy and the Draft Tourism Protocol

It was made clear, that the drafting of the Strategy and Protocol is an ambitious task, in particular because of a limited time frame and the summer break. However, the achievement of a very good draft before, respectively for the 2nd meeting is of vital importance.

2nd TWG Meeting (scheduled October 2007)

- Development of the drafts of the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol
- Development of the draft action plan for the implementation of the Tourism Strategy
- Call for contributions to the implementation of the Tourism Strategy and the Action Plan

The call for contributions also includes the call for long-term projects and long-term funding in order to ensure long-term effects and success of Strategy and Protocol.

Period between 2nd and 3rd TWG Meeting (3 months)

- Compilation of comments of all relevant stakeholders through launching an official electronic consultation
- Compilation of comments through an inter-ministerial consultation process in all countries

Between the 2nd and the 3rd meeting the official electronic consultation process will start; therefore Michael Meyer suggests that the documents should be translated into the different languages to ensure broad participation (The translation of documents was further discussed as a separate item, see p. 11).

After the 2nd meeting, the elaborated documents should go for discussion to the inter-ministerial platforms to ensure easier adoption and better understanding.

3rd TWG Meeting (scheduled January 2008)

- Incorporation of the comments of all stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) into the documents
- Acknowledgement of all contributions to the implementation of the Tourism Strategy and the Draft Tourism Protocol

The 3rd meeting will be the most important because it provides the last opportunity to change the documents due to contributions; it can already be regarded as “warming-up” for COP2 – if the draft documents find agreement from the Tourism Working Group, the best conditions for adoption at COP2 are made.

After the 3rd meeting the final draft will be submitted through the Secretariat and the Bureau to COP2; changes are not possible at that stage. However, the documents will be posted on the webpage to allow commenting; these comments will then be submitted to COP2 as a separate document; in that way, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment at least twice in the process of document elaboration.

The Czech National Focal Point, Jana Brozova, proposes the opening of an electronic forum through the Czech Clearing House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This forum will work on the basis of a webpage and will be accessible for everybody. The address of the webpage is the following: www.chm.nature.cz.

The Chair of the Tourism Working Group underlines that most of the work will have to happen between the meetings. She encourages the participants to contribute to the success of the elaboration of the Tourism Protocol and Strategy.

Discussion Notes

- The Tourism Working Group shall serve as platform for the support of follow-up initiatives. One of these initiatives is the proposal of the “Via Carpatica”, which is currently still at an early stage in the process of elaboration.
- It is most important for the success of the Carpathian Convention not to stop at the theoretical level, but to actually implement the steps which have been agreed on. Therefore both documents are equally needed: The Tourism Protocol as legally binding commitment, the strategy as guidance for the implementation of deriving activities.
- In order to achieve documents which satisfy both, the official demands of the political level as well as the demands of the implementing organisations in the countries, the cooperation and the input of governments, NGOs and tourism experts is desired.
- Following the decision of COP1, each country should establish an inter-ministerial platform in order to ensure interdisciplinary cooperation at the governmental level; the actual arrangement of this platform is left to the decision making of the individual country; in general, the involvement of all relevant ministries should be targeted.

VI Terms of References

1 Terms of Reference of the Tourism Working Group

The Czech National Focal Point, Jana Brozova, remarks that the Tourism Working Group is not authorized to officially adopt the Terms of Reference (ToR). This is task of the Bureau and the TWG will have to wait for official adoption from them (via e-mail). The preliminary adoption of the ToR through the TWG is nevertheless important for the further work.

The Terms of Reference were discussed during the meeting and the Tourism Working Group preliminarily adopted the following Terms of Reference on the basis of a draft that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop:

Draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism

1) Goal

Pursuant to the Decision COP1/10 para 2 of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Carpathian Convention, the WG will aim at the elaboration and negotiation of a strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians and of a draft tourism protocol, to be submitted through the Bureau to COP2.

2) Composition

The participation in the working group on sustainable tourism is open-ended. The members of the working group are delegated by the Parties to the Carpathian Convention and may represent different sectors (economy, environment, tourism, etc.). The Working Group will elect a Chair to guide its proceedings. CEEWEB provides continuous inputs to the Working Group.

The working group will take into account the input of stakeholders, including governments at all levels, international and non-governmental organisations and initiatives, as well as indigenous peoples, local communities, the private sector and other stakeholders shall be involved to contribute to the actions related to the future cooperation under the Carpathian Convention and its implementation in the framework of sustainable tourism, also by using the means of electronic consultation.

3) Background documentation

Preparatory and accompanying activities of the Interreg IIIb CADSES “Carpathian Project”, providing inputs to the WG, may include, inter alia:

- Background document “Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians” prepared by CEEWEB
- Methodology and tools for tourism infrastructure in margin and remote areas (methodology and tools) / Via Carpatica
- Developing professional skills in tourism – tools and methods, Handbook for local authorities and development actors
- Carpathian Cultural, Historic and Social Topography

4) Contribution to the follow-up platform

The WG will provide its guidance and recommendations for the identification and development of follow-up projects in the area of sustainable tourism.

5) Outcomes of the Working Group

Without timeframe → tourism protocol and strategy and the action framework should not be separated in order to achieve a concerted development

Discussion Notes

Antonina Karnaukhova from Ukraine notes that the Working Group on Energy and Transport had to deal with the same problem and she suggests to work towards a similar structure regarding style (not contents) for all ToRs in all Working Groups under the Carpathian Convention.

Jana Brozova welcomes this proposal and recommends that the harmonisation of the ToRs should be done by the Secretariat within the following week (15th calendar week). This task has to be accomplished very promptly as the TWG cannot continue work without adopted ToR.

Further Antonina Karnaukhova recommends adding a paragraph on cooperation with other working groups and international organisations to the ToR.

This suggestion finds approval by the TWG and the paragraph is added to the ToR.

Upon remark by Jana Brozova, it is agreed that the ToRs will not show any timeframe – concerning validity of the ToR – as decided in Vienna.

Tamara Malkova, Ukraine, reminds that all stakeholders need to be informed about the ongoing process regarding the ToR adoption.

Jana Brozova points out that it is up to the National Focal Points to inform the stakeholders in their country. Additionally the Secretariat will inform all observers which are on their list of observers.

2 Terms of References of the Tourism Strategy

The Terms of Reference was discussed during the meeting and the Tourism Working Group adopted the following Terms of Reference on the basis of a draft that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop:

Terms of Reference for the the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians

Guiding Principles

The strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians (from now on referred to as Tourism Strategy) is a voluntary document that aims to serve as a framework supporting the development of sustainable forms of tourism in the Carpathians. It is a strategic document with an overlying vision, guiding principles and a framework for action that will help to combine and effectively strengthen all efforts that strive towards a sustainable tourism future of the Carpathians.

Supporting sustainable tourism in the Carpathians means to provide for the conservation of nature, the economic prosperity of regions and the safeguarding of social structures and cultural assets throughout the Carpathian Mountains.

The Tourism Strategy strongly places its focus on trans-national cooperation in order to, firstly, cope with common challenges together and, secondly, to better use and conserve the natural and cultural treasures which exist across the borders and which make the Carpathians in their whole to one of the most unique mountainous regions in Europe.

Process of Tourism Strategy Development

The Tourism Strategy shall be developed in close cooperation among governmental experts, NGOs and other stakeholders. Therefore, the strategy development process will take place through open-ended meetings.

The meetings will be scheduled as follows (concrete dates will be set in due time):

April 2007: 1st Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism

- Discussion and adoption of the structure of the Tourism Strategy
- Discussion and adoption of the purpose of the strategy and the vision statement

October 2007: 2nd Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism

- Elaboration of a draft of the entire Tourism Strategy

January 2008: 3rd Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism

- Finalisation of the Tourism Strategy

The results of the meetings will serve as both, basis and input, to the chapters of the strategy. The Working Group will further develop the contents of the strategy in between the meetings. The final Tourism Strategy will be submitted to COP2.

Stakeholder Involvement

The Tourism Strategy is a document, which meets the demands of future sustainable tourism development in the Carpathian Countries. In order to achieve this goal the involvement of all relevant stakeholders is of vital importance. Therefore, the strategy shall be developed in cooperation with:

- (1) experts delegated by the parties from all Carpathian Countries
- (2) stakeholders from all relevant sectors related to tourism development (e.g. agriculture, nature protection, economy)
- (3) stakeholders from all levels (local, regional, national), and
- (4) stakeholders from all Carpathian countries,
- (5) International organisations working in the Carpathians

This interdisciplinary, cross-level and trans-national approach will help to ensure the broad acceptance and applicability of the Tourism Strategy in the Carpathians and will support cooperation in and success of sustainable tourism development in the Carpathian Countries.

A public consultation process will be initiated to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, including international and non-governmental organizations and initiatives, as well as indigenous peoples, local communities and the private sector. The electronic consultation process with the stakeholders will be started after the first meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism.

The Parties are invited to organise public consultation process on national level and report about the results of the consultations at the working group meetings.

Relationship of the Tourism Strategy with the Draft Tourism Protocol

The Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians will back up the implementation of the Tourism Protocol, which is being elaborated in parallel by the Working Group on sustainable tourism.

The Protocol will concern the actions in the field of sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians that need legal support of the governments. The Strategy however, will target not only governments, but also businesses and NGO community, will support good practices that exist and will find ways to scale and replicate them in other Carpathian countries.

Financial Matters

The participation in the working group meetings takes place on a voluntary basis. Therefore, expenses related to the participation in the working group meetings and expenses of working group experts delegated by the parties will be typically covered by the Governments of the respective countries.

The participation of a limited number of non-governmental organizations from the Carpathians in the working group on sustainable tourism that otherwise would not be able to attend the meetings of the working group may be supported by CEEWEB through the INTERREG III B CADSES Project '*Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework*'.

Discussion Notes

Finances

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, emphasises that there will be limited financial support possible for participants from non-EU countries. However, this cannot be stated in the Terms of References for formal reasons.

Public Consultation

Tamara Malkova, Ukraine, poses the question on how to arrange public consultation.

Michael Meyer explains that the outcomes of each session shall be distributed in English to the participants and the National Focal Points; all NGOs are requested to closely cooperate with their National Focal Points. Additionally all NGOs should use own additional channels for further distribution in their home countries.

The organisers of the TWG will as well cooperate with National Focal Points and NGOs and contribute to the distribution of outcomes and information.

In addition, the organisers will search for supplemental funding (e.g. in the scope of the INTERREG IIIB CADSES Carpathian Project).

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, and Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, again point out that the TWG is neither authorised to interfere with national affairs, nor is it capable of launching an own dissemination process. Also the development of National Focal Points for NGOs, which was proposed earlier, has to be left in the hands of the national authorities. Every country has to use its own structures, functional bodies and ways of communication to disseminate the information on the processes related to TWG and the Carpathian Convention.

Solomiya Omelyan reminds that COP1 decisions state that the countries are invited to support the Carpathian Convention and related processes through dissemination, public consultation, etc.

Discussion about the translation of Documents related to the TWG

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, gives an example on how the Czech Republic proceeds with the problem. She states that the Czech National Focal Point did not translate the decisions but prepared a table with all decisions, agreements etc. relevant for the Czech Republic and individual bodies. In a second step, the people identified responsible for certain tasks are now being contacted and invited to take up their work.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic applied for money for 2007 (successfully) in order to realise interdisciplinary round tables, where amongst other topics the Tourism Protocol and the Tourism Strategy will be discussed.

Istvan Sido, Association "Pro Conventia Carpatica", Romania, proposes to encourage NGOs to support the National Focal Point in this task as well.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, suggests that NGOs should seek for possibilities to disseminate the outcomes of the TWG meetings through the activities of currently running (sustainable tourism) projects: possible funds for translation within in these projects could be used; further, the project meetings can be used to discuss the Tourism Protocol and Strategy, e.g. by comments from the meeting participants which are forwarded to the TWG for further consideration.

Michael Meyer for this purpose will utilise the GEF project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity through Sound Tourism Development in Biosphere Reserves in Central and Eastern Europe" coordinated by the Ecological Tourism In Europe.

Another suggestion is to involve local people in the process, which e.g. might report back to the NGOs and TWG.

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, proposes to decide on a deadline for reporting for the National Focal Points. It is decided to report at the next TWG meeting in October.

Relation between the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol

The relation between and the purpose of both, Tourism Strategy and Protocol, are topic of discussion in the meeting.

Thus, Michael Meyer explains the difference between the Tourism Protocol and the Tourism Strategy:

The Tourism Strategy	The Tourism Protocol
... is a flexible document targeted to those implementing decisions on the ground (e.g. NGOs, businesses)	... is a static document, targeted to the governments
... supports the Tourism Protocol	... identifies needs for immediate action with regards to legal concerns
... has a broad focus and tackles with Pan-Carpathian as well as country-specific issues	... has a defined focus and precisely summarises issues

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, poses the question if the title "strategy" is too imprecise and may cause confusion among the meeting participants and other stakeholders, who do not expect a real framework for action behind the name.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, explains that a strategy is the usual title of such a document under a convention and that it will be understood as document dealing with the management of the implementation of the protocol.

Jana Urbancikova from the Bile Karpaty PLA Administration, Czech Republic, stresses that the strategy is exactly the document needed on the implementing level as it will describe both, a framework as well as a precise work program and action plan which implementers can use to plan their work. She sees the strategy as the way towards the goal. Even if COP2 does not adopt the Strategy, it will still be finished and it will serve as very useful for all people willing to work towards sustainable tourism development.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, emphasises again that the goal of the strategy is twofold: 1) to make people understand the approach of sustainable tourism development and to show them the way towards this development and 2) to provide a detailed action plan that enables people to directly take up work and go the first steps on the described way.

As to adoption at COP2: if COP does not want to adopt the whole strategy, there will be the possibility to separate the document into action plan and framework, so that the Parties might only focus on individual chapters, e.g. the Action Plan.

Validity of the ToR

The ToR is only valid until COP2 and can be submitted there as an Information Document; it would be best, if the Parties at COP2 agree on the adoption and continue directly with the implementation of the Action Plan.

3 Terms of References of the Tourism Protocol

The Terms of Reference were discussed during the meeting and the Tourism Working Group adopted the following Terms of Reference on the basis of a draft that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop:

Draft Terms of Reference for the Tourism Protocol to the Carpathian Convention

Purpose

The Tourism Protocol to the Carpathian Convention is a legally binding document, which shall set the legal frame for the parties to the Convention.

Process of Tourism Protocol Development

The Tourism Protocol shall be developed in close cooperation between experts, NGOs and other stakeholders. Therefore, the negotiation process towards the development of the protocol will take place through open-ended meetings.

The meetings will be scheduled as follows (concrete dates will be set in due time):

April 2007: 1st Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism
October 2007: 2nd Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism
January 2008: 3rd Meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism

The results of the meetings will serve as both, basis and input, to the chapters of the Tourism Protocol. The Working Group on sustainable tourism will further develop the contents of the protocol in between the meetings. The final draft of the Tourism Protocol will be submitted to COP2.

Stakeholder Involvement

The Tourism Protocol is a document, which defines the legal framework conditions for future tourism development in the Carpathians.

Therefore, the protocol shall be primarily elaborated by governmental representatives of the parties to the Convention, but also comments from stakeholders from all other relevant sectors and levels shall be taken into consideration.

An interdisciplinary, cross-level and trans-national approach will help to ensure the acceptance and applicability of the Tourism Protocol all over the Carpathians.

A public consultation process will be initiated to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, including international and non-governmental organizations and initiatives, as well as indigenous peoples, local communities and the private sector. The electronic consultation process with the stakeholders will be started after the second meeting of the Working Group on sustainable tourism.

Relation to the Tourism Strategy

The implementation of the Tourism Protocol will be backed up by the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians, which is being elaborated in parallel by the Working Group on sustainable tourism.

VII Development of the Draft Structures of the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol

1 Introductory presentation on the preparation of the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol

Michael Meyer gives an introduction on the overall goals and cornerstones of the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol and describes the main anticipated outcomes and impacts of both documents for the future tourism development in the Carpathians.

Summary of the Presentation

The Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians aims to support the conservation of the Carpathian landscapes, its biological diversity and natural treasures, the preservation of culture and traditions in the Carpathians and the continuity of long-term economic benefits for the local people through introducing a coordinating and unifying framework for strengthening and building on existing initiatives and promoting the responsible use of the Carpathians rich tourism potential.

Goals of the Tourism Strategy

- a more effectively integration of tourism with all relevant socio-cultural and ecologic considerations as well as relevant economic sectors
- the increase of public participation in, and awareness and acceptance of, conservation interests in the tourism sector
- no introduction of new legislation or programmes, but filling of gaps where initiatives are not implemented to their full potential or fail to achieve desired objectives
- strives to be a Pan-Carpathian response to support the implementation of the Tourism Protocol to the Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians

Cornerstones of the Tourism Strategy

Due to the urgent need to deal with certain pressing problems, the Strategy will be implemented through a framework of action, including a concrete action plan with different ranges of application, prioritising the themes that need to be addressed at:

- the Pan-Carpathian level
- multi- and bilateral levels
- and which require priority attention from individual countries

The Strategy also provides a framework to promote a consistent approach and common objectives for national and regional action to implement the Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Tourism Protocol

The Tourism Protocol is the legal instrument, superordinate to the Tourism Strategy which links the Strategy with the Convention on the protection and sustainable development. It is further a supplementary protocol to the Carpathian Convention dealing in particular with issues related to sustainable tourism and it is binding under international law.

Benefits of the Tourism Strategy and the Tourism Protocol

- Joint and more powerful approach instead of fragmented, overlapping or contra productive individual attempts
- Common legislation eases cross-border cooperation (Pan-Carpathian cooperation)
- Unifying vision as guidance for future development
- Common basis for future decision-making at all levels
- Lasting economic prosperity instead of short-term benefits
- Long-term conservation of natural and cultural treasures in the Carpathians

Discussion Notes

The term “Sustainable Tourism” and its use in the Strategy and Protocol

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, points out that the term of “sustainable tourism” should not be overestimated. What is essential is that a common understanding of the form of tourism is achieved. Very often the term “sustainable tourism” provokes opposition among local people and practitioners as it indicates for them losses, limitations and restrictions.

Therefore it is sometimes – and also in our case – more useful to work only with the term “tourism”. It is less frightening but it can still be based on the very same principles as sustainable tourism. The outcome of tourism development is important, not the terminology.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, explains that the strategy will facilitate the coordination between various stakeholders and sectors in the field of sustainable tourism development. Therefore it will be necessary to have a common understanding of what sustainable tourism is.

The goal is to achieve broad acceptance of the strategy among all stakeholders, including governments, practitioners, business people and the local population.

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, reminds that during the process of protocol development a lot of different views and opinions will have to be integrated.

Stakeholders

Governmental delegates

As the Tourism Protocol is a legal document, the national delegates are the key stakeholders in the process of developing the Tourism Protocol. Therefore it will be essential that they come to the meetings, follow and influence the process already from the beginning and work together with the TWG towards a broadly accepted document already before submission to COP2. Further their commitment to work on the document in between the meetings of the TWG is of high importance for its success.

NGOs, academic institutions and other stakeholders will back up the process with their experience and expert knowledge and will help to ensure the link between the governmental, political level and the local level.

Regional governments and municipalities

Monika Ochwat – Marcinkiewicz, League of Nature Conservation, Poland, proposes to involve regional governments and municipalities into the document development process. This proposal was broadly accepted.

Solomiya Omelyan, Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, UNEP-Vienna, offers to support the National Focal Points in their task of addressing these regional governments and municipalities.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, particularly addresses the NGOs from Romania, Hungary and Poland to approach their National Focal Points in order to provide them with information on the meeting outcomes. The NGOs are asked to get back to the organisers with their results.

Business sector

Jano Rohac, Ekopolis, Slovak Republic, stresses that also the link to the businesses is crucial. It has to be communicated to them that sustainable tourism can be profitable and that there is potential for long-term benefits for the businesses as well. This comment is strongly supported by the Chair of the TWG.

Michael Meyer stresses that businesses will only be willing to agree to sustainable tourism development if there are incentives offered to them, e.g. a label which brings more guest or some tax reduction. Therefore profitable incentives need to be found that persuade businesses.

Another opportunity to persuade businesses is to menace them with the European Charter for sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, which might imply sanctions in case of non-compliance.

However, Michael Meyer reminds that Strategy and Protocol are still documents for environmental conservation and business concerns should not overtake the lead.

He also reminds that sustainable tourism is a slow and long-term development where people have to understand that they have to be patient until benefits occur.

Last but not least, the tourists themselves have to be won as pressure group; tourism is a demand-driven sector, so that tourists that request sustainable tourism services will have great influence on the design of the future tourism market.

The EU

Dana Cajkova, National Focal Point of the Slovak Republic, sees the urgent need for EU grants for sustainable tourism development, which will support as well the profitable involvement of businesses. She mentions the need for new EU programs, financial mechanisms, structures and a new common policy.

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, also remarks that the cooperation with the EU is not satisfactory at the moment. The Carpathian Convention already tried to strengthen cooperation with the EU, but got no response so far; e.g. at the first EU Council, the invitation to COP1 was without any reaction.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, agrees to the comments of both National Focal Points but still emphasises the need to cooperate with the European Commission – not least because of financial reasons.

Michael Meyer's, Rapporteur, opinion about the cooperation with the EU is less optimistic. He stresses that it is no fault to hope for cooperation, but in the meantime it is more important to search for alternative sources of support.

Cezary Molski, Ministry of Economy, Poland, Vice-Chair, supports the attitude not to wait for the EU and to move forward. He sees the strength of the Carpathian Countries in cross-border cooperation and in bi- and multilateral solutions.

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, reminds of the Global Code of Conduct under the UN as good example for a similar initiative on EU level.

The Alpine Convention

Solomiya Omelyan, Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, UNEP-Vienna, and Martina Paskova, Chair, propose to use and even strengthen the cooperation with the Alpine Convention and their experiences with developing a tourism protocol. Although the example of the Tourism Protocol to the Alpine Convention is being criticized, the lessons learnt can be helpful.

2 Tourism Strategy

The Structure of the Tourism Strategy was discussed during the meeting. The Tourism Working Group adopted the Structure of the Strategy on the basis of a draft that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop.

The adopted Structure of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians can be found in Annex 3, p. 42.

Discussion Notes

Management and Monitoring of the Action Plan

Viktor Teres, Heifer Project International, Ukraine, poses the question about the management and the monitoring of the Action Plan (Chapter 5).

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, sees a good chance in involving the EU, in particular the European Environmental Agency, into the setting up of a monitoring mechanism. The European Environmental Agency mechanism is rather economically driven, but it is still a good concept which can be used during implementation and monitoring of the Strategy.

Another possibility is to involve different DGs (e.g. Regional Development, Economy) which are dealing with destination management.

Moreover, it would be a big challenge, but very innovative, to run a full monitoring mechanism only for the Carpathians. So far the Rocky Mountains are worldwide the only destination which has such a system.

There are two possibilities to achieve the creation of such a monitoring system: a) by a mandate given to the Secretariat by COP2, and b) through the engagement of the countries themselves.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, proposes to use clusters and already existing structures and institutional frameworks to manage the actions described in Chapter 5. The emphasis on the institutional structures shall help to avoid the frequent changes in support from the government, as institutions are rather independent from elections.

The National Focal Points will have the task to consult with their ministries and help them to find the most appropriate ways for using the individual structures that exist in the countries to implement new legislation and provisions related to the Carpathian Convention.

Martina Paskova supports Michael Meyer comment that governments will only adopt the Strategy at COP2 if the conformity with their national legislation is achieved. Therefore the consultative role of the National Focal Points is very critical.

Martina Paskova does not favor the involvement of the EU in the management and monitoring process.

Finances

Solomiya Omelyan, Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, UNEP-Vienna, proposes that either the strategy or the protocol should contain some concrete information about a financial mechanism. This proposal is supported by Antonina Karnaukhova, Permanent Mission of Ukraine, Vienna.

They added that there should be a paragraph in the document which stresses the need for financial resources for the TWG.

The lack of a financial mechanism like the GEF (Global Environment Facility) under the Convention on Biodiversity is a problem that cannot be solved now. However, it should be feasible to have enough funds to support at least those countries (Serbia, Ukraine) which are not in the EU.

It was agreed by the TWG that at COP2, respectively subsequent to it, discussions will be continued; with concrete plans, a budget and a permanent secretariat. For now the TWG decided to stick to a softer proposal regarding finances, probably added in the annexes.

Distribution of Tasks

The development of the Tourism Strategy has to be accomplished by the members of the TWG in between the meetings.

In order to achieve well thought-out chapters, Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, proposes team work with teams of different national and technical backgrounds (e.g. NGOs, institutions, etc.).

This idea is supported by the chair of the TWG. Furthermore, the chair reminds the members of the TWG to closely cooperate with the National Focal Points.

CHAPTER 1

Elaborated during the first TWG meeting, see VIII – Elaboration of Strategy Chapters, p. 21

CHAPTER 2

Elaborated during the first TWG meeting, see VIII – Elaboration of Strategy Chapters, p. 21

CHAPTER 3

Under general direction of Poland, Chapter 3 will be elaborated by:

Cezary Molski, Ministry of Economy, Poland

Polish NGO representatives

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine

CHAPTER 4

It is important to ensure that the tourism strategy is embedded into existing regulations, rules and agreements on national and international level. Therefore a broad overview regarding these legal provisions is necessary. Further, it is important to achieve an outline of all initiatives, networks and relevant conventions active in the field of tourism.

The TWG agrees that this chapter needs to be elaborated by professionals and thus decides to approach the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to take care of the elaboration of this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

It is agreed by the Tourism Working Group, that all members work on chapter 5. In particular because of the different levels of activities (from Pan-Carpathians to individual countries) the information input from all countries is essential.

The members are asked to submit their input to the organisers (CEEWEB/ETE), who will coordinate the elaboration of Chapter 5 and who will take care of summarizing and synchronizing the received material.

On proposal of various members of the TWG, it is decided that chapter 6 should be elaborated in close relation to Chapter 5.

Therefore, every activity proposed in chapter 5 already needs to provide for an appropriate indicator. At the third meeting of the TWG the group will decide which indicators will be finally used for the tourism strategy.

Chapter 5.1, Objectives have already been elaborated during the first TWG meeting, see VIII – Elaboration of Strategy Chapters, p. 21

CHAPTER 6

As indicators will already be elaborated in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 shall merely deal with and explain the overall concept of monitoring to be used for monitoring tourism development in the Carpathians.

All countries are asked to prepare a proposal for developing a monitoring system. The proposals shall then be submitted to the second TWG meeting, where the proposals will be compiled and integrated into one final proposal to be ready for the 3rd meeting of the TWG.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, stresses that every Strategy needs a well-functioning monitoring system in order to see the success or failure.

Answering the question of Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, who proposes a compliance mechanism, Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, explains that the convention itself could generally deal with a compliance mechanism; however, every single protocol needs its own specific mechanism with different tools e.g. for non-compliance.

Tomasz Lamorski, Babia Gora National Park, Poland, points out the additional worth of a monitoring system based on indicators as fundament for adaptive management and flexible adjustment to changing conditions.

A monitoring system further makes it possible to measure the success of the strategy, which is useful when it comes to business involvement, as businesses will be interested whether they will be able to achieve benefits, increase in outcomes, etc.

GENERAL CONDITIONS AND DEADLINES

For all chapters, the deadline for the development of a proposal is **June 15, 2007**.

Regarding the development of Chapter 5, each country is asked to prepare maximum 10 activities for each level.

Proposal for the elaboration of activities:

Level 1 (Carpathian-Wide): 3 for each country

Level 2 (Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation): 5 for each country

Level 3 (Individual Countries): 10 for each country

3 Draft Tourism Protocol

The Structure of the Draft Tourism Protocol was discussed during the meeting. The Tourism Working Group adopted the Structure of the Draft Tourism Protocol on the basis of a draft that had been circulated to all participants prior to the workshop.

The adopted Structure of the Draft Tourism Protocol to the Carpathian Convention can be found in Annex 4, p. 44.

Discussion Notes

The CBD Guidelines

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, poses the question why the CBD Guidelines (Article 7) are particularly mentioned in the Structure of the Protocol.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, declares the CBD Guidelines are the methodological approach, which the TWG will use for sustainable tourism management.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, adds that next to the CBD Guidelines also other multi- and bilateral agreements will be referred to in the document.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, asks about the purpose of chapter 2: cross-cutting issues.

The protocol and the strategy shall be characterised by an integrative and interdisciplinary character. Not only is the cooperation between the individual national ministries of the environment required, but also other ministries (e.g. economy, regional planning) need to be included. Therefore a chapter is necessary that ensures the cross-sectoral cooperation between the ministries.

The only other possibility is the integration of a phrase on interdisciplinary cooperation in each chapter and article of the protocol.

Public Participation

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine, proposed the integration of Public Participation into Chapter 2: Cross-cutting issues.

Jano Rohac, Ekopolis, Slovak Republic, notes that it might be weaker if integrated and that it should have an own article.

Jana Urbancikova, PLA Bile Karpaty, Czech Republic, reminds that it might scare politicians if public participation is stated in a separate article and that it should better be hidden.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, recommends using the term prior-informed consent in decision making as it includes full participation, all levels and the cross-sectored approach.

It is agreed that "prior-informed consent" will be integrated in Chapter 2, Article 9: Decision making.

Protected Areas in the Protocol

The question is being raised whether protected areas should be particularly dealt with in the protocol (e.g. by an own article).

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, explains the danger of interfering too much with national legislation if protected areas build an individual topic in the protocol. However, the CBD Guidelines are already focusing on protected areas and may therefore be used as guideline in this particular matter.

The Chair regards the topic of protected areas as essential.

As a compromise, protected areas are added to article 8, chapter 2.

Proposals for new Chapters/Articles

Rights to Use of Land and Approval Processes – Jano Rohac, Ekopolis, Slovak Republic

Jano Rohac proposes to insert a new article related to property, e.g. compensations, land use, planning, etc.

It is agreed to include the article "Rights to Use of Land and Approval Processes" in chapter 3.

Regional Statistics – Jano Rohac, Ekopolis, Slovak Republic

Jano Rohac suggests including regional statistics into Chapter 3, Article 13. The suggestion is accepted.

Sustainable Financing – Hildegard Meyer, WWF, Austria

It is agreed to include Sustainable Financing into Chapter 6, Article 26: Enhancing Economic Benefits to the Communities and Regions

Further agreed changes

Access to information and notification process are integrated into one article (Chapter 9, Article 39)

Public Awareness Raising and Education are separated and two individual articles are created (Chapter 9, Articles 37. 38)

Annotation of the Structure

It is agreed that the structure of the Protocol will be annotated before it will be sent to the National Focal Points and governmental delegates.

Michael Meyer points out again that the draft protocol will be negotiated and shall be finally adopted by the Parties. Therefore the involvement of all the Parties is essential.

Distribution of Responsibilities

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, and Michael Meyer, Rapporteur of the TWG raise the question to the delegates, whether they are ready to take responsibility for the elaboration of chapters of the Tourism Protocol.

The answers of the individual national delegates are the following:

Poland

Mr. Cezary Molski, Ministry of the Economy, explains that it is very difficult to decide now if, who and for what topics Poland could take responsibility. It will be necessary to first contact the National Focal Point and discuss the proceeding with further ministerial colleagues.

He regards the approach of the biodiversity protocol development as a good example and proposes to follow it. Thus, he asks for a draft of the tourism protocol which will be commented on by the ministries.

→ no final statement due to pending internal negotiations

Slovak Republic

The National Focal Point, Dana Cajkova, as well explains that she cannot take responsibility for the elaboration without prior consultation with the ministries. She proposed to involve national NGOs and specialists in the elaboration process.

→ no final statement due to pending internal negotiations

Czech Republic

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, offers to work on Chapter 4: Environmental Impacts. Further, she proposes to involve tourism experts (national/international) into the draft elaboration.

Interim Secretariat UNEP-Vienna

Solomiya Omelyan, on behalf of the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, agrees to work on the chapters 1, 10 and 11.

Conclusions

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, expresses his satisfaction about the progress with the distribution of tasks related to the Tourism Strategy and sees the main difficulty now in the lack of attendance of governmental delegates from all countries.

He reminds – based on the proposal from Poland – that the actual idea of the Tourism Protocol was to achieve a jointly elaborated document with an approach different from the Ukrainian approach regarding the Biodiversity Protocol.

Therefore the distribution of tasks has to be left open. The delegates of the countries as well as the NGOs and other stakeholders shall use the next 4 weeks for consultations with their National Focal Points and colleagues.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, asked the delegates of Poland and the Slovak Republic to take care of their internal negotiations within the next 3-4 weeks (latest: May, 7) and to get back with the results to the organisers and the Chair.

Independent of the results of the internal consultations, the TWG decided to agree on the proposal of Martina Paskova and Michael Meyer to involve international experts in the preparation of the draft of the tourism protocol. The fact that there is no budget for expert involvement available is a problem, therefore experts need to work for free or other financial sources need to be found. Moreover, the timeframe of six months is extremely short to finish the drafting and commenting process.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, promised that he will try to find international experts. He will inform the TWG about his results in six weeks.

As soon as the National Focal Points informed the organisers about their internal negotiations, decisions and recommendations (latest: May, 15), the further steps in tourism protocol development will be consulted with the Czech Republic and the Chair of the TWG and recommendations will be made to the TWG on how to proceed.

It also has to be clarified, if the Czech Government reconfirms to be “lead partner” in the protocol development, as stated by Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Czech Republic, during COP1, and if this commitment continues during COP2, i.e. if the Czech Republic supports the adoption process of the tourism protocol during COP2.

Additionally it was agreed that a letter should be sent by Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, through the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to the National Focal Points in order to achieve their full participation in the meetings and contribution to the two documents..

VIII Elaboration of Strategy Chapters

1 Elaboration of Chapter 1: Purpose of the Strategy

The 1st Chapter of the Tourism Strategy “Purpose of the Strategy” was discussed and elaborated on the basis of a draft during the meeting.

The adopted Chapter 1 “Purpose of the Strategy” of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians is the following:

Chapter 1: Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians is to encourage tourism that integrates socio-economic benefits with the conservation of biological and cultural diversity as it is determined by the Carpathian Convention, article 9.

Discussion Notes

The Participants decided that the purpose of the Strategy should be stated short and precisely in one sentence. The main focus was placed on clarifying the anticipated benefits for people and nature through the form of tourism promoted by the Strategy.

It was discussed whether to repeat the article 9 on sustainable tourism of the Carpathian Convention. The repetition should make clear the close connection between the Tourism Strategy and the Carpathian Convention. However, among other reasons due to the required brevity of the purpose, it was decided to simply refer to article 9.

Other potential key words, e.g. competitiveness, that were considered by the participants for integration in the “Purpose of the Strategy” were decided to include in Chapter 5, Objectives of the Strategy.

2 Elaboration of Chapter 2: Vision Statement

The 2nd Chapter of the Tourism Strategy “Vision Statement” was discussed and elaborated during the meeting.

The adopted Chapter 2 “Vision Statement” of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians is the following:

Chapter 2: Vision Statement

The Carpathians are a living region with a common identity where people enjoy quality of life with rich traditions and in sound environment.

This natural and cultural heritage builds the basis for a competitive sustainable tourism destination.

Good cooperation, local management and partnerships contribute to the high quality of tourism, which ensures continuous benefits for local people and economies.

The elaboration of the Vision Statement was achieved through the group work. Therefore four teams were built who discussed their ideas and presented their draft visions to the plenum. The decision for the final Vision Statement resulted from the joint discussion of the draft visions in the plenum.

3 Elaboration of Chapter 5.1: Objectives

The objectives of the Tourism Strategy, included into subchapter 5.1 “Goals and Objectives” were discussed and elaborated during the meeting.

The teams built for the elaboration of the Vision Statement (see above) also discussed their ideas about objectives and presented their drafts to the plenum. Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, harmonised the drafts and formulated deriving objectives, which were again presented to the plenum, discussed and in the end agreed.

The adopted Objectives of subchapter 5.1 “Goals and Objectives” of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians are the following:

Chapter 5.1 Goals and Objectives (key elements)

Objective 1

Establishing a marketing scheme for the promotion of the Carpathians as unique destination, including the development of supportive conditions for sustainable tourism products and services

Objective 2

Developing an innovative tourism management at all levels, fully integrating the needs of local populations and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage

Objective 3

Establishing of a continuous process of awareness raising, capacity building, education and training on sustainable tourism development and management throughout vertical and horizontal levels

Discussion Notes

It was left open whether it might become necessary to consider the integration of additional objectives after Chapter 5 has been elaborated.

The inclusion of potentially new objectives will then be discussed and decided on during the next meeting of the TWG.

4 Identification of essential problems to be tackled in Strategy and Protocol

The essential problems in the field of tourism development in the Carpathians were identified through the group work using the Problem Tree methodology. Therefore three teams were built who discussed their ideas and presented their “problem trees” to the plenum.

Problem Tree Methodology

Kristina Vilimaite from CEEWEB, Hungary, presents the Problem Tree methodology, which serves as a tool for the working groups when analyzing an existing situation by identifying the major problems and their main causal relationships. The output expected is a graphical arrangement of problems differentiated according to ‘causes’ (roots) and ‘effects,’ (branches) joined by a core, or focal, problem. The core problem is defined as “Unsustainability of Tourism in the Carpathians”. This technique helps understanding the context and interrelationship of problems and the potential impacts therefore serve as the preparation for the elaboration of objectives under chapter 5.1.

Elaboration of Problem Trees by the Participants

Group 1:

Agata Pustelnik, Horatiu Popa, Jiri Hrabak

Effects:

- Uneven distribution of tourists
- Difficulties with launching and running sustainable “Businesses”
- Unsustainable supply: infrastructure, architecture, McDonaldization
 - poor quality of products and services
 - landscape being destroyed

Problem: Unsustainability of Tourism in the Carpathians

Causes:

- Poverty, low education, no flexibility, aged population
- Insufficient tourism management, existence of borders, no common strategy for tourism
- Unsustainable demand (quality and quantity)
- Uneven distribution of local people

Group 2:

Victor Teres, Dana Cajkova, Bernadetta Zawilinska, Hildegard Meyer, Tamara Malkova

Effects:

- Decreasing quality of local people life
- Loss of the local culture
- Pollutions, waste management problems
- Mass tourism
- Selling of land (external control)
- Destruction of the biodiversity and landscape
- Chaos in the architecture, no common housing development

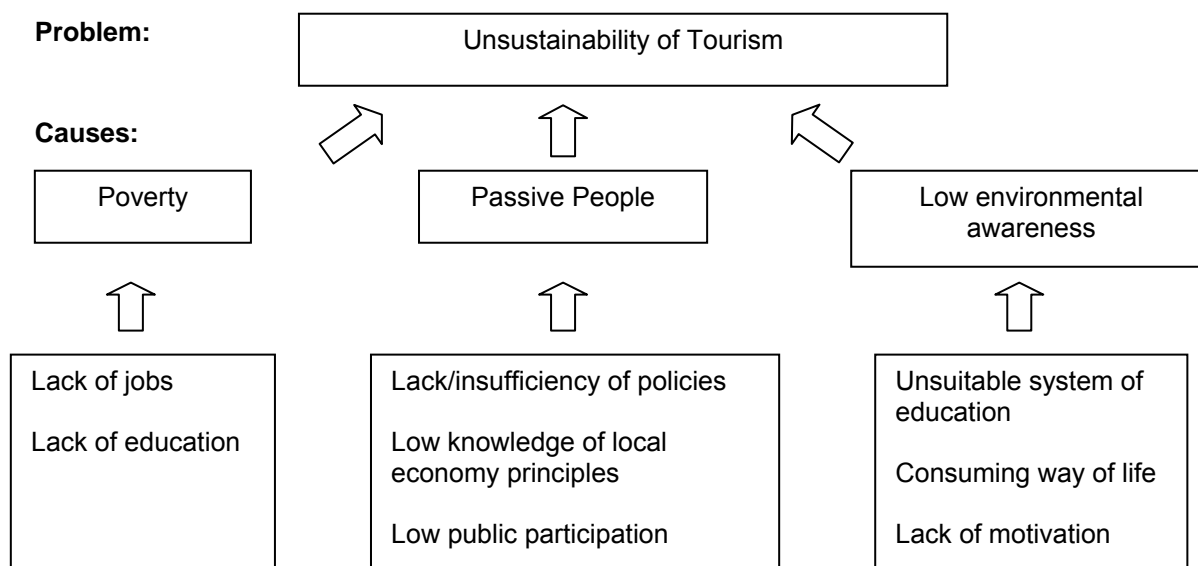
Problem: Unsustainability of Tourism in the Carpathians

Causes:

- Lack of suitable regulatory base, national and regional policies (economical policies, spatial plans, plans of tourism development, etc.)
- Poverty of local people
- Economic interests of the investors and local communities
- Low awareness of the impacts of the external investments
- Very low ecological awareness of the investors and local government
- Low level of knowledge and skills of possibilities of tourism development and regional products development (amongst locals)
- No connections of the investors with the area – the special values, traditions
- Lack of the protection system of tourists rights
- Low level of the local infrastructure

Group 3:

Istvan Sido, Monika Ochwat - Marcinkiewicz, Cezary Molski, Tomasz Lamorski



Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, gave additional remarks to the results of the group work and concluded that:

- Review of existing or development of new Tourism Master Plans is necessary, so that they fully integrate sustainability principles (e.g. strategy zonation and planning of destinations);
- Establishment of such bodies that foster the application of sustainable tourism is needed:
 - Inter-governmental platform

- Multi-stakeholder group (*ad hoc* /open ended), resulting in a communication system;
- Tourism Management Plans for all protected areas should be developed;
- Incentive Measures e.g. certification system should be employed;
- Budgets at regional/ local levels should be secured.

IX Presentations

On the first day of the meeting and in the morning of the second day, the participants of the meeting were introduced to the topic of the meeting through a number of presentations on different topics related to sustainable tourism in the Carpathians and the Carpathian Convention.

1 Presentation on the Background Document on Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians

Kristina Vilimaite from CEEWEB, Hungary, presents the Background Document on Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians, which has been submitted to COP1 in Kyiv, December 2006.

Excerpt of the Presentation

The Background Document has been elaborated by CEEWEB/ETE in the course of the Carpathian Project (INTERREG IIIB CADSES) and aims to present the current situation regarding positive and negative impacts of tourism on the Carpathian Countries based on various case studies from all seven Carpathian Countries.

Deriving from the current situation, the document strives to give an overview of the potentials tourism might have and identifies exemplary regions with differing tourism potential.

The document closes with recommendations for the future development of tourism in the Carpathian region.

Recommendations given by the Background Document on Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians:

- 1) For the creation of synergies in all the relevant sectors involved in tourism development and management that target the best enhancement of the megadestination that is "The Carpathians", a Strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians should be developed. This Strategy should aim to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to combine the efforts of all the Carpathian countries in finding and agreeing on actions to maintain the region for long-term tourism operations.
- 2) As tourism activities are widely unregulated and difficult to control, governments need to have an effective tool that helps them to find a common agreement at the regional level for advanced action regarding control and monitoring measures to ensure the high quality of their destinations in the long term. For this purpose, a Tourism Protocol under the Carpathian Convention will serve as a legal core tool for guiding the Parties and other stakeholders while they create joint mechanisms for the wise management and planning of tourism in the entire region.
- 3) Raising the awareness and building the capacity of those stakeholders and interest groups which are going to support the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy should be top priorities. These efforts would ensure proper involvement and the contribution of the Carpathian people to the implementation of the goals set out and agreed by the governments under the Carpathian Convention. To this end, appropriate action needs to be undertaken to ensure that tourism operation is based on a broad consensus and does not cause adverse effects to the mountainous population, their cultural heritage and their traditional knowledge.

The document can be downloaded from:
www.ceeweb.org/workinggroups/sustainabletourism/resources/ST_Opportunities_Carpathians_Bg_Doc_31-10-2006.pdf.

2 Presentation on the Carpathian Handbook, Article 9: Sustainable Tourism (Jana Brozova, on behalf of REC/EURAC)

Jana Brozova, National Focal Point of the Slovak Republic, presents the chapter dealing with the Carpathian Convention Article 9 on Sustainable Tourism from the Carpathian Convention Handbook for Implementation, developed by REC/EURAC.

Excerpt of the document handed in by REC/EURAC

In the umbrella project "Support to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the framework of the Alpine – Carpathian partnership" supported by the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, two projects are being implemented by the Regional Environmental Center in partnership with the European Academy (EURAC).

- Support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention: diagnostic audit and guide on implementation; and
- Support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention – Phase II

These two projects will produce a major publication: the Carpathian Convention Handbook for Implementation targeted at local authorities.

In order to ensure that this publication is as relevant and useful as possible to its target audience, and that it can be used straightforwardly by the donor community to allocate assistance, comments and feedback are crucial and indispensable. We would therefore like to request feedback from the participants at the first meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism on the attached draft chapter of the draft Handbook. You are invited to raise significant issues, point out mistakes and provide additional relevant examples.

Please note that this document is a draft version and has not yet been edited for publication. In the final version, the language and general presentation will be improved. Please send your written comments to: elp@rec.org

For more information see:
www.rec.org/REC/Programs/environmentallaw/carpathian/default.html

3 Presentation on Tourist Railways and Sustainable Tourism (John Fuller, FCILT)

Mr. John Fuller from the New Europe Railway Heritage Trust informed about the opportunities of tourist railways for sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians and presented good practice examples from his work in and beyond the Carpathian Countries.

Excerpts of the Presentation

Narrow gauge railways combine two strong human instincts:

- Nostalgia for the Past "In my days it was different..", and
- Curiosity to visit new places and experience different cultures.

Narrow gauge railways allow access to sensitive areas in an eco-friendly way and re-cycle industrial assets that would be lost.

Railways join communities across geographical "obstructions", across ethnical and cultural boundaries and across National Boundaries.

Special features:

- "Little" trains are especially attractive

- Visitors feel they are contributing towards conservation if they travel to / through sensitive landscapes by train
- Your visitors are in “manageable chunks” and are contained and controlled
- We can run summer and winter if required
- Visitors spend as much in the area of the railway as they do on the railway itself

4 Presentation on the Potential of the Carpathians as a “mega-destination” for Sustainable Tourism in Europe (Laszlo Puczko, Xellum Ltd.)

Mr. Laszlo Puczko, international tourism expert from Hungary, presented a vision on the Carpathians as sustainable tourism destination in Europe.

Summary of the Presentation

The Carpathians as tourism destination are so far not existent. However, they have a great potential for tourism development, due to their rich natural and cultural treasures.

The question Mr. Puczko raises is thus, how this potential might be used in the future and for whom a Carpathian destination shall be created. In this context, it is of crucial importance to persuade businesses, authorities and other relevant stakeholders in the Carpathians that a sustainable development of the Carpathians holds a special advantage, not only restrictions.

He points out some potential highlights and future tourism offers in the Carpathians, but also makes clear the difficulties the Carpathian Countries will have to face on their way towards becoming a tourist destination.

Regarding the promotion of the Carpathians as one sustainable tourism destination, he sees the biggest difficulty in the management of the area as a whole. First, because of language barriers, second because of the area’s size. Therefore, Mr. Puczko proposes the creation of distinct tourism offers through building thematic as well as regional clusters.

Discussion Notes

The Working Group agrees upon the fact that the right marketing of the Carpathians as tourist destination is of high importance.

Agata Pustelnik, FWIE, Poland, and Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, strongly support the idea of marketing the Carpathians under the theme of “Sustainability”. Also the idea of using thematic and regional clusters for the management of the Carpathians, as introduced in the presentation, finds approval.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, emphasises that the development of a good strategy will decisively support the qualitative growth of the Carpathians and its individual regions. Therefore he proposes to show the presentation again at COP2. Mr. Puczko and the TWG agree on that proposal.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, states that it will be most important to keep the balance between controlled development, marketing and the benefit for all – nature and people.

X Conclusions

1 Concluding Comments by the Participants

Michael Meyer asked the participants of the meeting to give a short feedback on the meeting, its organisation, the expectations for the future process, etc.

Cezary Molski, Ministry of Economy, Poland

It is a crucial thing to prepare the strategy for the multi-national level as well as for the regions; a lot of forces are working parallel and therefore it would be good to do joint efforts. Therefore the strategy seems to be more important than the protocol (although the protocol is valuable as well). The meeting provided for a possibility to discuss with positive results and to involve so many different opinions. It was also a lesson forward to understand better the opinions of NGOs. This proved the necessity to have an open-ended working group.

Dana Cajkova, National Focal Point of the Slovak Republic
Supports and totally agrees with the comment of Cezary Molski.

Hildegard Meyer, WWF, Austria

Contacts with investors, and the inclusion of businesses is of great importance for the strategy. In its proposal towards the EU for core funding, CERI included that they would like to have a platform on sustainable tourism in the Carpathians promoted through the homepage. The initiative of organising this meeting in the Carpathians is well appreciated.

Natalia Voloshyna, Swiss-Ukrainian Forest Development Project in Transcarpathia FORZA; Ukraine

TWG have a very tough job ahead with a hard time limit. Finding some compromises regarding the involvement of NGOs and governments is needed. The implementation will be done by NGOs and therefore the public has to be informed about this process. Thus, the members of TWG should use links, partners, etc. to inform others;

The vision statement still can be considered as a draft that could be perfected in the future.

The Swiss Cohesion Fund for the new EU members could be an additional financial source for the TWG activities; it would make sense to develop a common project proposal.

Agata Pustelnik, FWIE; Poland

The two documents are crucial background documents for future work in the Carpathians. However, it is important not to forget that besides these documents further work should be done in the regions, where the documents will serve as good tools for further actions.

Hopefully the Tourism Strategy and Protocol will be developed and implemented well in order to really make the Carpathians a living region.

Bernadetta Zawilinska, PTTK – Academic Section, Poland

The meeting served for better understanding about the processes of the Carpathian Convention. The TWG worked very well during the meeting, however finding experts that are willing to contribute to the development of the protocol voluntarily and therefore preparing the drafts of the two documents after the meeting can be difficult. In addition, it is necessary to spread the knowledge about the Convention and publicise the work of TWG.

Martina Paskova, Chair of the TWG, Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic

The fear of the participants regarding the timeline, the missing experts, etc. is understandable, but by putting into the work the best efforts and being optimistic, it is possible to succeed.

Promotion and mass media, along with other tools in different ways should be used for better results.

Tomasz Lamorski, Babia Góra National Park, Poland

This meeting provided for the possibility to have a real good workshop with participants from all levels, enjoy good cooperation and win new contacts. Not only the documents developed during this meeting, but also the process of working together are good outputs – thanks to all the participants for this.

Jana Urbancikova, Bile Karpaty Protected Landscape Area Administration

Involvement of experts should not be a problem as there definitely are people knowledgeable about their regions and tourism issues in each of the countries. And even if this is not the case, International experts can be involved.

Horatiu Popa, Green Echoes Association, Romania

It is a pity that the delegates from Romania are not at this meeting. It will be very important for the future that they are involved; especially as there is such a high percentage of the mountains in Romania. At the meeting, however, there were really good discussions, great people participating, therefore there is a hope for the successful outcomes of TWG work.

Tamara Malkova, Green Dossier, Ukraine

This project is a unique experiment which shall grow in the future. Sustainable tourism development needs to focus both on environmental and business issues, and a high need for

communication and cooperation. The development of this protocol and strategy are quite an example for this and the documents will be very useful in the future.

The approach that different stakeholders and levels discuss these things together is very much welcomed; hopefully this experience will be disseminated to other processes. It is hard work, but it should be possible to find experts and funds.

It is of crucial importance that the participants learn from each other and stay in contact.

Jiří Hrabák, Ministry for Regional Development, Czech Republic

This meeting is a first step; it is very important how quick and how well TWG will bring the results of its work to the governments and the people who need these results.

Rostislav Hošek Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Republic

The promotion on regional and national level of the documents and the Carpathian Convention is very important. The same goes for cooperation with other partners on the both levels, e.g. with NGO partners as Greenways. The effect of this will be good success of the strategy.

Monika Ochwat-Marcinkiewicz, League of Nature Conservation, Poland

Development of a portfolio for promoting the documents, the Carpathian Convention and related projects will be needed. One example is to prepare Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), another are logos

→ *The proposal on FAQs was supported by Cezary Molski and Michael Meyer*

→ *Comment by Jana Urbancikova:*

At this stage the process and not the product should be promoted. The product is not ready yet; care should be taken not to raise people's expectations and then disappoint them.

→ *Comment Horatiu Popa*

For reaching remote communities other promotion tools than a webpage should be employed.

Michael Meyer, Rapporteur, Ecological Tourism in Europe

First of all it is necessary that the local population start to trust in their country legislation; it would surely ask too much of them to bother them with a Pan-Carpathian tool already now.

Therefore the seven governments should be convinced first, e.g. through a promotion tour.

Then, in a second step, the promotion should be expanded and directed towards the local people.

2 Miscellaneous

Call for cooperation from CEEWEB

Kristina Vilimaite from CEEWEB presents a brochure on sustainable tourism which has been developed by the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of CEEWEB that can be used for promoting sustainable tourism as a concept also on community level.

This brochure shall be translated into the various languages of the Carpathians and native speakers are needed who would like to take responsibility for translation in their country. It is not secured yet that there are enough funds for printing the brochure in all languages. However, if possible, it shall be achieved to have the brochure in all Carpathian languages.

The following participants of the meeting agreed to cooperate:

- Romania: Horatiu Popa, Green Echoes Association
- CZ: Martina Paskova, Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic
- PL: Bernadetta Zawilinska, PTTK, Poland
- SK: Dana Cajkova, National Focal Point of the Slovak Republic

Kristina Vilimaite will send out the electronic version of the brochure to the volunteers. The translations of the brochure will be expected by May, 15.

3 Next Meeting and venue of the TWG

The delegates have to propose the venue of the next meeting.

As not all countries were represented by delegates, the decision about the next venue was left open, so that all countries have the possibility to invite the TWG for the next meeting.

The meeting will be held in October 2007.

One proposal for arranging the next meeting came from Ukraine. In this context the idea emerged to organise the meeting back-to-back with the conference “Ecotourism and Sustainable Development in the Carpathians”, October 9-12, 2007.

Annex 1 List of Participants

Official delegates

Czech Republic

	Name	Surname	Institution	Position	County	Contact data	E-mail address
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Slovakia

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Stakeholders

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Other organisations

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Organisers

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Annex 2 Meeting Agenda

AGENDA

Day I - April, 2

Morning Session for NGOs

09.30 – 12.30 Introduction of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism to the NGOs;
provision of information on:

- Carpathian Convention Process
- Purpose and tasks of the TWG
- Role of the NGOs – expected inputs to the TWG activities

Flexible coffee break in between

Start of the Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (TWG)

12.30 – 14.30 Lunch Break

14.30 – 18.45 Introduction and General Aspects

- Welcome remarks on behalf of the Interim Chair of the Working Group, the Government of the Czech Republic, by Martina Paskova, Head of Settlements' and Human Ecology Department, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic
- Adoption of the Agenda
- Election of a Chair, a Co-chair and a Rapporteur
- Carpathian Convention process and the role of the TWG
- TWG activities, timeframe and tasks until COP2
- Adoption of the Terms of Reference of the TWG

Tourism in the Carpathians – Opportunities and Threats

- Background document “Sustainable Tourism Opportunities in the Carpathians” (*Kristina Vilimaite, CEEWEB, Hungary*)
- Introductory presentation on the preparation of the strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians and the tourism protocol – general aspects & examples (*Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe, Germany*)
- Draft Handbook on the Carpathian Convention: Article 9 “Sustainable Tourism” (*Jana Brozova, Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic, on behalf of REC*)
- Tourist Railways and Sustainable Tourism: Opportunities in the Carpathian Region (*John Fuller, FCILT, United Kingdom*)

Flexible coffee break in between

19.00 Carpathian Evening

Day II - April, 3

- 9.00 – 13.00 Preparation of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians
- Discussion on the Terms of Reference of the *strategy for the future sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians*
 - The potential of the Carpathians as a mega-destination for sustainable tourism in Europe (*Dr. László Puczkó, Xellum Kft., Hungary*)
 - Introduction of the draft structure of the strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians (from now on referred to as Tourism Strategy)
 - Discussion on the draft structure of the Tourism Strategy
 - Adoption of the draft structure of the Tourism Strategy

Flexible coffee break in between

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch Break

- 14.00 – 18.45 Adoption of the Terms of Reference of the *strategy for the future sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians*
- Discussion of the process of elaborating the drafts of the individual chapters and sub-chapters
- Elaboration of the First Two Elements of the Tourism Strategy
1. Purpose of the Strategy
 - Discussion of the purpose of the strategy
 - Adoption of the purpose of the strategy
 2. Vision Statement
 - Joint creation of a vision
 - Elaboration of the vision statement
 - Adoption of the vision statement

Flexible coffee break in between

19.00 Dinner

Day III - April, 4

- 9.00 – 13.00 Excursion in the White Carpathians

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch Break

- 14.00 – 18.45 Adoption of the Objectives (Chapter 5.1) of the Tourism Strategy
- Protocol Development
- Adoption of the Terms of References of the Draft Tourism Protocol

- Introduction of the draft structure of the Tourism Protocol to the Carpathian Convention
- Problem identification exercise
- Discussion of the draft structure
- Adoption of the Structure of the Draft Tourism Protocol

Flexible coffee break in between

19.00 Dinner

Day IV - April, 5

9.00 – 11.00 Discussion and conclusions regarding the process of elaborating the drafts of the individual chapters and articles
Concluding Comments by the Participants
Miscellaneous (time and place of the second meeting)

Flexible coffee break in between

11.00 End of the meeting

Structure of the Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians

1. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of the strategy for the future tourism development of the Carpathians (from now on referred to as Tourism Strategy) accurately identifies targets and anticipated outcomes. The strategy is to serve as a communication document which encourages governments and other stakeholders to take further actions and initiatives on sustainable tourism development.

2. VISION STATEMENT

Creating a vision means to outline an image for the future of tourism in the Carpathians we seek to create. This ideal vision does not show detailed goals or steps towards their achievement, but it serves as guiding principle during the whole process of developing the Tourism Strategy to the Carpathian Convention.

3. A STRATEGY FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

It is important to create a strategy that is being supported best as possible by the Carpathian Countries and its various stakeholders. In order to obtain such a “strategy for all stakeholders” two aspects have to be taken into consideration here:

- a) It is necessary to identify the target groups towards which the strategy shall be addressed in order to reach broad applicability and acceptance.
- b) The strategy development is a dynamic process which affords the continuous identification of stakeholders to be involved in the formulation and the implementation of the strategy. Their roles, as well as their concerns have to be determined; they have to be identified on national, as well as regional and local levels.

4. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

The elaboration of the Tourism Strategy has to follow a certain process with determined steps and principles in order to achieve a well considered result.

4.1 APPROACH

An approach aims to pre-define the way of how to achieve the goals of the strategy. The guiding principles of such an approach can e.g. include participation, interdisciplinary work, integration, trans-border cooperation, etc.

4.2 INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES & RELATED STRATEGIES

This chapter determines which existing international and national agreements and frameworks need to be considered as guiding principles for the development of the Strategy. One most important example is the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Furthermore, the Tourism Strategy should be formulated in accordance with national priorities and policy frameworks.

5. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The framework for action is the main part of the document. It shall concretely determine all issues, necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy.

5.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Identifies strategic goals and the deriving objectives valid for the whole Carpathian region

5.2 SET OF ACTIVITIES

Describes concrete activities and their scope of application within the Carpathians.

- 5.2.1 Carpathian-Wide
Defines activities and thematic priorities that have impacts on or require actions of all Carpathian Countries in their unity
- 5.2.2 Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation
Defines activities and thematic priorities that have impacts on or require actions of two or more countries
- 5.2.3 Individual Countries
Defines activities and thematic priorities that have impacts on or require actions of individual countries

5.3 ACTION PLAN INCLUDING TIMEFRAME AND RESPONSIBLE ACTORS

The action plan determines the timeframe for the individual activities as well as the related responsibilities (table format)

6. MONITORING SYSTEM

This chapter introduces the monitoring scheme which will help to oversee the implementation of the planned goals, objectives, activities and indicators of the implementation of the strategy.

ANNEXES

Literature list

Links to other strategies

**Structure of
the Tourism Protocol to the Carpathian Convention**

Preamble

Chapter 1 General Provisions

- Article 1. Objective
- Article 2. Obligations of the Implementation
- Article 3. Use of Terms
- Article 4. Scope
- Article 5. Relationship with the Convention
- Article 6. International Cooperation
- Article 7. The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements and Arrangements

Chapter 2 Cross-Cutting Issues

- Article 8. Tourism as Integrative Tool for Sustainable Regional Development, including Least Developed Areas and Protected Areas
- Article 9. Decision Making
- Article 10. Public Participation

Chapter 3 Planning and Management

- Article 11. Integrated Management (Territorial Integration)
- Article 12. Adaptive Management
- Article 13. Destination Management Tools (e.g. ROS, Regional Statistics)
- Article 14. Tourism Impact Assessment and Management
- Article 15. Tourism Spatial Planning (Infrastructure Development)
- Article 16. Rights to Use of Land and Approval Processes

Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts

- Article 17. Managing Environmental Impacts (e.g. EIA, LAC, Carrying Capacity, Zoning, Visual Impact Assessment)
- Article 18. Supporting the Uptake of the Environmentally-friendly Technologies by Tourism Facilities
- Article 19. Tourist Traffic and Transport
- Article 20. Sport Facilities
- Article 21. Sport Activities
- Article 22. Wildlife Observation

Chapter 5 Social and Cultural Impacts

- Article 23. Managing Social Impacts (SIA)
- Article 24. Preservation of Cultural Values and Traditions
- Article 25. Equitable Sharing of Benefits

Chapter 6 Economic Impacts

- Article 26. Enhancing Economic Benefits to the Communities and Regions (Sustainable Financing)
- Article 27. Supporting the Marketing of Sustainable Tourism
- Article 28. Tourism Businesses Quality Improvement

Article 29. Business Environment (Regulations and Deliveries)

Chapter 7 Incentive Measures

Article 30. Certification and Labeling

Article 31. Tax Reduction

Chapter 8 Implementing Bodies

Article 32. Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to this Protocol

Article 33. Secretariat

Article 34. Implementation Committee

Article 35. Participation of the Relevant National, Regional and Local Authorities and National Focal Points

Article 36. Participation of Stakeholders

Chapter 9 Stakeholder Involvement

Article 37. Public Awareness Raising

Article 38. Education

Article 39. Notification Process and Access to Information

Article 40. Capacity-Building

Chapter 10 Provisions for the Implementation

Article 41. Strategy for the Future Tourism Development of the Carpathians

Article 42. Financial Mechanism and Resources

Article 43. Monitoring and Reporting

Article 44. Compliance

Chapter 11 Administrative Issues

Article 45. Assessment and Review

Article 46. Signature and Ratification

Article 47. Entry into Force

Article 48. Withdrawal

Article 49. Authentic Texts