



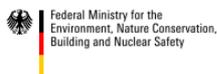
Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism

Belgrade
Serbia
24 – 26 November 2014

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MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING
OF THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION WORKING GROUP
ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

24 – 26 November 2014
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Michael Meyer



I. Attendance

The Sixth Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism was attended by governmental delegates of five out of seven Carpathian Countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia), NGOs, as well as tourism experts and observers.

35 participants from the following countries attended the meeting: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Austria and Germany.

II. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened at 14:00 on Monday, November 24, 2014.

The opening remarks were made by the Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Serbia, Mr. Slobodan Erdeljan and the Assistant to the Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication of Serbia, Ms. Renata Pindzo, who both welcomed the participants in Belgrade. The two ministries will be responsible for taking actions in regards to the Strategy for sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians.

Mr. Erdeljan pointed out that the tourism is of high importance in regional development and especially sustainable tourism will help the economic development in rural areas. As common cultural heritage and biodiversity is an important capital for sustainable development, the success of Carpathians is through regional cooperation.

Ms. Pindzo expressed her opinion that tourism should be in line with sustainable development to be able to foster local people and environment. As the global economy extends, if tourism properly designed and managed, it can support the development. State has the role to set actions so better quality is achieved. Joint Actions and cooperation will allow us to prepare a destination in tourism.

Welcome speech and organizational information was provided by Mr. Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E.) and Ms. Klaudia Kuras, UNEP Vienna Office - SCC.

Election of the Chair of the meeting followed and the participants agreed on Ms. Irena Posin, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication.

The Agenda of the meeting was adopted together with the proposal to add discussion on two questions about the usefulness of the project for elaborating the Strategy to the second day of the meeting. E.T.E. would like to support the meetings in the future and structure the implementation of the Strategy. Therefore it would be useful to receive views from the participants if the project should be prolonged.

The questions are as per below:



1. How useful did you find the contribution of the German Government of financing partially the elaboration of the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians and ETEs (Ecological Tourism in Europe) performance in implementing the project?
2. What are the key challenges for implementing this Strategy in short and mid-term future?

In addition, it was agreed to review previously sent Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Coordination Platform and representation of country experts in the Coordination Centre.

Mr. Harald Egerer, UNEP Vienna Office - SCC informed the participants that as not all Parties are represented at the meeting, no final decisions can be taken and the outcomes will be circulated for further electronic consultations. Mr. Egerer also provided an update on the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention and their status of ratification. Ms. Alexandra Doslic informed UNEP Vienna Office – SCC that the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism, as well as the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management shall be ratified in the Serbian Parliament soon.

III. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians

The Parties provided a short update on the implementation of the Strategy.

Ms. Nora Pataki, Ministry for National Economy, Hungary, expressed the support of Hungary for the project and appreciated that it brought stakeholders together to work on the topic. Hungary confirms their representatives nominated to the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism – Andrea Nemes from the Ministry for National Economy and Mr. Gabor Kiss from the Ministry of Agriculture. On 16.9.2014, a stakeholder meeting was organized in Budapest to introduce and discuss the Strategy before it was adopted in Mikulov. 16 different organizations were present and they are all invited to the national Tourism Task Force (TTF). In addition, these organizations can invite other members too. If there is a need for special institutionalization, Hungary will be waiting for guidelines. The stakeholders need to identify existing and also overlapping projects to implement the Strategy.

Mr. Karol Biedrzycki, Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Poland, thanked Parties for the adoption of the Strategy at COP4 in Mikulov. Poland nominated Ms. Maria Napiorkowska as the Tourism Focal Point and Mr. Biedrzycki is the second representative. The implementation of the Strategy was consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which advised that the Strategy doesn't have to be transformed into a national legislation. The role of the TTF in Poland could be taken by the Steering Committee on Implementation of Carpathian Convention actions.

Mr. Meyer suggested the elaboration of Terms of Reference for the TTF so there is a common understanding between Parties on the tasks of the TTFs.

Mr. Marius Daniel Andra, Department of SMEs, Business, Environment and Tourism, Romania, informed that Romania ratified the Tourism Protocol. At the moment, there is no available budget to implement the Strategy and therefore there is a need to find a solution.



Parties need to find agreement on promotion and common target. The question of the Tourism Focal Point of Romania is not yet solved. (Mr. Meyer suggested Mr. Octavian Arsene to be nominated, as he is involved in the topic) Mr. Andra shortly presented the proposal to host the permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention in Brasov, Romania.

Ms. Dasa Szaboova, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development, Slovakia, announced there will be a meeting of Ministers of Slovakia in April 2015 where the Strategy will be presented and decided how they want to implement it. The aim would be to implement it on governmental level. Communication platform for the implementation of the Strategy will be established in Slovakia and later followed by TTF. In addition, Slovakia is preparing national criteria of quality.

Ms. Vera Jankovic, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication, Serbia, informed that the Tourism Focal Point was chosen however has to be changed again. They will provide the information in due course.

The Parties agreed that they would submit the nomination of Tourism Focal Points and information about the Tourism Task Forces to the Secretariat in writing if UNEP Vienna Office - SCC will send prior a letter of request, which is not embedded in an email with other topics.

Mr. Meyer suggested amending the Terms of Reference for the CC-WGST that were circulated after the previous meeting of the Working Group in Bratislava, May 2014. (Annex 2). He also emphasized that it remains a challenge to bring together governmental representatives and observers with expertise on tourism to the meetings in order to discuss and agree on important tourism topics, which have an impact on their countries and the Carpathians. Therefore an in-depth discussion is needed on how to have a good representation in the CC-WGST. Ms. Posin expressed her opinion that it would be useful to know on what kind of experts the CC-WGST actually looking for so the Parties can make a good decision when it comes to nomination.

Mr. Biedrzycki pointed out that a new funding programme of EU will be implemented in 7 years so the Parties need to find out how to implement the Strategy within this funding period. Experts are not enough for the implementation but how to find people who would be ready to apply for funds and realize projects?

Mr. Meyer explained that the CC-WGST will have lot of tasks such as setting the frame for indicators, monitoring, branding, promotion etc. and it would be good to nominate from each country a destination manager who knows the situation in their country inside out. It is hardly achievable but if experts are put together, they will be able to come to a consensus.

Mr. Max Rossberg, European Wilderness Society, Austria, suggested to look for long-term committed people as the project will be going on for many years. There should be people who are little different, come with new ideas to prevent the mistakes from Alpine practices.



Mr. Egerer asked if the Tourism Focal Point and the tourism expert should be one or two different people. **It was agreed that official letter would be sent by the Secretariat to the Parties to designate NFP and experts/members to the CC-WGST.**

Ms. Pataki emphasized that the letter should be clear with the needs of the person to be designated and why is it necessary, e.g. an expert working at destination/national level and/or specialized in one of the core topics of the strategy (products development, marketing, monitoring) with good track-records over the past years in practical terms.

Day 2 was opened with a discussion on Action Plans. Not mentioned activities below were clear to the participants and at this moment required no discussion.

Country Action Plan:

*Action 1: **Initiate destination and/or country specific tourism product development** (e.g. rural tourism, slow tourism, heritage tourism, ecotourism in protected areas, spa tourism, dark sky parks, social tourism and handicapped tourism), focusing on all seasons*

Ms. Andrea Hagovska, People in Tatras, Slovakia and spokesperson of Ms. Szaboova suggests to connect activities with other Protocols to the Carpathian Convention.

Action 2: Identify and support the establishment of Carpathian wide authentic clusters of sustainable tourism products, e.g. thematic tours (e.g. architecture, cuisine, land use, mixed cultural/technical heritage etc), agritourism, hiking, cycling, ski touring

Ms. Hagovska thinks that at first we should define the common understanding of what a cluster is before defining structures. We should also get recommendation from other organizations.

Mr. Constantin Serban, Greentourism Ecological Association, Romania informed that cycling cluster is going to be created in Romania but there is a need for financing, as many stakeholders want to participate.

Mr. Biedrzycki said that local organizations and tour agencies, associations of guides, shops and markets interested in working in tourist service create clusters as they are from different sectors. The structure exists that look like clusters and we need to develop them and teach them to be more responsible in tourism.

Mr. Andra sees cluster as a number of entities coming together to achieve a common goal. But they also have their own interest. In Romania they have different incentives for associations and organizations etc. and it is not good to limit this concept. There is an institution in Brussels that divided clusters according to localization. Clusters are dynamic and they can become a big cluster but they can also die over night. He suggests looking at good examples from France or Germany.

A question was raised on how to have sustainable tourism within clusters. Mr. Andra think that tourists and tourism should be sustainable and not the clusters itself as it would limit



their actions. The financing comes to clusters because they see some incentives. Ms. Hagovska think that is about the core activity – tourism, innovation etc. – and therefore it needs to be set that the core activity of the cluster would be sustainable tourism.

Mr. Rossberg added that as it is about clusters on Carpathian-wide basis, communication will be crucial. There needs to be a strong communication component and the clusters need to keep each other informed. There should be a meta-cluster representing all topics and then there will be smaller clusters, but someone needs to be responsible for them. The communication needs to be available, a contact person should be designated in case someone wants to join or provide an idea.

Mr. Serban said it is good to have (a) local action groups inside clusters group. Now they start to write new strategies and it is a good moment to transfer the Carpathian Tourism Strategy into them. The clusters can be then started with more ~~within~~ the local action groups having a common Carpathian vision. .

Outcomes of the discussion:

- no ideal size of the cluster as it depends on the cluster itself
- decision to be made if there is a need for guidelines in order to connect the groups
- possible establishment of some system of observatories which would set rules and monitor all activities
- clusters would have experts on linking so the exchange of information can work

Comment on action plan in general – Mr. Andra suggests for each country to provide their schedule to the CC-WGST on how they are going to put the activities into action. But it should not be very strict, as they need to think about the actors and entities carrying out the actions. The ministries should show stakeholders that they are going with them and not against them.

There are many activities in various countries that are already being carried out or are even completed.

Action 4: Set principles and develop guidelines on sustainable tourism infrastructure and activities

Mr. Biedrzycki pointed out that principles and guidelines are developed in different areas, e.g. in hotel infrastructure the sustainable use exists but there is a need to develop them also in other areas: trade, infrastructure for tourism, attractions etc. So different principles and guidelines have to be developed for different areas.

Mr. Andra considers Danube Delta a specific area, but Romania released Master Plan for sustainable tourism inside that area. They applied some principles, which are also in this strategy – no mass tourism, small groups of tourists, ecotourism. Zurinovka is a new area there and new mayor saw opportunities and wanted to build two new hotels but the master plan stopped him. He can build small houses for families etc. but not huge buildings.

Ms. Posin closed discussion on this activity advising to create a platform for exchange of information.



Mr. Rossberg thinks that such platform would not only prevent doublework but would also help to create success stories in the countries.

Action 6: Support the establishment of regional Carpathian touristic (destination) brands contributing to the preservation of landscape character and tangible/intangible cultural heritage, possibly connected to a Carpathian brand

Mr. Serban informed about the Wallachian Vatra holiday village project. They want to create a tourism destination to ~~and introduce Carpathian cultural heritage~~ introduce Wallachian culture as a common cultural heritage of the Carpathians and gather different Wallachian specifics from each country under a common concept there. They are currently looking for plans to build Wallachian type of houses, each from different Carpathian country.

Mr. Andra said after clustering, branding is the second important problem. There is a need to create a common brand for the Carpathians in order to make a competition to the Alps. Making a common brand is very difficult as every country imagines it differently. But it is important to bring together different brands (e.g. in Romania - Carpathian Garden), then put together the similarities and different points and analyze them. Then common item points could be taken out and a general brand could be created faster.

Mr. Biedrzycki informed that Mr. Dawid Lasek, Carpathian Euroregion will present his project, which is being developed for past 3 years. It is not an easy task to develop a common brand and sell it in other EU countries and across the world. For this we need big money and marketing. Mr. Lasek informed that the Carpathian brand is based on identified brands on local level. The presentation followed after discussion on Action Plans..

Action 7: Support the development of cross-border tourism cooperation, favorable visa regime where applicable, and linking of trails-implementation to joint cross-border tourism products

Mr. Lasek expressed his opinion that it would be good to invite cross-border cooperation structures to these meetings as they have finance mechanism to support projects. Stakeholders should check the CBC calls.

Action 8: Establish incentive measures for local tourism businesses developing and implementing sustainable tourism products, incl. measures for removing barriers to effective sustainable business operations

Mr. Andra informed that on 26.11. an interministerial meeting will take place in Romania, where he is in charge of two projects: new tourism law and state aid for businesses.

The participants discussed then what could be the incentive measures.

Mr. Serban proposed the VAT exemption for sustainable tourism services and raising taxes for classic/unsustainable tourism services, funds being used to encourage the green tourism providers



They agreed that it could be a direct financial support focused on ecotourism, investment in infrastructure, changing VAT, etc. or it can be a development of a project for a region, which supports a local population.

Action 9: Ensure participatory involvement (e.g. workshops, online consultations) of local communities in regional product development

This action is set for a later year however the product development shall happen in an earlier stage.

It was suggested that the years in the columns for actions should be clarified and explained how they should be treated.

Mr. Biedrzycki advised that the local action groups could be interested in the product development as it would be a potential for them.

Action 10: Develop programs for promoting and funding the preservation of local cultural and natural heritage through tourism

There is an opportunity to apply for common projects. It is important to create a common cross-border programme.

Action 11: Establish the Sustainable Tourism Task Force as part of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

Terms of Reference for the TTF will be developed.

Action 14: Zone the key touristic areas with a focus on carrying capacity issues, and implement assessment measures based on EIA process principles

As zoning is probably done in all countries, a question was raised if this is a revision of the zoned areas and collecting information on current situation or if new zones shall be established.

Mr. Meyer explained it is both. The countries need to set a geographical scope in order to collect data for measuring the tourism impacts on natural and cultural resources. He suggests to measure it on a smaller area at first.

Mr. Rossberg suggested imposing a carrying capacity control or limit in the area and if we deal with hotels or B&Bs, we need to tell them in advance what limits might arrive. So part of the zoning is trying to get closer to the idea on how many tourists are accepted per year. Even Grand Canyon has limits, even there zonation is existing.

Ms. Hagovska says key zones may serve for 3 main purposes: statistic, environmental assessment and management. In Serbia it is used also for land use planning.

Action 15: Contribute to a common set of indicators on the effects of implemented policies and strategies to develop sustainable tourism in the Carpathians



Several publications exist on this topic and CC should use one of them. There is a need for a special session between the CC-WGST and experts.

Mr. Meyer pointed out that this is a country action plan so the Parties need to deal with this topic individually with own set of indicators. Then we can compare and come up with a common set of indicators and we can establish an observatory and monitoring center for the Carpathians.

Action 18: Establish a working group for assessing tourism impact on natural and cultural heritage (including Protected Areas), also using the results of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes and other tools

It would be useful to create Terms of Reference also for this working group.

Action 19: Support the establishment of destination management organizations (DMO) in key touristic areas (if applicable) to implement sustainable tourism management schemes with local stakeholders

According to Mr. Rossberg, the representatives of Protected Areas should be also included in destination management organizations (DMOs) otherwise there will always be a conflict between the tourism side and the PAs side.

Action 20: Develop a system of incentives to support the improvement and use of local supply chains to and from tourism

Many countries have plans for rural development, which are being financially supported by the EU, and this money can be used to support the local production. Another way would be through public procurement, Horizon 2020 etc.

It is also important to set common rules as e.g. in Germany, only 26% of products actually are coming from region. The question is what is a region, how big it is and how many % of the product needs to come from local supplies to be called regional.

Action 24: Establish a system of continuous education and training for relevant target groups on sustainable tourism development, e.g. education programs at schools, raising awareness of the public in regards to natural and cultural heritage

For this action, funding would be possible from Erasmus and Erasmus + programs. It can be used e.g. for curriculum on PAs management in schools, development of case studies, education in forest areas and camps for elementary schools. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) also offers funding for tourism for the potential education and training.



Joint Action Plan:

Action 3: *Initiate and possibly create a certification and/or labeling system for sustainable tourism for the Carpathian Brand, supported by a Carpathian-wide marketing strategy*

Mr. Serban provided an example of the EcoLabel used in Romania Europe from 2003 . To receive the EcoLabel, 425 more than 100 criteria must be fulfilled and only few providers can fulfill them. The solution to this dysfunction of Ecolabel is to split the criteria into different categories levels (eg. from 1 to 5 accorns), as in Progressive Green Labeling System (PGL) developed in Romania.

Mr. Biedrzycki asked more details about PGL and Mr. Serban answered in his following presentation including a comparative table of EcoLabel and PGL.

Ms. Hagovska asked if the labeling is going to be connected with the national quality system.

This whole topic needs to be discussed and a decision has to be made how to integrate and not compete with existing labels. In order to achieve sustainability in this sector, it is needed to create an umbrella setting a common standard.

Mr. Rossberg mentioned Destinet, which is listing labels. We would need experts from each country on this topic and this topic only. Successful label needs people who are really dedicated to the task.

Action 7: *Design, where applicable, a common system of marking trails throughout the Carpathians*

This is very important and can be achieved in a short time once the agreement on how to do it is reached. However it is hard even to agree on common marking inside of one country. What is possible is to motivate the responsible organizations by incentives or restrictions in order to reach agreement.

Action 10: *Initiate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned from the operation of DMOs in terms of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians*

Terms of Reference for DMOs will be created.

Action 22: *Create an online platform for education, training and sharing of best practices available to all stakeholders*

UNEP Vienna Office - SCC is a project partner of Innovation in Rural Tourism project, which is a live platform for education and as a final result new tourism destinations could be established. It would be good to access the information.

Action 24: *Exchange know-how on the contribution of tourism to biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation with other destinations*



Mr. Biedrzycki informed that UNEP/GRID Warsaw from Poland established a platform (<http://www.konwencjakarpacka.pl/>) for exchanging information on the Carpathians however they are looking for partners. At the moment, they only have data from Poland.

After the discussion on Action Plans, Mr. Lasek gave a presentation on the proposal of Carpathian Coordination Center (CCC). He informed the participants that this is not a final proposal and discussion is welcomed.

He presented the location – Rzeszow, Podkarpackie Voivodship in Poland together with the Carpathian region and its activities. They have links with other initiatives – Carpathian Horizon, Carpathian Convention, Danube cooperation, Eastern Partnership etc.

They have some money available and are ready to finance some activities. They would support cooperation and at the beginning provide personnel to start the CCC working.

In addition, he presented the Carpathian brand, which his organization has been working on for the last 3 years.

Mr. Biedrzycki expressed the support of the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism for the idea of developing the brand and also establishing of CCC in Rzeszow and asked other Parties to support that idea.

Slovakia also presented a proposal for the CCC. Ministry of Transport together with Center of Tourism Development Vysoke Tatry prepared a presentation on what a structure should the Center have. They propose a bottom up approach with 5 concept values:

- Multigovernance & approach
- Subordination
- Participation
- Legitimacy
- Integrated approach & regional development (also connected to other strategies e.g. Europe 2020, V4, Danube Strategy)

Financial support can be also given from DMOs. There is an existing implementation mechanism to support the bottom-up approach, existing coordination body and the new law on regional development. The Center should be also self-financed. Ms. Hagovska is currently preparing a business model how to finance the activities.

The CCC should be oriented for implementation on international level but there needs to be a focus on national level otherwise it will fail. Therefore, Tourism Task Forces (TTFs) should be established too.

Presented offers need to be submitted to UNEP Vienna Office - SCC in writing so an online consultations can be held as two Parties, Czech Republic and Ukraine, were not present at the meeting. The deadline was set to 20.12.2014.

The Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Coordination Center/Platform were discussed. The Parties raised a concern that half-year reporting will pose a big burden on the Ministries, as it requires too much work. However it was explained that those reports will be prepared by the CCC, which will then report directly to the CC-WGST. The Ministries will have to read them only.



It is important to develop a structure of the Centre and also communication needs to be coordinated properly. The Centre should be an open space allowing the networking and information exchange, as well as it will manage the activities deriving from the Strategy and report to CC-WGST.

Mr. Meyer suggested that the Center has at least one expert nominated from each country, working in the center or on an electronically basis from their country.

Funding:

After the 6th CC-WGST, Parties and stakeholders need to read again each activity and identify funding opportunities as per the activities in Action Plans.

Ms. Pataki mentioned there might be an IT call, which could be used for establishing the platform.

Ms. Hagovska suggested to look into COSME or Horizon 2020.

The problem might be that NGOs do not have money for the 25% co-financing however we could involve Local Action Groups, which have the potential for getting the money and negotiate with relevant partners.

It would be good to connect the activities with the Danube Strategy and approach the NFPs for Danube Strategy to cooperate.

Mr. Andra suggested to ask the European Commission to put the Carpathian Strategy on same regulation as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and ask for prioritization. Mr. Egerer suggested to have a mission to Brussels to discuss this option.

The participants expressed their wish that ETE will be able to prolong the project, so they could help with important tasks related to implementation of the Strategy e.g. writing the guidelines for each activity of the action plans, coaching for the establishment of the CCC, help with setting up the TTFs, template development for reporting on the implementation of the tourism protocol and its strategy, assisting in building the online platform and database on tourism projects, etc.

Mr. Serban, talking about the common tourism product approach presented For the new participants the Wallachian Vatra holiday village project as a fully aligned project with Carpathian Tourism Strategy concept note. All information can be found on www.vatravalaha.ro/en. He asked the participants to contribute with plan for 1 or 2 Wallachian houses from their countries. This is a pilot project in Romania, where one Wallachian house from each Carpathian country shall be built and used for tourism purposes. This could be a good example for promoting the ecotourism and also common cultural heritage.

Online platform establishment

In the Joint Action Plan, as well is in the Country Action Plan, are different topics which are related to the online platform. Discussion on this topic was held during the last two meetings of the CC - WGST and an idea was to combine all online platforms into one. However, the Parties need to agree on the level of information, which could be integrated into the platform. The Parties shall also decide who will be in charge of this task and what will be



the content, structure etc. At the moment a budget is not available. The interested stakeholders shall send their official offer to UNEP Vienna Office - SCC informing how they want to maintain and manage the platform.

Slovakia expressed their interest to establish such a platform, they will submit their proposal in due time.

The online platform should be established as soon as possible as the Strategy contains many ideas for projects and they should be carried out in a coordinated matter.

Mr. Rossberg emphasized that before starting it, we need to know who is the target audience – visitors or for internal use only, as it affects the visibility and structure.

Phase one should be a database and in a later stage, we can open it also for visitors however it doesn't need to be the same platform to make it easier for the programmer.

At the moment, we need to collect as many information as possible. Mr. Meyer imagines it as a map of the Carpathians and once zoomed in, it would show the projects and stakeholders in the region.

Mr. Serban proposed that the online platform should include a list with all festivals in the Carpathian Convention region.

Mr. Biedrzycki reminded the participants about the existing platform in Poland created by UNEP/GRID Warsaw and that it could be used for this purpose.

The Parties also need to agree on the language used for this platform. It was suggested that the material provided for country purposes only should be in their national languages however the common activities and information should be in English. Also it would be good if there is a designated person from each country who may translate the information in case if it is needed.

Mr. Egerer informed that there is an idea of information system disseminating scientific knowledge to policy makers and the public initiated by the UNEP Vienna Office – SCC and the Science for the Carpathians initiative, however they do not have data yet. Ms. Hildegard Meyer, WWF – DCP about The Carpathian Joint Biodiversity Information System (CJBIS), an interactive public internet platform that offers visualized information on the biological and landscape diversity in the Carpathian area (<http://www.ccibis.org/>), which has been developed within the BioREGIO Carpathians.

The Parties agreed to work on a content tree. One part of it can be a table of the Action Plan and information can be added to each column.

There is a proposal to prepare and circulate to all the countries a questionnaire on what should be the content of the platform, then the result could be given to an IT person.

The platform should have couple of sections for meetings, documents, actors, partners etc.

The discussion on the two questions of usefulness of the project for the elaboration the Strategy was open. The participants expressed their opinion as per below:

On behalf of Hungary, Ms. Pataki expressed the usefulness of the project. It was a good project and now we are facing a big challenge to implement it. It highlighted many tasks and



put together the structure and mosaic. Now Hungary is at a stage when they desire to implement it, however there is a need for additional support and not stop half-way through. On behalf of the Ministry for National Economy, Ms. Pataki confirms her support for the prolongation of the project for implementation of the Strategy.

Mr. Biedrzycki agreed that with Ms. Pataki, that this project was very beneficial to the Parties. It helped with the implementation of Tourism Protocol. The Action Plans in the Strategy show which direction to take to reach the vision in the document. The biggest challenge the Parties are facing now is to find an institution, which will coordinate and fund the implementation and prepare the projects.

Romania considers any contribution from German government useful for the region and Mr. Andra expressed hopes that the German government maintain the goodwill actions.

Slovakia sees a big added value from the project, and that is the new view on the Carpathians as a destination. For Slovakia, it is important to reach more systematic and strategic thinking about tourism and sustainable development to achieve different types of activities. Ms. Szaboova and Ms. Hagovska thanked ETE and the project partners for bringing the stakeholders together to reach the common goals in the Strategy and expressed the hopes in continuing to do so. Slovakia sees the biggest challenge in creating the Carpathians as a competitive destination. In order to reach this, it is necessary to have a good coordination platform with a common lead.

Serbia is happy to have been involved in such a project as it is preparing a new national strategy for tourism and it is a good timing. There is a lack of sustainability principles in current strategies and now the principles and indicators in the Strategy foster the development of these principles on national level. The main focus should not be on keeping the umbrella over the implementation and not letting the countries slide from the cooperation.

On behalf of NGOs, Mr. Rossberg welcomed the support as it eased the financial burden to participate in the process, which hopefully helped the Parties to reach the conclusion. It is important now to keep the momentum going as it will take many years to implement the document. The support is needed from all sides and money is a good motivator for the stakeholders to stay involved.

After the discussion, the participants agreed on the following statement:

The participants of the CC-WGST decided

- **to mandate ETE to request from the Federal Ministry for the Environment a further support for the structuring of implementation of the strategy. At this stage after adoption of the strategy the Parties and the CC-WGST are not on the position to fully operate its implementation as further assistance is crucial. ETEs support during the elaboration of the strategy was crucial for its success and the involvement and consultation process of so many stakeholders.**



- **to establish an online platform in the full ownership of the Carpathian Convention and the CC-WGST and requests its members to submit official offers for operational assistance on voluntary basis to UNEP Vienna Office - SCC.**

IV. Other matters

A discussion on next meeting venue was held as there should be two meetings of CC-WGST in 2015. It was proposed to have one meeting in Germany, National Park Eifel, hosted by ETE. The transport to Cologne is quite easy from all Carpathian countries.

The second meeting could be held in Hungary on the highest Hungarian peak – Kekes, as it was offered .

The proposal is to organize the first meeting in mid-May 2015. The Parties need to make sure they plan their travelling budget so they can attend both meetings next year.

Ms. Meyer, WWF – DCP expressed their support for the implementation of the Strategy and WWF is ready to help as they have lot of experience in sustainable issues.

V. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed with remarks by Ms. Posin, Mr. Egerer and Mr. Meyer on November 26, 2014.



Annex I

List of Participants

Nr.	Name	Organization	Country
Government officials			
1	Marius Daniel Andra	Department of SMEs, Business, Environment and Tourism	RO
2	Karol Biedrzycki	Ministry of Tourism and Sport	PL
3	Dasa Szaboova	Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic	SK
4	Vera Jankovic	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	SRB
5	Dalila Dolnagic	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	SRB
6	Renata Pindzo	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	SRB
7	Ana Jovic	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	SRB
8	Slobodan Erdeljan	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	SRB
9	Natesa Rahovic	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	SRB
10	Irena Posin	Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	SRB
11	Nora Pataki	Ministry for National Economy	HU



UNEP Vienna SCC			
12	Harald Egerer	UNEP Vienna Office - SCC	AT
13	Klaudia Kuras	UNEP Vienna Office - SCC	AT
Observers			
14	Andriy Taras Bashta	Association Fauna	UA
15	Andrea Hagovska	People in Tatras	SK
16	Anja Henning	European Wilderness Society	AUT
17	Valeriy Hryshenko	Communal enterprise „Agency of Regional Development and Cross-Border Cooperation „Transcarpathia” of Zakarpattya Oblast Council”	UA
18	Marina Ilic	Geoecological Center	SRB
19	Josef Jurcisin	Association of Euroregion Poland	PL
20	Dawid Lasek	Association of Euroregion Poland	PL
21	Kateryna Malkova	International Charitable Organisation „Information Center Green Dossier”	UA
22	Hildegard Meyer	WWF-DCP	AUT
23	Michael Meyer	Ecological Tourism in Europe	GER
24	Max Rossberg	European Wilderness Society	AUT
25	Constantin Serban	Greentourism Ecological Association	RO
26	Edita Stojic-Karanovic	Internation Scientific Forum „Danuve-River of Cooperation“	SRB
27	Ivan Svetozarevic	National Park Djerdap	SRB



28	Adela Maria Talpes	Greentourism Ecological Association	RO
29	Kristina Vilimaite	CEEweb for Biodiversity	HU
30	Valentyn Voloshyn	UAETA	UA
31	Martina Voskarova	Ecological Tourism in Europe	GER
32	Dejan Zagorac	Eko centar	SRB
33	Tatiana Zakharkevych	Communal enterprise „Agency of Regional Development and Cross-Border Cooperation „Transcarpathia” of Zakarpattya Oblast Council	UA
34	Mirjana Jovic	Omas Waters	SRB



Annex II

Final Agenda

6th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group
on Sustainable Tourism
24 - 26 November 2014, Belgrade, Serbia

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks by the UNEP Vienna Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the host country Serbia
2. Election of the Chair and the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Report of UNEP Vienna Office – SCC on the Status of Ratification of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism
5. Report of the Parties on
 - Selection of Tourism Focal Points for the CC-WGST
 - Communication on the adoption of the Carpathian Tourism Strategy at country level
 - Establishment of Sustainable Tourism Task Force
6. Review of the Terms of Reference for the CC-WGST and representation of country experts
7. Discussion on the interpretation of activities of each action plan and selection of priority actions at country and Carpathian level
8. Identification of short and mid-term funding resources for the implementation of the strategy
9. Proposals for the implementation mechanism
10. Discussion on the online platform establishment
11. Venue and date of the next meeting of CC-WGST
12. Discussion on the usefulness of the project for elaboration of the Strategy
13. Miscellaneous
14. Closure of the meeting



Annex III

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism

Mandate

The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Carpathian Convention (Kyiv, Ukraine, 11-13 December 2006) in its Decision COP1/10 para 2 decided “to support the establishment of a Working Group on sustainable tourism under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee”, a subsidiary body of the Convention, established pursuant to Decision COP1/3 para 4.

The Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 2) to the Carpathian Convention (Bucharest, Romania, 17 - 19 June 2008) in its Decision COP2/6 para 1 welcomed “the work of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism invited Parties and stakeholders to ensure the proper follow-up”, in para 2 invited “Parties and other stakeholders to continue to take part in the preparatory work towards the development of a Protocol and Strategy on Sustainable Tourism, and requested the interim Secretariat to further coordinate and service them in the process”; and in Para 3 called “upon Parties and invites relevant institutions to support the development of future projects/programmes (including the “Via Carpatica”)”;

The Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the Carpathian Convention (Bratislava, 25-27 May 2011) adopted the revised Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism, requests the Secretariat and recommends the World Tourism Organization to continue the development of the sustainable tourism strategy with the involvement of relevant stakeholders and the support of the national tourism agencies, welcomed the cooperation with and assistance by the UNWTO, ETE, CEEWEB, EURAC, UNEP, etc., in particular related to the development of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and of projects aimed at its implementation, and adopted the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;

The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Carpathian Convention (Mikulov, Czech Republic, 23 – 26 September 2014) by its Decision COP4/6 para 3 adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, welcomed the Background Document and took note that the strategy aims at the implementation of relevant paragraphs of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism adopted at COP3.



Tasks

The Working Group (WG) will aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention towards their cooperation for the implementation of Article 9 on sustainable tourism and other related Articles of the Carpathian Convention. Pursuant to Decision COP2/6 para 2 and 3 the main goals of the Working Group is to guide the implementation of the strategy on sustainable tourism, to support the implementation of the tourism protocol and the development of future projects and programmes.

Field of activities

1. Tourism Strategy

The Working Group will coordinate and guide the implementation of the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians.

2. 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.

List of results

- Proposed inputs for COP of the Carpathian Convention, such as inputs to a ministerial declaration to be considered by COP;
- WG Progress Report for submission to COP;
- Follow-up actions and projects.

Composition and organization of work

The Working Group is composed of persons nominated by the Parties through the National Focal Points for the Carpathian Convention. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of the Working Group are open for observers.

At each meeting, the Working Group will elect its Chair and Co-Chair; the Secretariat will act as rapporteur. In conducting its business, the Working Group will base itself on the applicable Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

The Working Group will meet as necessary and its meetings will be financially supported by the work programme of the Carpathian Convention and supporting projects. Work through email is encouraged.

The Working Group will report to the Conference of the Parties through the CCIC.



The CEEweb for Biodiversity and Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE) provides continuous inputs to the Working Group.

Coordination and cooperation

The WG will exchange information and foster communication with other relevant WGs of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. Working Group on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management, Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development) and will seek cooperation with other interested constituencies beyond the Carpathian Convention.



Annex IV

Draft Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Tourism Coordination Platform

The Carpathian Tourism Coordination Platform (CTCP) is an institution, which aims at coordinating the implementation of the “Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians. The operation of the CTCP is guided and monitored by the Carpathian Convention – Working Group for Sustainable Tourism.

Core tasks of the CTCP are to

1. Give support to and coach the National Tourism Task Forces in each country on the effective implementation of the Country Action Plan
2. Establish a network of relevant stakeholders (e.g. clusters, local and regional governments, non-governmental organizations, science, business sector)
3. Establish a structure for the implementation of the Joint Action Plan with regard to:
 - Sustainable Product Development
 - Training, Education and Capacity Building
 - Marketing and Promotion
 - Monitoring
4. Develop a financial overview and structure for the implementation of the strategy
5. Develop and implement a communication strategy, e.g. online exchange platform, database on initiatives and projects
6. Develop a reporting format and report on the achievements on a half-yearly basis to the CC-WGST



Annex V

Hosting the Carpathian Tourism Coordination Platform for implementing the „Strategy for the Future Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians“

- 1. Brief description of the host city/town**
(Population size; access to international transport; health and security)
- 2. Brief description of the host building**
 - a) Available rooms (approx. 10 staff) and equipment
 - b) Technical equipment
 - c) Financial arrangements to cover costs for rooms and equipment
- 3. Supporting mechanisms for implementing the Carpathian Tourism Strategy**
 - a) Contributions from the host country/district/province
 - b) Foreseen projects/third party funding
- 4. Institutional arrangements**
 - a) Description how the institution running the CCC is involving all Carpathian countries and all relevant stakeholders
 - b) Current links to other institutions in the Carpathians on tourism
 - c) Expertise in sustainable tourism of the hosting institution
 - d) Personnel arrangements (e.g. covering cost of staff and experts)

Note: The Carpathian Coordination Centre is to be established by the Carpathian Convention through the Tourism Task Force. The CCC has the following tasks: Product Development; Branding and Certification; Marketing and Promotion; Capacity Building of Businesses and Destinations; Quality Assessment; and Fundraising.