

# Development of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians



## Brief Project Description


**Title of the Project:** Development of the „Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians“ (CarpatSusTourStrat)


**Region:** Carpathians (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and the Ukraine)


**Target group:** The Governments of the seven Member States to the Carpathian Convention


**Duration:** March 2013 – November 2014

**Project partners:**

 CEEweb for Biodiversity (CEEweb), Budapest

 WWF-Danube-Carpathian Programme Office (WWF-DCPO), Vienna

 Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP-ISCC), Vienna

 Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA), Banska Bystrica

**Funding institution:** German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety with means of the Advisory Assistance Programme for Environmental Protection in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

**Impl. organization:** Ökologischer Tourismus in Europa (Ö.T.E.) e.V. (Ecological Tourism in Europe, ETE)

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## 1. Background of the project

Guided by the example of the Alpine Convention, the countries in the Carpathian Mountains established in May 2003 a Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. The seven Member States of this convention are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and the Ukraine. The Interim Secretariat of the Convention is currently managed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP ISCC) in Vienna.

Article 9 of the Convention refers to policies on sustainable tourism in the Carpathians, which were decisions of the following Conferences of the Parties (COP): The first COP (December 2006) decided to establish a tourism working group to develop a Tourism Protocol and a Tourism Strategy. The second COP (June 2008) decided to continue the work on the Protocol on Tourism and the Tourism Strategy.



High Tatra in Winter (©2012 Zuzana Okanikova)

The Tourism Protocol was adopted at the 3rd COP (May 2011). However, due to a lack of capacity of institutions and governments involved, the Tourism Strategy has not been developed further. In addition, the conferences are held at intervals of 3 years. Therefore, the fourth COP is planned for September 2014.

The outstanding importance of the development of the Carpathian tourism strategy was at the last meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) in November 2012 reaffirmed by the Member States.

The Association of Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE) has partnered with the CEEweb for Biodiversity (an NGO network of 64 Central and Eastern European nature conservation and environmental protection organizations from 18 countries) and its Sustainable Tourism Working Group (STWG) since the establishment of the Carpathian Convention; and supported consistently the development of Tourism Protocol and the Tourism Strategy.

Together with UNEP-ISCC, ETE and CEEweb conducted the first and second Meeting of the Tourism Working Group of the Convention and contributed to the design of the draft texts. This commitment was made possible by a special project funding from the European Commission, which lasted until the year 2008. Later the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) facilitated the third Meeting of Tourism Working Group and helped to moderate the Tourism Protocol until its adoption.

## Goals of the Project

This project aims at the existing synergy-enhancing strategies in tourism at European, national and regional level to improve the cooperation between the stakeholders, especially governments, the tourism industry and non-governmental organizations in the Carpathians and the agreement on a strategy regarding the future sustainable tourism development of the Carpathian region, which is to influence policy and decision-making processes between the governments positively.

Goal of the project is the

***„Participatory elaboration of a tourism strategy for the Carpathians, to be submitted as a draft for adoption at the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention, supporting the implementation of the Tourism Protocol“.***

Objectives of the project are

- Supporting participatory processes through active involvement of stakeholders, e.g. the tourism sector and nature- and environmental protection sector in the development of the strategy
- Supporting cross-border development processes and strategies in other regions through promotion and dissemination of the results

This will happen through a broad collaboration of networks that already exist in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the involvement of NGOs, the tourism industry and of state institutions. It is essential that all three stakeholders participate from the start in the development of the Carpathian-tourism strategy, since all three groups are also responsible for its implementation. The project is about to strengthen the three stakeholders in their environmental awareness and a shared responsibility for implementing the tourism strategy will. Therefore, this project aims to create a solid base for future sustainable financing of the implementation of this strategy by the involved interest groups.

## 3. Expected results

The following results will be available at the end of the project:

- A preliminary draft of a "strategy for future sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians" for final review and adoption at the 4th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in October 2014
- Documentation on the methodology for the development of the Carpathian Tourism Strategy

Further results of promotion activities are the development of 14 case studies (two per country) on sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians; presentation of the results on the partners websites; publication of results on a facebook site and as a print copy (BfN Skript) of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation; joint press releases with the donor institutions.

#### 4. Brief description of the work plan

Work Package I (Drafting the tourism strategy):

- 1st Draft until June 2013 (Input to 1st NGO Meeting)
- 2nd Draft until October 2013 (Input to 4th CC-WGST), incl. national Consultations
- 3rd Draft until December 2013 (Input to 5th CCIC), incl. Expert meeting
- 4th Draft until March 2014 (Input to 2nd Tourism Stakeholder Meeting)
- 5th Draft for adoption at COP 4 until June 2014 (Input to 5. CC-WGST)

Work Package II (Consultation process with stakeholder groups)

- Consultation with partners (Ö.T.E., UNEP-ISCC, CEEweb, WWF-DCPO) on project work plan and responsibilities (March 2013, Vienna)
- 1st NGO Meeting (CEEweb Sustainable Tourism Working Group – STWG); (June 2013, Banska Stiavnica/Slovakia)
- 4th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (CC-WGST); (October 2013, Poiana/Romania)
- 1st Working meeting of the tourism stakeholders in the Carpathians (NTAs, destinations, tour operators); (October 2013, Poiana/Romania)
- Expert meeting of project partners and seven national experts; (December 2013, Budapest)
- 5th Meeting of the CCIC (March 2014, Mikolov/Czech Republic)
- 2nd Working meeting of National Tourism Agencies at ITB 2014; (5th March 2014, Berlin)
- 2nd NGO meeting (CEEweb-STWG); (June 2014, Lviv/Ukraine)
- 5th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (CC-WGST) (June 2014, Lviv/Ukraine)
- Closing conference back-to-back to COP 4; (October 2014, Mikolov/Czech Republic)

Work Package III (Awareness raising of stakeholders)

- Development of 14 case studies on sustainable tourism with seven country experts (May 2013 – April 2014)
- Presentation of project activities on the partner's websites and facebook
- Consultations with national stakeholders through the seven country experts (May – September 2013)
- Documentation on the methodology for the development of the Carpathian Tourism Strategy and publication of the BfN Skript (publication of Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Germany).

Ö.T.E., Bonn – Germany  
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Sponsors:

