



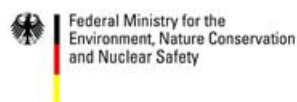
Report of Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting “Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. Strategy for Tourism”



**Banská Štiavnica – Svätý Anton
Slovakia
June 13 – 14, 2013**

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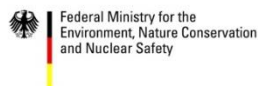


Report of Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting “Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. Strategy for Tourism”

This meeting was organized within the framework of the project *Development of the „Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians“*.

This project has been funded by the 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. It has been supervised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN) and the German Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA).

The content of this publication lies within the responsibility of the authors.



The meeting was co-funded by the European Commission.



Report



of Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting, 13-14 of June, 2013

“Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. Strategy for Tourism”

The meeting of STWG of CEEweb for Biodiversity and partners took place in Banská Štiavnica – Svätý Anton in Slovakia. The **purpose of the meeting** was twofold:

- to involve 7 country consultation focal points in the proceedings of the *Strategy for Tourism* project, set the plan of actions and responsibilities for stakeholders as well as
- to discuss the initial content of the strategy, including the input from the National Tourism Development Strategies Assessments in the Carpathian countries.

DAY I. June 13, Thursday

1. Introductory presentation of the project “Strategy for the Future Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians” was followed by discussion on:

- the process of meetings and action sequences throughout the project duration until the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention in October 2014,
- the process of the consultations in every country of the Carpathian region (addressing different interests among stakeholders),
- the participation in 2nd European Ecotourism Conference (www.european-ecotourism.eu) and
- economic dimension of the strategy (for example added value of natural, intact landscapes and creation of income for local economy by sustainable tourism development).

2. Presentation on the relation of the **Tourism Protocol of Carpathian Convention to the future strategy for tourism in Carpathians** gave a starting point for the discussion on the vision of the strategy and expected outcomes. The participants stated that:

- the stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the strategy should be defined and the governments and sectorial actors should be included as important target groups,
- the rationale of the strategy should explain why it is needed and contain the core message from SWOT analysis,
- the vision should include the following content:

The Carpathians are a top competitive destination in Europe, based on its unique natural and cultural heritage with a common identity where sustainable tourism contributes to the people’s quality of life.

The people in the Carpathians are successful and proud of maintaining their local authentic traditions and cultures, which contribute to unique tourist experiences.

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

In addition participants suggested other ideas for content of the vision:

- *Wilderness as the competitive advantage*
- *Variety of cultural identities*
- *Authentic, traditional landscapes*

- *Good management and cooperation*
 - *Slow tourism*
 - *High quality nature and culture experiences*
 - *Accessibility to mountains (free movement)*
 - *Manage large investments in order to meet the needs of local people and address the climate change*
- Draft results and deliverables of the strategy were agreed by 14 Carpathian NGOs and other participants, which should form the basis for the further elaboration of the strategy by the experts:
 1. Common brand is created for x number of destinations in Carpathians.
 2. A properly managed network of hiking trails is established by XX distinguishing between Carpathians wide and local destinations.
 3. All destinations in the Carpathians have an effective management and DMO following a set of sustainable criteria (tourist hubs).
 4. An information system is established throughout the Carpathians providing data for monitoring and for visitors at the same time.
 5. X number of products (STP – sustainable tourism products) is promoted at the regional as well as global tourism-related markets.
 6. Carpathian service providers are successfully communicating to tourists the value of this mountain region based on a code of conduct.
 7. Governments adjust their voluntary and legal frameworks for the support of sustainable tourism based on common assessments.
 8. Products and services should follow common quality standards and should be integrated into a labelling system.
 9. A Centre for product development, promotion, marketing and monitoring is established and operating by the year 20...
 10. The network of ecotourism destinations is established.
 11. Number of laboratories and incubators as learning institutions on sustainable tourism practices for providers and communities is established.
 12. Governmental sectors should ensure the proper sustainable use of authentic landscapes and wilderness areas with associated tourism infrastructure, which forms the foundation of any tourism operations.
 13. Small and micro businesses are supported by organizational systems and incentive policies.
 - Organizations responsible for establishing trails in Carpathians should be involved in the elaboration process for the strategy. Associations that are members of European Rambling Association and are involved in Via Carpathia were listed for that purpose:
 - KST - Klub Slovenskych Turistov*
 - MTSZ - Magyar Termeszettbarat Szovetseg*
 - KCT - Klub Ceskych Turistu*
 - PTTK - Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze*
 - SKV - Asociatia Carpatina Ardeleana a Turistilor*
 - PSS - Planinarski Savez Srbije*
 - Additionally: ERA, Sighetul Marmatiei*
- 3. Participants identified the following tasks during country consultations:**
- I. Establish national lists of stakeholders, which should be clustered as follow:
 - a. Government
 - b. Business

- c. NGOs
 - d. Science
 - II. Identify, establish and use different communication channels:
 - a. Establish national mailing list
 - b. Carry out personal consultation (personal, phone, etc.)
 - i. Use social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) if applicable and put news on the website of the organization
 - c. Organize consultation national meetings
 - III. Know exactly what to communicate, namely
 - a. Strategy drafts
 - b. Process, including the start and the end
 - c. Framework, including the exact process for commenting the draft
 - IV. Keep the deadlines, which are the followings
 - a. 15.06 - for sending the stakeholder lists
 - b. 01.09 - for sending the final comments to the strategy
 - V. Carry out lobbying activities
 - a. Targeting governmental representatives
 - b. Targeting participants at different meetings, such as: COP and CCIC
- The country experts agreed to design a more simplified approach for the stakeholder consultations in the seven countries by delivering a template/questionnaire, which requests for contributions on SWOT (Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) and Outcomes/Results of the strategy. With these contributions on the two main chapters of the strategy the experts will be able to draft the entire document for the next consultation round in October 2013 (CC-WGST and Tourism stakeholder meeting in Romania).

DAY II. June 14, Friday

1. Set of **case studies on sustainable tourism** was presented based on ETE and CEEweb for Biodiversity 2006 publication. Participants commented on current situation of several study cases:
 - Case study in Poland: The Azure San River Programme is being developed still by association of communes, the tourism development is still based on good managements of natural resources and gained a strong support from regional government
 - Case study in Poland: Przyslop Ecological Community continues ecological education programme and new site: www.przyslop.zawoja.pl/angielska/index.html, incorporating the tourism offer with Amber Trail
 - Case Study in Serbia: the status of unfinished ski centre is still the same
 - Case study in Romania: eco-tourism programme focusing on large carnivores in Piatra Craiulu NP was finished. However, constructions in the valley continued, there are many guest houses and holiday houses in the valley and the biggest income comes still from tourism. Additionally, this area is under the pressure of clear cuts and will be assessed in 2013 based on criteria.
2. Several **potential good case** studies from Polish Carpathian Region were presented and current sustainable tourism development activities in Polish Carpathians illustrated the variety of individual entrepreneurs, networking projects and partnerships in tourism development of this area.
 - Case studies in Poland: regional biking trails in Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic - Istebna, education and tourism projects (Carpathian Sky), good case studies from publication 2010

“Good practices in tourism services in Polish Carpathians” - Centrum UNEP/GRID-Warszawa project

- Case studies in Romania: working with local services, developing a logo, using a certification scheme for guest houses and other service providers, improving the marketing cycle-tourism and trails in Calimani National Park, promoting bird watching while canoeing in the Danube Delta

Participants agreed that the final case studies will be submitted by April, 2014. Until then there will be constant exchange of the observations and findings.

The submission of case studies by the country experts and stakeholder to ETE is clustered in two components:

- Assessment of the state of art of case studies from 2006. Followed by a decision of expert and ETE if the case studies should be included in the new publication.
- Elaboration of two new case studies

3. The **results of the assessments of the National Tourism Development Strategies** in 5 countries were presented. The four country experts from Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Ukraine have commented their findings. Participants agreed that the assessments will be linked to the Carpathian Convention by the following actions:
 - Four remaining Carpathian countries will be assessed until September 2013: Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia,
 - Focus in the assessments will remain on biodiversity aspects, but the language of the reports should be from the tourism perspective,
 - National PR meetings should be organized with the Ministries responsible for tourism in order to promote the results of the assessments and how it is linked to the Carpathian Convention
4. In the afternoon the participants took part in field trip to UNESCO World Heritage of Banská Štiavnica. In the evening the summing up discussion on country consultations together with meeting evaluation closed the event.


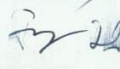

The meeting was facilitated by Michael Meyer and Katarzyna Śliwa-Martinez. Notes were taken by Veronika Kiss. The meeting was accompanied by the GreenArts exposition and two short films from Polish Carpathian Mountains were presented.

List of the participants:

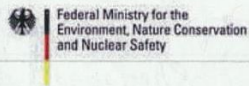
1. *Adela Talpes, Greentourism Ecological Association (Romania)*
2. *Andrei Blumer, The Association of Ecotourism in Romania*
3. *Andriy-Taras Bashta, Association FAUNA (Ukraine)*
4. *Constantin Serban, Greentourism Ecological Association (Romania)*
5. *Eliska Balharova, Centrum Veronica Hostetin (Czech republic)*
6. *Emil Vaklinov, Association "Rhodope mountains without borders" (Bulgaria)*
7. *Imola Fűzi, BOCS Foundation (Hungary)*
8. *István Szabó, SOSNA – Center for Sustainable Alternatives (Slovakia)*
9. *Ján Roháč, The Ekopolis Foundation(Slovakia)*
10. *Johanna Wylon, Academic Section of Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in Krakow (AS of PTTK in Krakow) (Poland)*
11. *Katarzyna Sliwa-Martinez, Academic Section of Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society in Krakow (AS of PTTK in Krakow), CEEweb for Biodiversity (Poland)*
12. *Marina Ilic, School for Survival (Serbia)*
13. *Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe (Germany)*
14. *Natalia Shovkopljas, Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia (UTCS) (Slovakia)*
15. *Veronika Kiss, CEEweb for Biodiversity (Hungary)*
16. *Zuzana Okanikova, OZ Pronatur (Slovakia)*
17. *Juraj Čorba, Law office Ruzicka Csekes s.r.o. (Slovakia)*

List of Participants
of
Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting
“Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. Strategy for Tourism”
13-14 of June, 2013
Banska Stiavnica – Svaty Anton, Slovakia

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The event is generously supported by



Draft results and deliverables of the strategy by 14 Carpathian NGOs and other participants, which should form the basis for the further elaboration of the strategy by the experts

Draft results and deliverables	Comments
Common brand is created for x number of destinations in Carpathians	
A properly managed network of hiking trails is established by XX distinguishing between Carpathian wide and local destinations	
All destinations in the Carpathians have an effective management and DMO following a set of sustainable criteria (tourist hubs)	
An information system is established throughout the Carpathians providing data for monitoring and for visitors at the same time	
X number of products (STP – sustainable tourism products) is promoted at the regional as well as global tourism-related markets	
Carpathian service providers are successfully communicating to tourists the value of this mountain region based on a code of conduct	
Governments adjust their voluntary and legal frameworks for the support of sustainable tourism based on common assessments	
Products and services should follow common quality standards and should be integrated into a labelling system	
A Centre for product development, promotion, marketing and monitoring is established and operating by the year 20	
The network of ecotourism destinations is established	
Number of laboratories and incubators as learning institutions on sustainable tourism practices for providers and communities is established	
Governmental sectors should ensure the proper sustainable use of authentic landscapes and wilderness areas with associated tourism infrastructure, which forms the foundation of any tourism operations	
Small and micro businesses are supported by organizational systems and incentive policies	

“Strategy for the future sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians” Actions Worksheet for Stakeholders

1. DRAFT PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of the Strategy is to incorporate and use the various attractions and assets of the Carpathians for tourism development. This mountain range covers a large part of Europe and may become an attractive destination of tourism which may contribute to the quality of life of the local population and to the protection of cultural and natural heritage. The Carpathians are shared by several countries, each of them having a different approach to tourism development. They follow different strategies and use different methods which can limit the expected positive contributions from and impacts of tourism to local communities. The strategy intends to harmonize and coordinate country-specific approaches by providing a common understanding and platform for planning and management.

The strategy is not a stand-alone activity, it is part of comprehensive effort of 7 Carpathians countries' governments to harmonize and coordinate the use, protection and promotion of the Carpathians as a tourism destination. This effort is stipulated by the Carpathian Convention. The specific need for a common tourism strategy is defined in the Article 9 which determines:

1. The Parties shall take measures to promote sustainable tourism in the Carpathians, providing benefits to the local people, based on the exceptional nature, landscapes and cultural heritage of the Carpathians, and shall increase cooperation to this effect.

2. Parties shall pursue policies aiming at promoting transboundary cooperation in order to facilitate sustainable tourism development, such as coordinated or joint management plans for transboundary or bordering protected areas, and other sites of touristic interest.

The elaboration of this strategy for sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians is realised within a project of the Advisory Assistance Programme for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The strategy elaboration is coordinated by ETE as experienced tourism development expert organization in close collaboration with organizations and experts in all Carpathians countries.

2. DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

The Carpathians is a top competitive destination in Europe, based on its unique natural and common cultural heritage preserved and maintained on large integral areas.

The people in the Carpathians are successful and proud of maintaining their local authentic traditions, cultures, and landscapes, which contribute to unique tourist experiences.

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

3. DRAFT OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1	
<i>Establishing of supportive conditions for sustainable tourism products and services, including development of marketing scheme for the promotion of the Carpathians as unique destination.</i>	
OBJECTIVE 2	
<i>Developing an innovative tourism management at all levels, fully integrating the needs of local populations and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage</i>	
OBJECTIVE 3	
<i>Establishing of a continuous process of awareness raising, capacity building, education and training on sustainable tourism development and management throughout vertical and horizontal levels</i>	

4. Contributions required by the stakeholders on Carpathian wide actions/results and country specific actions/results

(Please note that the measures in the left column below are taken from the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism of the Carpathian Convention. It is not necessary to fill in all the cells, but certainly those which are the most important for you.)

Measures	Carpathian wide	Country specific
Carpathian region is a sustainable tourism destination		
Regional tourism products		

Quality standards		
Contribution to local economy		
Managing tourist traffic		
Contribution to conservation of biodiversity		
Agriculture and forest management as sectors of special interest for tourism		
Transport and infrastructure		

Local cultural heritage		
Education and awareness on sustainability issues		
Experience exchange, information and capacity building		
Trans-boundary cooperation		
Managing impacts on biological diversity, natural, socio-economic and cultural environment		
Monitoring effectiveness of the strategy		

Common projects and programs		
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ⁱ **(original version from the meeting)** *The Carpathians are a top competitive destination in Europe, based on its unique natural and cultural heritage with a common identity where sustainable tourism contributes to the people's quality of life.*

The people in the Carpathians are successful and proud of maintaining their local authentic traditions and cultures, which contribute to unique tourist experiences.

- *Wilderness as the competitive advantage*
- *Variety of cultural identities*
- *Authentic, traditional landscapes*
- *Good management and cooperation*
- *Slow tourism*
- *High quality nature and culture experiences*
- *Accessibility to mountains (free movement)*
- *Manage large investments in order to meet the needs of local people and address the issue of climate change*

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