



Press release

Joint press release of the association Ecological Tourism in Europe and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN):

Tourism, Carpathians, International

Parties to the Carpathian Convention adopt a joint Tourism Strategy

- **BfN supports the concept for sustainable tourism development in the Carpathians**

Mikulov/Bonn, 26.9.2014: Today in Mikulov (Czech Republic), the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) adopted a joint strategy for sustainable tourism development in the mountain region. The project for developing the strategy was supported by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and coordinated by the environmental association Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E.). With the support from Germany, the concept for sustainable tourism in the Carpathians was developed by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in nature conservation and tourism and coordinated among the parties to the Convention. The new strategy aims to support the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine in the development of the Carpathians as a competitive tourism destination in Europe, based on its unique natural and cultural heritage.

“This Strategy helps the Carpathian countries to focus their tourism development towards sustainability”, BfN President Prof. Beate Jessel said. “We believe that the strategy will trigger many innovative projects both by governmental bodies and by the tourism industry”, explained Michael Meyer, the project manager in charge at E.T.E. “The success factors in the participatory elaboration process were the high motivation and constructive cooperation among the numerous stakeholders”, Meyer added.

“The Carpathian arc is an outstanding mountain landscape with many habitats worth to preserve and with a great tourism potential”, Prof. Beate Jessel said. “We are pleased that BfN was in the position to contribute to the development of the strategy. The strategy and its elaboration process constitute a model for sustainable tourism development in sensitive mountain regions”.

Background

In 2013, the Tourism Protocol of the Carpathian Convention entered into force. Its implementation is concretised by the strategy. The formulation of the strategy was carried out in a two-year process with the participation of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism of the Carpathian Convention (CC-WGST) and the Interim Secretariat of the Convention. It was conducted within the framework of the project “Development of a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians” under the coordination of Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E.), and its partners WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, the conservation network CEEweb for Biodiversity and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas as well as experts on tourism and nature conservation from the particular Carpathian countries. The project has been supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in cooperation with the

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The Carpathian Convention aims to protect and sustainably develop the Carpathians by improving the quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities, and the conservation of the natural value and cultural heritage. The Carpathian Convention was signed by seven riparian countries to the Carpathians (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine) in 2003 in Kiev, Ukraine, and entered into force in 2006. It is the only multi-level governance mechanism covering the whole of the Carpathian area and, besides the Alpine Convention, the second sub-regional treaty-based regime for the protection and sustainable development of a mountain region worldwide. The development of the Carpathian Convention was inspired by the Alpine Convention. Germany will hold the presidency of the Alpine Convention in 2015 and 2016. It is intended to strengthen the collaboration with the Carpathian region, particularly on ecological networks.