

Comments on the Carpathian Convention with regards to sustainable tourism

First of all we appreciate that the Parties will ensure a more effective implementation of existing global, regional and sub-regional principles, which gives us the clear message of using the *International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development* of the Convention on Biological Diversity as the basis for our future work in the Carpathians.

To this regard the Carpathian Convention is referring to the *Convention on the Protection of the Alps*, where among others, the tourism protocol is the tool for successfully developing strategies on how to deal with the negative impacts of tourism and at the same time giving advice on how to use tourism to strengthen local economies in the Alps.

The two paragraphs under Article 9 in the Carpathian Convention are referring to *promote sustainable tourism providing benefits to local people, increase co-operation and pursue policies aiming at promoting trans-boundary co-operation*.

As we see tourism is a crosscutting issue, which is touching most of the Articles laid down in the Carpathian Convention. Hence we would have appreciated if the Parties had developed a paragraph under Article 9 of the Convention in this matter. (Referring to Articles 4, 7, 8 and 11, in order to promote sustainable tourism as one option to tackle the problems raised in these articles.) Also this crosscutting nature would have required referring to “pursuing policies” as it is done in other sections of the Convention.

In this matter we would have welcomed if a further paragraph dealt with the actual needs of preventing further negative impacts on endangered mountain ecosystems.

Furthermore it should have been stated that the current and potential future development of tourism in and around the protected areas might cause a degradation of habitats, which should be one of the main targets for the implementation of the

Convention. This problem is particularly caused by tourism mobility and transport, although other factors, such as increased resource use, pollution or disturbance can be significant as well.

Strategy for the further development and implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Policy level

Taking into account ETE's experiences in negotiating and developing the International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development of the Convention on Biological Diversity over the last four years and CEEWEB's experiences in developing and assisting policy documents regarding nature conservation at EU levels, our organizations are ready for taking part and assisting in the further elaboration of relevant *strategies* and *documents* as well as shaping the structure of the *future Secretariat* of the Carpathian Convention.

a) Strategies

For the Carpathian Convention there are at least two other Conventions existing (CBD and the Alpine Convention) that may be considered as relevant for the further development of overall strategies. The most important tool to be mentioned here is the multi-year rolling work program, both financial and policy oriented. Such a program is negotiated with relevant bodies and expert groups prior to a COP and then approved by the COP for further implementation of the selected priority topics by the Convention Secretariat, the Parties and other stakeholders.

- ETE, as well as CEEWEB is able to contribute to such a program with elaborating drafts for further consideration. For this it is necessary to assess and evaluate the current needs for conservation and development in the Carpathians, accompanied by data about all relevant ongoing planning

processes in the countries concerned. This is already partly carried out by CEEWEB through other projects.

- As a logical next step concrete programs need to be developed and adopted, e.g. on forests, water, protected areas, alien species, tourism, agriculture, capacity building etc., which may be taken from the CBD, but needed to be reshaped according to the Carpathian circumstances.

b) Documents

With regard to the relevant documents (voluntary and binding ones) under the Convention to be developed by the CEEWEB Secretariat and/or Working Groups and to be adopted by the COP, again examples are existing of the CBD and the Alpine Convention on how to draw and use such documents, as for example the Tourism Protocol of the Alpine Convention.

- From the very beginning ETE was involved in the pre-preparation, development and negotiation processes (since SBSTTA-6) for the adoption of the *International Guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism Development* of the Convention on Biological Diversity. From this background ETE is able to contribute to the development of a tourism work program and protocol in preparing drafts and further in facilitating a negotiation process until adoption. Moreover ETE and CEEWEB are able to support the development with relevant tourism case studies on good practices and lessons learned.
- CEEWEB and the working groups are intensively working on the different topics connected to sustainable development, not only in the Carpathians. Based on this experience, the organization is able to contribute to the development of several guidelines and protocols, e.g. on agro-biodiversity, protected areas, forests.

c) Future Secretariat

The future secretariat of the Carpathian Convention will not only be a co-ordination body, but also one of the major driving forces for the success of the implementation. The development of the structure, the recruitment of experienced staff, the inter-connection to other ongoing initiatives and the location are all crucial issues for the success.

ETE has much experience in communicating and negotiating with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which could be of good use for the future Secretariat, in using the lessons learned and good practices of the daily operations.

The first three years are going to be decisive for the Secretariat as well as for the Convention itself. The structure will be developed step by step, starting with small number of staff and activities until the full range of operations is reached. During that phase it is essential to use experiences of other Secretariats and organizations dealing with this topic.

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