
Budapest
Hungary
June 16 – 18, 2014

Editors: Kristina Vilimaite, Michael Meyer, Martina Voskarova

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

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The content of this report lies within the responsibility of the authors.
Report
of
Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting, 16-18 of June, 2014

“Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians: Implementing the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism”

The meeting of STWG of CEEweb for Biodiversity and partners took place in Budapest, Hungary. The purpose of the meeting was:
- Contribution to the adoption of the Strategy for sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians (later only “Strategy”)
- Contribution to the implementation of the Strategy
- Discussion on transfer of experience

DAY I. June 16, Monday

The meeting was opened by Kristina Vilimaite (CEEweb for Biodiversity) and informed the participants about the agenda and goals of the meeting. Please find the Agenda attached in Annex II. Michael Meyer, Ecologic Tourism in Europe, suggested to put the discussion on synergy of the action plan of the Strategy with the Danube Strategy into agenda.

Participants introduced themselves and expressed their expectations of the meeting.

The implementation process of the Strategy was presented by Martina Voskarova, Ecological Tourism in Europe.

Michael Meyer introduced the current final Strategy draft, as the fifth draft, and informed the participants the CC-WGST agreed on this and he expects the Parties to adopt it at COP4 in Mikulov (CZ) on 26 September 2014. He explained the role of the Background Document to the Strategy and that it should be welcomed but not adopted by the Parties at the COP4. The role of CEEweb STWG in regards to the implementation of the Strategy is the coordination of NGOs and cooperation with business sector in finding the ways for implementation of the Strategy.

While discussing the final draft, the group covered the following topics:
- the SWOT analysis should have been in the Final Draft however participants agreed it is good to be moved to the Background Document
- a baseline is missing in the Strategy (statistical data) as there is no research coverage for the entire Carpathians. The research would take couple of years
- the participants were explained that the Strategy will be a living document and therefore even the vision may change over time
- Bulgarian participants are interested in the Strategy as it is linked to all sustainable tourism strategies in Europe
- In regards to DMOs, it is important to define the destination, find a way to organize them and state who is going to finance them. An example from DMO in Nepal was stated for a bottom-up approach when the regions organized themselves instead of the government doing the structure.
- Important to find a way how to create a common identity of people living in different places connected by a mountain range

**Action plans that could be implemented by NGOs in the Carpathians:**
- there is a need to get into contact with the government and insert product lines into country (governmental) tourism strategies
- branding should be in line with the destination. At first there needs to be a local brand (identification of market, enhancement of management capacities etc.) and then a Carpathian brand. This way the Carpathian brand would gain strength and the number of tourist’s return visits would increase.
- zoning the most important touristic area in each country and measuring the impacts (air quality, people etc.) based on set of indicators. This would be used as an example for other pilot destinations.
- there is a need for more projects aiming on preservation of cultural heritage (protection of ‘brand-making’ elements of the Carpathian cultural heritage)

The conclusion of Day 1 was that participants should look for relevant information, ongoing projects or calls and send them to Kristina Vilimaite so she can distribute them to organizations interested in cooperation.

**DAY II. June 17, Tuesday**

The Day 2 started with a restructuring of the Agenda to build on the discussion from previous day.

The participants should possibly organize a consultation before COP4 on actions and help with preparation of a briefing note for the ministers.

Participants were informed that Slovakia has interest in establishing the Carpathian Coordination Centre for implementing the Tourism Strategy. However, they need to find funding for its operation.

**The role of NGO involvement in the adoption process of the Strategy:**
- NFPs are going to circulate the documents among ministries to prepare for the adoption. The NGOs need to consult with them and take the time to explain the content in case the parties have concerns.
- informing other NGOs in the countries about the Strategy so they are aware and prepared to lobby.
- attend the stakeholder meeting and National Tourism Agencies meeting one day before COP4 which would be the final stage for lobbying for the adoption of the Strategy.

**Commitments for the Strategy implementation:**
- **Zuzana Okanikova**, OZ Pronatur, Slovakia will meet the NFP and discuss the action plan to agree on the time frame and split of tasks, lobby with the government for initiating actions, coordinate the activities so they do not overlap. She will try to make a list of people specialized in different fields to work together and arrange exchange of good practices between stakeholders. She expressed the need to have reports so the continuity is ensured, especially in case of changing governments.
- **Valentin Voloshyn**, Ukrainian Eco and Active Tourism Association, informed that their foundation is highly interested in cross-border network and cooperation and hope that in future there may be calls for proposal to bring additional benefits. At the moment they are focused on 3 things:
  - certification development – ‘Go to Carpathians’ – pilot studies on how Ukraine is ready to introduce infrastructural developments into nature-based tourism
  - revitalization of greenways concept (East-Carpathian Biosphere Reserve)
  - actions in academia – promotion of the ideas, increasing the curricula on the Carpathian universities, summer schools
- **Adela Talpes**, GreenArts, Romania, expressed the need for attracting funds for local cultural events (e.g. Wallachian culture as a common heritage in the Carpathians)
Marina Ilic, Serbia will lobby for the Strategy and also for the geographical scope. She will cooperate also with Ivan Svetozarevic and inform local stakeholders.

In general, the participants agreed the need for following actions:
- support for the establishment of coordination body
- communication with other NGOs, DMOs and local governments
- labeling
- developing and improving the quality of infrastructure
- to have studies on ecosystem services in Protected Areas and carrying capacities
- mapping – make a layout of the map and point the organizations, stakeholders and potential participants (possible to use the definition of ecotourism destination from the 2nd EEC in Poiana Brasov)
- creating a database for strategies – they may have the same actions and these should be coordinated as much as possible
- collecting data on species in NPs that are going to be affected by tourism development for establishing a baseline could be possible for instance by starting ecological camps for students (group of volunteers guided by an expert). There are various examples in Europe where universities are involved in this (NP Djerdap, State of Bavaria etc.)
- new project proposals
- cooperation with WWF if possible

The participants discussed the synergy of action plans from the Strategy and the Danube Strategy and agreed to write a statement of CEEweb Sustainable Tourism Working Group on inter-linkages between the proposed Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians of the Carpathian Convention and tourism related targets of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region which will be sent to the Secretariat of CC and the Danube Strategy. (This Statement was written by Kristina Vilimaite and edited based on comments received by the CEEweb STWG, please see Annex III) The reason is that the two strategies have direct links and therefore can also have common financing of various actions.

Discussion on the National Assessments:
- the results should be published on the CEEweb website in a table according to countries stating the period of validity
- when countries make their new strategies, they should mention then the connection to the Carpathian Convention
- assessment methodology:
  - send a request to people carrying out the assessments to provide a feedback for improvement
  - once the methodology is reviewed, send to:
    - to regional level administrations
    - institutes on international policies (e.g. European Academy Bolzano) and ask for feedback
  - send to CBD (their COP is in October so maybe make a side event there by CEEweb)
  - officially send to the ISCC so they send to the NFPs with request to distribute to other stakeholders in their countries and provide feedback

Case studies on sustainable tourism in the Carpathians were presented by Martina Voskarova. Two case studies in each Carpathian Country were elaborated country experts for the purpose of exchanging good practices.
Kristina Vilimaite gave a presentation on the geographical scope of the Strategy and informed the participants on the ongoing process with the governments to define this and create the map.

Wrap up

High hopes for the adoption of the Strategy were expressed however there is a need for many actions to be taken. The participants agreed that they need to focus on communication among themselves and also towards other stakeholders.
Michael Meyer thanked the participants for finding the time but emphasized the need for finding a new approach for organizing the STWG meetings as the participation is dropping over years.
A purpose of existence of STWG was discussed and the participants asked to spread the word and set clear expectations within the group so they see it as a priority. There will be higher chances for bigger projects if the Strategy is adopted and these also need to be identified by STWG. They need to prioritize the actions to reflect the real problems. After the planned country consultations with the tourism sector in each of Carpathian country, a list of priorities will be created based on the meeting results.

DAY III. June 18, Wednesday

The participants attended a trip to an Open Air Museum in Szentendre.

The meeting was facilitated by Kristina Vilimaite and Michael Meyer. Notes were taken by Martina Voskarova.
Annex I

List of Participants

1. Adela Talpes, Greentourism Ecological Association (Romania)
2. Constantin Serban, Greentourism Ecological Association (Romania)
3. Daniel Lakatos, Kárpátok Kincsei Turisztikai Egyesület (Hungary)
4. Dejan Zagorac, Eko centar (Serbia)
5. Emil Vaklinov, Association "Rhodope mountains without borders" (Bulgaria)
6. Kristina Vilimaite, CEEweb for Biodiversity (Hungary)
7. Marina Ilic, School for Survival (Serbia)
8. Mariya Nakova-Haracharova, Environmental Organization Rhodope (Bulgaria)
9. Martina Voskarova, Ecological Tourism in Europe (Slovakia)
10. Michael Meyer, Ecological Tourism in Europe (Germany)
11. Valentyn Voloshyn, Ukrainian Eco and Active Tourism Association (Ukraine)
12. Zuzana Okanikova, OZ Pronatur (Slovakia)
Annex II

Agenda

for Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting, 2014

“Towards Sustainable Development of the Carpathians: Implementing the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism”

Venue: Alfa Art Hotel, Budapest, Hungary
Dates: 16-18 of June, 2014

The presentation will be held and discussions will be chaired by Michael Meyer and Martina Voskarova, ETE; and Kristina Vilimaite, CEEweb for Biodiversity

Day 1
June 16, Monday

14.00
☐ Goals and proceedings of the meeting
☐ Introductory round of participants
☐ Presentation about the ongoing implementation of the project “Strategy for the Future Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians”

16.00-16.15 Coffee break

- Presentation and discussion about the Contents of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians (as finalized by the CC-TWG at its May 12-14 meeting)
- Information about the related Background Document

19.00-21.00 Dinner

Day 2
June 17, Tuesday

9:00
- Case studies on sustainable tourism in the Carpathians: presentation and collection of comments
  1. Scope of application of the tourism strategy in the Carpathians

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11:00-11:15

- Discussion on potential involvement of NGOs in adopting the strategy
- Discussion on potential involvement of NGOs in implementing the strategy

13:00-14:00 Lunch

- Discussion on potential involvement of NGOs in implementing the strategy (cont.)

16.00-16.15 Coffee break

- Preparations for the Carpathian Convention COP4 (September 23 – 26, 2014 Mikulov, Czech Republic)

18.00 Wrap up of the day

19.00-21.00 Dinner

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Day 3
June 18, Wednesday

9.00

- Discussion on dissemination of the summary of the national tourism strategies assessments (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Moldova) among decision makers from CEE region

10.30 Coffee break

- Transfer of experiences with sustainable tourism strategy development to other countries or regions
- Conclusions, evaluation & closure of the meeting

12.00 Lunch

*Departure after the lunch.*
To:

Mr. Harald Egerer
Head of UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

and

Mr. Branimir Botev, Ministry of Economy and Energy, Bulgaria, and
Mr. Emanuel Cernat, Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, Romania,
as the 3rd Priority Area Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Statement of CEEweb Sustainable Tourism Working Group on interlinkages between the proposed Carpathian Convention’s Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians and tourism related targets of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

CEEweb Sustainable Tourism Working Group at its meeting in Budapest on June 16-18, 2014, discussed the relations between the aforementioned initiatives and decided to develop a suggestion for synergizing the efforts in their implementation.

Rationale

The intergovernmental Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism with support of other experts has drafted Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians. The strategy is submitted for adoption to the Carpathian Convention COP4 that will take place in September 2014. The strategy was developed in the framework of multi-partner project with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for the

The Carpathians are important to the Danube because of the geographical reasons. Eighty percent of the Carpathians’ water drains into the Danube. One quarter of the Danube catchment lies in the Carpathian mountains. Millions of people that live in the Carpathians at the same time live in the Danube basin.

Tourism can be both a possibility and a threat to sustainable development in the Carpathian and Danube regions. On one hand, tourism can be a driving force for preservation of ecosystem services, local cultures and communities, and sustainable development of local economies. On other hand, it can be a force that damages environment, socio-cultural networks of people and can drain local people of resources. To different extent these potentials and threats are addressed both in the proposed Carpathian Convention tourism strategy and in the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

**Summary of the main elements in the Carpathian and Danube initiatives on tourism**

The following tourism related targets were decided in the Priority Area 3 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region on promotion of culture and tourism, people to people contacts:

1. Develop a Danube Brand for the entire Danube Region based on already existing work
2. Support the implementation of a harmonized monitoring system, dedicated to tourism, able to provide complete and comparable statistical data in all the 14 states part of the EUSDR
3. Develop new and support existing Cultural Routes relevant in the Danube Region.
4. Develop green tourist products along the Danube Region
5. To create a ‘Blue Book’ on Danube cultural identity
6. Ensure the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage and natural values by developing relevant clusters and networks of museums, interpretation and visitors centres within the Danube Region
7. Promoting exchange and networking in the field of contemporary arts in the Danube Region

The proposed Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians focuses on three objectives:
1. Establish supportive conditions for sustainable tourism products and services, including development of a marketing scheme for the promotion of the Carpathians as a unique sustainable destination.

2. Develop innovative tourism management, fully integrating the needs of local people and economies and other supporting sectors, and respecting the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

3. Establish a continuous process of awareness raising, capacity building, education and training on sustainable tourism development and management at all levels.

The actions for achieving the objectives are outlined in two plans, one to be implemented by each Party of the Carpathian Convention individually and the other to be implemented jointly in the entire Carpathians.

Conclusions and suggestions

There are obvious overlaps of geographical area and activities in the field of tourism development of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the planned Carpathian Convention’s Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development.

Six out of seven countries that are Parties to the Carpathian Convention are also working on the implementation of the Danube Strategy. It is beneficial therefore to search for synergies, prevent duplication of efforts and coordinate the use of financial resources.
Photos

from
Sustainable Tourism Working Group Meeting, 2014

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CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of non-governmental organizations in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.

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