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Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) a regional thematic network for cooperation of mountain protected areas in the Carpathians. The CNPA objective is to contribute to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian protected areas and natural assets, to support the work and activities of the Working Group of the Carpathian Convention on conservation of biological and landscape diversity, etc.

The development of the CNPA Newsletter is aimed to constantly improve the communication and information access of all CNPA members, contributing experts, partner organizations, etc. regarding the upcoming events, ongoing projects, various activities within the area, etc. We strongly believe that our joint actions and communication will be rewarded with good results thus allowing us to preserve a matchless natural and cultural heritage: the Carpathian Mountains.

Mircea Verghelet,
Interim Chair of the CNPA Steering Committee
BioREGIO Carpathians

BioREGIO Carpathians was a transnational cooperation EU project co-financed under the 2nd call of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme, priority area "Protection and Improvement of the Environment". It had a total budget of 2,202,888.77 € of which the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution was 1,872,455.45 €. In addition to this, the partnership benefited from the contribution of a partner from Serbia whose budget was 200,000.00 € granted by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia. The project duration went from January 2011 till June 2014.

The project was aimed at enhancing the integrated management of the Carpathian protected areas and natural assets together with their ecological connectivity in a transnational context and thereby increasing the attractiveness of the region. 16 international, national, and local authorities, organizations and scientific institutions joined forces to contribute to the protection and development of the Carpathian mountain region. The seven Carpathian Ministries of the Environment were observers to the project. BioREGIO Carpathians was a flagship project in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR and it worked in close cooperation with the Carpathian Convention, with the aim to ensure an adequate follow-up of the project outcomes at the political level.

Recommendations for the future were grouped into different themes:

- Measures for Ecosystems: improvement of the efficiency of the ecosystem management for the Carpathian region; including of the concept of ecological connectivity also in local spatial planning; achieving appropriate hunting activity as a tool to preserve a near-natural forest and create the ideal conditions for the propagation of the widest possible spectrum of species.

- Economic measures: adapt European funding mechanisms more specifically to the conservation needs of the Carpathians; implement the financial mechanisms for PAs.

The Main Outcomes of the Project include:

- The Carpathian Red List of Species, Habitats and A List of Invasive Alien Species of the Carpathians.
- Common Integrated Management Measures, concrete strategic approaches and actions.
- Ecological connectivity and continuity recommendations along with Web GIS database.
- Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CIBIS)
- Transboundary management plan and pilot actions in three pilot areas: Poiplie/Duna Ipoly NP, Iron Gates NP/Djerdap NP and Maramures Mts NP/Carpathian Biosphere Reserve/Maramures/Carpathian Biosphere NP.
Legal and Governance measures: involvement of stakeholders to policy development and decision making processes; resolving incompatibilities between the national regulations of the Carpathian countries that have negative impacts on nature protection and biodiversity protection; improve the transparency and promotion of compensation mechanisms; adapt legislation to enhance the promotion of sustainable practices in agriculture or forestry, etc.

Research and monitoring: develop basic common monitoring indicators and systems that are compatible for the entire region; establish a network for long-term monitoring for ecosystems in the Carpathians, which will help to improve the access to data; set up a demand driven research approach, etc.

Cooperation and communication measures: enhance cooperation between the different stakeholders of the Carpathian countries, for example by establishing networks (CNPA – Carpathian Network for Protected Areas).

Capacity development measures: improve the access to learning opportunities in the region for different stakeholders; safeguard an increase in the ecological awareness.

Measures for agricultural management and infrastructure management: infrastructures should be well integrated into existing ecological structures like stepping stones and linear corridors; adaptation of forest management measures in silviculture and harvesting practices can improve the habitat quality.

The following publications were developed:

1. Carpathian Red List of Habitats and Species
2. Common Integrated Management Measures in the Carpathians
3. Regional development opportunities for protected areas and natural assets
4. Study on financial mechanisms and innovative economic tools for protected areas and natural assets

To find out more, please visit the project website: http://www.bioregio-carpathians.eu/
BioREGIO Carpathians Final Conference

The final conference of BioREGIO Carpathian project will be held on 12th of June 2014 in Poiana Brasov, Romania. The event will focus on the project's results in conjunction with presentations of an UNDP GEF project, overview on the upcoming financing opportunities of the South East Europe programme. Various workshops for Protected areas management improvement will contribute to BIOREGIO outputs dissemination. On 13th June, the participants will have the opportunity to visit the beautiful Piatra Craiului National Park.

Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

The fourth meeting of the Parties (COP 4) will be held on 23rd – 26th of September, 2014 in Mikulov, Czech Republic. There will be discussed the individual Articles of the Carpathian Convention (4 – 13); the cooperation of the Carpathian Convention (CC) with the European Union, the Alpine Convention and other international bodies, the programme of work and the budget of the CC;

The Permanent Secretariat arrangements of the CC, the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of the Fourth Conference of the Parties; the date and venue of the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP5), BioREGIO results and other issues.

Carpathian Convention Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge

On the 25th – 27th of March 2014, in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, it took place the fourth meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional. During the meeting the activities of the Working Group and the current situation of the draft Protocol on Cultural Heritage were presented. The meeting participants also presented their national position regarding the future Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge. The document – the Road Map to achieve the objective of Art 11 of the Carpathian Convention – will express the will for cooperation and will prepare the way for the hard law instrument (Protocol) in the future.

The Road Map will be an intermediate step towards the Protocol, until COP5, when the Protocol will be adopted. Accordingly, the draft Road Map was discussed and developed.
The meeting participants discussed and agreed also on the Ministerial Declaration on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathians, which will be proposed for adoption at the COP4. The draft text of the Protocol on Cultural Heritage was discussed. Regarding the next steps it was agreed that the updated COP 4 Decisions related to the Art. 11 of the CC will be circulated to the meeting participants together with the draft Ministerial Declaration, the draft Road Map, and the slightly revised draft text of the Protocol. The amended ToRs of the Working Group and the Programme of Work will be sent as well.

The Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Unit activities

This year the CNPA unit conducted a survey focused on the cooperation between the protected areas within the Carpathian countries and the CNPA. The aim was to find out whether the interest in the CNPA work increased and which is the topic of highest interest for the future work among the Protected Areas. Based on the responses we received, we can summarize that the interest in the CNPA cooperation is growing.

Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians

In 2010, a Protocol on Sustainable Tourism was adopted, a Protocol which supplies a legally obliging set up for the development of sustainable tourism in the Carpathians. It is essential to have a clear strategy in order to enforce the implementation of the protocol. In response to this requirement, the „Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians“ (CarpatSusTourStrat) project seeks to work out the needed strategy for the Carpathians in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. The project is held from March 2013 until November 2014. The Manager of the project is the Ecological Tourism in Europe (E.T.E.), with implementative help from these project partners: CEEweb for Biodiversity (CEEweb), WWF Danube Carpathian Programme (WWF – DCPO), Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP – ISCC) and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA).

The main objective of the project is to elaborate a tourism plan for the Carpathians. The scenario will support the application of the Carpathian Convention Tourism Protocol. A large attendance of stakeholders will be assured during the buildup of the strategy. The plan will be submitted in preliminary form for adoption at the 4th Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention, due to be held in October 2014.

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