

Carpathianproject

Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework
Promoted by the programme INTERREG III B/ CADSES of the European Union



Project co-financed by the EU



UNEP



Carpathianproject



INTERREG IIB CADSES

The Carpathians are one of Europe's largest mountain ranges and are shared by seven Central and Eastern European countries. The objective of the Carpathian Project is to enhance the sustainable development of the Carpathian region based on its rich natural and cultural heritage. The project will analyze the available information base, develop strategies and policy instruments and implement pilot activities together with regional and national stakeholders. The project builds on the transnational framework established by the Carpathian Convention to apply EU policies through the Carpathian region.

Agenda and Strategic Approach of the Carpathian Project

1. Background

The Carpathian region – which spans the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine – is one of Europe’s largest mountain ranges, harbouring a unique natural and cultural heritage, providing a haven for wildlife and acting as an ecological link within Europe. The diversity of the natural heritage is one of the biggest assets of the Carpathian region with a view to sustainable development. The Carpathians are a living environment for millions of people in the heart of Europe, yet their biodiversity and natural heritage are subject to a variety of threats and adverse impacts from land abandonment, habitat conversion and fragmentation, deforestation, large scale migration on the one hand, and from industrialisation, pollution and overexploitation of natural resources on the other.

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians enshrines a common vision, integrates developmental and environmental goals, provides objectives for action and constitutes the strategic framework for cooperation to address these challenges in a transnational context.

The Carpathian Project¹ has been developed in 2005 by UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and RTI Polska together with Carpathian Convention Signatories and the broad project consortium of partners from 11 countries. The project builds upon the intergovernmental cooperative platform of the Carpathian Convention. UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention leads the project with the support of the seven Carpathian Convention Signatories.

In establishing priorities and elaboration of the project, the aims and objectives of the **EU Neighbourhood Programme** concept have been taken into consideration. The main objectives of the concept are:

- promoting sustainable economic and social development in the border areas;
- working together to address common challenges, in fields such as environment, public health, and the prevention of and fight against organised crime;
- ensuring efficient and secure borders; promoting local, “people-to-people” type actions².

¹ Full title of the project is “Protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in a transnational framework”

² “Paving the way for a new Neighbourhood Instrument” (COM (2003) 393 final).



In facing such complexity, the EU Neighbourhood Programme adopts the spatial approach according to the mission of INTERREG.

The Carpathian Project supported by the EU Community Initiative INTERREG IIB CADSES³ Neighbourhood Programme aims to prepare for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention as a transnational tool for regional cooperation and spatial development. The project originates from a fusion of the Carpathian Convention process with the conclusions of the INTERREG II C Vision PlaNet project⁴.

A comprehensive preparatory process was conducted by the Carpathian Convention as well as the Vision PlaNet and European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT)⁵ cooperation networks. The preparations include assessments, preparatory research, governmental consultations, participative stakeholder meetings and international conferences, drawing upon the resources of a wide range of organizations and partner institutions.

2. Integration of the EU spatial development policies: Carpathian Space vision

The Carpathian Project aspires to take the strategic approach. In this respect, its first task is to determine **common strategic vision** in order to build consensus and develop strategies and policies according to the principles accorded by the Carpathian Convention contributing to harmonious territorial integration across the region.

The concrete strategic benefits, the Carpathian countries will obtain and make use of in order to take a long-term perspective on the future of mountain people and to seek regional answers to the common challenges, will be spun off by the Carpathian Project implementation. The strategic approach might lead to the development of the innovative Carpathian area – **Carpathian Space** with common strategic vision and developmental tasks identified. In this regard, the project will analyze and consolidate the information base, develop strategies and



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³ CADSES – Central Adriatic Danubian South Eastern European space. Among the INTERREG III B areas, the CADSES – is the largest and most complex in Europe. It includes 18 countries, from the Baltic Sea – Poland and Germany – to the Mediterranean, through Austria, western Italy and the Balkans, down to Greece, touching the eastern countries from Ukraine to the Accession Countries.

⁴ Vision PlaNet is an INTERREG IIC-CADSES project initiated by Austria, Germany and Italy, comprising the Central European, Adriatic, Danube and partly the Southeast European space. This project aimed at a better mutual understanding of spatial development processes, instruments and institutions in this part of Europe. Within the Vision PlaNet a challenging identification of the CADSES transnational areas, including the Carpathian Development Region, has been elaborated. The Carpathian Development Region was identified as a transnational development area for future actions.

⁵ CEMAT– Conférence Européenne des Ministres responsable de l'Aménagement du Territoire/European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning. The Council of Europe's CEMAT brings together representatives of the 45 Member States of the Council of Europe, united in their pursuit of a common objective: sustainable spatial development of the European continent. The activities of the Council of Europe, relating to spatial planning, began in 1970 in Bonn where the first CEMAT was held.

policy instruments, implement and test pilot activities in continuous cooperation with local and regional stakeholders.

The project builds on the existing structure of the Carpathian Convention, providing a transnational framework for the application of EU policies throughout the Carpathian region.

Focusing on the themes of strategic importance by taking reference to European spatial development as to transnational and national concepts, by ensuring regional and local anchorage and by applying a proper transnational spatial development approach, the project will integrate European spatial development policies with the management of the Carpathians' fragile mountain ecosystems in a transnational context. The historically marginalized mountain regions partly situated in remote border areas of the Carpathians should nowadays become powerful unifiers across borders between nations and peoples, in one of the most dynamically developing regions of Europe.

Experiences e.g. of the **Alpine Space** clearly demonstrate that mountains can offer considerable potentials for development respecting the value of rich natural and cultural heritage and its preservation for the future.

Spatial development issues as, in the interest of the future of the Carpathian countries, could only be resolved through enhanced cooperation and interface between different governmental and administrative levels, civil society, academic institutions and local people. This model will be applied in the Carpathian Project that provides a linkage of the top-down with the bottom-up approaches.

3. Objectives, actions, expected results and follow-up

Overall objective: The project shall develop the Carpathian Convention into an operational and truly transnational platform, allowing for the implementation of most relevant EU policies across the Carpathian region. The project shall demonstrate that environmental and developmental objectives can go hand in hand, if the future is built upon the region's advantages and potentials and typical mountain challenges are addressed in a coordinated manner.



Roňáče, Slovakia, © Mareničky M.

The long term objective of the project is to strengthen the protection and to accelerate the sustainable development of the Carpathian region by improving the internal as well as European cohesion of the area and by preserving its natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

Actions

In 2003, the Carpathian Convention was signed, calling for the development of coordinated spatial planning policies aiming at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. Actions under the project cover an area which has not been so far comprehensively examined by spatial factors and for which no consistent vision of development has been created.

The project will provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs, strengths, weaknesses and constraints of the Carpathian region and its people. It will analyze mountain constraints in the context of economic transition and European integration, and deliver strategies and best practices for development, building on the region's potentials while safeguarding its natural and cultural heritage. Elaborated strategies can be forged by the meetings of the **Intergovernmental Platform** into agreed policy instruments, such as thematic Protocols to the Carpathian Convention.

Without the thematic Protocols related to particular sectoral policies, the Carpathian Convention would remain only the "framework" for cooperation between the Convention's Parties, and

might have little influence on shaping the future of the Carpathian region.

Therefore, Carpathian Project will facilitate and contribute to the development of proposed Protocols to the Carpathian Convention, such as in the fields of biological and landscape diversity, sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development and related action plans. The Protocols and regional strategies will support the harmonized implementation of all relevant EU legislation and policies across EU borders, in particular the Natura 2000 network or the 6th Environmental Action Programme, through planning and management measures, as well as of other sector EU policies (Water Framework Directive, Trans-European Transport Networks) in the overall spirit of CEMAT.

The project generates a comprehensive data platform through preparation of the Carpathian Atlas and collection of environmental information, which will be consolidated in databases and made publicly accessible through the project website's GeoPortal.

A general strategic process produces multi-sectoral strategic environmental assessments and the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision.



Expected results and follow-up

1. The Carpathian Project will contribute to implementation of the Workprogramme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1 September 2005-31 August 2008.
2. The project will result in the improvement of the information base through the collection and systemizing of the presently scattered information on the Carpathian region, including environmental information. The transnational cooperation process and its outreach as well as information campaigns will strengthen regional implementation mechanisms for the future.
3. The project will create a wide network of consistent partners aimed at iterative cooperation and interface in a long-time perspective.
4. Deepened analysis of key socio-economic sectors as well as the preparation of informal Strategic Environmental Assessments of those sectors will result in a Carpathian Spatial Development Vision and a Carpathian Environment Outlook. Results and experiences of pilot activities will provide the best practice examples for implementing the policy instruments.
5. Based on the generated comprehensive information and strategies, appropriate policy instruments will be developed and agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Platform in a participatory process in continuous interaction with local and regional stakeholders.
6. The Project aspires to prepare background for follow-up investments and concrete regional planning policies to be endorsed by the Intergovernmental Platform.
7. At the Second Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP2), the project will submit the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision along with project results to the Intergovernmental Platform with intention to reach agreement on the follow-up programme.

CarpathianProject partners:

- UNEP Vienna ISCC, **Austria**
- RTI Polska, **Poland**
- Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Centre for Regional Studies, **Hungary**
- REC Slovakia, **Slovakia**
- Retecamere, **Italy**
- Podkarpackie region, **Poland**
- Prefecture Authority of Drama – Kavala – Xanthi, **Greece**
- University of Olomouc, **Czech Republic**
- UNEP GRID Warsaw, **Poland**
- WWF DCP, **Austria**
- Academia Istropolitana Bratislava, **Slovakia**
- Institute of Urban Development, **Poland**
- Institute of Spatial and Cadastral Systems, **Poland**
- ISF Muenchen (Social Research Institute), **Deutschland**
- EURAC, **Italy**
- CEEWEB, **Hungary**
- Urbanproiect Bucharest, **Romania**
- Int. Charitable Foundation “Heifer Project International”, **Ukraine**

For further information please contact us:

United Nations Environment Programme

Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
Wagrammer Strasse 5

P.O.Box 500

A –1400 Vienna

Austria

www.carpathianproject.eu

www.carpathianconvention.org

Phone: 0043 1 260 60 50 18

Fax: 0043 1 260 60 67 30

Mr. Harald Egerer

Harald.Egerer@unvienna.org