

A milestone for the protection of Europe's mountains:

Carpathian States adopt Protocol on Sustainable Transport

MIKULOV, Czech Republic: From 23 to 26 September, Environment Ministers and other high-level government officials of the seven Carpathian States met in Mikulov for the fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians.

On 26 September 2014, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine unanimously adopted and signed the Protocol on Sustainable Transport. Sustainable transport represents a major challenge for today's rural and urban environments - particularly in sensitive mountain regions of the Carpathians. Addressing the Ministerial segment, Mr. Jan Dusik, Regional Director for Europe of the UN Environment Programme said: "Green Infrastructure is one of the main issues to be tackled in the future under the incoming Czech Republic's presidency of the Carpathian Convention as well as at the EU level; the new Transport Protocol gives the Carpathian countries an important tool in this respect. "

The Protocol was developed within the framework of the ACCESS2MOUNTAIN Project, with the strong support of the European Academy of Bolzano and the project partners.

Countries also adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Cultural Heritage and the Joint Alpine - Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change.

Concluding the meeting, Mr. Dusik said "With great pleasure I note that further important steps have been taken towards the future ratification and implementation of the Protocols on Biodiversity, on Forests and on Sustainable Tourism. Besides the many other achievements in the various thematic fields (forestry, tourism, climate change etc.), and the realization of concrete projects and initiatives in the various fields, I want to highlight particularly the value of strategic partnerships between the Convention with other Conventions and Institutions." The importance of the Carpathian is also continuously reflected at the global level, notably in the context of the UN, and besides the Alpine Convention often referred to as a best-practice example of regional mountain governance.

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) is the only multi-level governance mechanism covering the whole of the Carpathian area and the second sub-regional treaty-based regime for the protection of a mountain region worldwide. Since 2004, the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (ISCC) is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme through its Vienna office.

The COP is the main decision-making body of the Convention, consisting of High Level Representatives of the contracting states to the Convention. Amongst others, the COP is responsible for the adoption of protocols and amendments to the Convention and for the establishment of subsidiary bodies to the Convention. It decides the programme of work and the financial budget of the Convention and reviews and supports the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. The ordinary meetings of the COP are held every three years.

During the meeting, the Head of UNEP Vienna Office, presented all the activities done and the achievements starting from COP3 and, following the inputs prepared by Science for the Carpathians (S4C), he showed the

main challenges to be addressed in the Carpathians and the priority actions to be focused on during next three years until COP5.

EURAC led the organization of two side events. One, chaired by Filippo Favilli, was focused on the results of the BIOREGIO project and follow-up projects. The other event, chaired by Matthias Wagner, focused on the outputs of the ACCESS2MOUNTAIN Project, brought together stakeholders from transport and environment ministries, NGOs and research bodies which discussed about next steps in the process of implementation of the Carpathian Convention Transport Protocol.

The importance of the EURAC support to the ISCC activities was mentioned several times throughout the meeting. During the Ministerial Segment of the Conference, Eleonora Musco, on behalf of EURAC, made a statement reassuring EURAC contribution to the work program of the Carpathian Convention for next years.



Please find all the documents related to the meeting at this website:

<http://www.carpathianconvention.org/eventdetailcop/events/cop4-fourth-meeting-of-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-the-carpathian-convention-copy.html>

Useful link: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/>

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