



STATEMENT **on Public Participation,** **Cultural heritage and Traditional knowledge issues** **in the frame of the Carpathian Convention**

*Based on ANPED project
(Position Papers attached)*

The Carpathian Convention recognises the need for secure and sustainable development within the Carpathian region. The Convention in its aims and articles recognises the need for public participation to enable successful implementation, and ensure relevance and support from the communities of the Carpathian region.

The Convention makes reference to preserving and promoting the Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the local communities of the Carpathians.

If this is to happen those plans and activities will need to build on, and work with, social and cultural heritage issues, as well as economic and environmental ones, mechanisms to inform and involve civil society in the on-going work and decision-making of the Carpathian Convention.

Unfortunately,

- **traditional links between nature and culture** are weakened during modern times. A wide-range of old cultural traditions are dying out, as modern circumstances encourage people to try to change their lifestyle and thereby pay a huge price in ignoring fundamental traditions of living in harmony with nature;
- many ethnic minorities have been repressed and / or forcibly relocated as a result of wars and social upheavals. There is now a flourishing of expression of ethnic identity, heritage and traditions. However this window of cultural expression maybe very short-lived before it is swamped a more mass and dominant western and EU culture.
- we see in all our countries a big gap between the environmental movement and those structures which try to preserve cultural traditions. The meaning of culture moved from a whole lifestyle to just arts. An old connection, a harmony between nature and man is often disappearing from everyday life;
- there is currently a lack of co-operation between the environmental legislation and cultural laws, between official structures on environment and culture;
- there is a loss of cultural values because of globalisation and unsustainable development tendencies, loss of many elements of traditional culture, loss of

local production and traditional services, loss of recognition of importance of local culture.

We are sure that

- there is a need for support to enable existing cultures to survive and flourish. Local communities are active in restoring and promoting their own traditional cultures, but some practical assistance is needed to create space for local and traditional cultures to exist and develop.
- The need for a strategic approach to the promotion and preservation of traditional, cultural and other relevant activities, and to show the benefits to local economies, that would result from such an approach.
- the cultural heritage is still a real part of local community life.

We call for:

- Sustainably develop the region and improve its quality of life: to create local strategies for sustainable development of the regions, with the local communities, and develop resourced implementation programmes for these strategies.
- Preserve and promote local traditions through practical demonstration of their benefits to the local economies and as part of strengthening local community life.
- Stimulate and educate local communities in the establishment of traditional culture businesses.
- Investigation into the current status of cultural and ethnic heritage in each region.
- Co-ordination of cultural heritage promotion in cooperation with all Carpathian countries.
- Working with regional authorities to investigate and secure funding for support of ethnic and cultural heritage, develop mechanism for promotion of products and services including regional „trade marks“ to promote local traditional crafts,
- Development of common activities and strategies to protect and promote of cultural and ethnic heritage in the Carpathian Countries, facilitation of cross-border co-operation as regarding ethnic and cultural heritage.
- involving the public and civil society organisations in the creation of protocols (and other relevant legal instruments) for the promotion of cultural heritage.
- To create an internationally recognised Carpathian Heritage list with establishing a mechanism for list creation and a special fund for Carpathian Heritage to support sites and activities, with clear rules of procedure and stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process.
- To take steps to ensure the active participation of civil society organisations in the creation of protocols, and the projects of the official work-programme of the Carpathian Convention.

- To distribute of information on the progress of the Convention, and also provide opportunities for involvement and participation.
- Establish mechanism to ensure the practice and outreach of the Carpathian Convention along Aarhus principals. To develop closer co-operation with international forums.

We apply to the COP

- **to approve our initiative on creating a Task Force group on Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, which will work out legally binding tools for implementation of this article of the convention;**
- **to develop a cooperation with public organizations required by Aarhus Convention;**
- **to activate a process on public participation in creating protocols to the Carpathian Convention.**