

## CARPATHIAN ROADMAP – SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AIMED AT ADOPTING THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR CARPATHIAN REGION (EUSCARP)

The **General Affairs Council** of the EU enabled the development of new macro-regional strategies by stating in its conclusions that it *remains open to examine any commonly agreed and mature initiative of Member States facing the same challenges in a defined geographic area aimed at setting up a new macro-regional strategy* (25<sup>th</sup> April 2017). Moreover macro-regional strategies also implement the **Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020** and put into practice place-based approach.

The preparation of the Carpathian Strategy document (future EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region – EUSCARP) were initiated by the Polish Government in response to the need **to broaden and deepen cooperation in the Carpathian Region and its functional areas**. The objective is to address the common features and challenges for the mountainous Carpathian Region and Carpathian Communities – **different than the ones for Danube river basin** features – and add value to interventions delivered from the EU to national, regional and local levels so that to ensure that it contributes to strengthen the functioning of the macro-region.

The mountainous areas cover one third of EU and are inhabited by c.a. 20% of its population. The **features of Carpathian region** include among others: remoteness and weak transport accessibility, difficult access to public services and culture. It is also worth noting that many studies claim that the mountainous areas will be first of all facing the global warming which influence forestry, water management, biodiversity, agriculture and clean energy production. The diagnosis prepared by Poland shows that currently the Carpathian region is saddled with many negative trends, such as: low GDP *per capita*, decline in population, low productivity and innovative capacities, low employment rate, low employment in R&D that hamper medium to long-term development and endanger cohesion.

On the other hand Carpathians **stands out as a unique place** with natural and cultural assets providing good conditions for sports, recreation and tourism. This territorial potential often remains untapped while the ecosystem services could be developed based on biodiversity, natural landscape and conditions for eco farming.

In keeping with the specific nature of functional areas there are opportunities and problems that cannot be effectively addressed by regions or countries acting alone or on a sectoral basis. An external facilitator is needed. Thus the large territory of **Carpathians could be more present in European debate**.

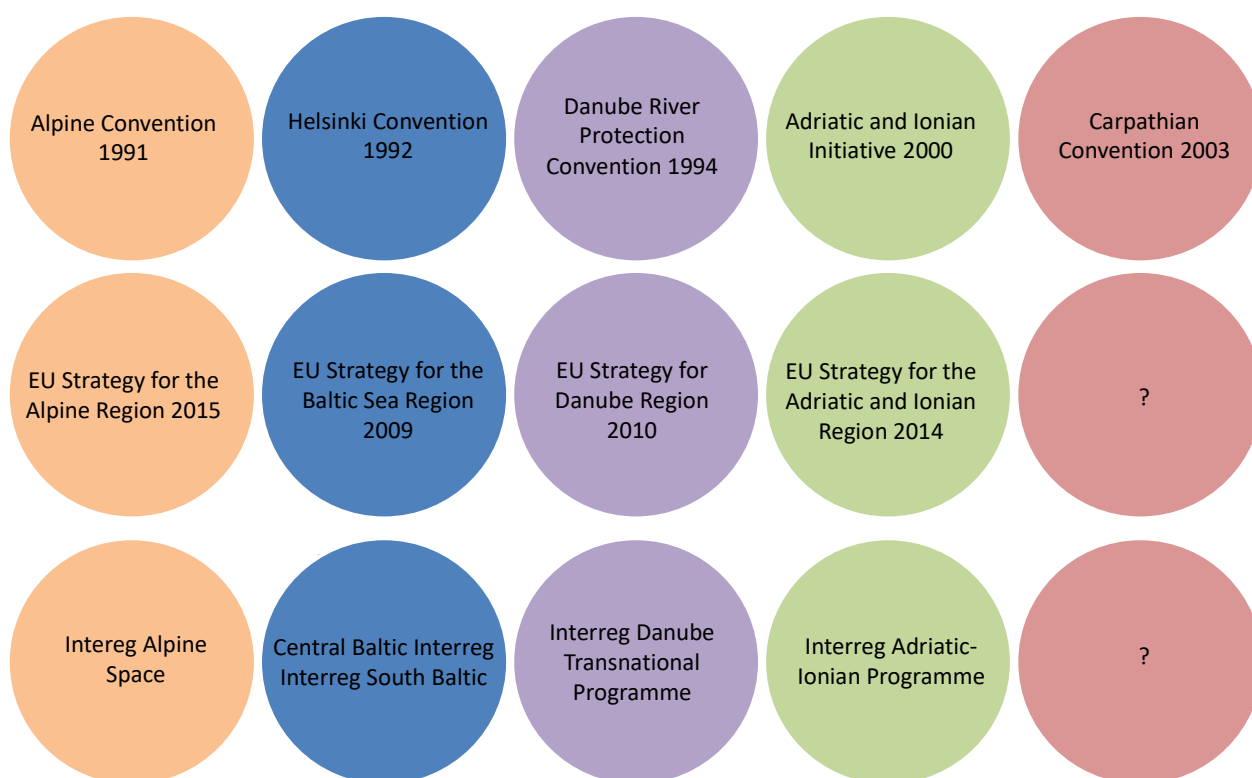
Establishing the macro-regional strategy could consolidate the strengths and opportunities, in particular by integrating policies in-between European-National-Regional levels, facilitating capacity building at local level and administrative complexity.

The EUSCARP would **support and complete the ongoing initiatives in the region**, such as the Carpathian Convention, Carpathian Euroregion and Interreg programmes. The **Carpathian Convention** will strengthen the processes as it looks forward to development of the EUSCARP. The Carpathian Strategy would contribute to implementation of the Thematic Protocols adopted by signatory countries of Carpathian Convention. Collaboration within these two initiatives would reinforce the implementing measures and would also deliver an impulse to make further use of the VASICA (*Vision and Strategies in the Carpathian Area. Protection and Sustainable Spatial Development of the Carpathians in a Transnational Framework*) adopted in 2009.

The need for a common platform for a joint work beyond the administrative borders, in different territorial scales has arisen. Filling this gap by the Carpathian Strategy, which give the common framework and tools for effective and efficient cooperation, facilitates leveraging the full added value. **The result-orientation of the**

**Strategy and project-approach** developed at the early stage will ensure a successful implementation of the document.

The macro-regional strategy would help to better coordinate EU regional and interregional, cross-border and transnational policies. Moreover it provides territorial dimension to sectorial approaches and a European dimension to national and regional policies. Additionally the territorial cooperation dimension of regional policy for mountain regions will contribute to the territorial, economic, environmental and social cohesion.



The scheme presented above shows the initiatives and tools for European macro-regions. The frame which enables to tackle with their territory in integrated manner consists usually of Conventions, EU macro-regional strategies and the financial sources from Interreg programmes (macro-regional strategies are also financed from national and regional operational programmes). For the Carpathian region there are still actions to be undertaken for strengthening the area and enhancing co-operation between states, regions and counties accordingly to challenges beyond administrative borders.

After signing the *Carpathian Declaration* in Krynica Zdrój a **the Commission** welcomed the ongoing process and underlined the added value of macro-regional cooperation. Indicating the advantages coming from the cooperation with Ukraine the Commission's representative drafted further steps towards developing the EUSCARP, emphasizing the need of building stronger political commitment, setting concrete targets and preparation for future implementation. However it was also indicated that the EUSCARP area is already partly covered by the EU Danube Strategy.

The Carpathian Strategy will deliver an opportunity for strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Carpathian Region and increasing the level and the quality of life of the inhabitants, and its quality of functioning in the EU as a whole.

## 1. GOALS OF THE ACTIVITIES

- I. Adoption of the EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region
  - a. Putting the Carpathian Strategy on the EU agenda (GAC – opening the formal process);
  - b. Appointment of a Working Group on EUSCARP;
  - c. Development and consultation of the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region, in cooperation with all Carpathian States (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova and Austria);
  - d. Adoption of the EUSCARP by the European Council
- II. Ensure adequate financial and delivery framework for 2021-2027.

## 2. ADDED VALUE OF THE CARPATHIAN STRATEGY

- Delivering the new impetus for cooperation and development in the Carpathian Area and tightening it,
- Supporting and completing ongoing initiatives (Carpathian Convention, Carpathian Euroregion; INTERREG programmes);
- Ensuring stability on the external border of the EU;
- Giving frames for a closer cooperation with Ukraine;
- Opportunity for innovation, cooperation, strategic approaches and new partnerships;
- Enhancing complementarities and synergies between various strands of the EU, national and regional financing deployed and to be deployed in the region (in particular concentration of intervention and planned decrease in the number of INTERREG programmes as well as transnational INTERREG programmes with macro-regional strategies);
- Good starting point for implementing common flagship projects as Via Carpathia, Carpathian Innovation Support Centre, Carpathian Incubator of “green technologies”;
- Chance for enhancing the Carpathian touristic label.

## 3. ACTIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN

1. Conceptual work on the Carpathian Strategy, diagnosis of the social, economic and spatial development of the Carpathian Region, in form of evidence-based analysis, till September 2016
2. Formulation of assumptions for the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region (send to potentially involved countries), September 2016
3. Meeting of the representatives potentially involved in the Carpathian Strategy in Warsaw, 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017
4. The draft of the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region was elaborated, December 2017.
5. Consultation of the draft Strategy among Carpathian Countries (via bilateral meetings and e-mails), 2017-2018
6. *The Declaration of Intent to Create the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region* was signed by representatives of governments of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine in Krynica Zdrój, 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2018
7. In Krynica Zdrój the question *how to implement the Carpathian strategy in the context of the new EU financial perspective* was discussed among the representatives of governments, regions and DG Regio, 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2018
8. *The Carpathian Declaration* was delivered to the Commission, European Parliament and Committee of the Regions with a call to support process of developing the EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region, October 2018

## ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION AT THE EU LEVEL

The proposed further steps are based on the so far experience of developing and adopting EU macro-regional strategies, nevertheless the procedure a new one may change in the next EU financial perspective.

The procedure for preparation of the strategy has usually started with the European Council, who asks the European Commission to launch the activities towards development of the Strategy. The adoption of the document by the European Council would emphasise the importance of the macro-region and facilitate the implementation which is crucial.

### 1. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES – 2018 AND FIRST HALF OF 2019

The submission of the *Carpathian Declaration* to the European Commission has opened the formal process of developing the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region at the EU level. At this stage gathering and committing the stakeholders on national, regional and European levels is essential. The lobbying process includes bilateral meetings, especially with Romania – the current presidency of the Council of the EU – and other partners in the region.

Further cooperation with Carpathian Convention and Carpathian Euroregion enables preparation for developing the EU Strategy and its successful implementation. At this stage formal and informal meetings of ministers, members of Parliaments and diplomats would play an important role.

Other stakeholders to be involved in the process are: *Carpathians* Interregional Group operating under the European Committee of the Regions as well as the European Parliament, in particular under the already existing thematic groups, such as the Intergroup on Rural Mountainous and Remote Areas or on European Tourism Development, Cultural Heritage, Ways of St. James and Other European Cultural Routes. An organisation of special event in European Parliament and Committee of Regions would be very supportive.

Opportunities to discuss and promote the initiative:

- DG meeting for territorial cohesion and urban matters – 12-13 November 2018, Vienna
- TCUM meeting – 27 November 2018, Brussels
- Meeting of group V4+2 for spatial planning and territorial cohesion, 28 November 2018, Bratislava
- COP 24 – Conference of the Parties ONZ – 11 December 2018, Katowice
- Presentation of the initiative during the meeting of *Carpathians* Interregional Group in the Committee of the Regions – 7 February 2019, Brussels
- Annual High level meeting on macro-regional strategies – 22 February 2019, Brussels
- Bilateral Meeting with experts from Romanian government – 27-28 February 2019, Warsaw
- DG meeting for territorial cohesion and urban matters – 7-8 Mai 2019, Buzau – tbc
- Workshop organised together with Carpathian Convention – summer 2019, tbd
- TCUM meeting – spring 2019, Brussels
- ESPON seminar – June 2019, Bucharest
- Final conference of the TRANSGREEN project, under patronage of the Romanian Presidency, 25 June 2019, Bucharest

**Poland, together with the governments of the signatory countries, will be responsible for these preparatory activities ; the activities will be completed by June 2019.**

## **2. INCLUSION OF DISCUSSION ON THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION IN THE AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – 2019**

In line with the procedure for developing EU macro-regional strategies, the discussion on the draft Carpathian Strategy adopted by the stakeholder countries must be conducted in the Council of the European Union. **Including the issue by the presidency Trio to the EU agenda is crucial.** Bilateral and multilateral dialog and getting support of the Friends of presidency group will be undertaken.

**The Presidency Trio, the Council of the European Union, together with the governments of the signatory countries, will be responsible for this activities; the activities will be completed in 2019.**

## **3. APPOINTMENT OF A WORKING GROUP ON THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL SIGNATORY COUNTRIES, TO WORK ON EUSCARP – 2019/2020**

The development of the Carpathian Strategy should be continued within the Working Group appointed by the European Commission. The appointment of the group depends on the decisions made by the countries committed to create EUSCARP. The involvement of all Carpathian and some neighbour countries, not only those who signed the Carpathian Declaration, (namely Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, Moldova and Austria) is very important.

The Working Group will include representatives of governments of all countries declaring their interest in the development of the Carpathian Strategy. When necessary the representatives of the Carpathian regions would be engaged in the process in a multi-level way, according to the principles of place-based approach. The final territorial scope of the Strategy will be decided by involved states.

The following areas could be addressed in the course of works of the appointed Working Group:

1. Human capital, education, quality of life and social issues;
2. Innovation, investments, entrepreneurship;
3. Agriculture, manufacturing, forestry;
4. Culture, history, preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, tourism, leisure industries;
5. Territorial cohesion, transport, energy, telecommunications, water and sewage infrastructure;
6. Financing, regulations and implementation of the Strategy.

Such an organisation of works should guarantee that the Strategy is developed in an efficient manner, so that the document is created within the maximum period of two years. Specific provisions of the Strategy should be subject to consultations during the meetings, debates and thematic conferences so as to reflect the actual needs of countries, regions and each concerned state from the Carpathian region.

During the Strategy preparation its implementation arrangements will be developed, taking into account legal, institutional, financial and political environment. Also a methodology for selecting and implementing a list of flagship/key projects will be settled.

Moreover to ensure the process of developing of the EUSCARP and future implementation it would be essential to launch a project devoted to desirable future of the Carpathian macro-region, for example from the ESPON EGTC.

**The European Commission will be responsible for this activity. It will be completed in December 2020.**

#### 4. CONSULTATION OF THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION – SPRING 2021

The works of the Working Group on the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region will be conducted on the basis of the activities undertaken following the analyses carried out, as well as the discussions with academics. The final phase of the works will include the wide consultation process of the project of EUSCARP with representatives of regional, national and supranational NGOs, business organisations, regions, experts and inhabitants of the Carpathian Region.

In the frame of the consultation the workshops and/or international conference will take place, also in the Carpathian Region. An event could be also organised by the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU.

**The European Commission and the governments of the signatory countries of the Carpathian Declaration will be responsible for this activity. It will be completed by spring 2021.**

#### 5. ENSURING FINANCING FOR EUSCARP – DECEMBER 2020

Poland proposes the EUSCARP be funded under an INTERREG 2021-2027 programme.

In this context it is worth noting that according to the currently negotiated provisions where a component referring to transnational cooperation of an INTERREG programme will support a macro-regional strategy, the total ERDF shall be programmed on the objectives of that strategy.

#### 6. ADOPTION OF THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION BY THE COMPETENT EU AUTHORITY – FIRST HALF 2021

As a result of the conducted works, the European Council could officially approve the fifth *EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region*.

**The European Council (- TBC) will be responsible for this task; the task should be completed by June 2021.**

#### LIST OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE CARPATHIAN REGION

No.	Measure	Deadline
I.	Establishment of the EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region	
1.	Preparatory activities	June 2019
2.	Inclusion of discussion on the EUSCARP in the agenda of the council of the EU	2019
3.	Appointment of a Working Group on the EUSCARP	2020
4.	Consultation of the EUSCARP	Spring 2021
5.	Approval of the EUSCARP by the competent EU authority	June 2021
II.	Ensuring an adequate financial framework and mechanisms for effective implementation of the EU Strategy	
1.	Negotiation of CPR and EFRR, INTERREG and NDICI regulations	
2.	Preparation of INTERREG Programs	
3.	Adoption INTERREG Programs by the Commission	

**PROMOTION AND INFORMATION RELATING TO THE CARPATHIAN STRATEGY – JANUARY 2019  
– JUNE 2021**

As it has been stressed several times – among others in the *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies*, 29/01/2019 – the political commitment is crucial for a successful implementation of the macro-regional strategies. Thus the actions on the promotion will contribute to the enhancement of awareness of potential and challenges of Carpathians, already preparing the ground for future realisation of the strategy.

Information and promotion activities are treated as a second pillar of the success of the Carpathian Strategy. Activities will be carried out at various administrative levels and among different stakeholder groups. From July 2020 until the end of June 2021 Poland will hold presidency of the Visegrad Group (V4), the Carpathian Strategy will be one of its priorities, what enable wide discussion on the issue. The EUSCARP could also play an important role in the presidency in the Carpathian Convention, which Poland is holding since 2020.

Measures under the Carpathian Strategy will include e.g.:

- Meeting of the V4 Group on territorial development;
- Meeting of the Groups of Carpathian Convention;
- Meeting in Brussels for members of Permanent Representations, members and staff of the European Commission, MEPs and others on the Carpathian Strategy;
- Meetings with representatives of the Carpathian regions ;
- Meetings with MEPs and members of the parliaments of potential signatory countries;
- Meetings with experts, members of non-governmental organisations, companies and institutions.

A forum for discussion on the concept and the provisions of the Strategy will also be the *Carpathians* Interregional Group operating under the European Committee of the Regions. Other entities that should be involved in the EUSCARP debate include the already mentioned groups operating in the European Parliament, such as the Intergroup on Rural Mountainous and Remote Areas or on European Tourism Development, Cultural Heritage, Ways of St. James and Other European Cultural Routes.

Discussion on the strategic planning of development in the Carpathian region should be in line with the main topics of the European debate, including the debate on the future of cohesion policy, in particular after 2020. It should also be combined with the concepts of the integrated approach to regions and functional regions, be of a horizontal nature and relate to the idea of sustainable development.