

Status, trends, threats and conservation needs in Carpathian wetlands

Introduction

Ján Kadlečík

State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

Frameworks for international cooperation in wetland issues

A unique opportunity to combine, strengthen and harmonize efforts of several „Multilateral Environmental Agreements“ (MEAs) related to water / wetlands / river basin management etc., for wetlands conservation and wise use – on regional / Carpathian basis

Ramsar Convention

Carpathian Convention

CBD, Bonn, Bern Convention/Emerald Network

Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Danube River Protection Convention

EU Water Framework Directive

EU Habitats and Birds Directives

Bilateral agreements/committees on water, nature conservation issues etc.

Carpathian Wetland Initiative Strategy

There are

- **political frameworks for formal cooperation – multilateral/ bilateral conventions, agreements, EU directives**
- **informal and coordinated cooperation of NGOs under WWF-DCP, the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI),**

but

- **common strategy and plan for wetlands conservation and wise use**
- **practical cooperation with some results and outputs visible in the field or in capacity building of the institutions and awareness**

is necessary and required

We can use existing mechanisms, to have it based on local/ subregional level (as it is in a case of CNPA); no new formalities necessary, but governmental approval important for development and funding

Key points for the CWI Strategic work plan are agreed in

- **the results of the 6th Evian Encounter (2006),**
- **in the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ramsar and Carpathian Conventions (2006), and**
- **in the adopted Terms of Reference for the CWI (2007).**

Strategic point

1. Information on wetland ecosystems, including transboundary wetland ecosystems

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform of basic data on wetlands

Activities:

- Organise the **first Carpathian wetland conference** to establish priorities in research, inventory and management of wetlands in the Carpathians and to agree on the basis for further cooperation and development of the initiative (2009).
- Using of **harmonised classification system** of wetland habitats compatible with EU (Natura 2000) system, compatible protocols for wetland inventory, guidelines for evaluation and interpretation of data for all Carpathian countries (using experience and work of the BBI-Matra / CERI project and Natura 2000/Emerald network development). (from 2009)
- **Training and workshop** on field manual use, field mapping, storing of data, digitizing.
- Collection and harmonisation of data for **Overview of Carpathian Wetlands – inventory** in all countries, GIS polygons, identification of wetlands of international importance and of sites in need of restoration, as well as transboundary wetland sites in cooperation with neighbour institutions. (from 2010)
- Involvement in the 2012 PA4LP Carpathian Clearing House Mechanism.

Strategic point

2. National Focal Points support

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for cooperation

Activities:

- Organize **meetings and electronic communication** of members of the CWI Board, using preferably other relevant events and support of travel expenses if necessary. (from 2008)
- **Facilitate effective cooperation** between the environmental, water management and other relevant sectors in respective Carpathian countries, coordination of national teams, expert networks and institutions. (from 2009)
- Regular **reporting** to the Secretariats of the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions and to the CWI Board. (from 2008)

Strategic point

3. Designation of additional Wetlands of International Importance, species and habitats monitoring

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for wetland assessment and monitoring

Activities:

- **Assessment of results of national wetland inventories with selection of the most valuable sites, leading to the *designation of additional Ramsar sites*, including transboundary sites, according to the Vision and Guidelines provided in the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance to ensure the fully representative network of globally important sites of wetland ecosystems in the Carpathian region; (mostly from 2011)**
- **Develop *harmonised wetland monitoring methodologies* of Carpathian wetland ecosystems and their key species, with particular regard to habitats and species listed in the annexes of the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as indicators developed for broader use within the Ramsar and Biodiversity Conventions; Translation of general guidelines on wetland restoration and sustainable use into national languages. (from 2011)**

Strategic point

4. Integrating wetlands into river basin management

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for integrated river basin management, especially in shared catchments

Activities:

- *Involvement in the preparation of the **protocol** or other relevant documents on sustainable and integrated water/river basin management within the Carpathian Convention in cooperation with other partners. (from 2009)*
- *Organise national **seminars/workshops for relevant stakeholders** and national authorities at river basin level on wetland management and water allocation to wetlands within the river basin management plans using Ramsar guidance (Handbook 7 “River Basin Management”) and the EU Water Framework Directive Guidance Document 12 (“The Role of Wetlands in the Water Framework Directive”). (from 2010)*
- ***Facilitation of bilateral consultations** and meetings on integrating wetlands into river basin management in shared wetlands and catchments, bilateral **agreements** on recognizing common objectives and principles of their management and wise use, based on experience of successful case studies. (from 2010)*

Strategic point

4. Integrating wetlands into river basin management

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for integrated river basin management, especially in shared catchments

Activities (contin.):

- Develop/prepare **handbooks and/or brochures**, leaflets on
 - retention of water resources in the uplands of catchment basins (in forests, mires, river floodplains and aquifers);
 - guidance and interpretation document on importance of river sediments and limitation of river sediment removals;
 - guidance on conservation of natural river morphology and preparation of unified / harmonised classification system of river morphology with illustrated interpretation manual/wordbook of morphological elements in national languages;
 - recognition of the ecological services provided by Carpathian rivers and related wetlands in all sectoral policies
- Cooperate on **development of a project** of best practice in retention of water resources in the uplands of catchment basins. (from 2011)
- **Involvement in the planned projects** (EU Interreg, Tisa River basin) which will include water/river basin management, communication and consultations with Carpathian Convention Secretariat and ICPDR.

Strategic point

5. Wetland restoration

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for wetland restoration activities

Activities:

- *Develop **wetland restoration strategies/policies** for montane/submontane wetlands in a number of Carpathian countries. (from 2009)*
- ***Identify priority sites for restoration** from results of national wetland inventories. (from 2010)*

Strategic point

6. Capacity building and public awareness

Strategic goal:

Establish a platform for capacity building and public awareness

Activities:

- *Preparation, distribution and evaluation of a **questionnaire** on training priorities and needs and development of training modules and training programme according to results of the questionnaire. (2009)*
- *Organise **training courses** for trainees from the Carpathian countries focused on priorities. (from 2010)*
- *Establish **web page** of CWI and publish information on wetlands and their role and function in the landscape and for human wellbeing in the Carpathians. (2009)*
- *Establish a **database of educational and training opportunities, institutions and experts** aimed at wetlands and communication with them. (2009)*
- *Development and production of **brochures, leaflets, postcards and posters** or a short documentary film on the Carpathian wetlands and their functions and services for human wellbeing and for biodiversity to support campaigns, and their presentation on web page. (from 2009)*
- *Establish and support **regional Wetland Centre** and its activities (coordination, information transfer, education, information sources collection, fund raising, harmonisation with the CC Protocol on Biodiversity, WG on Biodiversity of the Carpathian Implementation Committee, WWF project 2012 Protected Areas for a Living Planet and the Clearing House Mechanism, CNPA, CERI, etc.), based on the lessons learnt from the study tour focused on Wetland Centres in Europe. (from 2009)*

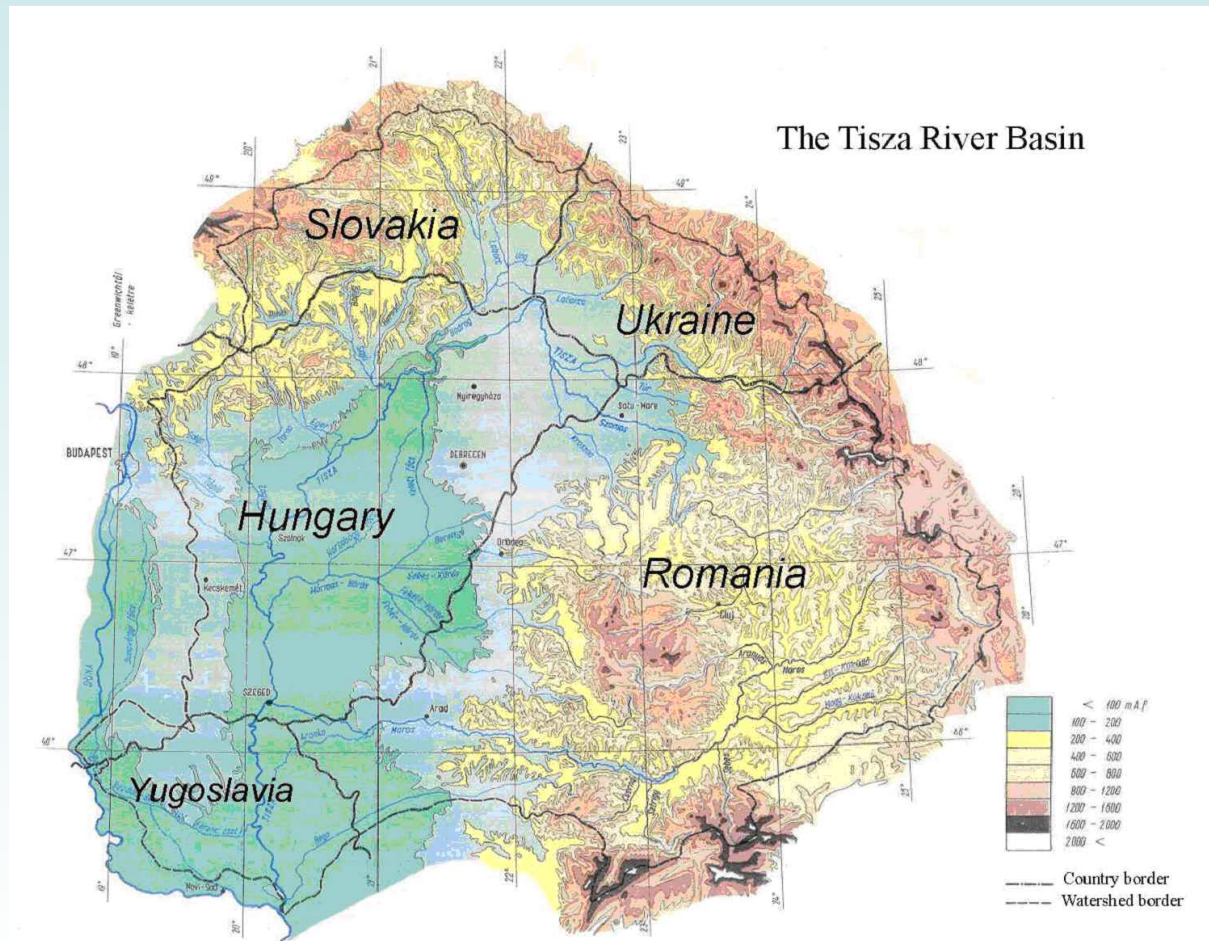
Funding possibilities and opportunities for the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative

Existing sources:

- 1. National sources and voluntary contributions (MoE Czech Republic, MoEW Hungary, SNC Slovak Republic)**
- 2. Projects (EU - INTERREG, SSETC, LIFE+; BBI MATRA; DBU Germany; Swiss Contribution to EU enlargement; Norwegian funds; WWF/MAVA PA4LP; UNDP/GEF – ICPDR – Tisa River Basin; UNDP/GEF)**
- 3. Ramsar Convention core budget;**

UNDP/GEF project on Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisa/Tisza River Basin (ICPDR)

- identification of suitable (prepared) sites for restoration



Outcomes of questionnaire of 2004 on the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative

Activities perceived as the most important:

- 1. Identification and designation of wetlands of international importance;**
- 2. Wetlands inventory;
Capacity building for wetlands conservation, restoration and wise use;
Organizing professional trainings;**



Outcomes of questionnaire of 2004 on the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (cont.)

- 3. Publishing common informational materials on Carpathian wetlands, their conservation and wise use;
Facilitating electronic communication and information exchange;
Coordinating and facilitating working group on wetlands, development and implementation of joint management plans in transfrontier or shared wetlands/catchments/river basins;
Organizing staff exchanges and study visits;
Common wetland and river based strategies development;
Establishing the Wetland Centre, coordinating and facilitating cooperation with other regions and networks in Europe and the world;
Lobbying, fundraising and coordinating joint projects, preparation of joint applications to available relevant programmes and funds,
etc.**

Outcomes of questionnaire of 2004 on the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (cont.)

The needs and challenges:

funding for management plans implementation,

GIS database on wetlands,

**environmental education programmes and facilities on wetlands
conservation, visitor facilities/centres,**

monitoring etc.

The Carpathian Wetlands Initiative Workshop Results

Countries identified their potential contribution to the common goals using their experience and designated contact persons for future communication and cooperation.

It was recommended to use the database of contacts or to identify two-three main partners from political and scientific bodies in each country, who will cooperate in future development of the initiative.

The activities should be connected with EU Water Framework Directive.

Future heading of the initiative should be specified in a conference with wider representation of governmental and non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations and other international partners with a topic on the status, inventory and conservation of wetlands in the Carpathians.

The Carpathian Wetlands Initiative Workshop

Results

The initiative should be developed under the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and the activities within this initiative should be based on the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 with its three “pillars” of action:

1. Working towards the wise use of wetlands through sustainable wetlands, water allocation, and the river basin management, establishing national wetland policies and plans; reviewing and harmonising the framework of laws and financial instruments; inventory and assessment; integrating wetlands into the sustainable development process; public participation in wetland management; promoting communication, education and public awareness; increasing private sector involvement; and harmonising implementation of the Ramsar Convention with other multilateral environmental agreements;

Ramsar three pillars of action

- 2. devoting particular attention to the further identification, designation and management of a coherent and comprehensive suite of sites to complete the Ramsar List as a contribution to the establishment of a global ecological network, and to ensure the effective monitoring and management of those sites included in the List; and**
- 3. cooperating internationally in the delivery of wetland conservation and wise use, through the management of transboundary water resources and wetlands, and shared wetland species, collaboration with other conventions and international organisations, sharing of information and experience, and increasing the flow of financial resources and relevant technologies**

Feedback of the 2006 Slovak MoE updates

Proposed strengthening of cooperation in:

Capacity building for wetlands conservation, restoration and wise use for stakeholders

Harmonization of legislation in the field of nature protection and biodiversity

Conservation of internationally important habitats, flora and fauna species in wetlands in the Carpathian region

SR

Cooperation in the joint management of the Ramsar sites/shared sites/catchments and/or species

HU/SK

Survey and monitoring of invertebrate and fish species in the small transborder wetlands

HU

Feedback of the 2006 Slovak MoE updates

Wetlands policy

PL

Wetlands inventory, common database

PL/SR/SK

Wetland/Training Centre for the Carpathians, enhancing training possibilities and opportunities

CZ/SK

Wetlands restoration

CZ/SK

Information sharing and distribution (web site)

River basin planning, management, including flood management

SK

Outcomes of the Stakeholder Meetings in the Carpathians

ANPED (Northern Alliance for Sustainability)

Public Participation project (2005-2006)

Water and river basin management:

Czech Republic

The major problem:

straightening of streams, concreting of river banks, continuous construction in floodplain areas, unsolved ownership and siltation of river beds

Recommendations:

Removal of obstacles and barriers from streams – technical adjustments

Water/river basin restoration, vegetation at river banks

Solving the issue of expropriated or state purchased land (property ownership, where to carry out the recovery, compensation)

Protection of wetlands

Protection of river floodplains

Outcomes of the Stakeholder Meetings in the Carpathians

ANPED Public Participation project (2005-2006)

Hungary

Sustainable and integrated river basin management - top priority

Different environmental limit values in countries

Inconsistency in legislation, e.g. opposite principles in water management and conservation legislation

Opposite interests of the countries in water management

Updating the indication and measuring system

Ensuring correct information, harmonizing the interests, international cooperation

Outcomes of the Stakeholder Meetings in the Carpathians

ANPED Public Participation project (2005-2006)

Poland

e.g. Strategy for sustainable development of the region; creation of a Carpathian database; efficient system of information exchange; multisectoral partnerships;

But also in some regions – *increase of artificial and natural retention by building of small retention basins and creation of polders; elimination of flood hazards by e.g. building and modernising of river bunds (about 550 km); modernisation of regulated rivers as well as regulation of river and stream beds in urban areas; building of big, new reservoirs and simultaneous implementation of water provisioning systems and systems of sewage treatment*

Recommendations:

Regulation of rules pertaining to management of borderland waters (monitoring, early flood warnings); creation of programs for funding of activities pertaining to maintenance and conservation of existing retentions and watercourses;

Building water reservoirs in the upper streams of rivers, reducing the flood ...
Restoration of technically developed streams and preventing their further development

Create a programme for the protection of wetlands

Outcomes of the Stakeholder Meetings in the Carpathians

ANPED Public Participation project (2005-2006)

Romania

To introduce the Carpathian issues as subjects of debate in the Water Basins Committees with the participation of NGO representatives

Communication/Information/stakeholders cooperation

Serbia

Prepare an action plan to address some of the most urgent problems in the region

Slovakia

Public involvement in creation of the program;

Harmonise legal instruments in the region

Outcomes of the Stakeholder Meetings in the Carpathians

ANPED Public Participation project (2005-2006)

Ukraine

- To establish local registers of cultural, historical and natural heritage – to move towards integration of these thematic registers on the pan-Carpathian level, as well as towards pan-Carpathian harmonization of standards and criteria of assessment within the issues covered by the Convention;**
- To extinguish controversial points in duties as for other conventions that in terms of their content somehow correlate with the Carpathian Convention**
- To implement basin-based approach into the practice of decision-making. To realize regulations on water-protection zone of mountain rivers and brooks**

Thank you for your attention !

