



**CERI Board Meeting
Brasov, Romania
5 December 2007**

Objective

Election of new Chair
GA 2007
Communications Strategy
Fundraising
Work plan 2008 (EU Core Grant 2008)

Participants: 7 people, JS=Chair; MB=Vice Chair, AG=Interim Executive Secretary; BP=Bohdan Prots; GP=George Prediou; JU=Jana Urbancikova; MO=Monika Ochwat-Marcinkiewicz; AV=Aleksandar Vlajic; HM=Minutes;

Ioan Abrudan was replaced by GP; Nenad Robajac was replaced by Aleksandar Vlajic; Yaroslav Dovhanych was replaced by Bohdan Prots.

For contact information on the participants see Annex 3.

Outcome

New Chair – Jan Seffer – elected
Update on National Networks
Agenda adapted for GA 2007
Update of the Board on Communications Strategy
Update of the Board on ongoing issues (Biodiversity Protocol, Belgrade Conference)

16:15 Welcome & Approval of Agenda

JS welcomes the participants to this important Board Meeting that will be used for

16:20 Review on National Focal Points; Election of Chair / Vice Chair

Czech Republic elected a new NFP in the last year; Bile Karpaty Education and Information Centre (Jana Urbancikova)

Hungary: New NFP is E-misszio Environmental Association (Istvan Csaba Botos).

Poland: Since last year Ecopsychology Association (MO) is the FP in Poland.

Romania: Current NFP is the University of Transylvania, Brasov.

Serbia: Ecolibri Bionet (Aleksandar Vlajic) will continue as NFP.

Slovakia: Daphne will continue as NFP.

Ukraine: Current NFP is Yaroslav Dovhanych (Ecological Club "Carpathians"). A new NFP has to be elected at the national network meetings the next day. Yaroslav Dovhanych left the message that he would support the National History Museum of Lviv (Bohdan Prots) or the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Vasyl Pokynchereda).

Election of Chair

The CERI Statutes say that the election of a Chair shall take place every 2 years. JS suggests to prolong the time up to 4 years.

According to new rules within the EU Core Grant there will be limited support to the members. Only 30% of the project budget can be subcontracted. In contrary, the CERI model was to subcontract NFPs for organizing things at the national level. Now the Secretariat will have employees and/or job agreements and will be directly contracted by the Secretariat. Minimum administrative work is not possible anymore, because there has to be an agreement for hiring space in the NFP place. CERI needs to have direct agreements with people who are working for the projects (EU Core Grant, DBU).

Proposal for Chair / Vice Chair

JS announces that he would like to be Vice Chair. He thinks the Chair should be changed, because he might not be diplomatic enough. He suggests to work on all administrative issues at Daphne in Slovakia.

MB disagrees, as he thinks this is not the reason to step down. He thinks it was no problem at all.

JS feels that it was not ok how he presented his comments at COP-1 to the Carpathian Convention. He thinks he could damage the image of CERI.

MB says that the statement for COP-1 was discussed and agreed on before. JS made it clear that it was his personal opinion.

JU states that the Carpathian Convention takes CERI seriously to a certain extent and that a constant contact is important. Changing JS would not be well-timed.

JS says that CERI needs to be represented more effectively.

MB did not hear any negative words after the meeting in Kyiv. He should stay as chair.

JS had some feedback from the ISCC. MB states that the statement in Kyiv gives CERI some teeth.

JU says that it is not the right time for the rotating system. The good is much bigger than the worse JS can do for the organization.

MB says that CERI could have any other spokes person from the organization.

JS agrees but suggests MB for the Chair, if this does not interfere with his job as Director of the DCP.

MB says that he cannot be the Chair, simply because of his busy job. The Chair should come from the Carpathians. He would be happy to be part of the team.

Voting

Chair: JS (5/6)

Vice chair: MB (5/6)

16:30 Review of old business according to Action List of 18 May 2007

MB asks whether or not AG is permanent staff at the moment.

AG replies that at the moment without financial support by a Core Grant, she is part-time employee supported by BBI-Matra project.

JS says that in case there will be a Core Grant for 2008, a half-time job will be announced. He thinks that more persons working on the CERI issues would be more effective than one full-time employee. Administrative work will be carried out by the Daphne office; an IT person is available for updates on the website and AG would overlap with the BBI-Matra project.

MB says that CERI needs a person who wakes up every morning and thinks on CERI. This would be only a question of money. Fundraising and all other activities are a full-time job.

AG thinks that more people bring in more ideas.

JS says that in 2006 the CERI Secretariat was no full-time job, except for certain time periods where more work on preparations had to be done.

MB asks what the work is CERI would like to ask the coordinator to work for.

AG replies that one cannot bother the members every day.

JS says that DEF has the same situation.

MB states that CERI is not working at the full as it should be. He asks whether AG is really enough to represent the Secretariat.

AG says that different incentives work for different people.

MB says that for him it sounds more work to get people involved than the situation is at the moment.

AG suggests to strengthen contact with NFP and national NW. Two rounds of visiting the national networks would be better, but she does not know whether this would help to activate the members. CERI has good experience with some experts, as they are driven by the experts' general interests.

MB says that the NFP are all senior people with full agendas. Action people that are pushing have to be not necessarily senior people.

AG states that the biodiversity project has a very strong line and that part of the people are interested.

JU says that if you pay for the people, then they will have time.

JS finds planning difficult in the NGO surroundings. He suggests to split 2 full-time jobs in 4, and to raise this money for additional persons at the NFP organizations. The Core Grant would provide up to € 120,000 with co-finance from DBU and BBI-Matra. Only 30 % of the budget is allowed to subcontract to the members. The remaining money has to be spent for travel and meetings. Additionally, DSA, IT work and administration have to be disclosed in the budget.

MB asks whether the reason for poor involvement of the members in CERI issues is a question of strategy or money.

JU replies that the reason is not only money. If CERI has something for the members to do, then it has sense.

AV asks whether a full-time in every country would be feasible.

JS thinks that CERI has a good structure with the WGs. CERI would rather need real projects than from the NFPs.

MB says that CERI has to have central pillars in the Development Strategy for CERI.

AG says that the analysis and structure was done within the board. Later the Development Strategy was spread among the members. The National Networks had meeting just before the Board Meeting, where comments were being elaborated. Members were asked for feedback. Monika Chrenkova will work on the draft including all information gathered from the members.

AG says that the Environmental Policy WG did not deliver the Development Strategy last year. Therefore, another process was initiated and the last Board Meeting was used to create a draft strategy.

JU asks whether the TWG is supported by BBI-Matra. At the same time CERI members were at the Carpathian Convention STWG meeting in the Czech Republic. She wonders who supported those people.

HM replies that there is no support for the TWG and the CERI members paid travel and accommodation for the Carpathian Convention STWG meeting themselves or through other organizations.

No SWOT analysis for the CERI by its partnership organizations has been carried out so far.

17:20 Core Grant 2008 (presentation by AG; Annex 1)

AG introduced the Board Members to the new EU Core Grant for 2008 including the objectives and activities.

She says that all WGs were invited to take part in the preparations for the proposal. Out of all WGs, the TWG, the BD WG and Management Planning WG were involved and the project proposal covers all their activities for 2008.

The overall budget is € 172,150, whereas BBI-Matra and DBU co-finance with € 52,320??.

Around € 119,830 are expected by the EU.

The NGOs themselves shall benefit from funding; no national allocations are foreseen. The NFPs are included as personnel; the WG will be subcontracted. The travel costs will have to be administered in a different way than it was the years before, because DSA have to be included. The DSA are much higher than CERI has used so far.

The project proposal was sent in earlier that day. More stress was put on EU policies as requested. Not all areas had to be covered as long as few of them were better elaborated. A new lady at the EC desk office was very helpful for the preparations.

GP says that will be a good chance to apply for Nature LIFE + in 2008. But there is still the problem of co-finance. Maybe it will be possible to get co-finance at the national level. CERI could create a common project with national co-financing. Mirek Kutal has interest as well. Institutes and NGOs can apply. It would be a good opportunity for the NFPs to get more members involved.

17:40 CERI GA 2007

AG says that the reason for such a short GA is the limited budget. She goes through the agenda items.

On day 3 the Development Strategy will be introduced for the first time. Then the NFP will represent their comments and a general discussion will be moderated. 15 min are not enough for this agenda item.

JS thinks that 15 min will be enough. There are other items to be discussed. He suggests to squeeze in the discussion on Day 2 depending on the discussion on the maps.

MB says that the DS is the most important thing. He would put in the session after the coffee break in the 10:50 to 12:00 session on Thursday. After a short introduction to the Matra issues, the NFP will represent their comments.

MB will lead the session.

JS will chair Day 3, IA Day 2.

18:10 Communications Strategy (Annex 2)

The draft Communications Strategy is ready and has to be approved by the Board and the GA.

MB suggests to ask the members first and then the Board. JS says that the GA as highest body shall discuss the issue. MB says that this is the process of creating the Communications Strategy.

Based on the WS that took in place in Poprad, Slovakia, last year, Tamara Malkova put together the Communications Strategy. Parts in national languages are important. At least basic information shall be translated.

JU says that even results from a national project in national language could be put on the web. JS expects clear measures to be monitored and an Action Plan. JU suggests to skip #2, because every communications officer should know this.

MB says that this could be included as general description of the method. GP says that the Communications Strategy should be more practical. JS notices that the expert audience has not been included as target group.

MB says that a slim strategy is needed, but difficult to develop without the Development Strategy. Then the slim strategy has to be moved into an action plan. At this stage we only know that we need internal and external communications. This is the beginning of the strategy. More meetings are needed to elaborate the strategy properly.

JS misses the goals. MO requests the roles of members and the secretariat to be defined.

MB says that the presentation is not clear. The goals are here, but not clearly said to be so. The Secretariat could help to role this out. The strategy is great as first cut, but more structure and a clear action plan for that is needed. He would present the strategy in the meeting.

JU suggests to have general rules for communications for the members; e.g. who speaks when etc.

IA will chair the morning session of Day 2.

18:30 Fundraising

The BBI-Matra project could be extended to the Western part of the Carpathians with support of DBU. The project was approved at the end of October. CERI is in the process of contracting. Total budget is € 87,000 Euro, co-financed by BBI-Matra funds.

For the 'World of Carpathians' CERI is negotiating with the DBU. DBU asked demanding questions related to the project idea. At the moment the budget is being considered (around € 82,000). CERI members that are involved are the Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation and the team around the project is seeking a Romanian partners for further cooperation, The project includes publicity work for the Carpathians. There is also a problem of co-financing. The EU Core Grant is suggested as co-financing tool.

MO suggests to apply for a national fund, at least in Poland. It is very likely that CERI will get the fund.

The TWG project is still in process.

ANPED is preparing a project that will be submitted to the Visegrad Fund. CERI was invited to participate to be contact point for Slovakia. Unfortunately Slovak members do not deal with the topic. REC Slovakia has been involved instead.

17:45 Belgrade Conference

MB reports on the side event 'Mountain Initiatives', where he had 2 min to talk. The audience consisted of 40 people (approximately 10 CERI members, 10 people from Georgia, 20 from UNEP). He put the CERI poster in IUCN BD lounge on a prominent position. Another side event about CBD took place, where he also represented CERI. The Director of EEA and some another key persons were present.

18:50 Update on the Draft Biodiversity Protocol under the Carpathian Convention

JS's participation in the Carpathian Convention Biodiversity WG was sponsored by CADSES (Carpathian Project). The first version of the draft protocol was drawn up by Ukraine, the second version was elaborated by Zbigniew Niewiadomski, Poland. The third version looks better, although some parts still look like a miracle, especially the parts that include cooperating on the harmonization of management plans etc. Habitat types were missing in the 2nd version and were included in the third. JS thinks that COP shall approve a red list of habitats. CERI could support the development within framework of BBI-Matra. In terms of connectivity there is difference to explain CNPA and ecological network. The third draft consists of 31 Articles, whereas Article 15 considers areas outside of protected areas.

The plan is to prepare the protocol for adoption by the next COP. Then the countries have one year to sign the protocol. The action plan is still missing and will be prepared for adoption until COP-3. Only after this procedure it will turn out whether the Biodiversity Protocol has been put into action.

JS considers the time useful he spend there. CERI is recognized as key organization in implementation of this protocol, which shall be done during the next 3 years.

At the moment the protocol is being legally checked in Czech Republic. Then the WG members will be asked for comments. JS will forward it to the Board Members.

19:10 End of Board Meeting

ANNEX 1 Presentation EU Core Grant 2008 (separate pdf file)

ANNEX 2

CERI COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

*(draft prepared by Tamara Malkova, Communication WG coordinator,
International Information Center "Green Dossier", Ukraine)*

1.

General purposes and tasks of the CERI Communication Strategy (CS)

The primary focus of the communication strategy is to strengthen the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative network (CERI), an umbrella organization of NGOs in the Carpathians. This support is targeted to enhance the network and its members' capabilities to respond to transboundary nature conservation issues and to contribute to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the region. The support should empower the network to respond to current priority issues as well as those that may arise in the future.

Problems which will be solved with the CS support

Loss of biodiversity, effectiveness of nature protection measures, management planning, environmental awareness raising, support of ecotourism in the region etc.

The communication strategy will

support the institutional development of the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative network of NGOs and research institutes (to a sustainable basis);

strengthen the capacities of the CERI network as well as its members to substantively address transboundary nature conservation issues, priorities for the Carpathians, at both the national as well as transboundary levels and;

enable CERI members to participate at and to contribute to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention

2.

Process of creating CS

<i>Communication is information exchange targeted to create understanding.</i>
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Steps of the process:

1. We need to communicate because we want to motivate consumers of information to act for making changes for better nature conservation.
2. We realize a difference between communication and information as two different approaches. Information approach: *"We have a problem and would like to get you informed"*; communication approach: *"You have a problem, and we are able to assist you in a solution"*.
3. We need to find out how the aim of the communication linked with CERI general tasks and targets.
4. We collect information and analyze.
5. We build the information link Sender – Channel – Receiver.
6. We define our targets answering following questions:
 - a. who are our target groups and why?
 - b. what we propose to them?
 - c. what they need?
 - d. who are the stakeholders of our communication?
 - e. who will play role of communicators?
 - f. which changes we expect in target groups?

target groups – those people whose participation is necessary for making changes,
stakeholders – those who are interested in a problem solution,
media (communicators) – those who support the problem solution

7. We define communication channels to be used according chosen tasks and targets.
8. We decide what are our information products and their packaging:
 - a. main message content,
 - b. forms for using,
 - c. styles,
 - d. sender and his role,
 - e. receiver needs
9. We take into account external conditions (cultural context, policy, factors of risk)
10. We agree timing needs of our communication activities:
 - a. how much time we need,
 - b. how urgent our message is,
 - c. how much time the receiver needs for our message realising,
 - d. which moment is the best to use.
11. We plan our activities.
12. We send information.
13. We create a feedback.
14. We evaluate the system (effectively of communication, channels of feedback, receivers reaction, plan next steps and needs, possible corrections).

3.

We recognized 2 types of the CS: **internal** strategy and **external**.

Internal CS

Target groups: CERI members, partner organizations, potential partners, NGOs

Needs: Good projects, good practices, information, education, activity support.

Aims of communication: Information exchange, strengthen the network, support, cooperation, bigger influence to authorities.

Strategy: Sharing information, inviting to meetings.

Messages: Together we can do more and be more powerful.

Channels: E-mail, meetings, web-sites, newsletter.

Tactics: Sharing knowledge and experience.

Planning

1. Strengthen the Network

information exchange (via newsletter, e-mail lists)

improving e-mail list (arranging separate lists for each WG, communicators in each WG, links between WG)

establish common standards for CERI members (using the logo, name for external communication)

Informing about actual projects

Identification of CERI members needs

2. Strengthen consultations and expertise (via newsletter and website)

3. Training on communication skills

4. Meeting for evaluation

5. Newsletter producing and distributing as one of the main tools of communication

External CS

Target groups: Communities, stakeholders, local and national authorities, donors, financial structures.

Needs: Improving economic situation, communication with CERI, more financing, more influence and affectivity, increasing of electorate quantity and trusting.

Aims of communication: Support, give them a tool, make CERI more visible, better dialog between communities and government, positive effect, support for new ideas.

Strategy: Giving examples, which may be used for different regions and countries; suggesting goals common for community groups and authorities; being competent; suggesting good solutions.

Messages: *Nature is a future of your community. Together we can do more. Our homeland needs our voice, and we can cooperate. Carpathians are important for the whole Europe. Government, which takes action would have good reputation.*

Channels: Web-sites, mass media, meetings, special information materials, booklets, personal contacts, official letters, telephone, consultations, newsletter, e-mail, fax, telephone, post.

Tactics: Include local communities into decision making; asking questions; showing that we know some answers; showing that we go in the same way; sharing optimistic messages and good practices.

Planning

1. Strengthen CERI communicator role in the region:
 - inform regional partners and authorities about official CC process
 - inform mass media
 - inform donors
2. Strengthen CERI expert role
 - consultations on the website
 - regular contacts with stakeholders
 - using deferent events for promote CERI
3. Sharing good practices
4. Inviting stakeholders into projects and decision making process.

4.

Evaluation and feedback

Should be done at the evaluation meeting with starting from the meeting preparation.

5.

Activities provided to create this draft

- working out the CS structure,
- e-mail discussion,
- workshop discussion at the CERI General Assembly (November 2006),
- completing planning of communication tables in written by the WG members (individual work),
- compilation of tables and analyzing,
- working out a general version.

6.

Activities should be done

- e-mail discussion of the draft,
- collecting comments,
- working out the final version,
- approving by the WG and the board.

ANNEX 3 Participation List

				General Assembly 2007					
				5 – 7 December 2007		List of participants			
				Brasov, Romania					
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