

**Executive Summary**  
**First**  
**CERI General Assembly**  
**Brasov, Romania**  
**June 1-2 2005**

**Objective:**

- To build the core structure, membership base and key principles of CERI as a newly established international association

**Main outputs:**

Adoption of decisions including the following:

- Approval of Chair, Vice Chair and National Focal Points (NFP) and members from 7 countries
- Agreement on the Rules of Procedure (ROP)
- Agreement on the Memorandum of Cooperation between CERI and the UNEP Vienna Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (ISCC) for 2005/06
- Agreement on the work plan and budget for 2005
- Scheduling of an Extraordinary General Assembly in Djerdap National Park, Serbia, November 2005 to approve 2006 budget and work plan

Please note: GA = General Assembly; DCP = WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme; NFP = National Focal Point; DEF = Danube Environmental Forum; GEF = Global Environmental Facility (established in 1991, helps developing countries fund projects and programs that protect the global environment); ROP = Rules of Procedure (by-laws of an organization); UNEP-ISCC = United Nations Environment Programme, Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

**Participants**

The participants were the CERI interim national focal points (Daphne, WWF-DCP, Transilvania University Brasov, CEEWEB, Ecolibri) and different NGOs and institutions including participants who were active with the former CEI from 7 countries in the Carpathians. Further, observers and speakers (Harald Egerer, UNEP Vienna ISCC; Mircea Vergholet, Director of the Protected Area Service in Brasov; Sorin Pop, GeoMMed Professional Association; Ingrid Butusina and Luminita Tanasie, WWF-DCP Romania, 2 students involved with FSC with WWF-DCP Romania) were present, and were either involved in the activities of CERI or dealt with projects of similar concern in focal regions. Michael Baltzer, Andras Krolopp, Tomas Ruzicka and Rafal Serafin of the board were unable to attend.

**Approval of Chair, Vice Chair and NFPs and members**

The first part of the meeting was devoted to establishing the core structure of CERI, through voting on the Chair (Jan Šeffler, Daphne) and Vice Chair (Mike Baltzer, WWF DCP) and electing 30 members (**Annex 20** of the GA Minute Annexes) and 7 National Focal Points. The NFP for the Czech Republic is Tomas Ruzicka (Environmental Partnership), for Hungary, Andras Krolopp (CEEWEB), for Poland, Dorota Maslanka (Foundation for the Support of Ecological Initiatives), for Romania, Ioan Abrudan (Transilvania University of Brasov), for Serbia, Nenad Robajac (Ecolibri Bionet), for Slovakia, Jan Šeffler (Daphne) and for Ukraine, Yaroslav Dovhanych (Carpathian Biosphere Reserve).

### **Agreement on the ROP**

The main topics of the ROP were the Functioning of the Secretariat and the NFPs and their links to the Board and the members. Furthermore, the members agreed on possible approaches for Fundraising and Project Definition and which roles the Secretariat, the member organizations and the Board play in this concern. It was agreed that CERI will mostly act as a 'conservation broker' in raising funds for projects and providing and sharing data and information, and not directly fundraise. Where it does raise funds, it will be indirectly, via 'project endorsements' via the NFPs, and where it does implement projects, only in cases where the projects are directly related to the 'Secretariat' role as described in the statutes, e.g. monitoring, database clearinghouse, coordination of ecoregion projects and involving at least two countries and members. The last point was the Representation of CERI (who can speak for CERI when).

### **Agreement on the Memorandum of Cooperation between CERI and the UNEP Vienna ISCC for 2005/06**

The representative of UNEP Vienna ISCC, Harald Egerer reported on the historic, current and future process of ratification and implementation of the Carpathian Convention, as well as the long-term collaboration of UNEP-ISCC and CERI (formerly CEI) concerning protection and sustainable development of the region. The contents of the memorandum include collaboration on the development of a UNDP-GEF project for achieving ecological connectivity of the Carpathians and cooperation on efforts to support the Governments of Carpathian countries in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and the establishment of a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA). Joint action plans between the organizations will be elaborated in a separate document before the next GA and on an annual basis.

### **Agreement on the work plan and budget for 2005**

In June there will be a DOEN (Dutch foundation supporting CERI members' projects) tour to different project areas within the Carpathians. A Ukrainian national consultation meeting will be held as part of the Carpathian Road Trip to tour CERI model projects and meet with the future network and local stakeholders. The tour will also aim at collecting inputs for the PDF-B application in order to draft the full-sized application for the GEF in August and other funding proposals. Further proposals (EU, BBI-MATRA and CADSES) will be drafted during summer. In the fall, the Fourth Ad Hoc Expert Meeting for the Draft Framework Carpathian Convention in Bolzano, Italy will be held. The first Conference of the Parties will most likely be held in November or December of this year, hosted by Romania in Brasov.

### **Scheduling of an Extraordinary General Assembly in Djerdap National Park, Serbia, November 2005**

The members called for an Extraordinary General Assembly in Djerdap National Park, Serbia in November in order to approve the work plan and the budget for 2006 and to discuss and move forward with a Scientific Advisory Committee and working groups.

### **Summary**

The CERI General Assembly was a fantastic start for the new era of the organization. The core structures of the newly established organization were built and many key decisions were made, providing a solid basis for future growth of the network, comprised now of 30 new members. There was already strong camaraderie and enthusiasm among future members and between members and National Focal Points. Critical discussion began involving the best means of harnessing the energy, talents and experience of members to set up a network capable of driving large-scale, long-term change, with requests for as much transparency and as little bureaucracy as possible. The next step will be organizing workgroups based on the themes agreed upon - biodiversity, large carnivores, forests, database management, environmental policy, environmental education, ecotourism and sustainable rural development, CERI institutional development and communications - as well as successful fundraising to use these workgroups as tools to carry out the organization's first main activities within the framework of the Carpathian Convention.