

***Carpathian Convention
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**THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION and SENSIBLE FACTORS.
THE NEED for CHANGE AND PROFESSIONALISM.**

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The text of the Carpathian Convention is written in the spirit of balance between the main components: forests, biodiversity and mountain agriculture.

By analyzing the evolutions from the last 3 years we will conclude that the Convention is focused only on forestry, biodiversity, large carnivores, tourism – and for these components there are “Protocols”. The big absent is **mountain agriculture** – according to article 7 of the Convention – for which we have no clear Protocol, because there are retentions. An explanation may be the complexity and sensitivity of the subject – involving directly the social component.

In the forms of mountain agriculture and animal breeding practice, in the Carpathian countries we will find **similarities**, but also important **differences**, which must necessarily be studied carefully and taken into consideration, their evolution being determined by geo-climatic factors which can have a regional or **micro-zone** character and of a long lasting human experience in direct relation with the environment. **Any touch or attempt to modify in the mountains the relationships human being-environment will create inevitably social reactions.**

There must also be observed some important **differences** in the actual situation from the mountain areas of the **Carpathian countries**:

- **areas with mountains less inhabited** on altitude, with “concentrated” village houses and with **weak**

mountain agro-zootechnical traditions or even disappeared, as the case of Czech, Hungary, partially of Slovakia;

- **areas with mountains more densely inhabited**, with village houses more dispersed and with **poor traditions still** in animal breeding and long lasting exploitation of grasslands and natural hay fields, case of Romania, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine;
- The **mountain agro-animal breeding** is the one which, through **the organic fertilizers and alkalization**, has created one of the **biggest wealth of the Carpathians – the fodder multi floral flora of the grasslands and hay fields, a magnificent biodiversity** maintained through the constant effort and the tenacity of the mountain farmer, in the succession of tenfold of generations;

In the European Union **the agriculture is recognized as an “engine”** of the social-economic life in the mountain rural.

The building of mountain long-lasting policies in the specific spreading area for a species of the Carpathian Convention must be supported on a **profound knowledge** of the **specificity**, similarities and differences, in such a way that all the orientations and **decisions** to have a **solid scientific base** and an ampler understanding of the mountain Carpathian and European phenomenology, generally speaking.

Once started with the **operational phase – the responsibilities grow considerably and we enter into the professionalism sphere.**

The mosaic of situations that we can find in the Carpathian countries and micro-areas obliges to the conceiving not of a unique policy but to a **policy adaptable to some zonal and even micro-zonal realities, which can be very different.**

The mountain agriculture is directly related to the **social factor**, and the base nucleus of the **cultural traditions** can be found again **in the families of mountain farmers**, which form the mountain rural communities, and the conservation of the cultural identity of these ones represents and objective of the policy of the European Union towards the mountain.

Because **the only form of stepping forward** which can be accepted in the long lasting mountain policy and which otherwise characterizes the mountain policies from the occidental countries E.U., is the state of **balance between agriculture and forestry**, a first step that imposes itself is represented by the completing of the

“mutual knowledge gap” with the expected result of the fertile equilibrate and responsible **co-working**.

The elaboration of agrarian-forest-economic studies on areas and micro-areas, of agrarian-forest-pastoral arrangements and the creation of viable and multipliable models – represents a **method of work** which can be practiced in order to avoid errors and to assure the success of the Carpathian Convention.

- **The major climatic changes** foreseen for the end of the XXIst century – trace a scenario that includes flooding of some large surfaces of fertile lands, with the reduction of the food volume for the planet population.

Where would follow to be obliged to move these masses of people?

This question is also followed by another one, more certain and closer: **the exponential demographic growth**. The horizon 2050 confirms a population of about **9 billion inhabitants**. So there appear two great challenges for the societies of the XXIst century and on forward.

The plus of 3 billion people in comparison with the actual means a huge over solicitation for the assuring of **food, water, energy and of the vital space for a permanent habitat**.

Or in this context the human society becomes obliged to thing again almost everything, in the spirit of the rational and economy.

The mountains become a subject of maximum interest, a priority – at national, continental and international level – as a space of **habitat** and as a source of **food, water, energy and biodiversity**. We could say:”Happy are the countries that have mountains”....

An important **change** is vitally necessary to be produced also in **some strategic concepts** which have been dominating until recently in the Alpine Convention but also in the beginnings of the new Carpathian Convention where mountain agriculture must play it’s important role.

The mountain can’t support any type of agriculture – the ground and the climate don’t permit. The available and durable orientation imposes the selection and continuity of the traditional forms of **agro-zotechnical practice, well-balanced mechanization, the normalized** extension of the **ruminant** effectives, which do **not** enter in competition with the human being for food, animal races capable to **combine** the need of **productivity** with the one of **organic resistance to extensive systems** or at the most **semi-extensive** of exploitation, with a **minimization of chemification** and concentration on the **high quality** of agro alimentary products.

- **Not a single government** can justify anymore **the mountain neglect** – which should be “gardened” at square meter, following the good examples offered by Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy and other regions or micro-areas with durable performances, some of them even from East. Just the Romanian Carpathians can produce high quality protein food for around 10 million people.

Numerous efforts are necessary regarding the mountain specificity: the development of **mountain research**, the adaptation of the educational system, of the education and the continuous professional formation, the building of a **specific juridical frame**, the **clear definition of the mountain areas**, the selection of valuable traditions and the setting of the **modernization technologies, lending and well-balanced**. Training the “pro-mountain” civil-society becomes of major and special importance.

In the new context the interpretation of the notion of “biodiversity” itself suffers modifications. A certain “vision” which has dominated in the last quarter of century and has concentrated almost **exclusively** on the forest sector, on rare plants and big carnivores – **is outrun** and risks to become **unrealistic**.

A new vision, a completing one – becomes the one of a “**biodiversity of first social utility**” where the forest keeps its place, the reservations of rare plants are reducing in reasonable limits, the savage fauna maintains its diversity without exaggerations – but the **fodder natural flora**, the multifloral, one of the Carpathian grasslands and hay fields regain their menaced and ignored already for too much time place – the idea being that of creation of a stable equilibrium between agriculture and the mountain forest space – Romania being very interested.

It is of the greatest importance to be known “the narrow places”, which are different from country to country.

- **The most serious form of mountain anti-economy** results from the **human erosion – human desertification**, from the phenomena of **agricultural abandon**. Romania, as well as other countries, is confronting this reality today.

The Carpathian Convention, by its concepts and plans of action which it **will promote** – must become a **defender of the essential, regenerative resources** from the mountain areas – where nature and human being go hand by hand. There isn’t another alternative in order that the mountain resources to be used plenary in

the use of the entire society, in a durable way. **No one can replace the mountain farmers!**

It becomes extremely important that at the level of the management team to be found **notorious specialists in the involved domains.**

Once entered on the road of the practical measures – “the actors” are being changed; **there isn’t place anymore for amateurs.** The creator role and the efficiency of the Convention will depend of the institutions, organizations, specialists involvement which detain demonstrated and recognized competences – and have the capacity to bring their contribution based on **knowledge and experience.**

- **A direction of realistic stepping forward** for the mountain areas that are under the incidence of the Carpathian Convention derives from **the newest orientations** at the level of the **European Community**: the accentuation of concentration on the “productivity” factor in the agriculture field, animals’ breeding, from the last half of the century has provoked economical and social effects, concerning the subject of animals and population **health**, even **negative**, some of them of serious gravity, with great losses and expenses for prevention and correction and they gradually renounce at the continuation on this way.

For the mountain areas from **Eastern Europe**, remained at the back concerning the modern technologies, **more extensive** systems – can become **an advantage**, through the limitation of investments and the **quality of products**, and the recognition of the multi functionality of agriculture and the diversity opens “**the window**” of **participation to the process of globalization.**

- In Romania – which detains on its territory **54% from the Chain of the Carpathian Mountains**, great **efforts** have been made in the last 17 years, that are obvious in the creation of **specialized institutions** for mountains, with profile of research, **professional formation**, administration, and also professional organizations, which having working together at national and international level, have gained important **accumulations of qualitative level and experience with value of multiplication.**

Important progresses have been achieved also by the emission of specific normative documents, as “The Mountain Law” No. 347/2004, having also a legal definition of the mountain area according to the criterias of the European Commission. In 2007 the

Romanian Parliament has adopted the Law No. 181 – regarding the establishment, organizing and functioning of the National Agency for the Mountain Area as a State Secretariate, with teritorial professional structures.

- **As institutions that can be invited as professional permanent partners** in the future efforts of the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, we can mention: **The Innovation and Training Center for Development in the Carpathians (C.E.F.I.D.E.C.) – Vatra Dornei (with over 3.000 graduates); The Institution of Research Development for the Grasslands – Braşov; The Institute of Research and Development for Mountaineering – Cristian, Sibiu (The Academy of Forest and Agricultural Sciences); The Universities of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Iaşi and Cluj – with faculties of agriculture-mountaineering; The National Institute of Economical Researches (Romanian Academy) and the non governmental specialized organizations: The Romanian Mountain Forum (R.M.F.); The National Association for Mountain Rural Development “ROMONTANA”; The Mountain Farmers Federation - Dorna (F.A.M. - Dorna) and of course The National Agency for the Mountain Area.**
- **Through the size of the mountain territory, the tradition of the richness, the qualitative efforts and the competences** of institutions and non governmental specialized organizations, **Romania emits justified pretensions for that the permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to be installed on its territory** (in the line of the existent offers).
- For the preparation of the **Protocol for Agriculture**, we suggest as location – Vatra Dornei, the area where **institutions and organizations have allready been established**, where **models have been implemented**, and a where a **unique experience has been stored – which become valuable for the Carpathian Convention.**
- We also propose that both official languages of the European Comission, english and french, to be used for the Convention in order to avoid discrimination and enlarge the access of competent factors.

THE ROMANIAN CARPATHIANS

Efforts for Sustainable Development (1990 – 2008)

Specialized Institutions:

- The National Agency for the Mountain Area;
- The Training and Innovation Centre for Development in the Carpathians – C.E.F.I.D.E.C, Vatra Dornei;
- The Institute of Research and Development for Mountaineering – Cristian, Sibiu (1991 - 2008);
- The Commission for Mountainology (The Academy of Forest and Agricultural Sciences);
- The Interministerial Committee for the Mountain Area;
- 9 Professional Mountain Agriculture Schools (2007/2008);

Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's):

- Mountain Farmers Federation – Dorna (F.A.M. – Dorna);
- National Association for Mountain Rural Development “ROMONTANA”;
- Romanian Mountain Forum (Mountain Partnership – U.N.O./F.A.O.);

Legal framework:

- The criterias for delimitation of the mountain area (according to the Resolution no. 1257/99. E.C.) – government decision;
- The delimitation of the mountain area;
- The Strategy for Development of the Mountain Area;
- The Mountain Law, No. 347/2004 (to be revised in 2008);
- The government decision regarding the establishment of the Interministerial Committee for the Mountains and each County's Committee for the Mountains;
- The Law No. 181/2007 regarding the establishment, organizing and functioning of the National Agency for the Mountain Area as a State Secretariate, with teritorial professional structures.