

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECOTOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE CARPATHIAN ECOREGION

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To protect nature, broad support from local people and the population in general, need constant nurturing and education. To bring people in contact with nature in a responsible manner is seen by many ecotourism NGO's such as the European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism (ECEAT) as the most important way to create such support base. 'Responsible' means, besides a minimal but acceptable disturbance for flora and fauna, that the local population that lives with and around this nature will get motivated by the enthusiasm and economic benefits of the visitors to learn more about their own nature and to form a local political majority in favor of its sustainable protection. Awareness raising on sustainable eco-tourism among the local population means reaching a better understanding of why, what and how nature should be protected.

Examples like the "Green Ways" development in Belarus, Green Agenda in the Niraj Valley, and the PANParks' participatory policy making process have brought together local stakeholders to build support for sustainability in tourism in different occasions the last years. In these cases there is already a platform and the project leaders are accepted as facilitators to bring the discussion further. In Romania, lack of awareness and knowledge on nature protection among local stakeholders is seen by the WWF CD Programme as the major obstacle for implementation of the Bern Convention and the EU Habitat Directive (David Reeder, pers com. 2006).

Well developed eco-corridors, such as the Pan European Ecological Network (PEEN) corridors, are thought to have a major impact on the protection of large carnivores, such as Brown Bear, Wolf and Lynx. The Carpathian mountain range acts as a bridge, connecting the Czech Tatra and the Ukrainian lowlands with the Balkan region. The Carpathians themselves already contain large territories that are needed for those animals. PEEN corridors between the core areas in the Carpathians will consolidate the populations and will act as important gene pool for the rest of Europe. Northern Belarus is such bridge between the Baltic, Russian and Polish populations. Genetic exchange highly depends on cross border corridors. Wolf, Bear and Lynx Management Plans, that are prescribed EU countries, foresee in the development of such corridors. The Romanian government has signed the Bern Convention and the Habitat directive in which they dedicated themselves to the implementation of these plans.

There are three components of awareness raising and knowledge development on linking nature protection with sustainable tourism that need attention.

1. European dimension

The protection of large carnivores in the Carpathian mountain range is chosen as a European priority policy area by the large nature protection organisations such as WWF and IUCN. The implementation of these plans depends very much on local actors. But at the same time these support programs requires a well developed organisational and administrative capacity, as we can see in the Netherlands with the implementation of landscape protection programs. Trust of local actors in building up protection programs is an absolute requirement (Eshuis, 2003).

2. Local threats

Extension of the protection of large carnivores outside NP's, implies a greater (felt) threat to the local population. A continuous local process is needed to give ample opportunity to the local population how to deal with this threat. Examples from other countries show that such process can turn at least prejudices into more reality based judgements, giving space to the development of damage compensation programs (WWF, 2002).

3. Local resource management

Finally, developing nature-based tourism in new areas will pose another kind of pressure on local natural resources. The local population need to re-assess on who has access to those resources, on what can be considered as sustainable resource management and on who is monitoring, controlling and sanctioning it.

Market opportunities for responsible tourism in Eastern European eco-agro destinations

In Eastern Europe, 'responsible tourism' or 'soft tourism' has a lot of potential in grow. ECEAT has shown within the last 10 years of practice that besides the Internal market, Western European visitors can bring in relevant economical revenues and interesting social contacts for certified rural home stays and ecolodges. The most important target group of ECEAT has been until now young couples or families, more than average educated, and interested in other cultures and natural experiences.

ECEAT has been a pioneer in developing accommodations and tours in Eastern Europe to eco-agro destinations: here defined as ecologically maintained rural landscapes and wilderness areas. There are several factors that are responsible for a recent growth of responsible tourism to these destinations.

1. According to own estimations (see figure below) only 2.5 million of total 64 million foreign tourists visiting Eastern Europe, were visiting eco-agro destinations. Often lack of information prevents tourists that are visiting cities and beaches, to spend a part of their holiday in more isolated natural areas. One important target group here is the fast growing numbers of backpackers that are visiting the main cultural capitals of Eastern Europe.

2. Most of the tourists visiting natural areas are from the internal source market. The growth of eco-agro tourism in Eastern European countries show the same growth trend as has been the case in Western European countries, resulting in i more than average growth in attractive natural areas, compared to other rural areas.

3. Since the increase of access possibilities and exposure of Eastern European countries in the Western European media, tour operators are discovering the natural beauty of Eastern Europe, resulting in more organized tours and potential for visits to eco-agro destinations.

4. Since the food aid and other emergency support to many poor Eastern European countries came to a hold, there are still numerous groups of village or church communities that arranged this type of aid, with good relations with their sister organizations in Eastern European countries. From experience in other projects, ECEAT has found that many members of these groups are looking for possibilities for the 'experienced' traveler, but that they have difficulties to find them.

5. There is a recent and rapid growth of the so-called SAVE market (Students, Academics, Volunteers, Educators). After decades of volunteer work to guide scholars and volunteers in their wish to contribute to local development, innovative tourism projects started to professionalize their services, resulting also in a growth of mediation services accelerating the launch of this SAVE market. This coincides with the growth of sustainable tourism departments within many European universities, resulting in a raising demand of internships and research possibilities in interesting tourism settings.

6. Until now there is a relative large under-used capacity of beds in the B&B sector in eco-agro destinations. B&B's in isolated eco-agro destinations are often normal families offering a room if demanded. Many of these B&B's are currently studying possibilities to get more clients, for example through internet mediators, resulting in a more prominent place in European search sites with an expected raise of tourists.

Accommodation businesses	Eco-Agro destinations in Eastern Europe (thousands)	Capacity (beds / persons) (thousands)	Occupancy rate in main tourist season	Average length of holiday (nights)	Arrivals in eco-agro destination (millions)	foreign eco-agro arrivals (millions)	Foreign city + beach arrivals East- Europe
Hotels / pensions	2	75	60%	7	8	0.8	50
Campsites	2	200	60%	20	7	0.7	2
B&B's	36	175	40%	15	5	0.5	5
Self- catering	10	150	50%	20	5	0.5	5
TOTAL	50	600			25	2.5	62

Estimated tourism arrivals to eco-agro destinations, compared to other destinations.

To stimulate the growth of responsible tourism to eco-agro destinations, there are, considering the trends above, several strategies necessary.

1. To link the existing sustainable offer to the growing source markets (SAVE, backpackers, Focus groups)
2. To develop sustainability in the whole tourism chain to maintain quality, credibility, trust in this fast growing market (see figure below).
3. To demand contributions to sustainable development from the growing amount of tour operators who plan or already program sensitive eco-agro destinations.

The higher demand for eco-agro destinations can result in an uncontrolled growth of the tourism sector in these areas. Taken all factors together, tourism arrivals could very well double or triple within the next 5 years, making this time frame very critical for involving all relevant actors and for taking measures to bend this growth towards sustainable tourism.

Until now, pioneering work has been done by PANParks and by EUROPARC in designing and stimulating monitoring schemes for sustainable tourism destination management in sensitive natural areas. This resulted in 3 official PANParks and an amount of Charters for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, experiments with Local Agenda 21 are being implemented, involving also sustainable tourism management. ECEAT Partner in Romania Focus Eco Center is manager of a program that guides 6 so-called micro-regions in Transylvania, among others the Niraj Valley, that designed a long term program for sustainable development. Probably only less than one percent of the total area designated as national park, landscape park or other kind of protection status has some management that is working on sustainable development.

Because of this pioneering work, and also because of several authoritative studies of the feasibility of monitoring indicators for sustainable destination management in 9 European areas within the LIFE project "VISIT" (www.vourvisit.info), there are no major practical and theoretical objections to launch sustainable destination management as serious policy tool. See also www.desti-net.net, and www.desti-link.net). Further integration of Eastern European countries within the EU, will facilitate sustainable destination management by different EU (structural) rural development programs, such as LEADER. Development of "responsible holidays" and its higher demand for it, will stimulate such processes. ECEAT has as a mission to contribute to the extension of the areas with sustainable destination management to 20%, either by certification or by legal arrangements, within the next 15 years. Also the Dutch government has this as objective according to the Netherlands International Policy Document "Nature for People, People for Nature". In this vision, sustainable managed eco-agro destinations can take up a growth towards at least 100 million visitors per year, comparable with the present amount of annual foreign visitors to the Alps.

Development of "responsible" tourism implies a careful sustainability quality control. Until now, pioneering work has been done by ECEAT, PANParks and by EUROPARC in designing and stimulating monitoring schemes for sustainable tourism destination management in sensitive natural areas. This resulted in 600 ECEAT certified accommodations, 3 official PANParks and an amount of Charters for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, experiments with Local Agenda 21 are being implemented, involving also sustainable tourism management.

Responsible tourism is based on integrating, monitoring and controlling contributions to sustainable development. Priorities for sustainable development have been set out extensively for example for the Carpathian Mountain Range. Many relevant institutions have confirmed these priorities on international conferences and by charters. Responsible tourism has an important role to play in these priority areas, often even a key role.

In this context it becomes highly relevant to demonstrate extensively how sustainability can be integrated in the whole tourism supply chain. The main objective of short term nature conservation strategies should there for be to show to local populations, businesses and authorities that a responsible tourism chain is possible and profitable. The secondary objective is to demonstrate to tour operators and tourists what contributions to sustainable development can and must be adopted into their practices.

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**Conceptual approaches to the study of factors
of political transformation**

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Democratization as a phenomenon of social and political life is the subject of a number of domestic and foreign scientists. The notion of democracy introduced in the academic community in the 1888 American political scientist D. Bryce launched the French Revolution [6, p. 133 - 134]. In broad terms, this process requires a political and social changes aimed at establishing and strengthening democratic regime. However, there is no unity among scientists in determining the essential characteristics of this notion. We agree with the ideas of modern researchers of very wide use for the characteristics of different types of social changes during the third wave, which is often unnecessary: the democratization process does not always lead to the establishment of a consolidated democracy.

We agree with the opinion of A. Kolody that due to the expansion of the use of locus model of transition, it became a concept that explained the movement of countries from authoritarianism to democracy, a broad conceptual scheme of analysis of political and social change in general, contributed to the creation of a separate transtology direction of comparative political science and eventually to the emergence of the concept of transitional paradigm.

Understand what the conversion path from authoritarian regimes to traditional societies as a new hide in a lot of surprises and contradictions come with time. Not all of them fit into the existing model transformation. Therefore, I believe that to give examples from history, taken for evidence and comparison, it is not necessary. The difficulties and failures of democratic practice transformational transitions induce a clearer definition of democracy,

the precise parameters and factors. The only way you can be sure that installing such phenomena and processes used the same concepts and the same coordinate system.

In my opinion, the concept of transition is not exhausted their cognitive and methodological resources, because "it is the transitional paradigm adequately explains a specific type half-revolutionary changes that have acquired a considerable spread in the late XX century." [1]. This is particularly true of non-traditional forms of social development changes a number of European countries of the former socialist camp as a result of velvet revolutions, and the color revolutions in post-Soviet space.

Global scale processes of democratization, the immense variety of types and forms to impose modern political science series of complex issues, most important among them is the diversification of democracy. Today, it is clear that involvement in the orbit of democratic transformation of new countries and peoples "is not tantamount to political unification picture of the world, leveling the political landscape of standards and benchmarks Western liberal democracy" [5, p. 135].

Modern political palette world unanalysable nor the old notion of the five socio-political formations, or the new "triad": *Totalitarianism - Authoritarianism - Democracy*. Corrective speak about the presence of hybrid socio-political models.

Therefore, analysis of the postcommunist transformation requires new conceptual approaches, including non-linear representations of the transition to democracy. Scientists have exposed serious doubts and vector model of political transformation towards a consolidated democracy through a series of supposedly mandatory developmental stages: erosion and collapse of authoritarianism, liberalization, institutional democracy, unconsolidated democracy, democratic consolidation [3, p. 64 - 75, 4, p. 169]. The agenda appears and understanding the factors of modern democratic transformation.

Some scientists determining factor in the democratization process considers the modernization of society. N. Latyhina notes that democratization generally causes severe internal crisis of economic, political and social structures of society, deterioration of ideology or value system, so it is directly related to the problems of modernization and serves its tool [3, p. 69 - 70]. This claim is correct and generally tends to uniqueness. However, in my opinion, not always observed a causal relationship in tandem modernization - the democratization, democratization - the modernization. In particular, in Chile during the reign of Pinochet rapid economic growth, large-scale changes in production technology, social relations symbolized the modernization process, but accompanied by a curtailment of democracy. Instead, democratic change, intended to facilitate the process of modernization in the absence of certain conditions, resources, or adequate control, leading to the disintegration of society, which is observed in Ukraine, Russia and other former Soviet states.

Elections as a litmus test of democracy is undeniable factor in the transformation process. In a democracy the elections will not only ensure a smooth transfer of power, but also serve as an indicator of the existence of appropriate democratic order in the country. In societies that are undergoing a transformation process and elections have another function: they are one of the most important instrument of the transformation process itself and its adaptation to social needs. The level of fairness and competition shows how smooth or problem occurring transformation.

Along with the modernization factor of modern social and political transformation is liberalization. Original understanding of the relationship of liberalism and democracy in the interpretations is the notion of "freedom." Home - freedom as a human right not be bound to perform the action. This includes reserve for an individual space, which can not be busy or other entities, or state. Second - the freedom of people's duty to obey only the laws of development which they participate. The first interpretation gives rise to liberalism, and it also provides a second interpretation. The Liberal government is not necessarily democratic, and democratic - liberal. However, liberalism determinive limits of power and functions of the state. The high level of legitimacy - that is the factor that provides a liberal democracy in the long term advantage over other political systems. Liberal democracy is more flexible in adapting to new challenges. However, if they can not reach a certain level of stability and prosperity, their legitimacy will certainly decrease.

Given the urgency of events, because the progressive world community recently celebrated the 20 anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, look at what happened with the political system of Germany in the late

twentieth century. Exploring Eastern Germany note that the social changes in the Sun had a unique character because it is the only case where one state swallowed another. There existed a number of factors of democratization. In race two systems on German soil state socialism obviously lost, so many people at the end of Sun 80th of the twentieth century. performed by changing socio-economic system. In the second half of 1989 began mass flight of citizens ND CHSR and through Hungary to Austria, and then - to Germany. It was the first form of Germans vote for change.

German reunification took place as part of the overall process of the collapse of state socialism. As a result of further transformations in East Germany had been a regional character, because the whole country consentreat effort to integrate the new land.

The political transformation of the top anti-communism pushed slightly below. November 9, 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, December 22, 1989 opened Brandenburg Gate - the symbol of the unity of the German nation, and October 3, 1990 R & D comes to the FRG. The process of German unification resulted in a record short time - for 329 days.

During elections in March 1990, involving Germany and the party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) lost to the eastern states and its chairman Victor Brandt suffered a fiasco.

Typically, workers in Western Europe have traditionally voted for leftist parties, which stood for social justice, supported by state policy. But in the early 90th conservative Alliance for Germany, where the dominant Christian Democrats, the victory achieved in the industrial south of the GDR. This paradox of electoral behavior associated with the popular ideas of liberalism among the miners. Because the fate of the coal industry and the status of the miners have always depended on state support and the Liberals - fans minimize state involvement in economic life and transfer its functions market.

In the first free parliamentary seats were as well. As we can see that the East nomenclature has been removed from strategic decisions. In 1995 only 11, 9% of elite positions in the united Germany were those who in 1989 lived in the GDR. Level changes that took place in most public institutions shows.

Displacement nomenclature elite research took place not only due to the dominance of western Germans, but also restructuring the East's elite. With political guidance and adminposts driven leaders, including the first communist reformers (G. Modrov). Only a tenth of parliament had experience in Parliament. Thus in August 1990 64% of East Germans looked to the future with optimism. The most optimistic was traditionally set up youth (74% aged 18-19).

Germany at the present stage of integration leading power in Europe. The introduction of the euro for the German project, chairing in 1999 the EU confirmed its leading role. The Bucharest summit of NATO member countries, held in the spring of 2008 showed the influence of the German leading factor in this organization. The clear position of Germany in blocking the accession of Ukraine and Georgia into the Membership Action Plan Alliance demonstrates the political and economic potential of this state as a self-player in the political arena. Germany wants to lead a European system of checks American influence on post-Soviet states. The modern format of Ukraine-Germany relations to build capacity in view of the mounting of the state.

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Table 1

Waves of democratization and backward wave

Years	The number of democracies	Number of countries away from democracy
The first wave:1820-1926 Regress:1926-1942	29	12
The second wave:1942-1962 Regress:1960-1975	36	6
The third wave: 1975 – nowadays	about 40	4-5

Table 2

The level of electoral support from the Alliance for Germany

The source Banac I. Introduction // I. Banac (ed.). Eastern Europe in Revolution. – Inthaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993. – P. 7.

City	% votes
Leipzig	51
Hary	39
Drezden	60
Karl-Marx-Stadt	61
Erfurt	61

Distribution of seats in first free German Parliament

Table 3

Political force	% place
Alliance for Germany	48
Liberals /Free democrats	5
Social democrats	22
Former communists	16

The source: Banac I. Introduction // I. Banac (ed.). Eastern Europe in Revolution. – Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993. – P. 7.

Table 4

Level changes of elite positions in the united Germany

Social components	% changes
Politicum	32
State apparatus	2,5
Business	0,4
Army	0

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