

9 Cultural and natural heritage in the Carpathian region

9.1 The situation and problems

9.1.1 Cultural heritage

The cultural heritage of the Carpathian area represents a unique composition within Europe:

- This region is the most Eastern part of Europe, where the monuments of the Western European Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance art can be found. The medieval Polish and Hungarian kingdoms were Roman Catholic states and church architecture followed the Western patterns. But not only church art, but secular architecture and art also followed these artistic styles. German and other Western emigrants have founded cities in this area, importing the artistic styles of their home countries. It was then taken over by the native aristocrats and well-to-do citizens as well. Brasov, Sibiu, Alba Julia and Sighisoara are the easternmost examples of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Lviv, Zamošč and Kazimierz are the easternmost examples of Renaissance architecture.
- On the other hand, this is the most Western area of Europe, where the monuments and art of Eastern Christianity are also present. In some parts of Romania and Ukraine one can find a marvellous co-existence or even mixture of the two artistic and architectural Worlds.
- Finally, the Carpathian area is the part of Europe where the monuments of European folk art and architecture have been preserved the most intact. Mountain people are everywhere more inclined to be engaged in the preparation of local handicraft products and to build artistically decorated houses. On the one hand, they are compelled to complete their income through the selling of handicraft (wooden, textile) objects because income from agricultural activity was not enough for survival. On the other hand, they had more time, and their environment was more inspiring for artistic activity, than on the plains. Furthermore, the Carpathian settlements were rather isolated from the outside world, to preserve their customs and traditions. Not only the tangible, but also the intangible cultural heritage (music, songs, dances, fairy tales) are protected parts of the cultural heritage of the Carpathians.

These three strands of cultural heritage are equally present in the Carpathian area, and they together determine the respective policies of the countries and of the area as a whole.

The respective institutions of the management of the cultural heritage have been established in all Carpathian countries already at the beginning of the 20th century. Most of them have taken over the Austrian legislation, since most Carpathian regions belonged at that time to the Habsburg Monarchy. This legislation gave priority to the methods of art history. The selection of protected heritage was exclusively the work of art historians. Such relations lasted very long, even after the Second World War until the 1970's. It was not earlier than in the third part of the 20th century that the so called vernacular architecture in rural regions and "anonymous" architecture in urban structures became part of protected cultural heritage. But change is rather slow. It can be truly stated that the system of protection of architectural heritage in many Carpathian countries and regions is still too strongly connected to its origins (from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) and it is not enough developed in the sense of modern theory, methodology and aims of European trends.

The other "heritage" of the management of cultural heritage stems from the "socialist" period. In this period the political system provided a centralised managing power to act for the preservation of historic heritage in the name of "common interest". Architects and managers did not have to care about efficiency, utilisation and the participation of private sector.

The democratic changes in 1989–1990 have brought completely different possibilities for the society – and for the management of historic cultural heritage from this time. Both urban planning and conservation became multilayered, and former centrally managed societies had to realise that decision-making involves more stakeholders, different interests and new techniques.

As a part of these changes, the earlier "academic" aims to protect only the most artistic part of built heritage has been fundamentally changed. The new economic criteria, the new technologies, and the demand to integrate built heritage into the everyday human environment have substantially changed the former approaches. Cultural – and within it architectural – heritage has been transformed from an object of symbolic or even ideological values, to an organic part of towns, landscapes, even regions.

Such changes certainly demand new methods of assessment and utilisation. Historical architectural heritage should have become an organic part of regional and urban planning, new methods of utilisation and re-utilisation are needed. New principles, new methods and new possibilities have to be put forward, involving not only politicians and experts, but investors, individual users and the general public as well.

9.1.2 *Natural heritage*

Obviously, the main object of natural heritage management in the Carpathian region is the mountain range of the Carpathians. Mountain ranges, flood areas of rivers and sea coastal areas are – generally – the main objects of natural conservation and management, because these are the areas, where natural habitats could survive with the highest probability.

Carpathian countries – like in the case of the cultural heritage – have established their institutions and regulations of natural conservation and most of them have taken over the respective guidelines and regulations of the UN and of the European Union. The result of these activities, nevertheless, is rather differentiated.

The countries can be divided into two groups. Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia declared more than 15 percent of their territory to be protected. This percentage corresponds to the level of developed European countries. In Hungary, Romania and in Ukraine this percentage is substantially lower. In the case of Hungary and Ukraine, it can be partly explained by the fact that the large part of these two countries is a plain used for agricultural production.

More characteristic is the distribution of protected areas according to the level of protection (*Table 5*).

Table 5

The main territorial dimensions of natural protection on the Carpathian countries

Country	Number of protected objects	Area of the country, km ²	Protected area, km ²	Share of protected area, %
Austria	1,087	83,860	23,475	27.94
Czech Republic	1,768	78,870	12,451	15.79
Hungary	236	93,030	8,299	8.92
Poland	1,822	333,882	90,526	27.11
Romania	931	238,610	12,360	5.18
Slovakia	1,176	49,010	12,347	25.19
Ukraine	5,198	657,630	22,468	3.42

Source: Collected by the author.

While the share of protected area is relatively smaller in Hungary, Romania and in Ukraine, the larger part of it enjoys the highest level of protection. These countries have much more and larger national parks and much less of lower ranked natural protection areas. These countries started their natural protection programmes by designating their national parks, while the designation of more per-

missive protected landscape areas and their regulation followed only later. In some of the large National Parks there is intensive economic, agricultural and animal husbandry activity. Conservation and economic objectives are together present and their priorities are rather ambiguously defined. In some National Parks there is intensive wood cutting activity. In other parks, there is large scale animal husbandry. In order to feed the animals, meadows are cut down, and there is a serious danger to destroy rare species and the nests of rare birds. Government support to these large National Parks is insufficient and Park managements try to achieve income from agricultural activity, sometimes at the expense of conservation objectives. Transitional provisions between absolute and full protection and absolute profit making activity are not satisfactorily regulated and that is frequently a source of conflict. In the Western countries, on the overwhelming part of the protected area, some economic activities are allowed which is in harmony with the objectives of the protection. In the Carpathian countries this “co-habitation” is not yet working adequately (Table 6, Figure 12).

Europe is particularly rich in cultural landscapes which are formed by various combinations of human and natural factors and illustrate the evolution of human society, its settlements, and their interaction with nature in time and space. They acquired socially and culturally recognised values, because of the simultaneous presence of natural values and of remains reflecting skills or distinctive traditions. The combined protection of natural environment and human activity is the insufficiently elaborated element of the protection regulations of some Carpathian countries. That is the source of most problems and conflicts which arose in the last years concerning protected areas.

Table 6

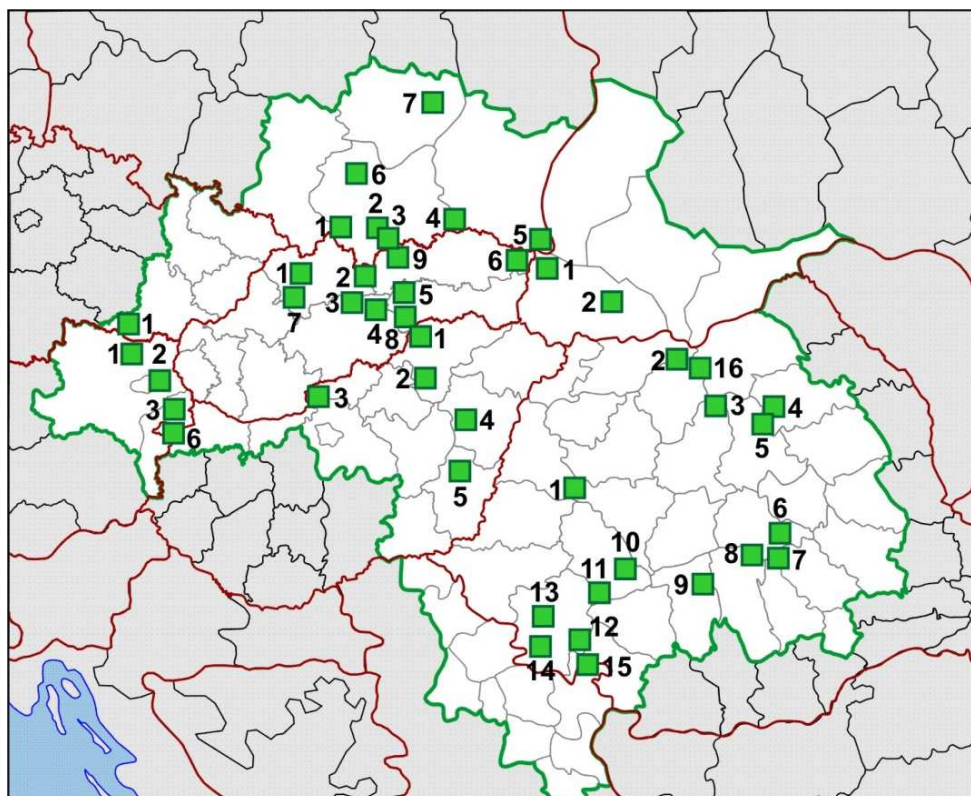
Share of National Parks and Biosphere Reserves in the protected areas

Country	Number of national parks	Of which: in the Carpathian area	Area of national parks km ²	Of which: in the Carpathian area	Share of national parks in the protected area, %
Austria	6	3	2,356	403	10.0
Czech Republic	4	1	1,372	79	11.0
Hungary	10	6	4,817	2,296	58.0
Poland	23	7	2,983	852	3.3
Romania	13	12	8,848	3,047	72.0
Slovakia	9	9	3,178	3,178	26.0
Ukraine	30	9	19,091	5,214	85.0
Carpathian region		47		15,069	

Source: Collected by the author.

Figure 12

National Parks in the Carpathians



Legend: *Austria:* (1) Thayatal; (2) Donau-Auen; (3) Neusiedler See. *Czech Republic:* (1) Podyjí. *Hungary:* (1) Aggtelek; (2) Bükk; (3) Duna-Ípoly; (4) Hortobágy; (5) Kőrös-Maros; (6) Fertő-Hanság. *Poland:* (1) Babia Góra; (2) Gorce; (3) Pieninski; (4) Magura; (5) Bieszczady; (6) Ojcowsky; (7) Swietokrzyski. *Romania:* (1) Munții Apuseni; (2) Muntii Maramuresului; (3) Calimoni; (4) Ceahlau; (5) Cheli Bicazului-Hășmaș; (6) Cenk; (7) Bucegi; (8) Piatra Craiului; (9) Cozia; (10) Gradistea-Muncelului-Cioclovina; (11) Retezat; (12) Domogled-Valea; (13) Semenic-Cheile-Carasului; (14) Cheli Nerei Beusnita; (15) Porțile de Fier; (16) Rodna. *Slovakia:* (1) Low Fatra; (2) Tatra; (3) Low Tatra; (4) Muranska Planina; (5) Slovak Paradise; (6) Poloniny; (7) Highs Fatra; (8) Slovak Karst; (9) Pieniny (Pieninski). *Ukraine:* (1) Ung; (2) Sinver.

Source: Author's edition.

The first one concerns the privatisation of some areas. In the period, when agricultural land was collectivised, some parts of the area have been declared to be a nature conservation area. Their retirement from cultivation was not a problem for the collective farm, since these protected areas represented only a very small fraction of their cultivated area. During re-privatisation, these areas were given back to the original owner. For him/her, however, it was a very serious problem, because he (she) could not afford, not to turn these areas into arable land or intensively used pasture or meadow. So, a conflict arose between natural protection and the basic interests of the new individual farmers. It happened in most countries where the re-privatisation of agricultural land took place, but the solutions were different. In some countries farmers received compensation; in other countries – like Hungary – the government was forced to purchase back these areas.

The other conflict and controversy emerged in the Tatras, after the catastrophic wind-storm in November 2004. The wind-storm devastated 12,600 ha forest, threw down 2.5 million cubic metres of wood. The trees thrown down were in overwhelming majority spruces, planted more recently. Most of the area had been quickly cleared from the thrown down trees, but in the Tatra National Park, mainly in its Western part a serious conflict arose between environmentalists and forestry organisations, especially in the Tichá and Koprová valleys. Environmentalists blocked the clearing of the area from the thrown down trees, because they wanted to prove that the original non-planted trees (spruce, larch-tree, fir-tree and beech-tree) survived much better the wind-storm, than planted spruces. Foresters said that the invasion of a type of wood-borer worms, the *Ips typographus* which invaded the thrown down trees will invade soon the intact trees as well and will cause a much larger damage. The conflict between environmentalists and foresters is not yet settled which could endanger already the promised EU support to Slovakia to reconstruct the Tatra forests and damages caused by the wind-storm.

9.2 Policy recommendations concerning some specific problems of the cultural heritage in the Carpathian area

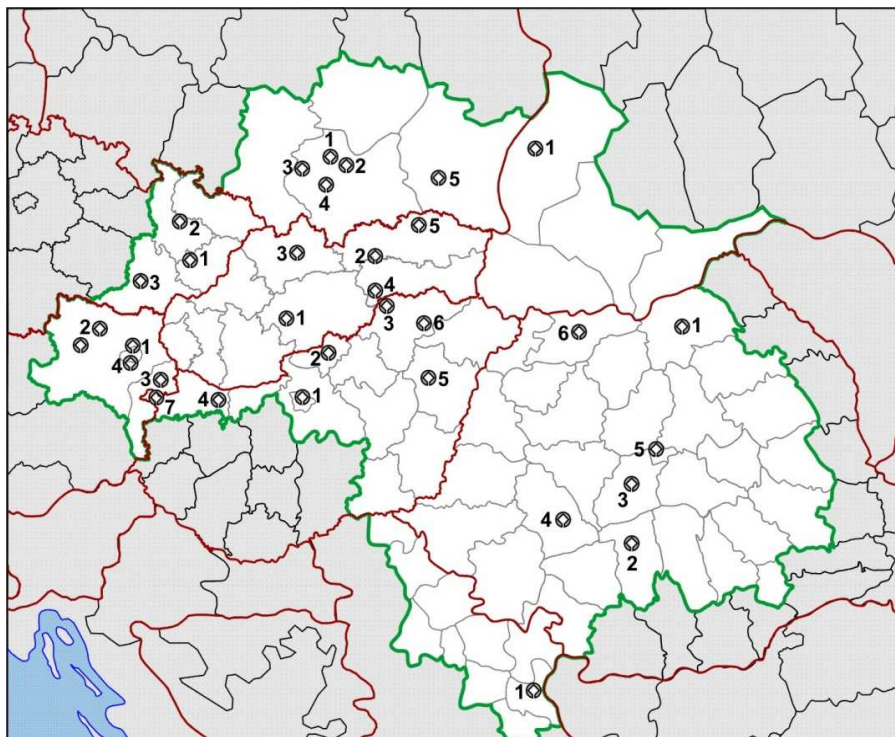
9.2.1 National bias in the management of cultural heritage

A specific feature of the Carpathian area is that there are several areas inhabited by more than one nationality with distinctive cultural heritage and there are areas which were inhabited in the past by national and religious groups which do not live there any more. Several churches, synagogues, monuments and buildings became victims of national ideologies. These ideologies promoted and cared for the protection of national cultural heritage supporting their interpretation of national history, and neglected those elements of cultural heritage, which did not fit into this conception. Therefore, in all countries of the region legal and professional arrangements are needed to preserve the respect for and memory of all nations and nationalities, language and religious groups, which created a specific cultural heritage.

In the Carpathian region deliberate destruction of cultural heritage – experienced in the Balkan wars – did not occur. But some bias in favour of national heritage occurred. UNESCO World Cultural Heritage nominations serve for it as an example (*Figure 13*).

Figure 13

The World Cultural Heritage Sites of the Carpathians



Legend: *Austria:* (1) Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn (1996); (2) Towns Krems , Melk; (3) Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape (2001); (4) Historic Centre of Vienna (2001). *Czech Republic:* (1) Gardens and Castle, Kroměříž (1998); (2) Holy Trinity Column , Olomouc (2000); (3) Tugendhat Villa, Brno (2001). *Hungary:* (1) Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrassy Avenue (1987, 2002); (2) Old Village, Hollókő (1987); (3) Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst (1995, 2000); (4) Millenary Benedictine Abbey, Pannonhalma (1996); (5) Hortobágy National Park – the Puszta (1999); (6) Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape (2002); (7) Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape (2001). *Poland:* (1) Cracow’s Historic Centre (1978); (2) Wieliczka Salt Mine (1978); (3) Auschwitz (Oswiecim) Concentration Camp (1979); (4) Kalwaria Zebrzydowska: the Mannerist Architectural and Park Landscape Complex and Pilgrimage Park (1999); (5) Wooden Churches of Southern Little Poland (2003). *Romania:* (1) Churches of Moldavia; (2) Monastery, Horezu; (3) Villages with Fortified Churches in Transylvania – Extension of “Biertan and its Fortified Church” (1993, 1999); (4) Dacian Fortresses of the Orastie Mountains (1999); (5) Historic Centre of Sighișoara (1999); (6) Wooden Churches of Maramureș (1999). *Slovakia:* (1) Historic Town, Technical Monuments, Banská Štiavnica (1993); (2) Spišský Hrad, Associated Cultural Monuments (1993); (3) Vlkolínec (1993) – Zilina Region; (4) Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst (1995, 2000); (5) Bardejov Town Conservation Reserve (2000). *Ukraine:* (1) Lviv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre (1998). *Serbia:* (1) Ravanica monastery.

Source: Author’s construction, UNESCO.

- There are 36 registered UNESCO World Heritage items in the Carpathian area;
 - Poland signed the agreement with the UNESCO in 1976. Until 1997 no heritage site was nominated in the New territories, belonging formerly to Germany
 - Romania signed the agreement in 1990. The first Saxonian city, Sighisoara was nominated in 1999.
 - A large part of Ukraine's valuable architectural heritage – the countries only renaissance castles, palaces are in the Carpathian area which was part of Poland, Austria and Hungary at that time. So far only the inner city of Lviv is nominated.
 - The Carpathian area had 4 million Jewish inhabitants before World War II. No Jewish quarters or buildings (synagogues) are nominated so far from the region.⁵
- After 1999, this attitude changed significantly and more nominations were made from the formerly neglected types of heritage.

9.2.2 *The “heritage” of the socialist period*

Carpathian countries face now the problem how to treat the “cultural heritage” of the socialist era. A lot of buildings and monuments were created during this period of four-five decades, which are now marking the view and skyline of many cities and settlements. Many of the most provoking monuments, symbolising the old system, had been already removed. It is, however, important, not to commit again the mistakes of the past. The recent architectural and cultural heritage should be reconsidered only from aesthetic and practical, not from ideological point of view. It has to be preserved what is worth to preserve, because – willing or not willing – it became part of the respective nation's historical heritage.

9.2.3 *Military cemeteries and monuments of World War I. and II.*

In 1914–17 the Carpathian region was the scene of some of the largest and most fierce and desperate battles of World War I. (Gorlice, Limanova, Przemysl, Kolomea, Chernivtsi). On the Galician and Romanian fronts nearly 2 million soldiers died. These soldiers came from 26 present countries and nations. Their graves, however – in contrast to other battle-fields – are not cared for, many of them are not even marked.

It may sound strange, but these battle-fields and cemeteries also belong to the historical heritage and historical monuments of Europe. In the other battle-fields of World War I this fact is long ago recognized. The battle-fields of Flanders, Artois and Champagne are marked by beautiful flower gardens, visitor centres and trench-museums. The situation is similar in Italy, in the battle-fields of the Dolomites. Even in Turkey, near to Gallipoli, Dardanelles, the graveyards of British,

⁵The Jewish Quarter of Třebíč in the Czech Republic is registered as World Heritage, but it is outside the Carpathian area in the region of Vysocina.

Australian and, New Zealander and Turkish soldiers are carefully maintained and visitor centres erected. Great numbers of visitors are visiting these cemeteries everywhere. In the Carpathian area, however, all these monuments and facilities are missing. The new states, emerging after World War I in these areas, felt neither obligation to, nor interest in caring for the military cemeteries of that war. There are a few committed amateur historians in Polish-Carpathian cities, which are making efforts to identify, map and mark the military cemeteries.

To establish these war memorials would require the common action of the Carpathian counties, Austria, Germany and Russia. It would be a symbolic action at the beginning of the 21st century, in honour of those who lost their lives in a senseless war at the beginning of the 20th century, just a century ago.

7–8 million soldiers fought in the Galician and Romanian Fronts in 1914–17, and 2 million have lost their life there. Today, minimum 50-60 million descendants of these fighters live in Europe.

9.2.4 *Sites of pilgrimage in the Carpathian area*

The majority of the inhabitants of the Carpathian area are Christians, and a large part of them are strong believers. Beside Ireland, the largest share of church-going people can be found in Poland, Slovakia and Romania in Europe. Among the Czechs and Hungarians the share of church-going people is lower.

The number of pilgrimage sites is very high in the Carpathian area. Only in the Carpathian Basin, that means within the mountain range of the Carpathians, there are more than 400 pilgrimage places. In the whole Carpathian area their number is about 700. Obviously, the overwhelming part of them are small and only of local significance. There are 50–60 which have national significance and there are 10–15 which are of international significance (*Figure 14*).

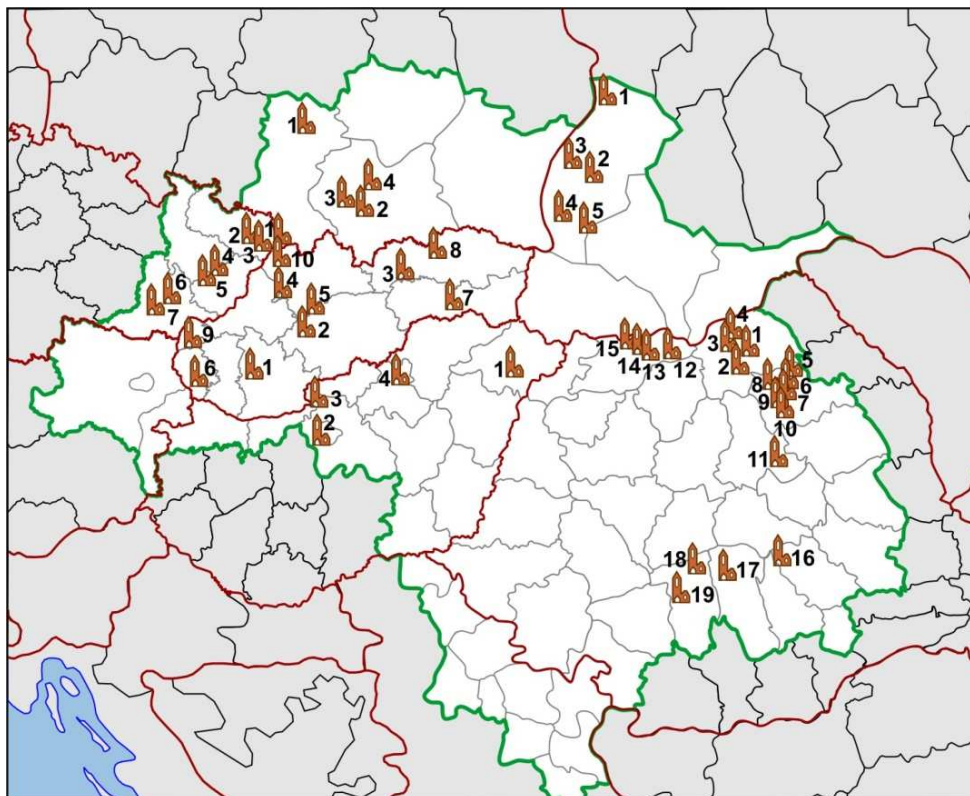
The pilgrimage site is mostly a church, a chapel or a spring with or without a cabin. The ground of the pilgrimage is that at that place Maria or Jesus appeared to somebody and concomitantly some miracles happened there.

In the socialist period, the communist state tolerated pilgrimage and the sites of pilgrimage, but did not do anything to facilitate pilgrimage, to improve access and transport to these sites, and to create accommodation, hygienic conditions to stay there.

In most sites the conditions did not change substantially so far. Hygienic conditions are unacceptable even on normal days, not speaking of religious holidays, when hundred thousands are gathering at the most famous places. Pilgrimage can be regarded in these countries as the largest tourism movement and support – including EU Structural Funds support – should be allocated accordingly to create acceptable conditions in the 21st century.

Figure 14

Pilgrimage sites in the Carpathian area



Legend: *Poland:* (1) Czestochowa; (2) “Pilgrims Park” Kalvaria Zebrzydowska; (3) Wadowice (the birthplace of pope John Paul II); (4) Łagiewniki, Cracow. *Czech Republic:* (1) Guty; (2) Frydek-Místek; (3) Kunčice; (4) Hostin; (5) Kroměříž; (6) Křitny; (7) Brno. *Slovakia:* (1) Nitra; (2) Banská Bistrica; (3) Levoča Marianka; (4) Rajecká Lesná; (5) Staré Hory; (6) Bratislava; (7) Košice; (8) L’utina; (9) Šaštín; (10) Turzovka. *Hungary:* (1) Máriapócs (Greek Catholic Basilica); (2) Máriaremete; (3) Márianosztra; (4) Belpátfalva. *Romania:* (1) Humor; (2) Voronet; (3) Moldovita; (4) Sucevita; (5) Neamt; (6) Secu; (7) Agapia; (8) Sihatria; (9) Varatec; (10) Bistrita; (11) Șumuleu Ciuc/Csíksohely; (12) Moisei; (13) Bogdan Vodă; (14) Rozavlea; (15) Barsana; (16) Sinaia; (17) Curtea de Argeș; (18) Cozia; (19) Hurezi. *Ukraine:* (1) Univ; (2) Krekhiv; (3) Lviv; (4) Hrushiv; (5) Hoshiv.

Source: Author’s construction.

The most famous and the most frequented pilgrimage site in the Carpathian region is the Jasna Góra monastery in Czestochowa, *Poland*. More recent and less famous is the “Pilgrims Park” Kalvaria Zebrzydowska (UNESCO World Heritage), but already attracts large masses of pilgrims. Important sites of pilgrimage in Carpathian Poland are Wadowice (the birthplace of pope John Paul II), Łagiewniki in Cracow.

In the *Czech Carpathian region* more significant sites of pilgrimage are: Svatý Hostin, Velehrad, Svatý Kopeček, Zlaté Hory and Křtiny.

In *Slovakia*, the main (national) pilgrimage places are Nitra, Banská Bistrica, Levoča Marianka, RajECKa Lesná, Staré Hory, L’utina, Šaštin, Turzovka.

In the *Hungarian Carpathian region* the most famous pilgrimage site is Máriapócs (Greek Catholic Basilica), Máriaremete, Márianosztra, BÉlapátfalva

In *Romania*, orthodox monasteries can be regarded as the main pilgrimage destinations. There are four main concentration areas of these pilgrimage monasteries: the monasteries of Bucovina (Humor, Voronet, Moldovita, Sucevita), Neamt region (Neamt, Secu, Vovidenia, Agapia, Sihatria, Varatec), the valley of the river Olt (Hurezi, Curtea de Arges, Cozia, Bistrita, Sinaia) and Maramures (Moisei, Bogdan Voda, Rozavlea, Barsana). The main pilgrimage place of Hungarians in Romania is the church and monastery in Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc).

The main pilgrimage sites in the Carpathian *Ukraine* are: Univ, Krekhiv, Lviv, Hrushiv, Hoshiv and Prylbichi.

9.2.5 Recommendations for the management of the natural heritage

- The network of National Parks and of other forms of high level protection can be regarded as established. Further extension of these network is not recommended, even in a few cases the territory of the National Park may be somewhat reduced.
- Areas with somewhat more permissive regulations must be extended. Especially protected landscapes, where human activities and natural processes are in harmony.
- Regulations between the two types of protection should be clearly differentiated. In National Parks, they should be made – in some sense – stricter (for example: areas belonging to a national park should not be allowed to be privatised). In the other protected areas, human economic activity should be allowed but carefully regulated. Especially, the exploitation of forests and meadows in protected areas should be regulated more carefully and in a differentiated way;

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- There are several national parks and other protected areas which are situated on the two sides of the state borders. Some of these areas are:
 - Thaya-Podiyí (AT–CZ)
 - Neusiedlersee- Fertő (AT–HU)
 - Tatranský-Tatrzański (SK–PL)
 - Pieniny-Pieninski (SK–PL)
 - Roztoczanski- Roztochya (PL–UA)
 - Aggtelek-Slovak Karst (HU–SK)
 - Podilski Tovtry-Rodna (Ukraine–Romania)
 - Skolivsky Beskydy-Bieszczadzki (UA–PL)

Some of them are already regarded as a single and common protected area, others are rather parallel organisations with insufficient coordination. But common actions and harmonisation of regulations are everywhere desirable.