

Cross sectoral issues – the Carpathians valued as a living place

Christian Hoffmann

The Carpathians, as other mountain territories, are suffering from social and economic "isolation". They are usually facing the absence or lacking accessibility of service of general interest, low-skilled job and education opportunities, low-productivity, lacking integration in regional and national governance processes. They are politically "ignored" due to lacking political representativeness/participation and limited consideration of their needs. Thus, people emigrate from rural areas. The remaining ones are old aged and the typical economic branches have to cope with de-growth. Also the widely spread agricultural production declines and the Carpathian cultural landscape scenery suffers from land abandonment. Since the end of the socialism era, the Carpathians enforced their multifunctional potentials to valorize their territorial capital to recover its local economy. Particularly, they have revitalized the tourism sector, which benefits from natural sites, ecosystem services and from the favorable local climate conditions in the Carpathians. Moreover, the European cohesion initiatives enabled the promotion of the local industries and the handicraft sector to foster the talents and innovative entrepreneurial skills to enforce local value added chains and to raise the competitiveness for sustaining jobs and employment-opportunities in the Carpathians. Innovative policies for the Carpathian mountain areas should thus foster sustainable and integrated solutions to avoid a mono-sectorial development. Instead, cross-sectoral policies and multi-sectorial cooperation could help to create a stable living place for enabling sustainable and local growth, without giving up their traditional cultural and family ties. The issue how to reconcile the ideas of sustainability and competitiveness in the era of climate change, social inequality and spatial injustice requires a cross-sectorial and trans-disciplinary debate. To cope with these complex thematic fields, any contributions covering the following issues are hence highly welcome:

- Cross-sectorial and transdisciplinary studies enabling the valorization of resources in order to raise the quality of life in the Carpathians - like studies or initiatives on energy exploitation, agricultural and natural resources or tourism and their impact on the socio-economic performance.
- Integrated, cross-sectorial approaches to counteract the rural urban divide with smart territorial relationships: to release endogenous potentials, to open appropriate options against social inequalities and spatial injustice, and to enable the Carpathians as a valuable living place.
- Innovative and integrative governance and mediation processes across sectors to avoid territorial conflicts regarding the empowering of local resources harming sustainability rules or cultural conflicts between traditional values and the multi-cultural expectations to sustain a modern and resilient society.