The story of a PAN-CARPATHIAN passage 1980 and 2015
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ASOCIAȚIA CARPATINĂ ARDELEANĂ A TURIȘTILOI
ROMANIA

Lillafüred, Hungary, 10-12 October 2017, Carpathian Convention
Why the Pan-Carpathian passage?

- The Carpathians are the mountains in which Polish tourism was born,
- The Carpathians are an area of many nations, cultures, religions,
- The Carpathians join rather than divide,
- Poles have always wanted to achieve the crossing of the whole range,
- Polish trekkers have tried to walk the Carpathians several times.

Lillafüred, Hungary, 10-12 October 2017, Carpathian Convention
1962 – geography students of the University of Warsaw,
- walked in Poland from Cieszyn (southern Silesia) to the Uzhok Pass (end of Western Bieszczady),
- drove to Romania and walked almost all of the Romanian Carpathian section.
- 3 trekkers reached Orșova on the Danube.
- the Poles walked in the company of Romanian trekkers.

1967 – Student Club of Beskid Guides in Warsaw
- planned to organise the „Carpathian Friendship Expedition 1967”,
- dreams remained only on paper.
Earlier attempts

1973 – students from mountain guide club planned to walk the Carpathians in the form of a relay.
- the route was divided into 7 stages,
- only 2 stages were done.

Badge of the expedition
Leader: Andrzej Wielocha (1)
Participants:
- Piotr Kurowski (2),
- Jerzy Montusiewicz (Lublin, 3),
- Zdzisław Pecul (4),
- Wiesław Tomaszewski.

Badge of the expedition in 1980
Via Carpathica Expedition 2015

Expedition co-financed by Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union

Participants:
- Andrei Dumitrescu, 1
- Vlad Spiru, 2
(Ciprian Brânzoi, 3)
I was 21 when we set off from Warsaw.

I celebrated my 22 birthday in the Ciucăș Mountains, Romania. I was a student of the Lublin University of Technology (now I am a professor).

On the peak of Popadia (1742), the Gorgans, Ukraine.
Via Carpatica Expedition 2015
Asociația Carpatină Ardeleană a Turistilor

Vlad Spiru
03.05.1991
Bran, Brașov, România

Andrei Dumitrescu
23.05.1987
Tirgoiște, Dimbovița, România
Arc of the Carpathians 1980
90 mountain days, over 1900 km and 80000 m climbs

Bucharest, after crossing the Carpathians

Andrzej Wielocha (1)
Piotr Kurowski (2),
Jerzy Montusiewicz (3),
Zdzisław Pecul (4),
Wiesław Tomaszewski (5).
Via Carpatica Expedition 2015
93 mountain days, over 2800 km

Start in SokoBanja, Serbia

Finish in Bratislava, Slovakia
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- walking the route in a non-stop trek
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

- E8 trail in Romania – along the Romanian Carpathians
- ViaCarpatica like ViaAlpina
- Mapping a new long distance path
- Connecting associations in the Carpathians
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- mountains were not accessible to foreign tourists,
- we were there illegally, but conscious of the dangers

Pass of the Legions, the Gorgans

Plaque on the monument

Young ones of Poland, look at this cross,
The Polish Legions lifted it up,
Traversing mountains, forests and walls
Bound for you, Poland, and for your glory.

In 1915 Polish soldiers defeated the Russians
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

• walking the section in Serbia

- A lot of help from the local association,
- There were illegal migrants crossing the border in the mountains.
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- keeping the continuity of the mountain ranges (border crossings)

Mount Rozsypianiec 1273 m, end of the Polish section, J. Montusiewicz, Z. Pecul

Village Sianki (Uzhok Pass area) Start of the Soviet (Ukrainian) section, at night after getting off the train
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

- keeping the continuity of the ranges

- Impossibility of crossing through the mountains, excepting: Slovakia, Poland and Czech Republic
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- a day of rest after 6 days of walking

- in practice we had only 2 rest days, out of the 12 planned,
- route planning had been too optimistic,
- at the beginning our physical condition was poor,
- then the weather took a bad turn,
- the mountains proved very demanding.
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

- a day of rest after 6 days of walking

- we had this rule all over the trip,
- we managed to keep our main plan all along the route,
- we started fast and took 2 weeks to find the best rhythm,
- after 3 weeks one of our companions quit,
- 17 days of rain from 93.
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- cooking on camp fires

Usually 3 times a day
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- walking down to villages for food, and back up to the ridge

- my longest trip for food was from the Bratocea Pass (1272) to Braşov (40 km one way),
- another time, from the Foll Pass (1343) to Zărneşti (25 km), myself and a companion carried 51 kg of food.
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

- crossing through the villages for food, every 4 days
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- relying on support teams

No mobile telephones then,

- communication with coordinator in Warsaw (J. Will) was sporadic, via support persons returning

The Low Beskid Mts, Poland, supplying food on 2 bikes
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- relying on support teams

- meetings with support teams was organised on a time table basis

Lotru Mts, Romania, packing new food provided by support team
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- relying on support teams
- the Ukrainian section was done together, we were 11 people in all (6th support team)

Hoverla (2061), Czarnohora, Ukraine
Eugen was our Ukrainian companion through Ukrainian mountains

Hoverla (2061), Czarnohora, Ukraine
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- staying on the mountain ridge,

Bucegi Mts,
Strunigele Mari (2168),
Romania

Lotru Mts
in the background the Parâng Mts,
Romania
AC 1980 – the idea of the crossing

- staying on the mountain ridge

Munții Ciucului, Romania

From left:
Z. Pecul,
W. Tomaszewski,
A. Wielocha.
AC 1980 – the route
Czechoslovakia-Poland-USSR (Ukraine)-Romania

- **Start:**
  16 June, Bratislava (now Slovakia)

- **Finish:**
  13 September, Orșova (Romania),

- generally walk along the Carpathian watershed, (bypassing the Tatras),

- walking the full arc, (bypassing the Transylvanian Upland)
VCE 2015 – the route
Serbia-Romania-Ukraine-Poland-Slovakia

- Start: 18 July
  Soko Banja (Serbia)
- Finish: 18 October
  Bratislava (Slovakia),
- walk along the Carpathian watershed,
- walking the full arc, (bypassing the Transylvanian Upland)
AC 1980 – the route

- We climbed over 250 peaks above 1000 m

The Gorgans, Greater Bratkowska (1792), Ukraine

Munții Mehedinți, Vârfu lui Stan (1466), Romania
AC 1980 – the route

- We climbed over 50 peaks above 2000 m

Pietros (2020), the Czarnohora, Ukraine, meeting with shepherds at the top
VCE 2015 – the route

- We climbed over ? peaks above 1000 m

Ciuc Mts, Romania

Topas peak, Ukraine
VCE 2015 – the route

- We climbed over ? peaks above 2000 m

We tried to stay as much as possible in the highest part of the mountains

Tatra Mts, Slovakia

Fagaras Mts, Romania
AC 1980 – the meals

There was no freeze-dried food, we had no chocolate or energy bars. There was a food crisis down below, not just up above.

We had 3 meals a day.
- Breakfast: milk porridge, pâté sandwiches, jam, tea.
- Lunch: spam or cheese sandwiches, onion, tea.
- Supper: tinned beef or pork with rice or pasta, tea.
• We had a vegetarian diet for most of the trip.
• Our plan was to eat at least one hot meal a day.
• We cooked mostly with fire, had a burner for the wet days and enjoyed a meal in a hut about once a week.

**Breakfast:**
• at the beginning porridge, but it proved not to be enough,
• switched to honey, butter and bread.

**Lunch and supper:**
- pasta with cheese, milk or jam
- peas, lentils or mushroom stew
- cheese with toast bread
- fruit, vegetables, fish or bacon from time to time
AC 1980 – the accommodation

- Mountain bivouacs

Munții Rodnei, Lacu Lala Mare, Romania
AC 1980 – the accommodation

- tent bases, mountain chalets

Student tent base, Gorce Mts, Poland

Ukrainian tent base, the Bieszczady

The Gorgans, Ukraine
VCE 2015 – the idea of the crossing

- sleeping in different places

Camping

Huts / guest houses

Interesting places

Shelters
- No GPS,
- No Hungarian DIMAP maps,
- Only 21 ranges were published in the Romanian Munții Noștri series (8 concerned our route),
- good tourist maps covered the mountains of Slovakia and Poland,
- in the Eastern Beskids (Ukraine) we used photocopies of Polish military maps from 1930-38, scale 1:100,000.
- in Romania we used photocopies of Austrian military maps from 1880-1915, scale 1:75,000 and 1:200,000.
AC 1980 – maps

Maps – sketchy and old
VCE 2015 – maps
- no Gore-Tex and no thermal clothes,
- no 11-zone socks and no lightweight tents.

We had tents with tarpolin tropics (after rain their weight doubled).
VCE 2015 – equipment

- Weight was an important factor in selecting our gear:

- Lightweight tent – 2kg
- Light backpacks
- Down sleeping bags – 1kg
- Light sleeping mats
- Synthetic shirts
- Fleece or down jackets
- Lightweight waterproof jackets
We had:
- flanel shirts, tricot T-shirts,
- ordinary insulated jackets,
Not everyone had carimats; I used a sponge mat, it was smaller, heavier, and it soaked in water.

Our rucksacks were large, because our equipment and food were heavy. We carried between 25 and 35 kg, the load dropped when the food was consumed.
AC 1980 – Slovakia
(once Czechoslovakia)

route length: 275 km, 11 days

White Carpathian Mts

Little Carpathian Mts
No Schengen zone then


- We had permission to walk along the border
The Bieszczady – The Gorgany – The Czarnohora,
route length: 285 km, 12 days

Pikuj (1406), the Bieszczady,
20 July (plaque above: 19 July)
AC 1980 – USSR (Ukraine)

- 7 days of non-stop rain
- 36 rainy days during whole trek

Jasinia, The Czarnohora

Aftermath of the local flood
Płajska Valley, The Gorgany
AC 1980 – USSR (Ukraine)

Hoverla (2061), The Czarnohora, champagne at the top

In the background: defaced plaque with Lenin (no longer there)
AC 1980 – Romania

28 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days


Hașmaș Mts, Hăghimașul Mare 1792 m
AC 1980 – Romania
28 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days

Eastern Carpathians

Now in Valea Buzau there is a water reservoir.

Siriu Mts, Siriu 1640 m
AC 1980 – Romania

28 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days

Eastern Carpathians

Munți Rodnei, Gargaleu 2076 m
AC 1980 – Romania

28 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days


Retezat, Peleaga 2509 m
AC 1980 – Romania

26 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days

Southern Carpathians:

Munții Mehedinți
AC 1980 – Romania

26 mountain ranges, route length: 900 km, 45 days

Southern Carpathians:

Făgăraș Mts
AC 1980 – Romania

Finish: The Danube, Orșova

Starting point: Soko Banja
End point: Iron Gates – Danube dam

The first objective:
Rtanj Peak 1560 m – the highest peak in the Serbian Carpathians

Rtanj Peak 1560 m

Limestone rock formations
VCE 2015 – Romania
1215 km in 45 days


Starting point: Orșova
End point: Sighetul Marmației
VCE 2015 – Romania

1215 km in 45 days

Parang Mts

Fagaras Mts

**Neamțului Mts**

**Bretcu Mts**
VCE 2015 – Romania
1215 km in 45 days

Nemira Mts

Hasmas Mts
VCE 2015 – Romania

1215 km in 45 days

Suhard Mts – shepherd’s hut

Rodnei Mts
VCE 2015 – Ukraine
410 km in 13 days

Chornohora – Svydovets – Polonyna Krasna – Polonyna Borzhava

Starting point: Solotvyno
End point: Uzhhorod

Polonyna Krasna

Polonyna Borzhava
AC 1980 and VCE 2015, Ukraine

Hoverla (2061), The Czarnohora

2015

1980
AC 1980 and VCE 2015, Ukraine

Pikui Peak 1405 m

1980

2015
VCE 2015 – Poland
331 km in 11 days

Bieszczady – Beskid Niski – Beskid Sądecki
Starting point: Balnica
End point: Niedzica

Low Beskids
Polish-Slovakian border
Beskid Niski Mts, state border

No Schengen zone, 1980

Schengen zone, 2015
VCE 2015 – Slovakia
495 km in 12 days

High Tatras – Slovak – Moravian Carpathians
Starting point: Veľka Frankova
End point: Bratislava

White Carpathians

Gerlachovsky Peak 2654 m
Other crossings

Polish: solo – 8, other – 4, in instalments – 3

T. Świst 2015

on a pole above Lake Avrig

Sanocki & Łukaszewska 2015
Other crossings

Dubuis 2011 (France), including Serbia

Krno 1984 (Slovakia), via Hungary

Hlavačkova 2015 (Czech Republic)
This was my biggest mountain adventure.
This expedition permanently binds me to the Carpathians.
After 35 years I won the Crown of Romania's Mountains (97 highest peaks of all mountain groups).
Polish tourists conquered the whole Carpathians the most often.

Film “ViaCarpatica”
Post Scriptum

Do I still walk the mountains?

Lillafüred, 11-10-2017

Carpathians
Post Scriptum

Do I still walk the mountains?

Piz da Lech
2911 m, 2013

Bivouac Fiamme Gialle 3002 m, 2017

Civetta 3220 m, 2016

Dolomites
Post Scriptum

Lillafüred, Hungary, 12 October 2017

Carpathian Convention

From left: Vlad Spiru, Jerzy Montusiewicz, Andrei Dumitrescu

Lillafüred, Hungary, 10-12 October 2017, Carpathian Convention
Au revoir!  
See you!

Do widzenia!  
Na shledanou!  
Do побачення!

Dovidienia!  
Viszontlátásra!

Auf Wiedersehen!  
La revedere!

Видимо се!