

**Statement by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands *at the occasion of*  
COP6 of the Carpathian Convention – 25 November 2020**

**An effective way to implement the Carpathian Convention: the Carpathian Wetland Initiative**

Since 2006, the Carpathian Convention and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands work together, based on a MoC that recognizes the fundamental role played by wetlands in regulating and providing water, in supporting the maintenance of cultural and biological diversity, ensuring high ecosystem productivity, and in providing services and benefits for people and the planet.

In 2018, the Global Wetland Outlook reminded the world that wetland ecosystems continue to be degraded and destroyed. Since the Convention on Wetlands was signed in 1971, another 35% of all wetlands were lost. This loss rate is three times faster than the reduction of forests. Wetland loss is significant natural capital lost, because wetland ecosystems are more productive and they store more carbon in the long term than any other ecosystem.

The Convention on Wetlands considers the international cooperation in the Carpathians through our joint 'Carpathian Wetland Initiative' and essential means to establish comprehensive national wetland inventories (serving as indicator 6.6.1 for the Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water and sanitation), to curb further wetland loss and to work for the restoration of wetland ecosystems and the ecological river corridors they provide in the wider landscape.

We are proud how the focal points in the seven Carpathian countries work together with colleagues from different sectors, such as agriculture, water management, forestry, energy and transport to achieve measurable improvements on the ground, as part of the programmes adopted under the Carpathian Convention for the implementation of its different protocols.

We highly appreciate this effective way of cooperation to implement the priorities of a global convention, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, at regional level as part of the Carpathian Convention.

Ably coordinated by Jan Kadlecik of the Slovak State Nature Conservancy, our joint programme is currently focusing, amongst others, on:

- improving the water quality in the Danube basin through its Carpathian tributary rivers and rivulets,
- nature-based solutions for the restoration and management of ecological corridors, also addressed as green infrastructures, within the Danube Transnational Programme,
- improving the management capacities of protected areas in the Carpathians, and
- mitigating climate impacts, notably through peatland rewetting for carbon sequestration and long-term storage.

When renewing the Nationally Determined Contributions to achieve the climate goals of the Paris Accord, we strongly recommend to include wetland-based solutions for land-use changes towards the restoration of wet forests and agriculture practices (paludiculture). Such wetland-based solutions are low-hanging fruits and have a great potential to contribute to emission reduction goals at national level.

Also, the important role of wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction is increasingly recognized. The wetland ecosystems in the Carpathians have a large potential for the reduction of flood and drought risks. Risk reduction should be carefully addressed while maintaining and restoring the biological diversity in Carpathians wetlands.

I wish the Carpathian Wetland Initiative much success and invite all of you to actively support its aims and activities as a practical means to implement the work of the Carpathian Convention.

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