
Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable
Development of the Carpathians

CC/COP7/DOC6/FINAL

FINAL PROGRESS REPORT for the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP7)

based on the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention 2021-2023¹

*Relevant documents mentioned in the Progress Report are available
on under BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS² on the CC COP7 website*

DECISION COP6/1 Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Consideration of the most useful and effective reporting formats/systems for a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sectors*

1. Within the consultation on the Global Biodiversity Framework implementation in the Carpathian region, the Secretariat together with the Focal Points initiated a discussion on using already existing or incoming reporting mechanisms such as reporting under the revised National Biological Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), assuming the inclusion of the Carpathian Convention relevant provisions in the NBSAPs, for the reporting on the Carpathian Convention implementation.
2. The Secretariat maintains contact with the UNEP Team responsible for the [Data Report Tool for MEAs](#) (DaRT) regarding the possible inclusion of the Carpathian Convention into the reporting tool DaRT. Currently, the Carpathian Convention Protocol on Biodiversity is added to the DaRT, showcasing that reporting on the regional conventions and strategies will be possible under DaRT. The UNEP Team is willing to further demonstrate the DaRT functions for the Carpathian Convention in a form of a dedicated workshop. However, further with the DaRT will require recommendations of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.

Activity: *Improving the functioning of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups*

Further to COP6/1 para 6 and 7 on establishing the role of the Working Group Chairs, the Secretariat maintained the list of Working Group Chairs and their contacts, based on the nominations received by the Parties.

¹ [Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention 2021-2023](#)

² <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/cop7/cop7.html>

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Activity: *Organization of the CCIC and WG meetings*

1. The following meetings of the Working Groups were held or planned in the period 2021- 2023: the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and Carpathian Convention Working Groups: the 12th CCIC meeting held on 18-19 November 2021 in Krakow, Poland; the 13th CCIC meeting, held on 22 November 2023 in Rzeszow, Poland; the 14th CCIC meeting held on 14-16 June 2023 in Mszana Dolna, Poland; the 10th meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Tourism) held on 15 April 2021 in an online format; the 12th meeting of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) held on 19-20 May 2021 in an online format; the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD), held on 17 March 2022 in an online format; the 13th meeting of the WG Biodiversity held on 11-12 April 2022 in an online format; 8th meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (WG Forest) held on 10-12 October 2022 in Levice, Slovakia; the 6th meeting of the WG SARD, held on 26-27 April 2023 in Vatra Dornei, Romania; 8th meeting of the WG Forest held on 16 May 2023 held in an online format; 14th meeting of the WG Biodiversity held on 22-24 May 2023 in Vsetin, Czech Republic.
2. Furthermore, upon the invitation of the Polish Presidency, the Carpathian Ministerial Conference on 21-22 November 2022 in Rzeszow, Poland, was organized allowing for high-level discussion on topics that are highly relevant from the regional and international perspective. The Conference focused on two main subjects: 1) the biodiversity in the Carpathians regarding the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, giving particular attention to the role of the Carpathian Convention in implementing the framework and 2) the situation in Ukraine concerning the direct and indirect impacts of the war on the environment and possible measures needed to address their consequences. The Conference witnessed the adoption of two Ministerial declarations:
 - [Ministerial Declaration of the Carpathian Convention on Carpathian Commitments for the Implementation of the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#)
 - [Ministerial Declaration of the Carpathian Convention on the Impact of War in Ukraine on the Environment and the Need for Cooperation and Assistance](#)

Furthermore, [the report on the impact of war on the natural environment of the Carpathians in Ukraine](#) was prepared as background material for the ministerial conference of the Carpathians and commissioned by the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment.

As a follow up to the Ministerial Declaration on Carpathian Commitments for the Implementation of the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework and in order to realize the given mandate, a consultation process was initiated. In this respect, a meeting on the GBF implementation in the Carpathian Region took place in an online format on 30 March 2023, with the purpose of providing a comprehensive overview of the activities enhancing synergies between the implementation of the CBD/GBF and the Carpathian Convention and exchanging views on the process between the CBD and

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the Carpathian Convention Focal Points. At the meeting discussed were the initiatives supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in the Carpathian region, particularly the development of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, to be adopted at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (11-13 October 2023, Belgrad, Serbia, as well as mainstreaming of the Carpathian Convention in the national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), which should be revised in line with the adopted GBF

At the meeting presented and discussed the initial draft of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework (CBF) supporting the implementation of the GBF in the Carpathian region, prepared by the Secretariat ([meeting report](#)).

The CBF initial draft was sent for a first round of consultation. The next consultation round on the draft took place at the 14th Carpathian Convention Working Group Biodiversity meeting, held on 22-24 May 2023 in Vsetin, Czech Republic.

3. The global programme "Adaptation at Altitude – Taking Action in the Mountains" encourages interregional exchange for sustainable mountain development. It facilitated a meeting between the Andean Mountain Initiative (IAM) and the Carpathian and Alpine Conventions, to promote collaborative learning and aid the IAM's in its journey to establish a legal framework of cooperation in the Andes for sustainable mountain development. The exchange was an opportunity to share experiences, and strategies, and build capacity for better mountain ecosystem conservation and environmental governance in the mountain regions. This collaboration is expected to strengthen interregional cooperation and increase the political visibility of mountain ecosystems. During the 14th CCIC meeting, the Carpathian Convention and IAM representatives shared detailed information about respective processes.

Activity: *Other activities related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention*

1. The development of the Carpathian Convention Vision 2050 was recommended by the 12th CCIC meeting considering the ongoing process in the Carpathian region. The Secretariat was requested to make the necessary arrangement for the consultation process.
2. The Secretariat has continued working on modernizing the Carpathian Convention website, which shall help in reorganizing and updating the content of the website and providing a fresh and user-friendly interface. The website should relaunch at the CC COP7

DECISION COP6/2 Cooperation with regional and local authorities and all relevant Stakeholders

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Activity: *Promotion and support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention across sectors at the regional and local levels and all relevant*

1. The project proposal “*Central Mountains: From the Alps to the Carpathians – strengthening governance models for sustainable development of mountain areas in Central Europe*”, was approved by the Interreg Central Europe Programme. This project proposal was initiated by CSTP - Centre Poland/Association Carpathian Euroregion Poland in cooperation with the Secretariat includes partners from various countries largely within the framework of the Carpathian and the Alpine Conventions, namely:

- Rzeszow County (LP)
- Association Carpathian Euroregion, Poland
- Association of Towns and Communities, Slovakia
- Carpathian Foundation, Hungary
- Association of Regional Brands, Czech Republic
- Foundation of Landscape Protection, Poland
- Brasov County, Romania
- Eurac Research, Italy
- CIPRA International, Austria
- Institute of International Sociology, Italy
- Alpine Pearls Associations, Austria

As part of its objectives, the project shall:

- Enhance cooperation among the stakeholders of the Alps-Carpathians mountains following a strategic, participative, multi-level and multi-sectoral approach (public, private, non-governmental), including the development of the Alpine-Carpathian joint strategy for community-led sustainable development of mountain areas in Central Europe,
- Piloting new models and structures for transnational and cross-border cooperation in the context of the mountain areas in Central Europe to solve sustainable development challenges together,
- Strengthening the capacities of Alpine-Carpathian stakeholders to improve governance across borders and mobilize policymakers in the implementation of transnational development strategies, including the development of the Alpine-Carpathian toolbox for active involvement of citizens and youth in decision-making processes”,

Considering the importance of the project’s activities for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, in the context of the involvement of local and regional stakeholders, the following Ministries agreed to become associated project partners:

- Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic,
- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine
- Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism of Romania
- Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland
- Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Poland.

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Project duration: April 2023 – March 2026.

Project budget: 2.330,000 EUR

The Secretariat will support the implementation of the project and facilitate the consultation process with the Convention.

2. The project proposal **“Carpathian Bridge - participatory mechanism of the Carpathian Convention at the local level”**, submitted to the International Visegrad Fund aiming at establishing closer cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and relevant local stakeholders, was unfortunately not awarded by the Programme. The Secretariat and the partners involved will consider the resubmission to suitable programs in the future.
3. The Secretariat continues to support the involvement of the local level in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including by increasing the number of stakeholders at the regional and local levels as well as by consulting the involvement of representatives of the regional and local levels in various projects and activities.
4. The Parties reported on the organization of the stakeholder's engagement meetings, which were held at the national level concerning the Carpathian Convention, as follows:
 - On the 10th of November, 2021, a workshop titled "Ecosystem Services and Their Assessment - Carpathian Ecosystem Services Toolkit (CEST)" was organized by the Ministry of Environment, Slovakia (MoE SR) in Bratislava.
 - Between 7th and 8th June, 2022, a workshop was held in Levice that focused on addressing current issues related to the Carpathian Convention (CC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This event was organized to establish synergies between the Carpathian Convention and the CBD.
 - On the 25th of May, 2023, another workshop was organized in Levice. This meeting of the working group for large carnivores fell within the framework of the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biodiversity. It specifically focused on pastoralism and farming in Slovakia, seeking to foster coexistence between large carnivores and pastoralism.
 - Lastly, on the 12th of June, 2023, a workshop was conducted in Košice. This event also focused on addressing current issues related to the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, with a particular emphasis on the Košice region.
5. Poland provided information about the cross-border the Small Project Fund Interreg PL-SK 2021-2027, which was approved by the European Commission in September 2022, offers support in many of the areas important for the Carpathian Convention. Priorities of the programme include:
 - Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches;

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- Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution;
- Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility;
- Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders;
- Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation;
- Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions.
- The geographical area covered by the programme is almost in 100% included in the geographical area of the Carpathian Convention.

Apart from grants for standard projects in all the priorities mentioned above, the programme will also offer microgrants in the two priorities which are last in the list above. Microgrants will come from the Small Project Fund, which will be managed by the following institutions, each of them on an agreed territory: Beskidy Region Association, EGTC Tatry, Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland, Higher Territorial Unit Prešov, Higher Territorial Unit Žilina. Beskidy Region Association, EGTC Tatry, Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland are located in Poland and will be responsible for the priority „enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation”. Two Slovakian Higher Territorial Units will be responsible for the priority „build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions”.

As the projects covering management of Small Project Fund are not approved yet, it is difficult to assess when beneficiaries may expect the first call for proposals. For sure second quarter of 2023 (information included in the draft report) is not possible. As the report concerns the past and it is difficult at this moment to set the date of the first call, we recommend not to include there information about future developments and plans.

Another detailed information from the Interreg Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020 programme, included in the draft report, is the description of the EthnoCarpatia project. It is one of the many projects concerning cultural heritage of Carpathian mountains implemented in this programme. The 2014-2020 programme supported also many projects in other thematic areas covered by the Carpathian Convention. Descriptions of these projects are available here: <https://keep.eu/projects/>.

Similar cooperation in the thematic areas included in the Carpathian Convention will be possible in two other cross-border cooperation programmes in the northern part of Carpathian Mountains: Interreg Czechia-Poland and Interreg Poland-Ukraine.

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DECISION COP6/3 Cooperation with the European Union

Activity: *Activities related to cooperation with the EU*

1. The Secretariat together with the Polish Presidency have continued to foster closer cooperation between the European Union and the Carpathian Convention, including the desired accession of the EU to the Carpathian Convention as a Party, especially in the light of the [Road Map towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention](#), which was adopted at the COP6. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially hindered the implementation of the Road Map. Furthermore, the request for designating a contact person in the European Commission regarding the cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and the European Union has not been fulfilled.

Activity: *Cooperation with the Interregional Group "Carpathians" of the European Committee of the Region*

1. The Secretariat has been invited to attend the three meetings of the Interregional Group "Carpathians" of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), which is chaired by Mr. Wladyslaw Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland. The first meeting of the Group organized on 27 November 2020, allows the Secretariat to inform the meeting about the COP6 and its Decisions relevant especially on the cooperation at the EU level. The second meeting was organized on 10 February 2021 and the third on 25 November 2021, to present the main conclusions of the 12th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. Furthermore, the Polish Presidency participated in the next meeting of the Carpathian Interregional Group on 12. October 2022 in Brussels, Belgium, informing about the forthcoming Carpathian Ministerial Conference to be held in Poland on 21-22 November 2022, and its planned outcomes.
2. Furthermore, the representative of the Chair of the Interregional Group "Carpathians" of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), Mr. Wladyslaw Ortyl, Marshal and the representative of Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy of Poland presented at the 12th CCIC meeting the updates regarding the development of the EU Carpathian Macro-regional strategy, including the [Analysis of selected economic, social and spatial conditions of the development of the Carpathian Macro-region](#) and [Executive summary of actions and projects of the Carpathian Strategy based on the results of the Carpathians 2020 Diagnosis](#), analysis of the stakeholder needs developments in establishing the Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians".

Activity: *Cooperation with EU Macro-regional Strategies, especially the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and its Priority Areas*

1. The Secretariat took part in the panel discussion on challenges and opportunities for the Carpathian macro-region in the context of the EU Green Deal, which was held on 9. March 2022 online in the framework of the 3rd EU Macro-regional Strategies Week.

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2. The Secretariat has been involved in activities of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, especially by active participation in the meetings of Priority Areas 4 (Water), Priority Areas 5 (Environmental risks) and Priority Areas 6 (Biodiversity). Specifically, the Secretariat was invited to deliver a presentation on the current activities of the Convention at the 22nd PA4 Steering Group meeting held online on 19 October and to deliver a presentation on activities related to ecological connectivity at the 16th PA6 Steering Group meeting held on 11 November 2022.
3. Furthermore, the Secretariat co-organized the [side event](#): *Achieving functional biodiversity in the Danube-Carpathian Region by mainstreaming ecological connectivity – How to make it happen?*, which was held online within the 11th EU Strategy for the Danube Region Annual Forum on 18. October 2022. The Side Event explained why ecological connectivity is important for people and nature, how it can be safeguarded with the support of regional bodies, and how it is linked to EU policies. The side event was related to the recently endorsed [Joint Declaration on Achieving functional biodiversity in the Danube-Carpathian Region by mainstreaming ecological connectivity](#), by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) "Water Quality" Priority Area (PA) 4, "Environmental Risks" PA 5, "Biodiversity, Landscapes, Quality of Air and Soils" PA 6, the Carpathian Convention, and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), all of whom committed themselves to action.

DECISION COP6/4 Cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme

Activity: *Activities related to cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme*

1. The Secretariat continued participating in the meeting of the UNEP Focal Points for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, allowing for the promotion of the Carpathian Convention, its objectives, and ongoing activities, as well as the consideration of potential possibilities for future cooperation in the light of the respective mandates of the Convention and the objective of UNEP to strengthen programmatic cooperation.

DECISION COP6/5 Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies

Activity: *Activities related to cooperation with other conventions and international bodies*

1. The Secretariat has been in regular contact with the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and its relevant bodies, including the Alpine Biodiversity Board, seeking further opportunities for cooperation and joint activities. The representatives of both Secretariats were invited and present in most of the meetings of the Conventions.

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2. The Secretariat has been regularly exchanging information with the Mountain Partnership, especially considering the [International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022, which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2022](#) (A/RES/76/129). The resolution was proposed by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and sponsored by 94 governments aiming at creating visibility for sustainable mountain development and fostering further collaboration to protect and conserve these precious ecosystems. The resolution encourages Member States, international and regional organizations, and all relevant stakeholders to highlight the importance and value of mountains' ecosystems. It was initiated on the 20th anniversary of the International Year of Mountains and the first Global Mountain Summit that adopted the Bishkek Mountain Declaration in 2002. The 2002 International Year of Mountains witnessed crucial steps taken towards establishing the Carpathian Convention.

Furthermore, the [United Nations General Assembly in December 2022 adopted a new resolution \(UNGA resolution \(A/RES/747/227172\) on "Sustainable Mountain Development"](#), which proclaims the period of 2023–2027 as Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions to enhance the awareness of the international community of the problems of mountain countries and to give new impetus for addressing the challenges and problems of mountain countries.

3. The United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session held on 16 April 2021 adopted the resolution entitled "Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use". The resolution put forward by the Kyrgyz Republic, together with 60 state co-sponsors focuses on transboundary cooperation in environmental conservation, including the preservation of ecological connectivity for wildlife. The resolution recognizes the Carpathian Convention as a regional initiative supporting cooperation and transboundary approaches concerning biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. The resolution can bring further impetus for the Carpathian Convention's work on biodiversity and ecological connectivity in the Carpathian region and initiate further exchange and cooperation with various actors and initiatives, including under the forthcoming UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
4. Regarding the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030](#), which was launched on 5. June 2021 –World Environment Day – and the Carpathian [joint statement welcoming the new UN Decade](#), the Secretariat has been promoting the Carpathians as part of the call for flagship projects to be promoted under the UN Decade. That resulted in awarding of the [Multi-Country Mountain Flagship](#) as one of the first 10 World Restoration Flagships of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, celebrating the success story of mountain restoration efforts in Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Uganda and Rwanda. Within the Multi-Country Mountain Flagship, the Carpathians were represented by Serbia.
5. The Carpathian Convention was invited to attend the Regional Dialogue on Governance in the Andes and Mountain Regions on 27-28 April 2021 which was organized by the Technical

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Secretariat of the Andean Mountain Initiative (AMI) at CONDESAN and UNEP ROLAC, under the auspices of the Andean Mountain Initiative. The aim was to provide a space for the exchange of ideas and experiences that can feed the processes undertaken by the AMI and promote constructive dialogue with other international mountain platforms. In this respect, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention delivered a presentation on the history, governing structure, and thematic areas of work of the Convention, while the Polish Presidency of the Convention took part in the panel discussion.

6. UNEP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, organized a 3-day interregional exchange [workshop Mountains Connect](#) on regional governance in mountain areas under the auspices of the [Adaptation at Altitude](#) programme on 20-22 June 2022 in Vienna, Austria. The workshop aimed to foster effective interregional exchange and action learning on the manifold approaches and mechanisms for regional governance, especially regarding enhancing climate resilience in mountains. The event was attended by stakeholders and decision-makers primarily from the Andes, the South Caucasus, the East African Community countries, and the Hindu Kush Himalaya – as well as mountain governance institutions such as ICIMOD, CONDESAN, Sustainable Caucasus, and ARCOS including the representatives of the Alpine Convention, and the Carpathian Convention. The [take-aways of the workshop](#) are available on the programme resource page.
7. On 15-16 December 2021, the Alpine and Carpathian Biodiversity Forum took place which provided a platform for discussion with national and international experts about issues related to the protection of mountain biodiversity. The event also strengthened the collaboration among relevant partners for the protection of mountain biodiversity and to define a joint and effective response to the main challenges identified. The [conclusions and recommendations](#) of the event were circulated via the Carpathian Convention channels.
8. On 16 September 2022, the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and its Alpine Biodiversity Board, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat jointly organized an [event "Mountain Biodiversity 2002-2022: achievements and next challenges at Global and regional level"](#), which was held against the backdrop of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022. During the event, the invited speakers shared their perspectives on mountain biodiversity ranging from 2002 to 2022, an overview of the progress and significant achievements in the past 20 years as well as their outline for a strategic approach for the future. The conclusions of the event should be available shortly.
9. The Carpathian Convention was represented at the [6th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership in Aspen, Colorado US](#). Thanks to Romania and its National Agency of the Mountain Area the Carpathian Convention was presented at the session on transboundary cooperation during which the representatives of different mountain regions of the world discussed best practices to strengthen

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regional dialogue for sustainable mountain development. The session focused on several transboundary cooperation agreements relating to mountains, such as the Alpine and the Carpathian Convention and the Andean Mountain Initiative, and considered best practices and lessons learned on how to protect biodiversity, and water resources, enhancing economic development and infrastructure. Romania highlighted the benefits of cooperating within the Carpathian Convention which includes sharing experience and knowledge on various topics related to sustainability and environmental protection, as well as connecting with an extended network of stakeholders.

DECISION COP6/6 Implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Activity: *Activities related to the Implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*

1. Following the mandate received by the Carpathian Convention COP6 (Decision COP6/6) on implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, but also considering the Convention's work on raising the importance of mountain biodiversity within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other global political agendas, the Secretariat together with the Chair of the WG Biodiversity – Czech Republic and the Polish Presidency, invited the stakeholders for a discussion on the role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the upcoming global biodiversity framework negotiated under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity. For this reason, the Parties and the Secretariat used among other fora's, the meetings of the 12th and 13th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity, sides events and thematic consultation on the margins of the CBD meetings and other occasions for discussion on the topic.

In this respect, the background documents and information on the Convention's involvement in the Global Biodiversity Framework were prepared, among others:

- Carpathian Convention's Role and Contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework - [assumptions by the Secretariat](#)
- Advocating for mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity - [insights from Mountain Biodiversity Day held on 13 January 2021](#)
- Policy briefs ([Elevating Mountains](#) and [Elevating Mountains 2.0](#)) presenting the latest scientific findings on the importance of mountain areas for the protection of biodiversity on a global scale to decision-makers
- [Indicators for Elevating Mountains in Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) - identified indicators that are considered effective for safeguarding mountain biodiversity and ecosystem integrity proposed within the draft Post-2020 GBF Monitoring Framework
- [Date Reporting Tool for MEAs \(DaRT\)](#) – a tool that could be considered useful for streamlining reporting of various biodiversity-related conventions, including the regional ones, such as the Carpathian Convention and specifically its Protocol on Biodiversity
- [Briefing note – Mountains in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#)

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Furthermore, the Secretariat and other partners, particularly UNEP, organized the CBD COP15 high-level side event “Celebrating International Year of Mountains-ensuring Mountain biodiversity protection within the post-2020 GBF implementation”, held on 14 December 2022 in Montreal, Canada.

The Secretariat delivered an official statement on behalf of the Carpathian Convention at the CBD COP15, where the role of the CC as a regional vehicle for the GBF implementation was presented, as well as the Carpathian Commitments adopted by the Carpathian Ministerial Conference in November 2022.

2. The renewed [Memorandum of Cooperation \(MoC\) between the CBD, Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention in the context of the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework](#) is finalized and approved by all three Conventions and it is awaiting the signature. As agreed between the Secretariats, the MoC will be signed shortly and celebrated at the CC COP7. The new MoC shall be considered a solid and relevant instrument for enhancing synergies amongst the Conventions and supporting common activities on topics of mutual interest, as well as sharing the best examples with other mountain regions in the world, thus supporting protection of mountain biodiversity.
3. Further to the COP6/6 Decisions, the Secretariat continued following the negotiation and development process of the post-2020 GBF, including participating in relevant CBD meetings and consultations. In this respect, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention has established regular and effective contact with the CBD Secretariat to maximize the effort of both Conventions on promoting conservation of the mountain biodiversity.

DECISION COP6/7 Cooperation with Eurac Research

Activity: *Activities related to the cooperation with Eurac Research*

Eurac Research, through the Vienna Representing Office and in cooperation with Bolzano Research Institutes and Administrative Departments, continued providing scientific support capacities and assistance to the Carpathian Convention, also through the development and execution of projects focused on the implementation of the Convention. Currently, Eurac Research and the Secretariat are concluding a work plan annexed to the Memorandum of Cooperation between UNEP Vienna-SCC and Eurac Research.

DECISION COP6/8 Strengthening science-policy-practice interface and cooperation with scientific networks

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Activity: *Activities related to strengthening the science-policy-practice interface and cooperation with scientific networks*

1. The Secretariat was continuing its efforts to strengthen the science-practice-policy interface and pursue closer collaboration with the Science for the Carpathians (hereinafter S4C) network.

The Secretariat supported S4C in the implementation of the project, “Linking Science, Policy and People for Sustainable Carpathians”, funded by the Visegrad Fund, developed, and submitted by the S4C in collaboration with the Secretariat. The project has been completed in February 2022, and the report has been submitted and approved by the Visegrad Fund. The project outcomes include:

- [S4C recommendations to the Carpathian Convention, based on the 6th Forum Carpaticum](#) (June 21-25, 2021), presented at the 12th CCIC meeting and available on the Convention’s and the [S4C](#) website,
 - S4C Interdisciplinary Winter School “[Sustainable development in hot spots of nature and tourism in the Carpathians](#)”, which took place between 1-4 February 2022 in Poland;
 - Development and publication of the “[S4C Research Agenda 2022-2030](#)”, which covers a wide range of topics- including those newly introduced, based on the recommendations received by the participants of the 6th Forum Carpaticum, such as: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Tourism; Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge; Education for Sustainable Development; Participatory research, Multi-actor dialogues and knowledge co-production; Social innovation to promote sustainable development; Green energy and energy efficiency, etc. The Secretariat facilitated using inter- and transdisciplinary methods for participatory knowledge co-creation by the participants of the Forum. The [Programme](#) and [Book of Abstracts](#) of the Forum can be found on the conference [website](#).
2. The planned workshop “Towards a stronger role of universities in shaping sustainable development of the Carpathian Region” has been integrated into a Plenary session, to promote wider participation in the discussion, and contributed to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of strengthening science-practice-policy interface in the region. Based on the results of this process, the Secretariat and the S4C have been invited to discuss collaboration between the Convention and the S4C at several conferences and events, including 1) The International Transdisciplinary Conference, which took place virtually on September 13-16, 2021, 2) Workshop on inter- and transdisciplinary research institutions, which will take place in a hybrid format (based in Bramois, Switzerland), on 21-22 October 2021, 3) a Webinar dedicated to the integration of inter-and transdisciplinary approaches in Carpathian and Caucasus regions, co-organized in collaboration with the S4C and the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region (SNC-mt) on October 29, 2021.

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3. The Secretariat continued the implementation of the project “Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via a science-policy-practice interface,” funded by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP), in collaboration with the S4C. In addition to supporting the 6th Forum Carpaticum, the project assisted collaboration of the Secretariat and S4C on a science-policy-practice interface in Education for Sustainable Development, for example at the 11th World Environmental Education Congress (Prague, Czech Republic, 14-18 March 2022), and at the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar (Zakopane, Poland, 28-30, September 2022).
4. The Secretariat coordinated and co-authored with the S4C members the chapter “Science-policy-practice collaborations towards sustainable development in the Carpathian Region” in the volume “Safeguarding Mountain Social-Ecological Systems: A Global Challenge”, to be published by the Elsevier in the Hazards and Disasters Series.
5. The Secretariat facilitated the participation of an S4C lecturer in a Caucasus Summer School, organized by the SNC-mt, which took place on 20-24 September 2021, focused on disaster risk management, identifying, and assessing mountain hazards and their causes. Another S4C representative provided a lecture for the summer school *IPROMO 2021 - Post COVID-19 Recovery in Mountain Areas*, organized by the Mountain Partnership.
6. The Secretariat facilitated the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Cooperation between the S4C and the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region (SNC-mt). Specifically, it coordinated two plenary sessions at the International Mountain Conference (IMC), in collaboration with the SNC-mt, which took place on September 11-15, 2022, in Innsbruck, Austria, and facilitated S4C’s inputs in the sessions, as well as represented S4C at one of them:
 - Session “Discussing transdisciplinary practices for global mountain sustainability: opportunities, challenges and experiences”, co-organised in collaboration with SNC-mt, GLOMOS, Eurac Research Interdisciplinary Centre for Mountain Research, University of Lausanne, Mountain Research Initiative and CONDESAN, and following the workshop on inter- and transdisciplinary research institutions on mountains held in Switzerland in October 2021, at which the Secretariat presented its collaboration with S4C.
 - Session “Supporting cooperation within and among regional scientific mountain networks – does EU policy play a role”, organized in collaboration with SNC-mt, International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research (ISCAR), Network for European Mountain Research (NEMOR) and the Mediterranean Islands Mountain Network (MountMed Institute).

Based on the latter session, the Secretariate facilitated follow up in collaboration with SNC-mt and S4C, aimed at organizing the next inter-regional workshop at the upcoming Caucasus Mountain

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Forum (July 4-6), to facilitate further collaboration between the S4C, SNC-mt and other scientific networks in mountainous regions.

7. Based on discussions at the two sessions conducted at the International Mountain Conference, the Secretariat proposed inputs for the Declaration, to be adopted at the European Mountain Convention, and communicated them to Euromontana:

- I. Calling for support to Mountain Scientific Networks:

Scientific networks in the European mountain regions play an essential role in linking scientists across disciplines and borders, supporting links between science, policy, and practice, and providing a knowledge base for smart and future-oriented decision-making. The networks and collaboration between them offer the potential for learning across mountain regions, creating science-based partnerships and exchanging expertise and best practices to create and promote sustainable solutions for the challenges of the changing world. This is particularly important for regions experiencing climate change-induced instabilities, political and socio-economic turbulences, and armed conflicts. In addition to Euromontana, the International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research (ISCAR), Science for the Carpathians (S4C) Network, the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region (SNC-mt), the Network for European Mountain Research (NEMOR) and the Mediterranean Islands Mountain Network (MountMed Institute) are actively working on this arena. Yet, most of these networks face several challenges and need to be reinforced.

Therefore, for more recognition and promotion of scientific networks in the European mountainous regions as agents for change, through establishing a sustainable resource base/ funding opportunities to continue their work, including:

- (a) supporting coordination and exchange between academia and practitioners, both within and between these networks, to better inform decision-makers in the regions,
- (b) supporting young scientists' engagement in the networks' activities,
- (c) facilitating science-practice-policy interface to create joint solutions for sustainable development.

- II. Calling for support to transdisciplinary processes and institutions in mountainous regions:

For active engagement of institutions and actors in transdisciplinary research practices as a means to foster the co-production of knowledge that supports the smart and sustainable development of mountainous regions; This active engagement requires multiple types of support, which can include: 1) training and capacity-building to engage in transdisciplinary research and teaching, 2) funding for the implementation of transdisciplinary approaches, and 3) facilitating the integration of research results into policies and practice, among others.

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8. To facilitate closer links between the Carpathian Convention parties and the S4C network and enable opportunities for more active membership in the S4C network, the creation of thematic working groups under the S4C network has been proposed. Such S4C Thematic groups may act as expertise reference points for the Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention. Moreover, due to the closer collaboration between the Secretariat staff and the S4C, the S4C has come forward with the proposal to include the Secretariat representative in the Executive Committee of the Network. The S4C Executive and Scientific Steering Committee will inform the Secretariat as soon as progress is made in this respect.
9. The Secretariat is cooperating closely with the S4C on the organization of the 7th Forum Carpathicum conference “Carpathian Futures – Critical Transitions”, which will take place on 25-29th September at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. The Forum will include exchange on Carpathian ESD and a special event on Ukraine, to facilitate collaboration among Carpathian universities and other actors on capacity development for “rebuilding Ukraine” in accordance with the Agenda 2030 and the provisions of the Carpathian Convention.

DECISION COP6/9 Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity
Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Activities related to cooperation with the Carpathian Network of Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity*

1. In close cooperation with the Chair of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) – Czech Republic, the Secretariat organized the **12th Meeting of the Working Group on Biodiversity on 19 – 20 May 2021** in an online format ([final meeting agenda](#)) and the **13th Meeting of the Working Group on Biodiversity on 11-12 April 2022** via an online format ([final meeting agenda](#)), and **14th Meeting of the Working Group on Biodiversity on 22-24 May 2023** in Vsetin, Czech Republic ([final meeting agenda/final meeting report](#)).
2. The WG Biodiversity meetings reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the [Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity - Work Plan 2021 – 2023](#). Particularly, the WG Biodiversity received updates on relevant project implementation, as well as on reviewed steps taken for the implementation of the [International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity](#) (adopted by COP6, 2020). Furthermore, the WG Biodiversity reviewed and discussed cooperation with relevant organizations and bodies, such as the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, and the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, etc.

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Special attention was given to the ongoing Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to this process ([final meeting report](#)).

The WG approved the updated [Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity](#)

3. The project proposal – [LECA – Supporting the coexistence and conservation of Carpathian large carnivores](#), supported by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic together with the Secretariat, was approved for funding by the Interreg Central Europe 2021-2027. The project aims at the harmonizing monitoring of large carnivores, and strengthening conflict prevention and poaching destinations of large carnivores in the Carpathians. The selected pilot areas are Beskydy-Kysuce, Tatra Mountains, eastern Carpathians, Slovak Karst-Aggtelek NP/Bukkk NP. The main expected results include:

- 3 Adopted Thematic Guidance (on monitoring, conflict prevention and poaching),
- 4 Participatory stakeholder platforms established in the pilot areas,
- 4 Endorsed cross-border strategies,
- revision of the Carpathian Convention under “Action Plan on conservation of LCs”.

Project duration: April 2023 – March 2026

Project budget: 2,350.00 EUR

4. The project - [NaturaConnect: Designing a resilient and coherent Trans-European Network for Nature and People](#), was approved for funding by Horizon Europe. The project will contribute to the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, particularly on creating a Transnational European Network of Nature (TEN-N) that includes a functioning connected system with ecological corridors. The project’s main objectives include:

- Define a blueprint for TEN-N,
- Data collection to design TEN-N and a monitoring system,
- Engage with stakeholders & policy makers,
- Develop future scenarios that incorporate existing climate and land-use projections,
- Review & disseminate the best spatial planning practices & funding mechanisms.

The Carpathians have been selected as the case study for the project and in this respect the Secretariat will be involved in the project activities related to the Carpathian region. Other information about the activities was shared at the 14th WG Biodiversity meeting.

6. The WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat assisted in the development of the “[Joint Declaration on Achieving functional biodiversity in the Danube-Carpathian Region by mainstreaming ecological](#)

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[connectivity](#)”, which has been developed with the support of the SaveGREEN project consortium. The overall goal of the Declaration was to develop and commit to a coordinated cross-border and cross-sector approach for spatial planning and nature conservation in the Danube-Carpathian region. The Declaration shall raise further awareness of the importance of ecological connectivity for the well-being of people and nature, support the safeguarding and improvement of ecological corridors in the region and reflects on them considering relevant EU and national environmental policies and by considering relevant spatial planning instruments. To finalize the development of the declaration, a dedicated workshop was held on 28 June 2022 to review and agree on the final text. The Declaration was endorsed by the Carpathian Convention, ICPDR, and EUSDR (particularly PA4, PA5 and PA6). The [Joint Declaration](#) was the subject of discussion at the recent [side event organized within the 11th EUSDR Annual Forum](#) on 18 October 2022.

7. On 28-30 September 2021, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) Steering Committee, WWF, CEEweb for Biodiversity, and Eurac Research organised the International Conference “**Protected Areas - Cornerstones of Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians and Beyond**” in Visegrád, Hungary, both physically and virtually ([Press Release of the Conference](#)).

The three-day event hosted the 3rd **Conference of the Carpathian Network of the Protected Areas**, which offered a platform to present best practices of protected areas management and facilitate a dialogue on further strengthening cooperation between and within the protected areas in the Carpathians and other regions. The [detailed Minutes of the 3rd CNPA Conference](#), the presentations made by the CNPA Steering Committee and the representatives of the Protected Areas in the Carpathians and the presentation prepared by the Secretariat on the CNPA status quo and the need for revisiting the strategic CNPA documents ([Review of the CNAP Medium Term Strategy implementation](#)) were all subject of the discussing regarding the way forward for the Network.

The Conference in Visegrad also witnessed the **closing of a Carpathian Convention flagship project – [ConnectGREEN - Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin](#)**, funded by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, where various successful project results and outputs were presented. The main outputs that should be considered by the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity and other actors are:

- [Guidelines for the Identification, Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Ecoregion](#)
- [Methodology for identification of ecological corridors in the Carpathian countries using large carnivores as umbrella species – final document](#)
- [Guidelines on How to Use Spatial Planning Tools in Integrative Management of Ecological Corridors](#)

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The conference also adopted a [Conference Declaration](#), where the participants agreed to call on the European Commission, the European Parliament and the national governments of the Danube-Carpathian region to drive the efficient management of ecological corridors to avoid further deterioration, restore their functionality and reverse habitat fragmentation. One of the paragraphs of the Declaration states that *recognizing that the Carpathians are a major element of the EU's ecological network, encourages the EU to accede to the Carpathian Convention as a holistic instrument to foster ecological connectivity*".

8. The project consortium under Lead Partner – Eurac Research, with the support of the Secretariat, successfully finalized the implementation of the [Centralparks project](#) (Interreg CE Programme) that focused on building management capacities of Carpathian protected areas for the integration and harmonization of biodiversity protection and local socio-economic development.

In addition to the previous communication at the project implementation level, two project results are expected to be formally endorsed by the Parties at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in 2023, namely:

- *Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas:* [Full document](#) | [Factsheet](#)

The strategy shall guide for preparing or updating protected area management plans, for local or regional planning documents concerned with nature and landscape conservation, land use, and spatial development (in line with Convention Biodiversity Protocol Article 17). The target audience of the strategy is local and regional stakeholders, including protected area administrations, nature conservation and landscape protection agencies and other nature and landscape conservation bodies and authorities, as well as local communities, and their municipal and regional authorities.

- *Strategy for local sustainable tourism development based on the natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathians:* [Full document](#) | [Factsheet](#)

The strategy shall guide local and regional stakeholders, including managers of Carpathian protected areas, local communities and their authorities, and local entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, to prepare or update protected area visitor management plans and local or regional planning documents related to tourism development, natural and cultural heritage conservation, and land-use.

The WG Biodiversity and other stakeholders were invited to consider, use and further disseminate the other main results, including:

- [Guidelines on communication between protected areas and local communities in the Carpathian – full document](#)
- [Centralparks: Carpathian Ecosystem Services Tool](#)

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The final conference of the Centralparks project took place on 23-24 March 2022 in Wieliczka, Poland under the theme “Transnational cooperation for the sustainable future of the Carpathian region” ([agenda of the Conference](#)).

As a part of the final conference, on 24 March 2022 the Secretariat with support of the Eurac Research and the Chair of the CNPA SC, organized a round table session on the significance of Protected Area Networks for effective protected area management and nature-based sustainable development in the Carpathians and beyond. The session was attended by representatives of various networks of protected areas, including CNPA, ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS, Parks Dinarides and the Carpathian Wetland Initiative. The management of protected areas beyond borders. Through this session, the networks of protected areas were invited to exchange information on their modus operandi, as well as to inspire each other by sharing information on activities and cooperation experiences to initiate activities and closer cooperation. As a follow-up, the Secretariat prepared a table containing the relevant source of formation for the networks, particularly for the CNPA to consider the needed governance improvements ([Centralparks Final Conference - Round table follow-up – table](#)).

9. Due to the support of the Centralparks projects, several meetings related to the CNPA were organized:
- CNPA Steering Committee (SC) on 18. November 2021 in Krakow, Poland (within the 12th CCIC meeting) – [more information](#), where the CNPA SC agreed to several recommendations (see [CNPA Steering Committee meeting, 18 November 2021, Krakow, Poland – Meeting report + recommendations](#))
 - CNPA SC on 24 March 2022 (within Centralparks final conference), where the CNPA SC discussed the implementation of the recommendations from the Krakow meeting. As a result of the discussion on establishing a better governance model for the CNPA, the members of CNPA SC agreed to assess the idea of establishing an association as a new model for the CNPA and verify the willingness of the CNPA members to join it. The Secretariat together with the support of Eurac Research was tasked to develop a questionnaire addressed to the CNPA members about the association, as well as about other relevant topics of future cooperation within the CNPA.
 - The [CNPA questionnaire 2022](#) with the support of the Secretariat and the CNPA SC, was circulated to the CNPA members for feedback. The CNPA questionnaire 2022 [results were presented](#) and discussed at the CNPA SC meeting that was held on 30 June 2020 in an online format. Overall positive feedback from the CNPA members (80 responses and nearly 90% in favour of establishing an association with legal personality for the CNPA) encouraged the CNPA SC to agree on the following next steps (CNPA SC [meeting report](#)). The CNPA SC decided to work further on the idea of establishing an association of protected areas in the Carpathians, however, further consultation in this respect is needed.

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- 8.1. The CNPA Chair provided relevant updates on the CNPA activities during the 13th WG Biodiversity meeting – [presentation](#).
 - 8.2. UNEP, in collaboration with the Secretariat, commissioned a report on options and opportunities for ecological powerline corridor management with possible transboundary effects. The focus area of the report is Slovakia, while the examples provided by the report can represent the preparedness of various system operators across Europe in terms of businesses' contributions to the global sustainable development efforts (full report).
 - 8.3. UNEP and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention are supporting the development of a project proposal to be submitted under the first call of the Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 in cooperation with the energy distribution networks across the E.ON Group in Europe, relevant NGOs and universities in the Carpathian region. The project, led by SOS/BirdLife Slovakia, aims at creating healthy ecosystems and restoring biodiversity under the high-voltage corridors in forests subject to Natura 2000 but also outside forests in Natura 2000 areas. The project was not invited to the second stage of the submission process, however, the consortium considers resubmission for the next call of the Danube Region Programme in 2023.
 - 8.4. The Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) provided updates on the ongoing activities of CWI at the 13th WG Biodiversity Meeting – [presentation](#). The Carpathian Wetland Initiative provided the [annual report for 2020 and Work Plan for 2021](#). Further updates on the ongoing activities of CWI were presented within the 12th WG Biodiversity meeting – [presentation](#).
 - 8.5. Furthermore, the Carpathian Wetland Initiative and the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, with the support of the Secretariat, have been involved in the development of the project proposal – MARTI - Management and Restoration of Tiny Areas of Conservation Importance that was submitted to the 1st call of the Interreg Central Europe. The project's main results include the development of a tiny wetland areas preservation action plan for the Danube region and the development of a training program for wetland restoration. If successful, the Secretariat will be supporting linkages between the project results and the UN decade of restoration as one anchoring point, as well as supporting communication and dissemination. The project was not selected for funding; however, the consortium considers resubmission.
9. The Secretariat was requested by the IUCN SSC (Cat Specialist Group) to support the proposal for concrete actions for the Eurasian lynx, for listing under a specific Appendix by the CMS COP14 in 2023. More information will be shared shortly.

DECISION COP6/11 Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management

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Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Cooperation with the ICPDR Tisza Group in the frame of the Joint Declaration of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River - Tisza Group*

1. UNEP, as both a co-coordinator of the UNEP Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and as the global custodian for SDG indicators relating to the protection and restoration of freshwater ecosystems (6.6.1), addressing water quality and pollution (6.3.2) and integrated water resources management (6.5.1), organized together with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, a session within the [International River Symposium](#), held in a hybrid format in Vienna and online on 27-30 November 2022. The session titled "Partnerships for community action to increase river resilience" featured a discussion on developing effective partnerships on various levels to increase the action of the community and stakeholders at the local level to protect, restore and sustain the health of the river's ecosystem. Concerning the Carpathian region, the challenge of plastic pollution in the Tisza River was presented, highlighting the partnerships that have resulted in strong community action like the [Danube Region Programme Tid\(y\)Up project](#).
2. The Secretariat was regularly invited to present the Carpathian Convention activities at the EUSDR PA4 (Water) Steering Group meetings.

DECISION COP6/12 Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Activities related to the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development*

1. The Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development to the Carpathian Convention entered into force on 01.01.2020 for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic. Furthermore, the Protocol is in force for Romania since 18.01.2021 and, lastly, for Ukraine since 28.04.2021. This information is also available on the Carpathian Convention [website](#).
2. In close cooperation with the Chair of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD) – Romania, the Secretariat organized the **5th Meeting of the Working Group SARD on 17 March 2022** via an online format ([final meeting agenda](#) / [final meeting report](#)) and **6th Meeting of the Working Group SARD in Vatra Dornei on 26-27 April 2023** ([final meeting agenda](#) / [final meeting report](#)).
3. Taking into account the declaration of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution (RES/76/253) and recognizing the importance of the Carpathian Pastoralism, the last WG SARD meeting recommended using the

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building momentum of the IYRP to undertake relevant actions for supporting, promoting and protecting the traditional pastoral practices in the Carpathians and to highlight the relevance and contribution of the Carpathian region to this important practice at the international level.

4. Further priorities topics for advancing the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development were proposed by the Chair WG SARD – Romania, which include:
 - 4.1 Best practice models: short food supply chains – Farm to fork
 - 4.2 Quality schemes and certification of „Mountain Products”
 - 4.3 Associations for farmers and food producers in the mountain area - benefits and best practice Models

The Parties presented at the meeting provided national updates on the SARD Protocol implementation.

The WG SARD reviewed and recommended the updated [Terms of Reference](#) for its operations.

DECISION COP6/13 Sustainable Forest Management Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: Implementing the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management, including the development of the Inventory of Virgin Forests of the Carpathians, which shall support the protection of the most precious forest areas of Europe

1. In close cooperation with the Chair of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (WG Forest) – Slovakia, the Secretariat organized the **8th Meeting of the Working Group Forest** on **10-12 October 2022** in Levice, Slovakia ([final meeting agenda](#) | [final meeting report](#)), and the **9th Meeting of the Working Group Forest** on 16 May 2023 in an online format ([meeting agenda](#) / [final meeting report](#)),

The meetings focused mainly on the discussion regarding the **finalization of the Inventory of the virgin forest in the Carpathians** and its possible extension to other degrees of naturalness of the Carpathian forests. Another relevant issue discussed was the development of the **Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services**. In addition, the participants received inputs from the **Science for the Carpathians** to consider as part of WG Forest work in the future. Eventually, the WG Forest was tasked to develop a WG Forest Work Plan 2023 – 2026 guiding the implementation of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan ([final meeting report](#)). The WG Forest developed a [WG Forest Work Plan 2023 – 2026](#) guiding the implementation of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan.

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At the 9th Working Group (WG) Forest meeting on 16 May 2023, key stakeholders discussed relevant updates and plans for the sustainable management and protection of the Carpathian forests. Notably, the European Environment Agency (EEA), represented by Annemarie Bastrup-Birk, discussed updating the Inventory of Carpathian Virgin Forests with new data from Ukraine and Poland, to be presented at the Carpathian Convention COP7 in October 2023. It was suggested that an additional layer of quasi-virgin forests should be created, and the Inventory should be updated according to new definitions and criteria.

During recent consultations, Romania, Slovakia, and Poland have collectively endeavoured to establish indicators and definitions for quasi-virgin forests in the Carpathian region. This collaborative effort was aimed at identifying the unique attributes of these forests, proposing comprehensive indicators, and seeking consensus on a shared definition that could be universally adopted across these countries. The document is currently still in consultation within the WG Forest.

Furthermore, during the 9th WG Forest meeting, Ms. Sabine McCallum, a UNEP climate change expert, presented a draft Assessment of Climate Change Risks and Impacts on Carpathian Forest Ecosystems, which was opened for further feedback until 31st May 2023. The final assessment shall be finalized within next weeks and presented at the CC COP7 in October 2023.

Several parties expressed support for Ukraine, considering the conflict's environmental impact. Notably, Klaudia Kuras of the Carpathian Convention's Secretariat discussed capacity-building and training, facilitating academic exchange, and aiding Ukraine in implementing environmental commitments. This sentiment was echoed by Liubov Poliakova of Forest Europe and Michał Magnuszewski of Poland's forestry sector.

Further discussions featured an overview of several environmental projects in the region. Alberto Del Lungo from FAO Ukraine highlighted the importance of forestry for Ukraine's economy and the environment, and the ICSDAFF project. Isabella Greimeister-Pfeil of the Environment Agency Austria discussed the EU4Environment Water & Data Project for Ukraine. Hildegard Meyer from WWF-CEE presented the EU Horizon Project NaturaConnect, while Tomasz Pezold Knežević from WWF-CEE introduced the Forest Connect project. Robert Cyglicki from Greenpeace underscored the significant loss of tree cover in the Carpathians.

Tereza Toullová from the Forest Management Institute of the Czech Republic introduced a documentary film about close-to-nature in the Carpathian Forests.

Finally, in the meeting's closing remarks, the Secretariat highlighted future steps: updating the Carpathian Virgin Forests Inventory, developing and finalizing the criteria and indicators of quasi-

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virgin forests in the Carpathians, finalizing the climate change risk assessment, translating the forest documentary film, and hosting the 10th WG Forest meeting in Slovakia in 2024.

The WG Forest reviewed and recommended the updated [Terms of Reference](#) for its operations.

DECISION COP6/14 Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry, and energy
Article 8 of the Carpathian Convention, Article 10 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Activities related to sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry, and energy*

1. The Secretariat is involved in the implementation of the project [SaveGREEN- 'Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin'](#) funded by the EU Danube Transnational Programme (project duration: 1 July 2020 -30 November 2022).

The project aims to foster cross-sectoral and transnational cooperation, as well as build comprehensive know-how towards the development of concrete solutions aimed at improving, restoring, and preserving the functionality of key ecological corridors in the Carpathian, Alpine and Balkan Mountain valleys.

The project's final conference is scheduled to be on 6 - 7 December 2022 in Vienna, Austria. More information about the results of the project will be shared in due course.

One of the main results of the projects with the involvement of the Carpathian Convention was the endorsement of the "[Joint Declaration on Achieving functional biodiversity in the Danube-Carpathian Region by mainstreaming ecological connectivity](#)."

DECISION COP6/15 Sustainable tourism
Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Implementing the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism, including the functioning of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP)*

1. Further to the Decision COP6/15 on sustainable tourism, the Secretariat in close consultation with the Chair of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Tourism) – Poland, organized the 10th Meeting of the WG Tourism on 15 April 2021 in an online format, as a first step in revitalizing activities of the WG Tourism with a strong support of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP). This meeting allowed for consideration and discussion on relevant priorities and ideas for organization of work of the Convention's bodies and initiatives involved in the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism for the current implementation period 2021 – 2023 ([final meeting agenda](#) | [final meeting report](#))

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In this respect, WG Tourism proposed the Work Plan for CSTP for the period 2021 – 2023, which was proposed by the CSTP- Centre Poland (currently the coordinator of the CSTP) - [document](#). Furthermore, it reviewed and recommended the updated [Terms of Reference](#) for its operations.

During the 10th WG Tourism meeting, the Parties provided updates on the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism.

2. The Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) - Centre Poland together with the Secretariat, initiated the development of the project proposal "[Central Mountains: From the Alps to the Carpathians – strengthening governance models for sustainable development of mountain areas in Central Europe](#)", approved for funding by the [Interreg Central Europe](#). This project proposal was initiated by partners from various countries largely within the framework of the Carpathian and the Alpine Conventions, coordinated by the CSTP - Centre Poland/Association Carpathian Euroregion Poland and the Rzeszow County with the great support of the Secretariat. The project partners include:

Following the CCIC recommendations, the project shall improve the governance, operations and cooperation of the CSTP.

3. The Secretariat was informed about the opening of the Office for Sustainable Tourism and Rural Development for the Carpathian Region in Slovakia, which shall enhance the implementation of the Carpathian Convention on a national level in Slovakia and will be also operating within the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform, creating the third official CSTP Center Slovakia (after Poland and Romania). The opening of the new CSTP Center – Slovakia is based on the agreement between the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic and the Association of Towns and Communities in Slovakia. The Secretariat is consulting with the involved partners on further process, including signing of a memorandum of cooperation with the CSTP Centre Slovakia and the Secretariat.
4. A detailed report by CSTP Poland following the Work Plan for CSTP for the period 2021 – 2023

Institution building (Priority Area I)

In 2022, clear progress was made in expanding the basic structure of cooperation on the Slovak side. After changes in the Statute of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland, 14 local governments from Slovakia joined the organization by October 2022. Among them are both towns and municipalities in eastern Slovakia from the Carpathian area. It is assumed that by the end of the year, another 10 local governments will join the Euroregion. Between September and October, 12 Ukrainian local governments joined the Carpathian Euroregion, including large cities such as Stryi, Drohobych and Sambir. Strengthening the organizational foundations of the Euroregion will have a positive impact on the actual possibilities of achieving the objectives of the CSTP in the future.

In July 2022, the Ministry of the Environment sent information to the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention about entrusting the function of the CSTP Slovakia to the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia (ZMOS). Thus, another Centre was created within the CSTP network. Currently, CSTP Poland and ZMOS are preparing a work plan for 2023.

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Cross-border Functional Areas (Priority Area I)

Another field of structural activities is the issue of creating Cross-border Functional Areas in the Carpathian Region. In this regard, from November 2021 teams responsible for the preparation of the Strategy will be established, based on which cross-border Integrated Territorial Investments will be designed. It is expected that due to the specificity of cross-border areas in the Carpathian Region, sustainable tourism will be the main development profile in the CBFA. It was agreed with foreign partners that starting from January 2023, the development of strategies for each of the CBFAs will begin.

Small Project Fund INTERREG PL-SK 2021-2028 (Priority Area I)

On the 23rd of October 2021, the Polish-Slovak Working Group on the INTERREG PL-SK 2021-2027 Program decided related to the system of implementation of small project funds on the Polish-Slovak border. Based on this decision, the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland will be responsible for managing the fund in priority 4.6 "Increasing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation". This means an opportunity to financially support the public sector and non-governmental entities in the field of implementation of projects supporting sustainable tourism. The Euroregion plans to open the first call for proposals in the second quarter of 2023.

Cooperation with higher education institutions in the Carpathian region (Priority Area I)

In 2022, the Carpathian Euroregion established the Scientific Council of the Carpathian Euroregion. The council consists of professors – representatives of universities from Krakow (Jagiellonian University, University of Agriculture, Cracow University of Technology) and Katowice (Academy of Physical Education). The Council is headed by Prof. Andrzej Szarata - Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Cracow University of Technology. The role of the Council is to support the Euroregion and the CSTP in the field of analyses, research, and projects.

Carpathian Tourism Observatory (Priority Area II)

In the second priority area, the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland performs intensive conceptual and organizational activities. The establishment of a professional Carpathian Tourism Observatory (CTO) is a goal of strategic importance. In this respect, the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland cooperates with the Institute of Tourism/ HES-SO Valais -Wallis in Sierre, Switzerland, which developed and implemented the Territorial Model of Tourism Observatory (<https://www.tourobs.ch/>). In Poland, the main partners of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland are the Statistical Office in Rzeszow and the Cracow University of Technology. The Statistical Office, using its resources, experience, and cooperative ties with statistical offices of the Carpathian countries, supports the CSTP in developing the functionality and architecture of the CTO system. "In the years 2018-2020 the Statistical Office in Rzeszow, together with 7 European countries, implemented the international project ESSnet Big Data II: Workpackage J - Innovative

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tourism statistics. The project aimed to create, based on the integration of data from various sources, the concept of a prototype system for monitoring changes in tourism. During the project, the model was developed to link data sources in the field of tourism for both the demand side (related to tourist travel) and the supply side (related to accommodation facilities). The prototype uses data from statistical and administrative sources, as well as from websites obtained using the author's web scraping method. As a result of the analysis of online resources, the high information potential of booking and airline websites was demonstrated, which have a large amount of data changing in real mode. On their basis, among other things, quick estimates in the field of tourism were prepared and the space-time disaggregation method of travels of Polish residents to overseas countries was developed. The solutions can be used and developed as part of the tasks performed by the Carpathian Tourism Observatory". In 2022, the Euroregion started cooperation with VISA in the preparation of schemes for the use of information from payment cards for the Observatory.

EtnoCarpathia Project (Priority area III)

Source of funding:

- European Regional Development Fund, Cross-border Cooperation Program Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020.
- Financed by the National Institute of Liberty - Civil Society Development Center from the funds of the Civic Organization Development Program for the years 2018-2030 (until the end of 2021).

Completion period: 01.11.2019-31.10.2022.

Project Partners:

- Municipal Cultural Center in Vranov (PP1)
- District Museum in Rzeszow (PP2)

The total value of the project: EUR 844,701.74 EUR (100%), SEKP: EUR 515,370.00

Idea and a short description of the project:

The main idea of the project was to develop and promote the cultural heritage of the Polish-Slovak borderland through the development of the EtnoCarpathia tourist product based on the resources of the Carpathian culture. The traditional folk culture of the ethnographic groups existing in the borderland until World War II is an important factor in tourism development in the Carpathian Mountains. Therefore, the activities planned in the project were aimed at increasing the attractiveness and recognizability of the borderland using cultural heritage resources of 7 Carpathian cultures from Poland and Slovakia (Pogorzans, Dolinians, Lemkos, Boykos, inhabitants of former Šariš, Zemplin and Zamagurie regions). The EtnoCarpathia product was developed under a common, already existing international Carpathian brand and offers tourists the opportunity to get to know

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the authenticity and multiculturalism of the Polish-Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountains, diverse crafts and unique traditions. As part of the project, the website <https://etno.visitcarpathia.com/> was created. It is a compendium of knowledge about 7 cultures of the Polish-Slovak borderland and a promoting tool for the tourist product. It is a pro-development instrument which is constantly updated with new content and may include information about the ethnographic cultures of other Carpathian countries in the future. The website is also connected with a dedicated mobile app. Moreover, the inventory of ethnographic resources was carried out and publications were created. The CarpathiaEtnoDesign competition for young designers was organized, which was the opportunity to meet "old and new", combining traditional design and modern trends, and actively involved young people in the project. Handicraft workshops (Lemko necklaces (krywulka), Boyko necklaces (sylvianka), felting, cross-stitch embroidery) addressed to all enthusiasts of Carpathian crafts or local artists, photography workshops on product photography or those concerning modern marketing tools, as well as information meetings on the creation and importance of territorial brands. In addition, the project was promoted during events like EtnoWeekend, a study tour of Polish and Slovak journalists and bloggers, and an international conference.

"Between the Fjords and the Carpathian Mountains - the platform for the exchange of experiences in tourism education" (Priority area III)

Source of funding: "Education" program under the Norwegian and EEA funds in Poland (Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)

Completion period: 01.02.2022-31.01.2024

Project Partners:

- Bronislaw Markiewicz State Higher School of Technology and Economics in Jaroslaw (PWSTE)
- Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland
- Nord University

The total value of the project: EUR 229,370.00 (100%), SEK: EUR 36,585.00

Idea and a short description of the project:

The project aims to increase the quality of higher and secondary vocational education in tourism in the border area of the Polish part of the Carpathian Euroregion, using Norwegian models. The activities of the project will ensure raising the level of knowledge both of students, pupils (thanks to new curricula at the professional level) and people working in the tourism sector (participation in quality circles). Through the organization of periodic meetings, cooperation between the education and tourism sectors in the region will be strengthened. On the other hand, through the transfer of knowledge and innovation, ensured by ongoing cooperation with the Norwegian partner and

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participation in the study visit, local entrepreneurship in the sector will be strengthened. The project will also influence the strengthening of professional competencies of the region's tourism sector staff and managers, as well as will ensure the exchange of good practices. Innovative elements of the project will include professional education programs in tourism based on Norwegian models and ensuring the implementation of the "Carpathia" brand strategy. In addition, the project will include innovative meetings such as co-creations stimulating cooperation between students and representatives of the tourism sector and meetings such as quality circles aimed at raising the level of knowledge of people involved in the management and service of the tourism sector in the Carpathian Euroregion. Groups of target recipients of the project include staff and students of the PWSTE, staff and students at secondary vocational schools, representatives of the tourism sector (tourist organizations, associations, facilities, departments of offices), tourists visiting the border area of the Carpathian Euroregion, teaching staff from other vocational schools in the project area, centres and sections related to the development of education, as well as local governments from border areas.

**DECISION COP6/16 Cultural Heritage and traditional knowledge
Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention**

Activity: *Activities related to cultural heritage and traditional knowledge*

1. It was no updates regarding a possible resubmission of the *Carpathian Route - exploring, promoting, and protecting the richness of the cultural and natural heritage of the Carpathian Region*, due to a lack of suitable funding. However, the Secretariat is monitoring the situation. The project funding was cancelled in September 2020 by EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation for political reasons.

**DECISION COP6/17 Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early
warning Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention**

Activity: *cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and the EEA on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention*

1. The Secretariat continues close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Topic Centers on providing support for the Carpathian Convention's activities, including operations focused on forests, climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and ecological connectivity as

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well as on the integration of common information systems. Recently, the Secretariat and EEA updated the work plan 2023-2024 guiding the cooperation activities.

2. Thanks to the support of the SaveGREEN project, the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS) has been greatly improved.

DECISION COP6/18 Climate change
Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Ratifying and implementing Article 12bis on Climate Change*

1. Article 12bis on Climate Change is in force for Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, and Romania since 2021.

Ratification of Article 12bis by the remaining parties will support us in further engaging and undertaking activities combating climate change in the Carpathian region and will further strengthen the activities and tasks of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Climate Change (WG Climate Change).

2. In collaboration with Hungary – the Chair of the WG Climate Change, the Secretariat organized the 8th Meeting of the WG Climate Change was held on 6 May 2021 in an online format ([final meeting agenda](#) | [final meeting report](#))
3. Following the 12th CCIC recommendation and in line with the [Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians](#), the Secretariat together with nominated experts continue to work on the development of the *Assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services*.

The process was initiated by the and was followed by the [first expert group meeting](#) in November 2021 and a subsequent survey allowing for a detailed discussion of the key impacts and risks that the forest ecosystems are facing as well as adaptation responses in the Carpathian region. Finally, a draft structure for the assessment was filled out with more in-depth information (see the full assessment's [background/synthesis document](#)). Preliminary conclusions of the assessment include:

- 3.1. Climate change effects on disturbances such as fire, wind, insects, and pathogens are of fundamental importance for forest ecosystems and biodiversity.
- 3.2. Climate change effects on drought and flood frequency and intensity are also of great concern.
- 3.3. Effective adaptation responses are critical, e.g.
 - Restore landscape heterogeneity to increase system resilience,
 - Adaptive forest management approaches,
 - Reforestation and endemic species restoration,

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- Anticipating novel ecological communities of the future.

The current draft of the assessment was presented at the 8th meeting of the WG Forest (October 2022, Levice, Slovakia), and at the 9th meeting of the WG Forest (16 May 2023 in online format) where a discussion on open issues and gaps was held.

As a result of the ongoing written consultation, the final version of the assessment should be available shortly.

DECISION COP6/19 Awareness raising, education and public participation

Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention

Activity: *Activities related to the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development while implementing the Carpathian Convention*

1. The Secretariat, in collaboration with S4C, continued to implement the project “Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface”, which has been funded by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP).

The project is contributing to the establishment of the Carpathian ESD Expert Network, based on the [recommendations received at the First Carpathian ESD Seminar](#), organized in Budapest, Hungary on 16-18 April 2019, as well as on [the recommendations received from ESD-related discussions](#) on the 6th Forum Carpathicum. All discussions and recommendations of ESD events at the 6th Forum Carpathicum were summarized and included in a report “[Towards the Carpathian ESD Expert Network: Integrating Education for Sustainable Development into the activities of the Carpathian Convention](#)”, which is made available at the Convention website.

Among other project activities, an S4C Expert on Carpathian Convention networks produced a report, with recommendations for the development of the ESD Network, and its integration into the Carpathian Convention’s structure, based on document analysis, interviews of ESD experts, and several workshops, including the participatory inputs collected at the “Workshop on strengthening networks within the Carpathian Convention” and ESD-related discussions at the inter-sectoral session by UNEP GRID/Warsaw, which took place during the 12th CCIC meeting, held in December 2021. [The report and recommendations for the establishment of the Carpathian ESD Expert Network](#) have been shared with the Carpathian Convention parties and partners and are available on the Convention site.

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2. The Secretariat, together with ESD experts from Poland (S4C) and Hungary (Ministry of Interior) co-organized a Dialogue Session “Linking education with local and regional sustainable development challenges – opportunities and challenges in the Carpathian region” at the World Environmental Education Congress, which took place in Prague on 14-18 March 2022.
3. Based on the recommendations of the 12th CCIC, the Parties have been invited to provide nominations of ESD Experts to the Carpathian ESD Expert Network. Nominations have been received from Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia to date.
4. The Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Polish Presidency of the Convention, co-organized the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar, which took place in Zakopane, Poland, on 28-30 September 2022. Experts from all Carpathian Countries, representing governmental, academic, protected area and civil society institutions took part in the Seminar and reiterated their interest in collaborating on ESD in the Carpathian region. Several collaborative project ideas have emerged, and recommendations for developing a database of ESD Experts, projects and materials have been made by several experts. The report of the [2nd Carpathian ESD Seminar](#) is available on the Carpathian Convention website.
5. Based on the common interests identified at the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar, the Secretariat facilitated follow-up collaboration among the experts, including elaboration of joint projects and research, as well as presentation about the Convention by the Romanian and Czech experts at the workshop on "Learning Landscapes" at the Interpret Europe Conference, Sighisoara on 13 May, 2023.
6. The Secretariat, in close collaboration with the nominated ESD expert from the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, organized a virtual workshop “Towards a transdisciplinary approach in the Carpathian region, implementing the Carpathian Convention and UNECE Strategy for ESD 2021-2030”, which took place in April 2022 as part of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in the UNECE Region. The workshop participants discussed how the Carpathian Convention can contribute to the implementation of the four strands of the UNECE ESD Strategy in the Carpathian region, including 1) Whole education and ESD; 2) Whole institution approach: communities of transformational learning; 3) Digital Education, ICT and ESD; 4) Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD.
7. The Secretariat, with facilitation from the nominated ESD expert at the Ministry of Interior of Hungary and in close collaboration with the Polish Presidency of the Convention, promoted the Carpathian Convention achievements in the field of ESD at the 9th Europe Environment Ministerial Conference and the 3rd High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, in Cyprus 5–7 October 2022.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with the governments of Hungary, Poland and Serbia co-organized the side event “ESD Expert Network in the Carpathian Region”, which took place on 5 October 2022 and included contributions from high-level governmental panellists from Hungary and Serbia, a video

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message from the government of Poland, and a presentation by the chair of the S4C network. Supportive messages from the government of Slovakia and the NGO sector in Serbia have been received at the Side Event ([report from the Side Event “ESD Expert Network in the Carpathian Region”](#)).

The Secretariat provided an intervention at the High-level Meeting of Education Ministries, informing the delegates about the Carpathian Convention, the creation of the Carpathian ESD Expert Network, and expressing readiness for further collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). After the intervention on behalf of the Secretariat, the representatives of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) expressed interest in the Carpathian ESD Network and suggested exchange and collaboration.