

## Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management - Work Plan 2023 – 2026 implementing the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan - FINAL

*While conducting its activities, the WG Forest shall act according to its Terms of Reference and follow the strategic objectives established therein. It will take into account and support implementation of relevant global and EU policies and processes, particularly the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU forest strategy for 2030, the European Green Deal, the incoming Nature Restoration Law, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as the goals of achieving sustainably managed forests, halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework.*

| Reference   | Action  | Timeframe  | Actors  | Next steps recommended by the WG Forest   |
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| <b>Actions deriving from the COP Decisions</b>  |   |  |   |   |
| Decision COP6/13 para 2<br><br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 6.1, 6.2, 6.3<br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 8.1<br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 11.1 and 11.2 | <b>Continue working on the priority topics, such as:</b><br><br>- <b>identification and protection of natural and virgin forests,</b><br>- <b>promotion of close to nature forestry,</b><br>- <b>forestry and climate change</b><br><br>in order to implement the respective objectives of the Strategic Action Plan,   | By end of 2023   | WG Forest, Parties, relevant partners Secretariat               | - Further strengthen cooperation on the priority topics   |
| Decision COP6/13 para 3<br>Decision COP7/13 para 2 and 3<br><br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 6.1, 6.2, 6.3  | Continue cooperation and knowledge sharing with the Carpathian Convention and the WG Forest to achieve the implementation of Article 10 of the Forest Protocol with reference to the <b>finalization of the Inventory of Virgin Forests of the Carpathians and its possible extension to other degrees of naturalness, particularly quasi-virgin forests in the Carpathians</b> | By end of 2026   | WG Forest, EEA, the European Topic Centre other relevant actors | - Collect the missing information from the Parties on the virgin forest identification,<br>- Consider extension of the Inventory of the virgin forests in the Carpathian to other degrees of naturalness, particularly quasi-virgin forests and cooperate on and contribute to the process,<br>- Organize, in consultation with the WG Forest, physical and online meetings of the WG Forest in order to discuss the related next steps,<br>- Continue the cooperation with the EEA/ECT to finalize the Inventory and extend it to other degrees of naturalness<br>- Harmonize with other process on forest definitions, if possible,<br>- Invite other relevant experts to support the process,<br>- Consider the importance of the primeval forest reserves, which in an adequate size can be essential for the conservation of isolated and small stands of primary and old-growth forests,<br>- Explore information exchange on economic implications including questions on compensation related to the protection of the natural forests and especially virgin forests. |
| Decision COP6/13 para 5<br>Decision COP7/13 para 6<br><br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 11.1 and 11.2  | Support the development of the <b>Assessment of the impacts of climate change risks on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services</b> , and once completed, consider and act on proposed policy recommendations proposed by the Assessment, taking into account specific conditions of the Parties   | By end of 2026   | WG Forest, WG Climate Change Secretariat                        | - Providing further feedback on Assessment draft and related documents<br>- Promote the Assessment and its findings<br>- Consider and act on the policy recommendations proposed by the Assessment<br>- Discuss and propose projects and initiatives supporting the implementation of the policy recommendations proposed by the Assessment   |
| Decision COP6/13 para 7<br><br>Strategic Action Plan – Action 5.3   | Exchange information and <b>coordinate efforts to address the problem on illegal logging</b> taking into account already existing mechanisms and platforms, as appropriate.   | By end of 2023 (with possible continuation in 2024-2026 implementation period) | Parties, WG Forest Secretariat                                  | - Actions to be further considered  |

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| <p>DECISION COP6/8 para 3;<br/>Decision COP7/8 para 5</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan –<br/>Action 14.1 and Action<br/>14.2</p> | <p>Consider of the <b>Sciecne for the Carpathians (S4C) recommendation</b> of the priority topics for WG Forest work :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural disturbance dynamic, including alteration of disturbance regimes and implication for habitat and ecosystem services</li> <li>- Ecological silviculture, including but not limited to close-to-nature forestry</li> <li>- Forest hydrology and relationships to flood regimes and risks</li> <li>- Improving the region’s forest road network, design and engineering</li> </ul> | By end of 2026 | Parties, WG Forest S4C, other relevant partners, Secretariat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss and propose projects and initiatives supporting the implementation of the S4C recommendations</li> <li>- Identify possible funding for undertaking relevant actions</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Strategic Action Plan –<br/>Action 9.1 and Action 9.2</p>   | Exchange information and technical exchange on forest roads and skid trails   | By end of 2026 | Parties, WG Forest S4C, other relevant partners, Secretariat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage bilateral and multilateral scientific and technical exchanges on the topic of forest transport infrastructure. The exchanges shall focus on the development of guidelines for forest road and skid trail planning, design, maintenance, and management in the Carpathians. The goal of the exchanges will be to transfer the best available information on the science and engineering of forest transport infrastructure, including economic, ecological, and operational considerations.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Decision COP7/13 para 11</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan – Action 8.1</p>  | Promote close-to-nature forest management in the Carpathians  |                | Parties, WG Forest, other relevant partners, Secretariat     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss and propose projects and initiatives relevant to Promote close-to-nature forest management in the Carpathians</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Decision COP7/13 para 8</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan – Action 6.5 and Action 4.2</p>                                      | Assess and improve forest connectivity and restoration  | By end of 2026 | Parties, WG Forest, other relevant partners, Secretariat     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss and propose projects and initiatives relevant to forest connectivity and restoration</li> <li>- Support development of the support the development of a Strategic Action Plan with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for protected areas of the project ForestConnect “Towards a Climate-smart Forest Connectivity for Large Carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian Region” (Interreg Danube Region Programme), if the project will be approved</li> <li>- Continue working with the EEA/ETC/DI on assessing forest connectivity and prioritisation for conservation/restoration.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Decision COP7/13 para 9</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan – Action 3.1 and Action 3.2</p>                                      | Provide support for Ukraine, particularly on forest related issues  | By end of 2026 | Parties, WG Forest, other relevant partners, Secretariat     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actively explore and discuss possibilities for providing support to Ukraine</li> </ul>  |
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