NATIONAL REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARPATHIANS

National Report to be submitted to the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

[country – date]

Introduction & background

This National Report has been elaborated in accordance with the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians[1], its Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity[2] done in Bucharest on 19 June 2009 which entered into force on 28 April 2010, and its Strategic Action Plan adopted at the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP3)[3].

Following Article 28.1 of the Protocol, "*The Parties shall regularly report to the Conference of the Parties on measures related to this Protocol and the results of the measures taken*".

According to Article 29.1 of the same Protocol, "*The Parties shall regularly examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of this Protocol*".

[1] Hereinafter named "the Convention"
[2] Hereinafter named "the Protocol"
[3] Hereinafter named "the SAP"

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A. GENERAL INFORMATION OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

A.1 Which are the legal, policy and institutional achievements on national and regional levels since the adoption of the Protocol in your country, aiming at its implementation and the realisation of its objectives?

Please give a short summary of all relevant measures, laws, projects, programs, initiatives, multilateral agreements, etc.

National Nature Conservation Master Plan

The National Nature Conservation Master Plan of 2015-2020 states the importance of biodiversity and the ecosystem services and forces a multisectorian approach to prevent further loos of biodiversity.

The Master Plan highlights the importance of international cooperation in a dedicated chapter.

National Biodiversity Strategy

The National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in 2015-2020 (hereinafter referred to as: National Biodiversity Strategy) intends to halt the loss of biological diversity and further decline of ecosystem services in Hungary by 2020 and to improve their status as much as possible. A long-term vision has been identified for the European Union in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (the 2050 vision): By 2050, European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its natural capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored for biodiversity's intrinsic value and for their essential contribution to human well-being and economic prosperity, and so that catastrophic changes caused by the loss of biodiversity are avoided.

The conservation strategy of plant genetic resources for food until 2020

Vision for the future: long-term conservation of the existing diversity of our national treasures, Hungary's genetic resources of food crops and microorganisms free of genetic damage, as far as possible the realization of their actual economic value and the spread of their sustainable use in their natural environment, and the promotion of their use in research, education and Hungarian breeding efforts.

The main goal of the Strategy is to identify the major objectives needed for the conservation of Hungary's plant genetic resources for food and agriculture – that is genetic materials of

arable crops, grape varieties, fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices and essential oil plants, and microorganisms important in agriculture and the food industry – in line with the vision for the future, and also identify the measures that ensure the achievement of these for the period up to 2020.

The goal is the creation, financing and operation of a genetic conservation system that includes integrated genetic conservation areas within the sub-regions, and agroecosystem-based 'model farms', where land management could be combined with agricultural tourism. To implement this, inclusive rural systems and a market need to be created that endorse varieties and diversity, so that the varieties are never alien to the region or the market. In accordance with that, the following elements of the system need to be transformed: financing; employment; education and training system, including research; legislative environment; social services; the processing and sales background.

Strategies of Sectorial issues

Forestry (National Forest Strategy)

The long term objective for increasing the country's forest cover is to reach 27%, which is considered to be the optimal level, by 2050. This would require an additional 680,000 ha afforestation.

Please give a narrative description of the main features (geography, biological and landscape diversity) of the Carpathian region of your national territory

Hungary is situated in the Carpathian basin, which is a region under various climatic influences. This has resulted in the formation of the special biogeographical unit, namely the Pannonian biogeographical region (or Pannonicum), the largest part of which belongs to Hungary.

Due to the characteristics of the basin the majority of the area of Hungary is flat, only one third exceeds 200 m elevation, and merely 2% goes above 400 m sea-level. The highest peak is Kékes-tető (1 014 m), the lowest one is the flood plain of River Tisza, in the south of the country. The characteristic regions are the Northern and Trans-Danubian Hills of medium height and the two basins: the Great Plain and the Small Plain.

The backbone of the water system is given by two big rivers, the Danube and the Tisza, their length in Hungary is 417 and 598 km respectively. A significant part of the natural watercourses is originated in the Alps and Carpathians and flows into the two great rivers in

the territory of the country. The largest lakes are Lake Balaton (598 km2), Lake Velencei (26 km2) and Lake Fertő/Neusiedl (322 km2) at the Austrian border with 82 km2 in Hungary.

Although the territory of the country is small in Europe – 3% of the total area of the European Union – it is rich in unique natural resources. Hungary provides habitat for 17% of the plant and animal species of the EU Habitat Directive and 36% of species of the EU Birds Directive. Moreover, there are several species in the Pannonian biogeographical region that occur only in Hungary, therefore we have a great responsibility in maintaining their populations.

Due to the diverse ecological conditions various ecosystem types and diverse landscape have also developed. Species diversity is high compared to several other parts of Europe. At rural parts of the country – mainly in the economically less developed regions and remote areas – genetic, species and habitat diversity is higher. For instance diverse genetic resources for food and agriculture – fruit and vegetable landraces and local varieties etc. – can be found in home gardens, orchards and households at rural areas.

Hungary's geographical situation and biological diversity provides favourable conditions for agriculture: fertile plains, an advantageous climate, availability of water - the quantity of flowing water per inhabitant is said to be the largest in the world. 57.4% of the country is agricultural area (46.5% of the country is arable land, 8.2% is grassland and 2.7 % is horticultural land, gardens, vineyards and orchards), while 20.7% of the country is covered by forests or forest plantations.

Two regions belong to the Carpathians: the Northern Hungarian Mountains and the Gödöllő Hills. The Northern Hungarian Mountains are the northern, mountainous part of Hungary. It forms a geographical unit with the adjacent parts of Slovakia. The mountains are situated in northeast Hungary, along the eastern parts of the Hungarian-Slovak border.

The Northern Hungarian Hills begin with the Börzsöny, adjacent to the Danube Bend, where it meets the Transdanubian Hills. The Börzsöny range is about 600 km² in area, and mainly of volcanic origin. The highest peak is the Csóványos (938 m). The next range towards the east is the Cserhát, with the same geological composition as the Börzsöny. Erosion here was more severe: these are mere hills and comprise the lowest part of the North Hungarian Hills. The highest point is the Naszály (654 m).

Kékes, the country's highest peak at 1014 metres, is located in the next range, Mátra. However, the range's average height is only 600 metres, less than that of the neighbouring

Bükk. Mátra is also of volcanic origin. The Bükk is a limestone range; it has the highest average height in Hungary. It is rich in caves, some of which were inhabited in ancient times. The Aggtelek Karst area is a geologic formation spanning the Hungarian-Slovakian border, and the reason for the Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst World Heritage Site, and the Hungarian Aggtelek National Park. Hungary's most popular cave, the Baradla, is located there. The Zemplén Hills are again of volcanic origin; the soil's high quality favours viticulture. The climate is humid continental with long summers. The higher Carpathian Mountains have relatively strong climatical influence upon the area. The average annual temperature is rather low and the average temperature is only 15.5 °C (in Aggtelek) in the vegetative period, such value can be measured only at the higher mountains of Hungary. The annual precipitation was between 600-700 mm but it significantly decreased during the last years, with an average of about 400-500 mm. The local microclimates are strongly influenced by the relief.

B. ACHIEVEMENTS AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION INFORMATION

B.1 **Please provide information on measures to implement the Protocol and the results of the measures taken.**

Objective 1 – Measures for harmonization of policies and strategies and integration into other sectoral policies: *Pursuant to Articles 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Protocol*
The new **Fundamental Law** of Hungary, the foundation of the Hungarian legal system that came into effect on 1 January 2012 enhanced and fortified the basis of the Hungarian environmental jurisdiction by raising biodiversity into constitutional level. According to Article P of the Fundamental Law: “All natural resources, especially agricultural land, forests and drinking water supplies, biodiversity – in particular native plant and animal species – and cultural assets shall form part of the nation’s common heritage, and the State and every person shall be obliged to protect, sustain and preserve them for future generations.” Since 2006 Hungary has been following a GMO-free strategy, which is supported by all parliamentary parties. This is underlined by the new Fundamental Law of Hungary, which includes the pursuit of a GMO-free agriculture. No cultivation of any kind of genetically modified plant variety/hybrid is authorised in Hungary according to the legislation in force. Hungary's GMO-free policy is based on scientific results and the precautionary principle. The **National Sustainable Development Framework Strategy 2012-2024 (NSDFS)** was adopted by

the Parliament. It provides an interface between cross-sectoral policies and strategies from sustainable development aspect. It sets up the environmental carrying capacity as a barrier to economic development and underlines that biodiversity and other renewable natural resources must be protected and their overexploitation and exhaustion must be prevented. It also provides entry points for mainstreaming biodiversity into different sectors (e.g. education, energy, R&D, transportation, etc). The NSDFS also emphasises the importance of conserving non-protected areas.

The structure of the NSDFS helps the actors of society to identify their responsibilities in the transition to sustainability. The system of goals and measures are grouped according to human, social, natural and economic resources and assigned to the different actors of society like citizens/families, business, small communities, NGOs, churches and the government sector.

Individuals and families are responsible for reducing environmental damage and limiting the use of scarce resources. Business should support environmental organisations and activities and switch over to environment-friendly technologies, while reducing the consumption of natural resources (inputs) and pollution. As for NGOs, their sheer existence is indispensable, as they can promote the values of environmental sustainability the most effectively. The government sector has the responsibility in transferring sustainability related knowledge and the ability of systematic thinking through public education, support research and development, innovation, basic and applied research activities at universities, as well as initiatives aimed at the creation of local, ecological production and consumption systems, closed material cycles as well as ecological and landscape preserving farming. Ban on the use of resources in a critical state and green economy reforms are also the duty of the government sector.

The **National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in 2015-2020** is a complex strategy for the preservation and sustainable use of Hungary's biodiversity that has been adopted as an individual document. It is a contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) of the Convention of Biological Diversity and the definition of its national objectives. Hungary must also comply with the Biodiversity Strategy of the European Union, effective until 2020, adopted in June 2011 during the Hungarian presidency.

The National Biodiversity Strategy emphasises six areas: protection of areas and species subject to nature conservation; maintenance of landscape diversity, green infrastructure and ecosystem services; agriculture-related issues; sustainable forest and game management and protection of water resources; combating invasive alien species (non-indigenous species); as well as Hungary's role in the fulfilment of obligations arising from international biodiversity protection agreements. Within these strategic areas, twenty objectives concentrate on managing the national priorities of biodiversity protection. Each objective involves several specific goals, the implementation of which is supported by measures, while monitoring is assisted by indicators.

The new **National Environmental Program 2014-2020** (NEP-4) has been developed parallel with the NBS. NEP-4 has a specific strategic objective on biodiversity conservation together with the protection of all natural and landscape assets. The objectives and actions contained in NEP-4 are harmonized with the NBS and the two strategic documents support each other.

NEP-4 deals with several issues that are only marginally or not specifically addressed by the NBS, such as sustainable consumption, waste management, climate change, energy efficiency, improvement of air quality etc. Objectives and actions set by NEP-4 in this regard support the implementation of the NBS.

NEP-4 contains the fourth National Nature Conservation Master Plan 2014-2020, which determines concrete and practical actions related to nature conservation about the following:

- Conservation status of Hungary: protection of areas and assets important for nature conservation
- Management, maintenance and guarding of protected areas
- Collection of conservation related data: Conservation Information System, the National

Biodiversity Monitoring System and other monitoring methods

- Conservation planning activities, management plans for protected areas
- Public relations, awareness-raising, exhibitions, R&D, ecotourism, websites
- International cooperation related to nature conservation
- Financing
- Legislative and institutional background

The Act XXVI of 2003 on the **National Spatial Plan** lays down the national regulations for land use and the spatial framework of spatial planning in order to harmonise land use in Hungary's settlements and regions of different features and to develop a uniform infrastructure network. It was revised in 2013. The spatial plan ensures the protection of natural, landscape and cultural heritage values through rules of zones primarily. The zone of the national ecological network (core area, ecological and green corridor and buffer area) including natural and semi-natural habitats of national importance and the unified and composite system of ecological corridors, which provide links between them. In the zone of core areas and ecological corridors the rules restrict the designation of areas for development, the placement of transport infrastructure and new surface mines, as well as the prescription the utility lines fit into the landscape. These regulations indirectly contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

The **European Union Strategy for the Danube Region** – ratified by Hungary in 2011 – is a macro-regional development strategy of the Danube countries. It concerns the sustainable development of the region and the protection of its natural and cultural assets.

Its biodiversity goals include the contribution to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity, the effective management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas, the protection and restoration of the most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species, the development of a green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats along the river and the reduction of the spread of invasive alien species, among others.

The **Second National Climate Change Strategy for 2014-2025** with an outlook to 2050 contains a National Decarbonisation Roadmap and a National Adaptation Strategy. It recognizes the threats that climate change poses on biodiversity and affirms that adaptation and mitigation measures can have either positive and negative ecological impacts or side-effects. Therefore, knowing and influencing direct anthropogenic effects are the most important, most efficient and most predictable intervention points from the aspect of climate sensitivity of ecological systems. It emphasises the fact that the conservation of biodiversity serves as a basis for adaptation to climate change.

With regard to local adaptation (by ensuring the protection of biodiversity and preserving the natural status of ecosystems), it proposes a number of actions, as follows: defining priority lists of species and habitats particularly vulnerable to impacts of climate change; preserving and restoring biodiversity; restoring and improving water retention capacities of wetlands; implementing ecological restoration programmes; maintaining diversity and mosaic-like patterns of habitats; introducing management methods to minimize the expansion of invasive alien species; enhance the monitoring of processes.

The **National Rural Development Strategy 2012-2020** (NRDS) aims to reverse unfavourable processes predominant in the countryside. Based on the vision that has sustainable, viable agricultural and food production and values of rural life at its core, the NRDS defines the objectives and principles of Hungary's rural development policy as well as provides a framework for the

implementation of the relevant programmes and measures.

The NRDS deals with increasing rural employment, balanced and varied agriculture and forestry that utilises resources in a sustainable manner, re-establishment of a diverse production structure, local food production and markets, rural-urban relations, the exploitation of export opportunities of high value-added food products, the strengthening of cooperative alliances, local energy production, rural local communities, improvement of the standard of living, a reversal in the rural population decline, and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

One of the five strategic goals pursued by the strategy is dedicated to preserving natural values and resources, including biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Within the strategic area of natural resources and environment 11 national programmes have been formulated, including a special programme targeting the protection and restoration of natural values, areas and ecosystem services.

The NRDS specifically deals with issues directly relevant to biodiversity conservation:

- the protection of drinking water bases, the preservation of water stocks, soils, natural wildlife and landscapes, increased environmental safety;
- the protection of domestic and local animal breeds and plant varieties;
- the preservation of Hungary's GMO-free status;
- development of a legislative, institutional and financial background that facilitate the protection of areas and assets important for nature conservation;
- maintenance of financial schemes that support agricultural biodiversity and the revision of harmful subsidies;
- enhancement of the management role of national park directorates;
- improving outreach to society (civil rangers, NGOs, educational institutions);
- keeping forests in state ownership and implementation of management practices taking the ecosystem approach more into account;
- control of invasive alien species;
- facilitating the adaptation to the potential effects of climate change;
- supporting local varieties;
- protection and maintenance of protected areas of local interest, historical gardens, unique landscape features.

The instruments and measures required for the implementation of the NRDS and its specific programmes are described in the so-called Darányi Ignác Plan. One of its main objectives is to create a regulatory environment that facilitates the protection of basic values that are of key importance with regard to the NRDS, such as the right to health, a healthy environment and foods, biodiversity conservation, the preservation of natural resources in rural areas, including soil, water bases, landscapes that form part of the national cultural heritage, farming and settlement values, sustainability and the rights of future generations.

The **National Action Plan for the Development of Ecological Farming 2014-2020** adopted in January 2014 aims to integrate environmental risk mitigating measures into ecological farming, to support biodiversity conservation measures and to protect beneficial living organisms (e.g. non-cultivated edges and bands, sowing edge plants for providing nutrients to pollinating insects).

It also determines the areas where different aspects of ecological farming can be integrated with other agricultural programs, like gene conservation, backyard gardening, habitat management, etc.

The **National Forest Programme 2006-2015** recognizes the role of forests in the conservation of biodiversity and urges the introduction of sustainable forest management practices that preserve the diversity and natural state of the forests. This strategy also emphasises the importance of improving the cross-sectoral cooperation in forestry, being indispensable in the conservation of biodiversity. The programme has been developed in harmony with the EU Forest Action Plan and the declaration of the fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. The programme is implemented based on annual implementation plans, focusing on 10 development areas, including nature conservation as a distinct implementation area.

The development area addressing the interrelation between nature conservation and forestry has been identified based on the fact that the protection and conservation of natural values – species, habitats and areas – cannot be restricted to protected forests. On the contrary, it requires the nature-friendly management of all forest ecosystems. In line with this, the overall goal of the plan is to constantly improve the management of forest by applying nature-friendly management approaches on a growing area of forest.

Concrete measures implemented within the programme include the followings:

- the natural regeneration of forests on extended areas;
- increasing the extent of natural forests regenerated from seed;
- preserve groups of trees and ecological green corridors to ensure the protection of habitats;
- creating no-harvest zones to preserve the habitats of protected species;
- respecting spatial and time limitations to ensure the protection of plants and animal species;
- applying special cultivation methods and working patterns,
- repression of invasive alien species;
- replacing forest stands of non-indigenous species with native species;
- developing diverse forest structure composed of several layers.

The **„Kincsem" National Equestrian Program 2014-2020** specifically addresses the gene conservation of native horse varieties that are maintained mostly in public national studs.

The **National Plant Protection Action Plan** adopted in 2012, intends to mitigate the risks imposed to human health and the environment originating from the use of plant protection products and from pest management programs, especially at areas with extreme environmental vulnerability. The sensible use of herbicides and pesticides has an important direct effect on biodiversity. The plan also encourages afforestation, the introduction of integrated crop production techniques for the protection of biological diversity, as well as to study all possibilities for reducing the use of plant protection products (spread of natural enemies, pollination, etc.). Objective 6.1.2. (Development of national plant protection programs for research and innovation) includes targeted support for domestic institutes responsible for maintaining and safeguarding the old plant varieties.

The **Food-chain Safety Strategy 2013-2020** that aims to ensure the safety and quality of our food while adopting environmentally-friendly food production-methods, has several interfaces with other national strategies and focuses on transparent and mutual information exchange between affected parties. However it does not deal with biodiversity conservation, and its importance regarding food-chain safety in particular.

The **National Water Strategy** adopted in 2013 determines short-term (-2014), mid-term (-2021) and

long term (-2027) objectives. It aims to conserve and improve the quality of our waters both on the surface and underground, mitigate the effects of climate change, develop sound irrigation systems, and promote local grey water use. Biodiversity conservation as a „side-effect" of harmonized and sustainable land use and water management appears throughout the Strategy.

The **National Transport Strategy 2013-2030** determines the objectives in transport system developments until 2030 with an outlook until 2050. Biodiversity does not appear as a particular objective in the National Transport Strategy, nevertheless biodiversity loss is a proposed indicator for measuring the impacts of transportation.

The main goal of the **National Energy Strategy 2030** is to terminate the country's energy dependency. The strategy defines five tools to achieve this goal, and two of them concern biodiversity indirectly: energy saving and the support of renewable energy production. On the other hand, the fifth corner point of the strategy is the creation of a bipolar agriculture that can flexibly shift between food and energy plants as needed by gradually involving fallow land into agriculture. Fallow lands play an important role in biodiversity conservation and their introduction into agriculture is not advisable. The strategy encompasses some rules about the conditions when fallow lands should be used for energy plant production to reduce biodiversity loss.

Objective 2 – Measures for conservation, maintenance, restoration and sustainable use of natural and semi-natural habitats:

Pursuant to Articles 8, 10, 16 and 18 of the Protocol

Please provide your inputs

Hungary has several neighbouring countries of which the longest common border is with the Slovak Republic. the length of the common border exceeds the 600 km The common historical and cultural background as well as the natural assets enhance the need of cooperation. Nature doesn't stop at an administrative border. The landscape and geographical units can only be managed with cross border cooperation and in common understanding. We have important border rivers (Danube, Ipoly etc)unique landscapes and geological features (e.g. Aggtelek-Slovak karst) These needs were recognised already in the past and we have cross border initiatives such Cross border Ramsar Sites (Felső Tisza, Ipoly-mente) cross border world heritage site (Aggtelek-Slovak karst) cross border geopark (Nograd Novohrad Geopark) The cooperation is alive both on ministerial and regional level. The ministries has a cooperation agree meet once a year to discuss the main issues, but the regional level cooperation is more everyday coopreration.

Aggtelek Biosphere Reserve

The territory of the Aggtelek biosphere reserve has been renewed in 2013, following the new recommendations of the UNESCO MAB Programme. A 3 level zone system has been desifnated to ensure the implementation of UNESCO recommendations, to promote sustainable development. Beside this, the management plan of the biosphere reserve has been completed also. The total area of the Aggtelek biosphere reserve is currently 45310

hectares. We reported on the results to the UNESCO, which was accepted in 2016.

Objective 3 – Measures for conservation and sustainable use of species of flora and fauna, conservation of endangered species including endemic species and large carnivores of the Carpathians:

Pursuant to Articles 11, 12, 16 and 18 of the Protocol

Large carnivores:

The grey wolf and the Eurasian lynx live on a permanent basis in the northern border areas of Hungary, while only occasional wandering individuals appear of the brown bear. These large carnivores in Hungary only represent the perimeter populations of their core populations. The size and change of their populations mostly depend on their conservation status in cross-border areas, especially in Slovakia. Breeding wolf families can be found in the Northan-hill, the Aggteleki karst, the Zempléni-mountain and the Bükk. During the past five years their populations have strengthened, new families have appeared in the Bükk and the Zempléni-mountain from where we had had data of only wandering individuals. Breeding lynx populations live in the Bükk, the Aggteleki karst and the Zempléni-mountain. Bear occurrence have also been reported in these areas but these specimens usually stay only for a short time in Hungary. According to comparative studies, large carnivores in Hungary have close connection with Slovakian populations and in case of the wolf also with Polish populations. The apparent strengthening of Hungarian large carnivore populations is caused mainly by the movement of Slovakian populations to the South.

Numerous cross-border cooperation (Interreg, KEHOP) and good professional relationship have been developed during the previous years with the Slovakian party regarding the conservation of the common large carnivore populations. The aims of all of these are the mapping of the ecological corridors used by the large carnivore species and their possible development, along with monitoring kinship relations. Professional experience exchange also means the discussion of the management and prevention of damages done by wolves. Regarding damages by wolves in Hungary, the national park directorates assist farmers preventively through providing information, professional help and lending or granting electric fences. With the help of shepherd breeder organizations we provide farmers with guard dogs. This successful programme has been given more support for two years and the Hungarian government has been financing it by a central budget. We plan to extend these actions in the near future and to strengthen and broaden a positive communication towards the farmers and the society.

Red list of the higher taxa of vertebrates and the Vascular Flora

Higher taxa of vertebrates

Since the previous OECD report the Red List of the higher taxa of vertebrates of Hungary was not officially updated, according to IUCN 2001 standardized criteria. In spite of this, the IUCN classification of these species was evaluated by the help of specialists of the different taxa. In this case, we were strictly trying to follow the guidance of the IUCN 2001 standard so these new results were not comparable to the summary in the last OECD report. Data presented below in the table are interpreted from the ministerial data base, which will be awaiting for broader consultation. Preliminary results show that amphibians are the less threatened taxa (11.1%) among the higher taxa of vertebrates and there are the highest number of threatened species (with the highest number (229) of species) was found in the case of birds (33.7%). The smallest group (15 species) were the reptiles that were found to be more threatened (26.7%) than the mammals (21%) which have a relatively high number of species (76).

Status of higher vertebrate taxa, 2017

	Species known[a]	Threatened	
		Number	(%)
Vertebrates			
Mammals	76	16	21
Birds	229	77	33.7
Reptiles	15	4	26.7
Amphibians	18	2	11.1

a) Refers to the number of breeding species; total number of birds recorded is 425 (including passage migrants, winter visitors and vagrants which were not evaluated here;

Vascular Plants

Since the previous OECD report the Red List of the Vascular Flora of Hungary was updated, according to IUCN 2001 standardised criteria. The new compilation of the Red List takes only indigenous plants or archeophytes species into consideration. Neophytes were normally excluded from the list, except for some long-ago established and definitely declining species. The number of indigenous and established species of the flora of Hungary is 2183. The newly compiled Red List consists of 943 species (43,2% of the vascular flora). Regarding the modified IUCN 2001 categories, 43 (2,0%) of them are extinct, 4 (0,2%) are extinct in the wild, 115 (5,3%) are critically endangered, 162 (7,4%) are endangered, 105 (4,8%) vulnerable, 336 (15,4%) near threatened, 178 (8,2%) data deficient.

IUCN (2001)	Hungary	%
Extinct (EX)	**43**	2,0
Extinct in wild (EW)	**4**	0,2
Critically endangered (CR)	**115**	5,3
Endangered (EN)	**162**	7,4
Vulnerabre (VU)	**105**	4,8
Near threatened (NT)	**336**	15,4
Data deficient (DD)	**178**	8,2
Total number of species on the Red List	***943***	
Total number of indigenous and established species of the flora	***2148***	
Number of threatened species (CR+EN+VU)	*382*	*17,5*
Red List Index	***0,548***	

The number of threatened species (CR: critically endangered; EN: endangered; VU: vulnerable) is 382 (17.5% of the total number of indigenous and established species of the flora). The Red List Index of Hungarian flora was also calculated on these data: 0,548.

Objective 4 – Measures for continuity and connectivity of natural and semi-natural habitats; ecological network in the Carpathians; enhancing conservation and sustainable management inside and outside the Protected Areas:

Pursuant to Articles 9, 14, 15 and 16 of the Protocol

National Ecological Network

According to the existing territorial categories, the backbone of the Hungarian green infrastructure is the national ecological network, covering more than 36% (more than 33 000 ha) of the territory of the country. The zones of National Ecological Network (core area, ecological and green corridor and buffer area) were harmonized with the Pan-European ecological network-related category system in 2009. The Network includes different type of areas of nature conservation importance, like nature protected areas, Natura 2000 areas, high nature value areas, natural and semi-natural habitats of national importance and the unified and coherent system of ecological corridors which provide links between them. In the zone of core areas and ecological corridors the rules restrict the designation of these areas for development, the placement of transport infrastructure and new open pit mines, and prescribes the use of landscape conform utility lines.

The zone of the National Ecological Network is entrenched in the municipal planning of settlements. It was incorporated into the spatial planning regulation. Act No. XXVI. of 2003 on National Spatial Plan (which is the main regulation for land use planning in Hungary) defines the zones of the network (core area, ecological corridor, buffer zone).

The National Ecological Network was updated in 2014, and the latest amendment (in 2014.) of the Act on National Spatial Planning (No. XXVI. of 2003) provides detailed regulation for each elements of the state ecological network, which must be taken into account during the municipal,

county and regional level planning process.

The most important legislation of the national land-use planning Acts (Act XXVI of 2003 on the National Spatial Planning, Act No. CXXII of 2000 on the Spatial Plan Balaton Resort District Area, Act No. LXIV of 2005 on the Spatial Plan of Budapest Agglomeration Area) is under review in 2017. Review is focusing on the functional revision of the ecological network's zonation (core area, buffer zone, ecological corridor), and on maintaining the connectivity between the zones.

Objective 5 – Measures for prevention of introduction of invasive alien species and/or genetically modified organisms threatening ecosystems, habitats or species, their control or eradication:

Pursuant to Article 13 of the Protocol

Invasive Alien Species

The prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species is a trans-national and multi-sectorial task that assumes broad cooperation. The fulfilment of the provisions of this imposes an increasing task on the government.

Until recently, Hungarian legislation did not contain a dedicated law against invasive alien species providing a black list including the most dangerous species (General regulations can be found in Act. No. LIII. of 1996 on Nature Conservation). In order to fulfil the challanges of the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species it was necessary to modify its legislation concerning measures against invasive alien species. Sectorial regulation should incorporate the topic of invasive alien species and regulate their maintenance.

A large proportion of invasive alien species are introduced unintentionally into the country. It is therefore crucial to manage the pathways of unintentional introduction. Action in this area should be gradual, given the relatively limited experience in this field.

To develop an adequate knowledge base to address the problems raised by invasive alien species, it is important that Hungary undertakes research, monitoring and surveillance of such species. As surveillance systems offer the most appropriate means for early detection of new invasive alien species and for the determination of the distribution of already established species, those systems should include both targeted and general surveys and benefit from the involvement of different sectors and stakeholders, including regional and local communities. Surveillance systems should imply paying continuous attention to any new invasive alien species anywhere in the country.

Listings and rules of invasive alien species of Hungarian concern should be coordinated, declared in regulation and enforced to keep the species under control that may cause damage in Hungary but are not listed as invasive species of EU concern.

Public awareness of the importance of invasive alien species as one of the most relevant reasons of biodiversity loss is essential for effective reaction to this huge challenge.

To absolve the extended functions we should increase the human resources of the Hungarian authority system and also the management coordination of the invasive alien

species.

Rules of invasive alien species

According to the EU Regulation invasive alien species of Union concern shall not be intentionally:

(a) brought into the territory of the Union, including transit under customs supervision;

(b) kept, including in contained holding;

(c) bred, including in contained holding;

(d) transported to, from or within the Union, except for the transportation of species to facilities in the context of eradication;

(e) placed on the market;

(f) used or exchanged;

(g) permitted to reproduce, grown or cultivated, including in contained holding; or

(h) released into the environment.

Taking all necessary steps to prevent the unintentional introduction or spread, including, where applicable, by gross negligence, of invasive alien species of Union concern.

List of invasive alien species of national concern just under construction. Members of the list of national concern will be separately assigned to the restriction points (a)-(h) listed above.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

Since 2006 Hungary has been following a GMO-free strategy, which is supported by all parliamentary parties. This is underlined by the new Fundamental Law of Hungary, which includes the pursuit of a GMO-free agriculture. No cultivation of any kind of genetically modified plant variety/hybrid is authorised in Hungary according to the legislation in force. Hungary's GMO-free policy is based on scientific results and the precautionary principle.

Objective 6 – Measures to support cooperation under the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas:

Pursuant to Articles 7 and 14 of the Protocol

The Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate is actively involved in the various work packages of BioREGIO Carpathians Programme, especially in the construction of Red Lists by providing data for Hungary (WP3), and in the elaboration of Common Integrated Management Measures (WP4) by working-out and testing a novel method of forest naturalness survey. The Directorate plays an important role in the development of common measures being responsible for coordinating Working Package 6, which focuses on the three cross-border pilot projects.

Szent István University (SZIU) is mainly involved in these project activities where data collection, harmonization and classification is requested. This includes mainly the WP3 – Database development and WP5 – Continuity and Connectivity, but also WP4 – Integrated Management of Carpathian natural assets and protected areas. It will provide basic data from a Hungarian perspective and contribute to the development of a methodology of data collection and harmonization as well as of categorization and classification of threatened species and habitats in the Carpathians. SZIU will take part in the stakeholder meetings to collect the relevant information to the Common Integrated Management

Measures and in the Pan-Carpathian Day events together with the Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate (WP7).

The project took place between 2011 and 2014, unfortunately, there was no continuation.

The last CNPA Steering Committee meeting was 20 January 2014.

The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat and the Association of Natural Protected Areas Administrations (ANPAA) signed on 20 June 2016, which aims at assisting the Secretariat with servicing the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Unit.

The Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the CNPA, ALPARC and DANUBEPARKS on 12 October 2016; and encourages further cooperation on ecological connectivity, exchanges on protected areas matters, education and other specific topics common to the three networks

Objective 7 – Development and implementation of management plans or conservation measures:

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Protocol

Please provide your inputs

Conservation status of species, habitats and ecosystems in protected areas:

According to the data of the national report focusing on the assessment of conservation status, progress since 2008 may be summarised as follows. (Conclusions are based on differences between results of national reports of 2007 and 2013)

- In case of 6.5% of habitat types of community interest (3 habitat types out of the total of 46) the conservation status declined, while in case of the rest the assessment of conservation improved due to changes in the methodology of assessment and improvements in data availability;
- The conservation status improved in case of almost 5% of species of community interest (10 species out of the total of 208) and declined in case of 4% (8 species). In all other cases changes in conservation status occur due to changes in the methodology of assessment, changes in the taxonomy of certain taxa, and the application of more accurate data.
- In recent years the pace of **protecting forest areas** has slowed down in Hungary. In the future the main focus of nature conservation will rather be to develop and enforce management rules in those areas already protected. 53% of the national level protected areas consist of forests. This means, 22% of the country's forests are located in a protected area, presently. Nearly one-fifth of protected areas are strictly protected.
- Between 2008 and 2015 the total area of the protected forest growth from 435 323 hectares to 457 662 hectares (including 73 234 hectares stricktly protected in 2015).

Since 2009 cca. 1100 from the total cca. 1500 protected kurgans (burial mounds) which are under country-level protection by the force of Act on Nature Conservation (1996) have been integrated into the Cross Compliance system of Common Agricultural Policy in Hungary as valuable landscape elements. This measure highly contributes to the preservation of these objects as biological value, and as landscape and cultural heritage.

Objective 8 – Consultation, harmonization and coordination of measures in border areas:

Pursuant to Articles 7, 16, and 20 of the Protocol

Objective 9 – Measures in support of the development of compatible monitoring systems and a joint information system:

Pursuant to Articles 18, and 19 of the Protocol

All Countries have a national monitoring system for tracking the changes of biodiversity, protected habitats, species and sites. Within the designation work if the Natura 2000 network the countries of Pannonian Biogeographical region made efforts to harmonise the data and the sites along the common borders in 2005. The differences of approaches and technical financial possibilities were clear already in that time. It is very complicated to have a joint information system for monitoring on national level. However on regional scale it is feasible to elaborate a common data collection and evaluation method.However in case data is needed to a specific task data exchange works.

Examples in regional level (e.g. HUSK interreg projects) exist (E.g: Creation of bilingual databases of protected animals and plants, Examination of the habitat of large predators (wolf, lynx), and preparation of a joint registry after the physiological examination, Handling the UNESCO caves of Aggtelek carst and the Slovak carst etc.)

Objective 10 – Measures of coordination of scientific research:

Pursuant to Articles 19 and 20 of the Protocol

Hungary has several neighbouring countries of which the longest common border is with the Slovak Republic. On regional level the cooperation is very good. The Hungarian National Park Directorates along the Hungarian –Slovakian border have cross border cooperation agreements and common projects. Main topics are under many: Aggktelek-Slovak Karst and cave system, large carnivores, inventories of cross border water bodies (biodiversity, and water quality research projects.

Since 1974, the census and conservation of the globally endangered imperial eagle have been an ongoing project of BirdLife Hungary with constant support from national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations. Despite the success of conservation actions raptor poisoning is still a serious threat both nationally and internationally. The new EU funded LIFE project called „**Conservation of the Eastern Imperial Eagle by decreasing human-caused mortality in the Pannonian Region**” gives

us the opportunity to continue our work in the next 5 year period during which important conservation actions will be carried out not only in Hungary, but in Slovakia, Czechia, Austria and Serbia as well.

Securing prey sources for endangered ***Falco cherrug*** and ***Aquila heliaca*** population in the Carpathian basin (**RAPTORSPREYLIFE**, LIFE13 NAT/HU/000183)

2014. 07. 01 - 2018. 12. 31.

Project objectives

1. This project aims to reinforce the on-going efforts to strengthen the European core populations of Aquila heliaca and Falco cherrug, globally threatened species on Annex I of the Birds Directive also identified as priority species for LIFE-Nature projects. Thanks to EU financial support, these populations have stabilised and increasing while the European and global populations are still decreasing. However unfortunately in contrary to the birds of prey population their main food sources, the small mammals (Spermophilus citellus, Cricetus cricetus, and Lepus europeus), are continuously decreasing. The ongoing LIFE09NAT/HU/000384 project's findings justify the importance of these species in the diet of these raptors. Even today the small mammals are the majority of the prey especially the S. citellus what is still more than 1/4th of food as an average. The satellite tagged birds of the LIFE projects also justified that these birds are frequently feeding outside of the SPAs especially where small mammals are more abundant. (See attached maps.) Therefore the project aims to stop the decline of the existing small mammals' population where they are exists and works as a demonstration project in some actions to prepare the background scientifically for the possible future increase of those populations based on the best practices applied.

2. The project aims to increase public awareness towards the birds of preys and especially their small mammals prey too.

3. The project also aims to demonstrate how to adjust different nature conservation priorities when we carefully consider the life style and habitat demand of Sicista subtilis trizona and Nannospalax (superspecies leucodon) strictly protected species in Hungary and adjusting our work for the benefit of all species.

Actions and means involved:

This project will focus on the evaluation of the genetic status and the stress status of S. citellus colonies and especially the fragmented populations. Based on these data captive breeding program and gene bank from captive and natural colonies will be established. The genetic status of target populations will be improved by planned introductions of animals of known allelic composition. Veterinarian surveillance of potential food sources will be also established.

Suitable land will be purchased, reconstructed to improve the carrying capacity for prey species and S. citellus repatriated there. Small patches of lands will be leased also to create stepping stones between Natura 2000 sites to provide connection and habitat for preys like Cricetus cricetus, and Lepus europeus. Airport's grassland management guideline and recommendation how to improve the water management system on S. citellus habitat will be prepared. Land Stewardship Advisory Service will be set up to assist farmers and hunters on land use and predator management issues. Hunters will be encouraged to catch predators by lent traps. The movements of S. citellus will be mapped by satellite transmitter. An

intensive communication program will start with a baseline survey of the public awareness and targeting farmers, hunters and local citizens and national level, erection of attention signs, will increase awareness in the target groups and create support for conservation measures to the target species. To evaluate changes in population trends and to assess the success of conservation actions of the project a comprehensive monitoring program including satellite tracking and photo trapping will inform about the changes in population parameters of the target species.

Expected results

As a result of the project the main reasons of the decrease of small mammals will be better understand and the decrease of these main food sources of A. heliaca and F. cherrug will be stopped. The genetic and health survey would start. Gene banks will be established. The fragmented small populations will be improved. Potential habitats will be reconstructed and about 2000 S. citellus will be reintroduced from strong viable populations. The fragmented populations will be connected by stepping stones. The project will implement the recently endorsed European S. ciltellus Species Action Plan. The public awareness would be increased towards these species.

Objective 13 – Other measures of international cooperation:

Pursuant to Article 7 of the Protocol

As mentioned in point 12. the Hungarian National Park Directorates along the Hungarian – Slovakian border have cross border cooperation agreements and common projects. On institutional level the national parks have cooperation agreement with the Slovak Nature Conservancy (SOP SR).

Within the frame of HUSK interreg projects there are several project for enhancing cooperation on local level. The cross border cooperation also can be found in the field of education and awareness rising (Establishment of a complex informational system for visitors in the border area) and local/municipal level (E.g.: Unfolding the natural values of the Börzsöny, Cserhát and Ipoly-mente – strengthening environmental consciousness in the area of Szente, Diósjenő and Vinica - The aim of the project was not only to enhance tourism in the area but also to involve the local population.

Objective 15 – Measures on education, information and public awareness:

Pursuant to Article 24 of the Protocol

Educational institutions, national park directorates, public collections, botanic gardens and zoos, and nature preservation NGOs have a major role in the performance of that task.
National parks registered in total 1.4 million visitors in 2012, which was 10% higher than in the previous year. On the protected natural and Natura 2000 sites, the nature conservation demonstration sites are the primary scenes of ecotourism and

environmental education organised by the national park directorates. Due to the establishment and operation of educational and visitor centres and various demonstration sites, any support to ecotourism also means support to rural job creation. The directorates maintain 31 reception, visitor and educational centres, in addition to which 169 nature trails, 7 country houses arboretums and botanic gardens, 53 other demonstration sites and 42 caves opened to tourism also assist the interpretation of natural values. The natural values are presented and the environmental attitude of visitors is shaped within the framework of previously announced programmes, during guided tours and in the framework of forest school programmes and sessions. Since 2007 the Week of the Hungarian National Parks has also been organised across the country, providing an opportunity for attitude building.

Collection gardens, scientific public collections have an important role in the education and attitude building relating to biodiversity as with their organised programmes they pursue active and effective educational and training work and preserve values.

Forest school and forest kindergarten programmes are also important fields in nature and environmental education conducted at educational institutions. In 2012 forestry companies operated 29 and national park directorates operated 15 forest schools (Figure 3), but numerous non-governmental organisations and enterprises also ran several forest schools and provide services according to the local specificities.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
forest schools operated by forestry companies (29)	no data are available	38,376	37,239	39,783
school maintained by national park directorates (15)	10,594	11,792	11,274	10,498
Total (people)	10,594	48,158	46,502	48,269

Figure 1.: Visitors in forest schools operated by forestry companies and national park directorates in a yearly breakdown (persons/year) (Source: OEE and Ministry of Agriculture)

The Ecoschool Network was introduced in Hungary in 2000. Equipped with a quality assurance and quality development system, recognised and controlled by the state, the ecoschools are making sure that environmental education is pursued in high quality in all educational areas and that it should develop consistently in their work. In 2012 in total 711 schools followed the ecoschool work plan having gained the Ecoschool or Permanent Ecoschool title (when the title has been obtained three times) over the last few years.

Applications may be submitted for the Green Kindergarten title since 2006 and in 2012 more than 560 kindergartens were proud holders of the title. Operation corresponding with criteria that also focus on the protection of biodiversity has an outstanding role in the local pedagogic programmes of such institutions.

The presence of the objectives and tools of biodiversity preservation in the national basic programme of kindergarten education in the National Curriculum, in the

framework of curriculum of public education and in the output requirements of the related programmes of higher education (with special regard to teacher programmes) is very important in terms of effective attitude building concerning natural values.

The Objective 4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy is “Improving public awareness and judgement of biodiversity, natural values of community significance, as well as protected natural areas and Natura 2000 sites via knowledge dissemination, attitude shaping, and interpretation”. The preparation of the mid-term review of the Strategy has been started and it will be available at the beginning of 2018. Recent data will be available than.

B.2 Have you taken complementary measures to those planned by the present Protocol? If yes, please, list them.

Existing measures are sufficient to implement the Protocol, therefore no complementary measures were needed.

B.3 What have been the most successful aspects of implementation of the Protocol?

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative has been the most successful.

B.4 What have been the greatest difficulties in this implementation? Please tick your answers in the following list.

Lack of political will and support	x
Limited public participation and stakeholder involvement	
Lack of integration of the objectives of the Protocol into other sectors	x
Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weakness	
Lack of transfer of technology and/or expertise	
Lack of adequate scientific research capacities to support all the objectives	
Lack of public education and awareness at all levels	x
Loss of biodiversity and its related goods and services not properly understood/documented	

Lack of financial, human, technical resources	
Lack of economic incentive measures	
Lack of synergies at national and international levels	
Lack of cooperation between involved stakeholders at local and national levels	
Lack of effective partnerships	
Lack of appropriate policies and laws	
Lack of precise definitions of potential misunderstanding notions	
Population/local communities pressure	
Lack of knowledge and practice ecosystem-based approaches to management	
Others (please specify)	
Possible comments and details	

B.5 Which institutions in your country are the driving forces to implement the objectives of the Protocol? Are they in contact with similar institutions in your neighbouring countries?

The 10 National Park Directorates and the Ministry of Agriculture.

B.6 Are the local authorities or other stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, …) encouraged to contribute to the implementation of the Protocol in their objectives and activities? Have they undertaken activities or actions aiming at implement better and further the Protocol? If yes, in which particular field (degraded habitats, endangered species, water and river basins management, industry and energy, spatial planning, tourism, protected areas, communication, research, cooperation, information, …)?

NGOs have a diverse role in nature conservation in Hungary: they extend activities of state nature conservation spatially and integrate them deeper into society. NGOs and private citizens carry out a number of monitoring, species-specific and habitat conservation activities. NGO are also active in policy-making and are involved among others into drafting of legislation through strategic partnerships. See e.g. description of the WildWatcher programme, memorandum of understanding with BirdLife Hungary and strategic partnerships with NGOs in Part 3. NGOs also have a watchdog role and may report on

deficiencies to the ombudsman or the European Commission, thereby initiating an investigation. Some NGOs are particularly active in conservation projects, and regularly co-operate with state nature conservation bodies (primarily with national park directorates) in EU-funded LIFE Nature projects.

The list of projects where NGOs take part in as a co-ordinating beneficiary or partner, from 2008:

Project number	Project title	Year of finance	Website
LIFE07 NAT/H/000324	Restoration of sodic lake sub-type of the Pannonic salt steppe and marsh habitat in the Hortobágy	2008	http://www.hortobagyte.hu/lifeplus_index.php
LIFE07 NAT/H/000322	Conservation of Hungarian meadow viper (*Vipera ursinii rakosiensis*) in the Carpathian-basin	2008	http://www.rakosivipera.hu/
LIFE07 NAT/H/000320	Conservation of alluvial habitats of community interest on the Szabadság Island and side channel in Béda-Karapancsa	2008	http://www.szabadsagsziget.hu/
LIFE09 NAT/HU/000384	Conservation of Falco cherrug in Northeast Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia	2010	http://www.sakerlife.mme.hu/intro.html
LIFE10 NAT/HU/000018	Restoration and conservation of the Pannonic salt steppes of Pásztó grassland with sustainable management	2011	http://www.pasztolife.hu/index.php/hu/

LIFE10 NAT/HU/000019	Conservation of imperial eagles by managing human-eagle conflicts in Hungary	2011	http://www.imperialeagle.hu/
LIFE10 NAT/HU/000020	Conservation of priority natural values in 'Turjánvidék' Natura 2000 site southern unit	2011	http://turjanvidek.hu/
LIFE11 NAT/HU/000926	Conservation of Falco vespertinus in the Carpathian basin	2012	http://falcoproject.eu
LIFE11 NAT/HU/000924	Large scale grazing management of steppe lakes in the Hortobágy	2012	http://www.legelotavak.hu/hu
LIFE12 NAT/HU/001188	Restoration of Pannonic sodic wetlands in the Kiskunság	2013	http://www.sodicwetlands.com/
LIFE13 NAT/HU/000081	Conservation of the European Roller (Coracias garrulus) in the Carpathian Basin	2014	http://rollerproject.eu/
LIFE13 NAT/HU/000183	Securing prey sources for endangered Falco cherrug and Aquila heliaca population in the Carpathian basin	2014	http://sakerlife3.mme.hu/
LIFE13 NAT/HU/000388	Transboundary cooperation for revitalization of riverine habitat complex in Drava region within Natura 2000	2014	http://www.olddrava.com/

LIFE15 NAT/HU/000902	Conservation of the eastern imperial eagle by decreasing human-caused mortality in the Pannonian Region	2016	

The private sector is involved into nature conservation mainly through subsidy schemes, for example agri-environmental, forest-environmental programmes. In the long run, one of the main goals of these schemes is to raise awareness of farmers, foresters etc. to the natural heritage they manage and to inspire them to carry out their activities in general sustainably, regardless of the actual scheme that they are involved into.

B.7 Is there a special unit/committee responsible for the consultation and mediation between all the stakeholders at national level?

No, there isn't.

B.8 Do you have any other general comments or recommendations on the implementation of the Protocol?