



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

[Czech Republic – 03/07/2017]

Introduction & background

This National Report has been elaborated in accordance with the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians¹, its Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity² 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 at 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.

Since the Carpathian region of the Czech Republic covers only about 10% of its area, there is no specific legislation, policies or strategies that could address the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity specifically of the Carpathians. The only exception might be the administration offices of landscape protected areas situated in the region. However, even their activities are guided mainly by other policy instruments. Thus, it is impossible to distinguish what are the achievements of the Biodiversity Protocol in comparison to other instruments of nature and landscape protection that are being used in the Czech Republic. General information on nature and landscape protection is available on [this website](#). An overview of the present status and trends of biodiversity and its protection can be found in the [Fifth National Report](#) of the Czech Republic to the Convention on Biological Diversity (from 2014), to which it is a Party. Moreover, in 2016 the [National Biodiversity Strategy](#) of the Czech Republic 2016-2025 was adopted.

The achievements of the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol to the Carpathian Convention in the Czech Republic are therefore apparent mostly as results of projects and initiatives, carried out chiefly through international cooperation. We would like to emphasize that strengthening the cooperation on issues related to landscape conservation, ecological connectivity and green infrastructure at local, regional and international levels is one of the priorities of the Czech Presidency to the Carpathian Convention (2014–2017). In this regard, we see as one of the most important achievements the international [Conference on Large Carnivores' Protection in the Carpathians](#), which was held on October 18-21, 2016 in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czech Republic.

As regards international projects relevant for the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol, the most important are: BIOREGIO Carpathians – Integrated management of biological and landscape, Large carnivores monitoring in the Site of community importance Beskydy, LIFE project: Preservation of alluvial forest habitats in the “Morávka river basin“, LIFE project: Integrated Protection of Rare Butterfly Species of Non-forest Habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

As an example of good practice from the national level, we would like to point out the subsidy grant scheme Operational Programme Environment: biodiversity related projects that are planned to be implemented within the boundaries of the Carpathian Convention will gain some a priori point advantage in the project evaluation process.

In conclusion, since the achievements in the field of biological and landscape diversity in the Czech Republic cannot be attributed directly to the Biodiversity Protocol, the answers to the questions below take into account, unless otherwise stated, only those activities or projects in which the Czech Republic is involved that would not be initiated, had it not been for the Carpathian Convention and its Biodiversity Protocol. We believe that this differentiation is more useful for the examination and evaluation of the effectiveness of the provisions of this Protocol.

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

The Carpathians extend to only a small part of the Czech Republic in the area of Outer Western Carpathians and its units (e.g., Javorníky, Ždánický les, Chříby, Rožnovská brázda, Bílé Karpaty, Moravskoslezské Beskydy). It is a highly varied and naturally, culturally and historically valuable area, in which protected landscape areas (Beskydy, Bílé Karpaty and Pálava) and Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation such as Čertoryje, Chříby or Niva Morávky and Special Protection Areas, e.g. Hostýnské vrchy and Horní Vsacko) have been designated.

White Carpathians (Bílé Karpaty) is a region located in the western corner of the Carpathians and comprises a rolling mosaic of grasslands, orchards, fields and forests. It covers an area of 715 km² along the Czech-Slovak border. Bílé Karpaty PLA is unique compared to other large-scale conservation areas in the Czech Republic as they are the highest mountains of the south-western edge of the Carpathian mountain range. Designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1996, Bílé Karpaty is considered to be of high global and regional biodiversity value due to its unique geographical location at the crossroads of three floral provinces: Pannonian, Carpathian and Hercynian. Especially significant are the species-rich mountain grasslands with scattered trees, preserved in this region thanks to hundreds of years of traditional farming. Floristic research in PLA Bílé Karpaty has shown it holds 1,500 species of vascular plants, of which 30 were previously thought to be extinct or missing.

Beskid Mountains (Beskydy) PLA covers an area of 1,160 km² and is the largest Protected Landscape Area in the Czech Republic. The PLA was designated for its unique natural treasures, especially indigenous primeval forests with rare Carpathian fauna and flora, rich diversity of meadow coenosis, unique surface or underground pseudokarstic phenomena, but also for its exceptional aesthetic qualities and diversity of rare landscape type shaped by man in coexistence with nature. The importance of Beskydy PLA is underlined by 42 small-scale protected areas designated on its territory. Last but not least, Beskydy is one of the few remaining places in the Czech Republic where endangered large carnivores such as the wolf (*Canis lupus*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) still occur.

Pálava PLA is also a UNESCO biosphere reserve. It is dominated by the limestone Pálava Hills and contains a significant proportion of natural or little affected steppe ecosystems that include meadow steppe, forest steppe, and thermophilic oak forest. In the floodplain of the river Thaya, forests alternate with meadows and wetland habitat that also include halophytic vegetation. The remaining part is used agriculturally, with many sustainably farmed vineyards.

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

Article 4; article 5 paragraph 1; article 6: implemented through other policy instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

Article 5, paragraph 2; article 7:

- TRANSGREEN project;
- Conference on Large Carnivores' Protection in the Carpathians and its Declaration on the Management and Protection of Large Carnivores in the Carpathians calling for the development of an international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores;
- participation at the meetings of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity);
- participation at the meetings of the EU Working Group on Green Infrastructure and Restoration

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

Article 8, paragraph 1: not implemented (Red Lists have not yet been adopted); **paragraph 2 and 3:** being implemented through other policy instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

Article 10: implemented through several actions/projects summarised in the publication Ecological Restoration in the Czech Republic

(<http://www.ochranaprirody.cz/res/archive/132/017546.pdf?seek=1378128953>)

Article 16: implemented through other policy instruments (as explained in part A.1 above), namely Natura 2000. Cooperation with SK concerns for example the migration of large carnivores within the border area of both countries and the influence of transport structures

Article 18, paragraph 1: CZ-SK cooperation in joint spring monitoring of large carnivores in the Beskydy and Kysuce Protected Landscape Areas; **paragraph 2:** The Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System – CCIBIS exists

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

Article 11: implemented through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

Article 12, paragraph 1: not implemented; **paragraph 2:** namely in case of large carnivores: above mentioned international conference, projects TRANSGREEN and possibly future project ConnectGREEN

Article 16, paragraph 2: CZ-SK cooperation in joint spring monitoring of large carnivores and data exchange in the Beskydy and Kysuce Protected Landscape Areas; **paragraph 3:** implemented through:

- LIFE project: Integrated Protection of Rare Butterfly Species of Non-forest Habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia;
- ongoing LIFE project Conservation of selected NATURA2000 insect species in the transboundary area of Western Carpathians;
- project BIOREGIO Carpathians – Integrated management of biological and landscape.

Article 18: see above (Objective 2)

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

Article 9, paragraph 1 and 2: implemented through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above); **paragraph 3:** projects TRANSGREEN and possibly future project ConnectGREEN

Article 14: cooperation during the preparation of the last CNPA conference (Visegrad funds)

Article 15: implemented through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

Article 16: see above (Objective 2)

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

Article 13: not implemented – implementation foreseen through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

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

Pursuant to Articles 7 and 14 of the Protocol

Article 7 and 14: see above (Objective 1 and 4)

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

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Protocol

Article 17: implemented through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above)

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

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

Article 7 and 16: see above (Objective 1 and 2)

Article 20: projects TRANSGREEN and possibly future project ConnectGREEN, BIOREGIO Carpathians – Integrated management of biological and landscape, LIFE+ projects – see above (part A.1, Objective 3)

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

Article 18: see above (Objective 2)

Article 19:

- implemented mainly through other instruments (as explained in part A.1 above);
- participation at the meetings of the WG Biodiversity;
- participation in projects as mentioned above (part A.1, Objective 3, etc.);
- CZ-SK cooperation in joint spring monitoring of large carnivores and data exchange in the Beskydy and Kysuce Protected Landscape Areas. NCA CR and SNC SR have signed MoC dedicated to mutual cooperation on several biodiversity related topics and data exchange

Objective 10 – Measures of coordination of scientific research:

Pursuant to Articles 19 and 20 of the Protocol

Article 19 and 20: see above (Objective 8 and 9)

Objective 13 – Other measures of international cooperation:

Pursuant to Article 7 of the Protocol

Article 7: see above (Objective 1)

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

Pursuant to Article 24 of the Protocol

Article 24: yearly round tables are organised for the stakeholders from the Carpathian region, where information on current developments, projects and activities is exchanged; permanent exhibition on the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols as well as educational material were created

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

Please see the answer to question A.1.

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

Developing and strengthening of international cooperation on relevant biodiversity issues through WG Biodiversity and above mentioned projects, establishing networks of relevant partners, exchange of experience

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited public participation and stakeholder involvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of integration of the objectives of the Protocol into other sectors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weakness	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	
Loss of biodiversity and its related goods and services not properly understood/documented	
Lack of financial, human, technical resources	xx
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)	
<i>Possible comments and details</i>	

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?

Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic (including PLA Administration Offices), Forest Management Institute, NGOs (Vzdělávací a informační středisko Bílé Karpaty, o.p.s., Nadace Partnerství, Hnutí Duha Olomouc, Czech Union for Nature Conservation, Hájenka, z.s., Centrum Veronica Hostětín, Ursus and others)

Some of them are in contact mainly through WG Biodiversity. NCA CR signed Memorandum of Cooperation with State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic regarding biodiversity issues.

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...)?

During the Carpathian Convention Round Tables that are organised on a yearly basis in the Czech Republic by and for the stakeholders, projects and activities relevant for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols are presented and the participants are further encouraged to link their activities to the Convention/Protocols. Again, it is difficult to determine to what extent these activities would be implemented without the Protocol. In any case, within the network of stakeholders who participate in these round tables, the relevance for the Convention/Protocols is regularly emphasized.

On the other hand, we find it difficult to reach out to those stakeholders who do not participate in these meetings and are not familiar with the Convention/Protocols.

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

- National Focal Point for the Carpathian Convention / Unit of International Conventions, Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments, Ministry of the Environment
- Inter-ministerial Coordination Group for the Carpathian Convention
- Roundtables organised yearly for the Carpathian Convention stakeholders at local level

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

If we were to evaluate the implementation of the Protocol by listing the actions taken and objectives achieved as assigned by the Strategic Action Plan, the results would be

rather unsatisfactory. Although we believe that important and successful steps were taken in order to implement the Biodiversity Protocol (in the case of the Czech Republic mostly through international cooperation), they implement only a small part of the SAP. We however see this rather as a drawback of the SAP itself. It proves to be too ambitious and not quite strategic (actions and objectives should be planned for example as “SMART”: specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related).

Thus, for future implementation of the Protocol, we would propose to use the SAP only as a list of possible actions. On the national level, Parties should focus on those actions they believe to be the most relevant for their specific situation. On the international level, we would suggest that the implementation is planned in a more strategic manner, if possible including indicators that would also allow (qualitative) evaluation. In our opinion, Parties should jointly decide (through CCIC/COP) on several specific priorities they consider the most important and relevant for each upcoming implementation period while also taking into account current situation and developments at other international fora. Based on these priorities as well as on both financial and personnel capacities, topics and tasks for the WG for the next implementation period could be determined and at the end of each period the qualitative evaluation of results achieved could be carried out.