



## **Skype teleconference**

### **Forest cooperation activities between the Carpathian Convention, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil Systems (ETC/ULS)**

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

**10:00-13:00**

## **REPORT**

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil Systems (ETC/ULS) organized a skype teleconference on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015, to plan the progress towards a harmonization strategy of Carpathian-wide information on forest resources.

The teleconference has been attended by forest experts, researchers, Carpathian Convention partners and stakeholders (see the attached list of participants).

The teleconference served as a cardinal step for further collaboration between the ETC/ULS of the EEA and the Carpathian Convention that started in 2014 and allowed a first identification and assessment of gaps in the availability of datasets on Forests for the Carpathian region.

The aim of this collaboration is to support a sustainable forest management through the setup of a harmonized database on Carpathians Virgin Forests, as agreed in the Partnership Agreement between the Carpathian Convention and the European Environment Agency (EEA), welcomed by the Carpathian Countries at the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP4), on 23 – 26 September 2014, in Mikulov, Czech Republic.

### **Opening of the meeting**

Eleonora Musco, on behalf of UNEP Vienna-SCC, made a general presentation about the Carpathian Convention activities and objectives and, more specifically, about the content of the Partnership Agreement signed between the Carpathian Convention and the European Environment Agency.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Partnership agreement between the Carpathian Convention and the European Environment Agency:  
[http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2014\\_COP4\\_Mikulov/BACKGROUND%20DOCUMENTS/Partnership%20Agreement\\_SIGNED.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2014_COP4_Mikulov/BACKGROUND%20DOCUMENTS/Partnership%20Agreement_SIGNED.pdf)

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Silvia Giuliotti, on behalf of the EEA-Natural Systems and Vulnerability programme (EEA-NSV), complemented the Secretariat introduction presenting the activities of the EEA in the fields of the territorial and regional cooperation for environmental observation and information with different regional entities and organizations, especially on mountain related issues, aimed at achieving interoperability between the respective information systems.

Following these opening remarks, the participants made a round of introduction to present their own background and expertise.

### **Discussion**

Dania Abdul Malak, ETC/ULS, moderated the more technical part of the skype call.

She presented the work done so far since last year on reviewing the available data sets and indicators on Carpathian Forests, which was also presented during the COP4 meeting.

Some issues still need to be addressed to complete EEA-ETC/ULS analysis:

1. The inclusion of the definitions set by the Carpathian Convention Forest Protocol in order to differentiate virgin/primeval vs. natural forests in the region.
2. The inclusion of relevant previous initiatives and projects information on forests.
3. The use of information coming from national sources and inventories and the exploration of their potential comparability between each other.

The final aim of this work will be the set-up of the Carpathian Virgin Forest Database, taking into consideration the “Criteria and Indicators for the Selection of Virgin Forests in the Carpathians”, adopted by the Carpathian Countries during the COP4 meeting.

### **Point 1: Improve the Land Cover Land Use (LCLU) coverage focusing on forest**

Dania pointed out that to achieve these points there are still some obstacles because of unavailable and too broad data.

For example, high resolution layers are still lacking for Ukraine. Ivan Kruhlov, new chair of Science for the Carpathians (S4C) network, informed participants that concerning Ukraine, different National Institutions and Ministries have the control over the National forests data and information.

Lubos Halada, part of the executive board of S4C, informed about a German Project of the Humboldt-University of Berlin which made a meta-analysis of long-term patterns and drivers of change of the Carpathian Forests starting from 18th century.<sup>2</sup> The data collected are easily available and can be a useful source of information.

Concerning data collection, Christian Hoffmann, EURAC, underlined the importance of already clarifying the final goal of the creation of such a Carpathian Virgin Forest Database

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<sup>2</sup>Please find more information here: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264837714000131>

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also in order to clearly explain to data providers the reasons behind the collection of the data and information on the Carpathian.

Costel Bucur, WWF DCP, explained that the Inventory is important for the sustainable forest management in the Carpathian Area and to be able to influence the political level and decision makers.

Antonín Kusbach, Czech expert, and Zuzana Tollrianova, Czech Focal Point to the Carpathian Convention, explained that also in Czech Republic different Institutes and Ministries are in charge of forest data collection and the availability of these data and information has to be checked with the competent institutions.

Dania Abdul Malak suggested to create an excel sheet on the actual availability of data and information at national and local level and on data providers. Participants also agreed about the necessity to combine different initiatives and already existing channels of cooperation and, more specifically, to involve the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Carpathian Countries in this activity. EEA, ETC/ULS and the Secretariat has already discussed about this and will facilitate the contacts between the Carpathian Convention NFPs and EIONET NFPs .

## **Point 2: Set a sustainable forest management system**

Annemarie Bastrup-Birk, EEA-NSV, suggested to set the Carpathian Virgin Forest Database focusing on few key data and indicators and inform the Carpathian authorities which are in charge of needed data collection and management that this specific activity on the Carpathian Forests is part of a bigger activity on forests at EU level, also related to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, so that accessibility of data might be made easier once the authorities feel actively involved in a pioneer project. Emanuele Mancosu, ETC/ULS, explained that a sensitive aspect concerns the accuracy and soundness of the data and indicators and their comparability and compatibility. A specific mechanism for the validation process should be established, especially because of the different standard in the Carpathian Countries.

Annemarie Bastrup-Birk, mentioned a COST action<sup>3</sup> which offers harmonization guidelines as support to the integration of forest data developed with different standards by European countries.

Concerning the already existing projects, Ivan Kruhlov informed about a project in Ukraine leaded by FORZA<sup>4</sup>, the Agency for Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Region, which can be useful for collecting data in Ukraine. The Secretariat is already in contact with FORZA and will facilitate the communication with EEA-ETC/ULS.

Costel Bucur informed participants that the Pin Matra Project is now adapting the results identified until now according to the recent adopted “Criteria and Indicators for the Selection of Virgin Forests in the Carpathians”.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/costactionfp1001/home>

<sup>4</sup> Please find more information here: <http://www.forza.org.ua/en>

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To supply the Serbian coverage gap, Ivan Svetozarevic, the National Park Djerdap, was identified as potential contact point.

Richard Slaby, Forest Management Institute (CZ), informed about available indicators developed by the National Forest Inventory (CZ) based on aero-photos and field data (fragmentation towards connectivity, forest border).

### **Point 3: Overview on the available data, what, where, and their compliance with the Carpathian Convention Criteria**

Concerning the rest of the Carpathian Countries, Lubos Halada informed that in Slovakia the National Forest Centre is in charge of the Slovakian Forests Inventory but there are also other organizations that are collecting data and information.<sup>5</sup> This is valid also for Czech Republic.<sup>6</sup>

Christian Hoffmann suggested that it would be useful to keep in touch also with the European Forest Institution (EFI) for Central and Eastern Countries.<sup>7</sup>

Zuzana Tollrianova underlined the importance of involving in all steps the Carpathian Convention NFPs in order to make use of the already existing national channels of information and of the national scientific community and to follow the strategic documents on forests activities adopted in the context of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management, the Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Forest Protocol, the Criteria and Indicators for identification of virgin forests in the Carpathians)<sup>8</sup>

### **Next Steps:**

- Use the outputs of the already existing different projects and initiatives concerning the Carpathian Forests: Humboldt-University Project, Forza Project, Pin Matra Project, “Pralesy” web sites, the European Forest Institution (EFI) for Central and Eastern Countries initiative (In charge: EEA-ETC/ULS with the support SCC)
- Create a questionnaire to collect inputs from the Carpathian Convention NFPs on data availability and already existing initiatives (In charge: EEA-ETC/ULS with the support of the SCC)
- Circulate the questionnaire among the Carpathian Convention NFPs with all the relevant information on the cooperation activity on forests between SCC- EEA-ETC/ULS and their final objective (In charge: SCC with the support of the EEA-ETC/ULS)

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<sup>5</sup> Please find more information here: <http://en.pralesy.sk/>

<sup>6</sup> Please find more information here: <http://www.pralesy.cz/index.php?lang=en>

<sup>7</sup> Please find more information here: <http://www.eficeec.efi.int/portal/>

<sup>8</sup> Please find more information here: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/forests.html>

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European Environment Agency



**European Topic Centre**  
Spatial Information and Analysis

- Creation of an excel sheet on the actual availability of data and information at national and local level and on data providers (In charge: EEA-ETC/ULS)
  - Set-up of the Carpathian Virgin Forest Database (In charge: EEA-ETC/ULS with the support of the SCC)
  - Organization of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management to present the results of the cooperation activity on forests between SCC- EEA-ETC/ULS (In charge: SCC, together with the host Country Romania and with the support of the EEA-ETC/ULS)
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