**Terms of Reference**

**for the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management**

**Mandate**

The Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP2) to the Carpathian Convention (Bucharest, Romania, 17-19 June 2008) by its Decision COP2/4 paragraph 4 invited “the Parties to continue to take part in the preparatory work towards the development of a Protocol on Sustainable Forestry” and requested “the Interim Secretariat to further coordinate and service the Parties in the process”.

Decision COP2/13 paragraph 7 requests “the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) to review and decide on the continuation of the Working Groups, as appropriate”.

Decision COP3/4 paragraph 2 adopts “the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians”, while the Decision COP4/4 paragraph 1 “welcomes the entry into force of the Protocol”.

Decision COP3/4 paragraph 4 welcomes “the establishment of observership of the Carpathian Convention to Forest Europe and invites the Signatories of Forest Europe and the Carpathian Convention to extend their cooperation and support joint activities”.

Decision COP3/4 paragraph 5 welcomes “the initiative of the establishment of the Carpathian Inventory of Virgin Forests”, which was followed by appreciation of “the progress made towards the establishment of a Carpathian Inventory of Virgin Forests and contribution to its development proposed by the European Environment Agency (EEA)” and the request to the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management to “closely cooperate with the EEA on the issue” (COP4/4 paragraph 4).

Decision COP4/4 paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 adopts “the Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management” and “the Criteria and indicators for selection of virgin forests in the Carpathians”.

Decision COP4/14 paragraph 10 requests “CCIC to revise all Terms of References of Working Groups taking into account the contributions of the Working Groups to the Carpathian Convention Information System”.

The 7th CCIC meeting suggested that the Working Group considers climate change related issue in line with Article 14 of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management and Objective 11 of the related Strategic Action Plan.

**Tasks**

The Working Group shall aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in their cooperation for the implementation of Article 7 on sustainable agriculture and forestry and other related Articles of the Carpathian Convention. Pursuant to the Decision COP3/4 paragraph 2 , the main goal of the Working Group is to ensure appropriate implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management (Forest Protocol) and its Strategic Action Plan (Decision COP4/4 para 2). Tasks of the Working Group includes consideration and implementation of the Criteria and indicators for selection of virgin forests in the Carpathian (Decision COP4/4 para 3) and possible elaboration of a harmonized criteria and indicators for identifying natural forests. The Working Group shall focus on development of the Carpathian inventories of virgin and natural forests.

**Field of activities**

1. The Working Group will establish the Carpathian inventory of virgin forests based on a format for harmonized data of virgin forests;
2. The Working Group shall in particular provide guidance and actions with regard to the elaboration of a harmonized criteria and indicators for identifying natural forests and subsequent preparations of an inventory of natural forests;
3. The Working Group will define climate related activities in line with the with the Article 14 of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management and the Objective 11 of the related Strategic Action Plan;
4. The Working Group will analyse the available information base and identify gaps requiring further research;
5. The Working Group shall provide guidance and recommendations for the development of follow-up projects in the area of sustainable forest management with the view of implementing the provisions of the Forest Protocol and Strategic Action Plan;
6. The Working Group shall continue the cooperation under the Partnership Agreement with the European Environment Agency (EEA) on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention with the view of implementing the provisions of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan;
7. The Working Group shall continue cooperation and consultation with strategic partners/institutions such as EEA and WWF;
8. The Working Group shall explore ways of cooperation with other relevant institutions such as Forest Europe and the United Nations Forum on Forests;
9. The Working Group shall propose inputs to the next Conference of the Parties.

**List of results**

* The Carpathian Inventory of virgin forests established;
* Harmonized criteria and indicators for identifying natural forests elaborated;
* The Carpathian inventory of natural forests established
* Inputs for proposals for follow-up activities and projects with the view of implementing the provisions of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan;
* Exchange of experiences on strengthening role of forestry and forest industry in adaptation and mitigation climate change;
* Partnership with EEA extended;
* Cooperation with relevant institutions and partners strengthened;
* Inputs to the Conference of the Parties proposed.

**Composition and organization of work**

The Working Group is composed of the National Focal Points for the Carpathian Convention and/or persons nominated by them. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of the Working Group are open for observers.

At each meeting, the Working Group will elect its Chair; the Secretariat will act as rapporteur. In conducting its business, the Working Group will base itself on the applicable Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

The WG will report to the Conference of the Parties through the CCIC.

**Coordination and cooperation**

The Secretariat is requested to further coordinate and service the Parties in the process.

The WG will benefit from cooperation with EEA and WWF on matters related to sustainable forest management.

The WG will exchange information and foster communication with other relevant WGs of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. WG on Biodiversity, WG on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, WG on Spatial Development, WG on Adaptation to Climate Change) and will seek cooperation with other interested constituencies beyond the Carpathian Convention.