

PROGRESS REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

FOR

**THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CARPATHIANS (COP5)**

Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity
Article 4

1. Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) recommended possible finalization of the **Carpathian Red Lists**. After consultation with the CCIC, it was decided that Carpathian Red List of Forest Habitat (Doc.1) and the Red List of Vascular Plants of the Carpathians (Doc.2) should be recirculated for a possible finalization and adoption at the COP5. However, Poland has recently submitted comments (Doc.3) reflecting its concerns and suggesting further work on the Lists. Consequently, the 8th Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) meeting, held on 14 – 16 June 2017 in Modra, Czech Republic, asked the Parties to submit their official comments and/or positions on the Red List (including the Red Lists of Invasive and Endemic Species) to the CCIC for its consideration at its next meeting.
2. The format of **National Report on Implementation of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity** to the Carpathian Convention (Biodiversity Protocol) was discussed during the 8th meeting of the WG Biodiversity held on 20th October 2016 in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czech Republic, and at 7th meeting of the CCIC, held on 21 – 22 November 2016 in Vienna, Austria. Due to complexity and specificity of the current format, the CCIC approved new simplified version of the form of the National Report on Implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol (Doc.4). According to the Strategic Action Plan, the Parties shall submit the Report to the Secretariat three months prior the COP.
3. The **Conference on Large Carnivores' Protection in the Carpathians**, together with the 8th meeting of WG Biodiversity was organized, with a generous support of Czech Republic and its Nature Conservation Agency, on 18 – 21 October 2016 in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czech Republic. One of the outcome of the Conference is the **Declaration on the Management and Protection of Large Carnivores in the Carpathians** (Doc.5).

¹ All the documents mentioned in the Progress Report are available on the Carpathian Convention website under section of COP5/[Background documents](#)

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4. The WG Biodiversity recommended to prioritize work on activities related to **large carnivores**, including, among others, initiating elaboration of an international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores and other related activities.
5. The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat and the Association for Natural Protected Areas Administration (ANPAA) has been signed (Doc. 6). The overall goal of the MoC is to provide a durable basis for the cooperation of nature conservation bodies under the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols. According to the document, ANPAA shall assist the Secretariat by servicing a CNPA Unit.
6. The Secretariat was informed about the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between CNPA, ALPARC and DANUBEPARKS. The MoC and related Action Plan is available online (Doc. 7 and Doc. 8).
7. For the first time professionals from the field of biodiversity and the field of spatial development and planning met together in order to discuss possible synergies and propose joint activities to be undertaken by the two CC Working Groups in support for the implementation of the Convention. The Joint Working Group took place in Kluszkowce, Poland on 22 - 24 October 2014 and was organized by the Secretariat, together with Ekopsychologia Association and UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre within the project "Carpathians Unite – mechanism of consultation and cooperation for implementation of the Carpathian Convention". The project was supported by Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union. For more information about the meeting and its outcomes, please see the Meeting report - Joint WGs – Doc.9.
8. The Secretariat has developed an interactive knowledge sharing platform showcasing successful stories of mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors of the Carpathians called [Mountain Biodiversity for our Wellbeing](#). Depending on resources available the Secretariat will continue to further develop the platform introducing new best practices from the Carpathians, as well as from other mountain regions.

The Mountain Biodiversity platform was launched at a **side event** held during the **13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD COP13) on 9. December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico. The side event was organized with great support of the Slovak Republic, at that time the Presidency of the Council of EU. More information about the side event – Doc. 10 and the Cancun Declaration – Doc.11.

9. The Secretariat has been involved in the development of the project **ConnectGREEN-Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin**, which was submitted under the second call INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) with the leadership of WWF, 12 project partners and 10 Associated Strategic Partners. The project development was also partially financed by the EUSDR "START - Danube Region Project Fund"

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call, obtained thanks to the submission of a small project proposal under the Secretariat coordination. ConnectGREEN aims at improving the ecological connectivity between natural habitats, especially between Natura 2000 sites and other protected area categories in the Carpathian ecoregion of transnational relevance. 4 transnationally relevant pilot sites are included in the project, where ecological corridors will be identified in more details: (1) Piatra Craiului National Park (RO); (2) Apuseni-SW Carpathians (RO) - National Park Djerdap (SB); (3) Western Carpathians (CZ-SK) and (4) Bükk National Park (HU) - Cerová vrchovina Protected Landscape Area (SK). Physical barriers and other threats will be identified in these areas and integrated together with other spatial data categories into the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS). Specific management and restoration measures will be developed in a participative way with key stakeholders (conservationists, spatial planners, authorities, hunters, foresters, etc.) for safeguarding the ecological connectivity in each pilot site. The Decision Support Tool (DST), created by the spatial planners (and included in CCIBIS) will support this process by overlapping and analysing a broad range of spatial data and various individual scenarios. A Strategy will be developed based on the methodology and the project's findings on identifying, preserving, and managing ecological corridors focusing on large carnivores' movement needs in the region. The Strategy is planned to be enforced by the parties to the Carpathian Convention with the support of relevant Associated Strategic Partners. For this purpose, the project is planning to support two meetings of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity and at least 2 multi-sectoral meetings on the Carpathian Convention level, one to receive feedback on preliminary project findings, another discussing results. All three Carpathian Working Groups, on Biodiversity, Spatial Development and Transport are planned to be involved.

10. The Secretariat, in cooperation with WWF, ICPDR and the Institute of Biology Bucharest-Romanian Academy, developed the project proposal WILD for DC, financed under the third call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP) . The project officially started its implementation in January 2016. Within the project, the experts provided by the TAF-DRP developed an *“Assessment of illegal wildlife and forest related practices and trade in the Danube-Carpathian Region and the effects on the conservation status of endangered wildlife species and priority forest habitats”* and listed some main objectives to be included in a possible project proposal targeting wildlife crime. The experts recommended the project partners to support a political up scaling against illegal wildlife and forest related practices in the Danube-Carpathian area and the improvement of transnational cooperation.
11. The Secretariat has been involved in the development of the project **Wild for DC- Sustainable Solutions for Wildlife Crime Prevention in the Danube Countries**, submitted under the second call INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) with the leadership of WWF as the Lead Partner. The project aims at combating unsustainable and conflict use practices through sustainable tourism and planning combined with capacity building for control and enforcement of wildlife crime prevention in the Danube Area. The project will apply strengthened joint and integrated approaches for increased cross-sectoral and transnational cooperation and mitigation

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of usage conflicts in rich natural heritage areas in the Danube region. To achieve this goal, the project will promote sustainable development through i.e. focusing on developing the tourism industry, enhance transnational efforts to monitor and combat unsustainable practices related to wildlife and forest management and improve policy frameworks in terms of their sustainable use for wildlife and forests within the region. The project involves 13 partners and 9 associated strategic partners from eight countries and will be working actively in six protected areas, comprising of 8 Natura 2000 areas, a Ramsar site and a UNESCO World Heritage site. It will furthermore engage in 17 transnational learning exercises as well as developed and implement ten tools and seven pilot actions. The project partners will develop four capacity building modules, an international Joint Tourism product based on wildlife and undertake joint multi-stakeholder cooperation actions. In addition, the project intends to elaborate a White book including good examples of sustainable tourism solutions and policy guidance for the involvement of locals and tourists in the monitoring of protected areas. The Carpathian Convention plans to be actively involved in the implementation of work package five related to the development of policy tools. This work package includes recommendations for regional and international legislative, policy, and strategic processes on how to improve regional and transnational cooperation and making policies more effective and result-oriented.

Spatial development

Article 5

The Secretariat has received information about the **administrative units** where the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols are being implemented from the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine. The excel table presenting already obtained data is available (Doc. 12). The Secretariat would like to request the missing Parties to submit the relevant information, which will be all together to publish and disseminate.

Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management

Article 6

1. The **Joint Declaration** between the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube Region –Tisza Group and the Carpathian Convention was signed during the 4th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region on 29. October in Ulm, Germany. The Joint Declaration was signed by Mr. Harald Egerer, Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, on behalf of the Carpathian Convention and by Mr. Ivan Zavadsky, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR Permanent Secretariat, on behalf of the ICPDR – Tisza Group. Please see the signed Joint Declaration (Doc. 13)

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2. The Secretariat participates as Associated Strategic Partner (ASP) in the **JOINTISZA project-Strengthening cooperation between river basin management planning and flood risk prevention to enhance the stats of waters of the Tisza River Basin**, approved under the first call of the INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme. The Secretariat will have an advisory and supporting role during the project implementation, especially with the focus on the activities related to the climate change, reporting this activity to the Adaptation to Climate Change Working Group. The Secretariat will take part in the crucial project meetings, including an expert consultation on drought management in the Carpathian Basin. It will validate policy related project results, provide integration of policy related project results, and multiply project impact when the project is finished.

Sustainable agriculture, rural development and forestry
Article 7

1. The **Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management** (Forest Protocol) entered into force for Serbia on 30 June 2015. Please see the Status of signatures and ratifications of the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention (Doc. 14).
2. The Secretariat organized two meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management – WG Forest - (26 – 27 September 2016, Brasov, Romania and 16 – 18 May, Sopron, Hungary) with a main objectives set on elaboration of the **inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians** and also **harmonization of criteria and indicators for identifying natural forest in the region**. For this reason the Secretariat has been closely cooperation with the **European Environmental Agency** and other stakeholders involved in these topics.

Concerning the **inventory of virgin forest**, the Secretariat requested the Parties to provide national inventories and maps of virgin forests. Since not all the Parties have submitted this information, the WG Forest decided to include into the inventory/map data provided by the stakeholders working on this subject including universities, non-governmental organizations other relevant institutions. After finalization of the inventory, it will be submitted to the Parties for a validation process.

WG Forest suggested that after finalizing the inventory of virgin forest, the WG Forest should focus on possible **monitoring with potential use of remote sensing**.

With reference to the **criteria and indicators for identifying natural forest** in the Carpathians, it was discussed by WG Forest that the most important step in order to make a progress in this respect is to identified a threshold of naturalness of the forests. However, due to the complexity of natural forests and different protection status in the Carpathian countries, it requires more consultation than initially expected. The Secretariat will continue exploring this subject with experts working in the field on forest naturalness and then will consult with the WG Forest and

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the CCIC possible further process. More information about the WG Forest meetings can be found in the relevant Meeting Reports (Doc. 15 and Doc.16).

A workshop on balancing bioenergy production and sustainable forest management in Mountain Areas” organized by the EUSDR Priority Area 2 - Sustainable Energy (PA2) was held back to back to the last WG Forest meeting (May 2017, Sopron). More information about the Workshop can be found in the Report (Doc.17) and under section of the Progress Report – Cooperation with the European Union.

3. WG Forest recommended to define climate change 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. Ideally, a project on forest and climate change matters should be initiated and submitted for an appropriate funding.
4. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the EURAC research, and with the kind support and hospitality of Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Serbia, organized the third Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD), held on 20th – 22nd April 2015 in Stara Planina, Serbia. The WG SARD meeting initiated elaboration of the **new Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development**. After extensive consultation with the national experts the final draft version (Doc.18 and CC/COP5/DOC3) agreed by all the Parties was circulated by the Secretariat on 31. March 2017 inviting the Parties to take the necessary internal steps to allow for the successful adoption and signature of the Protocol, which will be one of the most important highlights of the upcoming Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. The 8th CCIC meeting recommended the WG SARD to identify possible actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol.

Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy
Article 8, Article 10

1. The **Protocol on Sustainable Transport** (Transport Protocol) was signed by already six out of seven Carpathian Countries. The Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia signed the Transport Protocol at the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) on 26 September 2014, while Poland on 15 June, and Ukraine on 26 June 2015. Furthermore, Slovakia (13 May 2015), Ukraine (20 June 2016) and Poland (4 July 2016) had met all the national requirements and ratified the Transport Protocol. Please see the Status of signature and ratification of the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention (Doc. 14).
2. The Secretariat has been involved in the development of project proposal **TRANSGREEN** - *Integrated Transport and Green Infrastructure Planning in the Carpathians for the Benefit of People and Nature*. The project was selected under the first call of the INTERREG Danube Transnational

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Programme (DTP), under the leadership of WWF DCP, with 11 project partners and 9 Associated Strategic Partners. The project aims to contribute to safer and environmentally-friendly road and rail networks in mountainous regions of the Danube Basin with a special focus on the Carpathian Mountains. It will do so by improving planning frameworks and developing concrete environmentally-friendly and safe road and rail transport solutions taking into account elements of Green Infrastructure, in particular ecological corridors. Sharing experience and knowledge will be of great importance. Innovative pilot actions will focus on ecological corridors crossed by EU TEN-T road and rail projects in the Carpathians. Four pilot sites are included in the project: Beskydy (CZ-SK), Miskolc-Kosice-Uzhgorod (HU-SK-UA), Tirgu Mures-Iasi and Lugoj-Deva (RO). A Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Convention Transport Protocol is planned to be developed with the project support, which will finance two meetings of the Sustainable Transport Working Group and one cross-sectoral meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups (Biodiversity, Transport and Spatial Development).

3. UN Environment Vienna Programme Office is involved in the *ClimaProof - Enhancing Environmental Performance and Climate Proofing of Infrastructure Investments in the Western Balkan Region from an EU integration perspective* project financed by the Austrian Development Agency whose beneficiaries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (will be included in the project, given its regional scope, but will not be considered a beneficiary country), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244/99), Montenegro, and Serbia.

The project will be implemented between December 2016 and November 2019 by UN Environment, in close cooperation with the recipient countries.

The main objective of the project is to reduce vulnerability of road infrastructure to climate change in the Western Balkan by mainstreaming EU best practices on climate proofing infrastructure and green infrastructure. The project has the following components:

- a) Understanding the future climate and weather patterns in the target region: strengthening national capacities to understand climate change and climate change related risks in the region through improvement of the information base;
- b) Planning for the future climate and weather patterns in the target region: strengthening national capacities to integrate climate change projections and climate proofing and green infrastructure in infrastructure development on a regional and national level;
- c) Building infrastructure adapted to the future climate and weather patterns in the target region: creating an enabling environment for regional cooperation and investments in climate resilient infrastructure in the WB;

Cooperation with the Carpathian Convention and its signatory countries is sought in the following directions:

- Firstly the projects will be developing some innovative methodological tools that might be of use and interest also to the countries of the Carpathian Convention that are not beneficiaries of this project; in particular, in implementing the first component UN Environment has partnered

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with BOKU University to jointly develop a software for producing high resolution, localised, bias corrected scenarios for the target region - with the possibility of developing further improved scenarios on local areas with input of additional meteorological observations. With the support of the Carpathian Convention, these tools could also be adapted for use in the Carpathian region;

- Secondly, given the fact that more than half of its members are members of the EU and that the ClimaProof project has a strong focus on exporting EU best practices to the Western Balkan region, some countries of the Carpathian Convention might be interested in contributing to such best practices with their own examples;

- Thirdly, in the context of development of transport focused projects such as ConnectGreen and TRANSGREEN, the Carpathian Convention might support experience sharing between the Carpathian region and the Western Balkans.

Sustainable tourism

Article 9

1. The Protocol on Sustainable Tourism (Tourism Protocol) entered into force for Romania and Serbia, on 11 November 2014 and 30 June 2015 respectively. Ukraine provide the deposit of ratification on 4 May 2017 to the Depositary, the Protocol shall enter into force for Ukraine on 20 June 2017. Please see the Status of signature and ratification of the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention (Doc. 14).
2. Four meetings of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Tourism) were organized during the last implementation period.

First of them, was held on 24 - 26 November 2014 in Belgrade, Serbia thanks to great hospitality of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Serbia (Meeting Report – Doc. 19).

The second meeting was organized on 18 - 20 May 2015 in Aggtelek, Hungary in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the National Economy of Hungary, and great hospitality of the Aggtelek National Park Directorate (Meeting Report – Doc. 20).

The third WG Tourism meeting was organized on 12 – 14 April 2016 in Brasov, Romania with support of the Brasov County Council and the Ministry of Environment of Romania (Meeting Report – Doc. 21).

The fourth meeting took place on 12 -14 September 2017 in Brasov, Romania thanks to great support of the Ministry of Tourism of Romania and the Brasov County Council. The main objectives of the meeting were the finalization of the COP5 Decisions related to sustainable tourism and discussion on the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP). More information about the meeting can be found in meeting report (Doc. 32).

The WG Tourism meetings were supported by the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Project (led by the Ecological Tourism in Europe - ETE), which is sponsored by German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

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All of the WG Tourism meetings were almost entirely devoted for discussion on progress on implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism and of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, especially arrangements of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP), which should initiate and coordinate activities implementing the Tourism Protocol.

On the margins of the Conference Leveraging the UNESCO Brand for Sustainable Tourism Development in Central European Regions, two Carpathian countries, Romania and Ukraine, signed an Agreement (Doc.22) initiating a closer cooperation on activities related to sustainable tourism development in the region by establishing the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform. This initiative aims at enhanced implementation of the Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Tourism and its Protocol, and it has received political support from the Ministry of Tourism of Romania and Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine. Related Joint Proposal (Doc.23) are available on the website.

3. Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Project (led by the Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE)) supporting the implementation of the Tourism Protocol and its Strategy, was extended by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety until 28 February 2017. The additional activities shall focus on the establishment of National Tourism Task Forces (NTTF) in each of the seven Carpathian countries, developing a common ToR for the NTTFs, and coaching them for the implementation of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Strategy in their countries and beyond.
4. ETE with support of the Secretariat organized a workshop - *Workshop on the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention into National Law* on 12 - 13 December in Vienna, Austria (Meeting Report - Doc. 24).
5. The Secretariat supported development of the ["CARPATHIAN TOURISM: Cooperation of V4 Countries"](#) project, financed by the Visegrad Fund. The project aims at empowering local entrepreneurs to improve handicraft workshops as tourism services and to increase quality and visibility of other rural tourism initiatives.
6. The Secretariat organized the Networking Event of the project Innovation in Rural Tourism, which was held in Vienna in July 2015. The event aimed at generating ideas for new projects in the field of ESD and sustainable tourism.

The Final Conference of the InRuTou project was organized by the Polish partner Ekopsychology Society on 16 October in Czerwienna, Poland.

The Secretariat also produced two project publications - The Transferability Manual and the Final Project Publication, both available on the Carpathian Convention website.

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- The Transferability Manual is a methodological publication that explains how the project was developed based on its background and technical documents. Its aim is to support interested organizations in transferring the InRuTou methods to other communities, regions, and countries;
- The Final Project Publication Innovation in Rural Tourism - Cases from European Mountain Communities presents the piloting process and its results in each participating area with the aim to provide inspiration for and concrete examples of implementing the InRuTou training.

Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge

Article 11

1. The Secretariat actively participated at the International Conference - Leveraging the UNESCO Brand for Sustainable Tourism Development in Central European Regions, held under auspices of the Ministry of Environment and the City of Bardejov on 5 May 2017 in Bardejov, the Slovak Republic.

The Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic offered the Secretariat to organize one of the panel discussion within the conference. The preparation, started in February 2017, resulted in a successful event and discussions on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians, which was well received and has inspired some potential activities in the region. In order to facilitate the discussion during the Carpathian panel, the Secretariat produced a background paper on *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians* (Doc.25), which gives comprehensive overview on the Carpathian Convention activities on cultural heritage and sustainable tourism development, and suggests possible next steps in these fields including closer cooperation with UNESCO.

2. At the last meeting of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, held in March 2014 in Bratislava, the country representatives requested the Secretariat to obtain a scientific opinion on the key Definitions of the draft Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge.

Following the Working Group decision, the Secretariat asked the Science for the Carpathians (S4C) for independent scientific comments to the definitions. Mr. Zsolt Molnár, who provided the Secretariat with comments, is a contact person for the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge issues in the S4C and he was also recommended by the S4C Executive Board.

The 8th CCIC meeting suggested organization of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge (WG Cultural Heritage) meeting in order to discuss the need of the respective protocol and possible future activities of the WG Cultural Heritage.

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***Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early
warning
Article 12***

1. The Secretariat together with WWF and EEA is planning to further develop and improve the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS) with support of TRANSGREEN project and possible other future projects.
2. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), developed a new Joint Work Plan 2016-2017 (Doc.26) annexed to the Partnership Agreement between the Carpathian Convention and EEA, with operational priorities focused on forests, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and ecological connectivity
3. The Secretariat continued cooperating with the EEA with regards to the contribution to the EEA existing Information Systems.

Concerning adaptation to climate change activities, the Secretariat is working on the creation of a Carpathian webpage under the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT), collecting already existing data and information on climate change in the Carpathian region, in coordination with the Adaptation to Climate Change Working Group. It will also support the possible development of case studies based on the result of the research projects and other activities on climate change, which will be then provided to the Climate-ADAPT platform. (More info at DECISION COP4/10)

Concerning forests activities, the Secretariat is cooperating with EEA on the setup of a harmonized database on Carpathians Virgin Forests. This will contribute to the improvement of the Carpathian region knowledge-base on the state of Forest ecosystems.

In order to put together the different initiatives and support the possible development of a Carpathian wide information system accessible to all Parties, the Secretariat has foreseen a contribution to such a system in the projects submitted under the INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme. (e.g. TRANSGREEN and ConnectGREEN).

4. The Secretariat participated at the Forum Carpaticum 2016: Future of the Carpathians: Smart, Sustainable, Inclusive and invited the Science of the Carpathians (S4C) to present results of the last Forum Carpaticum during the upcoming COP5 enriching the Conference with sound scientific knowledge. More information about the Forum Carpaticum 2016 can be found on the website of the [event](#).

The meeting of the S4C Steering Committee will most likely take place in parallel to the technical segment of the COP5.

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Adaptation to Climate Change

1. The Secretariat informed the Parties about the idea of introducing the Article on "Climate Change" to the Carpathian Convention. The first draft proposal prepared by the Secretariat was circulated to the Focal Point and then discussed during the last meeting of the WG Climate Change, held in Vienna on 27 – 28 October 2016. The amended draft proposal was recommended by the WG Climate Change and approved by the CCIC. The final draft version of the Article was circulated by the Secretariat on 3. April 2017 (Doc.27 and CC/COP5/DOC4) in inviting the Parties to take the necessary internal steps to allow for a possible adoption the COP5.

Following the international law practices and internal consultations, the Secretariat proposed to name the new article - Article 12bis Climate Change.

2. Two meetings of Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change (WG Climate Change) was organized by the Secretariat with generous support of the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary and Szent Istvan University.
3. First of the WG Climate Change meeting was held 30 September – 2 October in Szolnok, Hungary and its main objective was strengthening cooperation between relevant partners (among the others: the Alpine Convention, the European Environmental Agency, the ICPDR – Tisza Group) in the region involved in adaptation to climate change, as well as a discussion on a possible project – Meeting Report - Doc. 28.

The second WG Climate Change meeting was held on 27 – 28 October 2016 in Vienna, Austria. One of the main objective of the meeting was a discussion on a possible inclusion of the Article on Climate Change to the Carpathian Convention. See para 1. Meeting Report – Doc. 29.

4. The Secretariat has been elaborating, with support of the WG Forest, an Outlook on Adaptation Responses to Climate Change for the Carpathians. The report will be presented that the upcoming COP5, prior to that the Secretariat will circulate the final draft to the Parties at the earliest convenience.
5. The Secretariat continued cooperation with EEA on the development of a Carpathian webpage under the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT), which is the European Commission initiative aiming to support Europe in adapting to climate change by providing/sharing available information on the topic. The WG Climate Change support the Secretariat in collecting relevant information on the activities and projects in the Carpathians. Secretariat is currently discussion with EEA finalization on the Carpathian webpage on Climate-ADAPT. The result shall be presented in near future.

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Awareness raising, education and public participation

Article 13

1. The Secretariat continued its involvement in the project Innovation in Rural Tourism, which has the Vocational Educational component, and which is based on community stakeholder participation (see DECISION COP4/6 for more information about the InRuTou project deliverables). A wide range of partners working in the field of tourism development and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) were invited to the Networking Event of the project, with the Secretariat organised in Vienna in July 2015, including the Regional Center of Expertise in ESD and the Regional Environmental Centre. The event was aimed at generating ideas for new projects in the field of ESD, community participation, intergenerational learning and sustainable tourism.
2. The Secretariat, in coordination with the Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Committee on ESD, organized an informal meeting among the Carpathian ESD focal points during the 10th Steering Committee meeting on ESD, which took place on June 8-9 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. Before the meeting the Carpathian Convention focal points were in touch with the ESD focal points participating in the UNECE meeting, as encouraged by the Secretariat.

There are ideas of further involvement of and cooperation between ESD focal points and the Carpathian Convention.

3. The Secretariat supported organization of the Model United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (MUNESD) for students on 18 – 22 April 2016 in Vienna, Austria. MUNESD took the Carpathian Convention and its COP as an example of negotiation process of an environmental agreement.
4. Secretariat has been organizing students visits, especially for the Carpathian countries, aiming at awareness rising and education on the Carpathian Convention activities and the related topic, among other, biodiversity conversation, sustainable development, climate change.

Cooperation with the European Union

1. The Czech Presidency of the Carpathian Convention and the Secretariat together with the European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (Competence Centre Macro Regions and European Territorial Cooperation) organized the Expert Workshop - **Mountain dimension in the Danube region, the case of the Carpathians. Challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation in mountain areas**, held in Brussels, Belgium on 25 November 2015. The workshop focused on discussion about the mountain dimension of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and on the possible synergies between the relevant Priority Areas of the EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention. One outcome of the meeting was the development of a Joint Synergy Paper

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between the Carpathian Convention and the relevant Priority Areas (PAs) of the European Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) and a draft Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and the EUSDR PAs, to be submitted to the EUSDR Priority Areas for signature/endorsement.

2. The following **Memoranda of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and the EUSDR** Priority Areas has been signed:

-The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and EUSDR PA 1B "Mobility | Rail-Road-Air", 07 June 2016

-The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and EUSDR PA 04 "Water Quality", 30 August 2016

-The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and EUSDR PA 02 "Energy", 03 November 2016

The coordinator of the EUSDR PA 05 "Environmental Risks", confirmed the willingness to sign the Memorandum as well. Some EUSDR PAs decided to launch a written procedure for its signature, while with other PAs, the Carpathian Convention is still at an earlier stage of mutual consultation.

The Memoranda will facilitate the coordination with the specific PAs and possible support to Carpathian related activities.

The Secretariat has been actively participating in different meetings and activities of the EUSDR, presenting the Carpathian Convention activities and projects:

-The 4th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in Ulm, Germany, 29 – 30 October, where the Secretariat took an active role in the workshops under two different Thematic Fields: 1) Connect the Region - Discussion and Workshop Putting synergies into practice: regional initiatives together for sustainable use of local resources 2) Protecting the Environment - Workshop and Panel Discussion Protecting the environment in the Danube Region: Integrated horizontal cooperation

- Several Steering Group Meetings of the EUSDR PA 02, PA 03, PA 04, PA 05, PA 06.

-The Danube Strategy PA6 Stakeholder Workshop, 12 May 2015, Munich, Germany.

-The 5th Annual Forum of the EUSDR, held on 3-4 November 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Briefing on the cooperation activities with EUSDR and copies of the MoCs are available [online](#).

3. The Secretariat was invited as speaker by the **EU Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)** Joint Secretariat (JS) for the kick-off event in Budapest on 23 and 24 September 2015. The meeting was an occasion to launch the programme, to announce the first call for project proposals and to support potential applicants in the preparation of project proposals. In this context, the Secretariat was invited to contribute to the thematic workshop "2.3: Foster the restoration and management of ecological corridors", giving an overview of the situation in the Danube area concerning the challenges, opportunities, priorities and practical actions required. More than 500 stakeholders,

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decision makers and potential partners, representing national, regional and local authorities, as well as other relevant actors, attended the DTP Kick Off meeting, sharing their visions on the programme area and their project ideas. The presentation of the Secretariat can be found on the Carpathian Convention [website](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/eventdetailothers/events/kick-off-danube-transnational-programme.html) (<http://www.carpathianconvention.org/eventdetailothers/events/kick-off-danube-transnational-programme.html>).

***Cooperation with the Alpine Convention, other conventions
and international bodies***

1. The Secretariat supported and facilitated the creation, production and distribution of the “Alpine – Carpathian” photo calendar for the year 2015. The theme of the calendar is the Alpine and Carpathian landscape and its agro-cultural level.
2. The Secretariat actively participated in the closing event of the exhibition “The depth of the mountain landscape, an agricultural perspective” which was held on 29 May 2015 and was hosted in the premises of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Rome, Italy. The exhibition, produced by the Alpine and Carpathian conventions, focused on the beauty of mountain territories and the way such areas have been shaped by human activities with a precise attention to the “inhabited mountains” with their farms, mountain pastures and traditional agriculture.
3. The Secretariat supported and facilitated the participation of the Alpine Convention to the International Conference on “Creating a Network of Emblematic Mediterranean Mountains”, organized by the Local Action Group – Pirin, which was held on 21 - 23 April 2015 in Razlog, Bulgaria. The Secretariat actively participated in the discussion on the creation of a network of emblematic Mediterranean mountains and delivered a presentation on the Task Force on International Mountain Cooperation, jointly established with the former Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention (2013-2014). The Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change, adopted by both Convention’s Ministerial Conferences, was presented as a best practice in International Mountain Cooperation.
4. The Secretariat facilitated the networking and follow - up process between the different stakeholders which were involved in the EXPO Milan 2015 Mountain Week organized by the Alpine Convention in cooperation with the Carpathian Convention. The Carpathian Convention National Focal Points were informed on the development of the initiative and the networking process between the EXPO 2015 National Commissioners and Carpathian Convention National Focal Points was facilitated as well.
5. The Secretariat supported and actively participated in the organization of the **EXPO 2015** Mountain Week, which was held from 4 – 11 June in the frame of the Universal Exposition EXPO 2015 in Milan, Italy. The Secretariat took actively part in the opening conference of the Mountain

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Week on “Mountain Cooperation for Food: Initiatives in the Alps, the Carpathians and other mountain regions”. During the meeting, the potential of international agreements and interregional initiatives among mountain regions for the protection of sustainable agricultural food products from mountain areas was stressed. The importance of mountain products, often characterized by high environmental standards in terms of quality and production was further analyzed. The Secretariat facilitated the participation of the Alpine Convention in the workshop “Climate Change Adaptation in Mountain Regions” organized by the Presidency of the Carpathian Convention and Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic in the Czech National Pavilion on June 5th in EXPO 2015.

6. The **Joint Alpine-Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change** adopted by COP4 (26 September 2014 in Mikulov, Czech Republic) and boosted the adoption by the Alpine Convention during the XIII Alpine Conference (21 November in Turin, Italy) was jointly presented during the side event “**The Challenges of Local Adaptation Planning and Initiatives for Communities**” which was held within the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) COP 20 on December 8th 2014 in Lima, Peru.
7. The Secretariat actively contributed to the organization of several meetings and events within the 20th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC – COP 20) which was held on December 2014 in Lima, Peru. The Secretariat actively supported and took part in the side events “The Challenges of Local Adaptation. Planning and Initiatives for Communities” which was held on December 8th 2014 and in the workshop “**The Role of Mountain Forests to Climate Change Adaptation: Which Perspective from Sustainable Forest Management?**” which was held on December 9th.
8. On the initiative of minister Andrä Rupprechter, currently President of the Alpine Conference, the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention was organizing on 18-19 April 2017 in Alpbach, Tyrol a conference “**The Role of Women in Mountain Regions**” aiming at providing information, fresh input and ideas on a forum for exchange and networking for the stakeholders involved in the questions of the role of women in Sustainable development in the mountains. The Declaration of the conference is available – Doc. 30. More information on the event can be found on the relevant [website](#). The Secretariat was partly involved in organization and promotion of the event.
9. The Secretariat together with the Alpine Convention and the Regional Academy on the United Nations (RAUN) has been cooperating on mentoring a group of researchers for the development of a study on women access to natural resources, participation in natural resource preservation and management in mountain areas, to be presented at the RAUN 2017-2018 Conference on “Women and Girls in a Changing World: Prospects and Challenges”, Vienna, January 2018.
10. During the Conference on Large Carnivore’s Protection, Roznov pod Radhostem, 18 – 21 October 2016, the Memorandum of Cooperation between the International Council for Game and Wildlife and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention was signed (Doc. 31). As an annex to MoC, an annual work plan is foreseen. The Secretariat in consultation with the CIC is currently working on the possible ideas for common activities to be included in the annual work plan.

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Cooperation with CBD, EEA, UNESCO and other international institution has been presented in the relevant thematic sections on this progress report.

Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee

The Parties have been continuously informed about the progress made and asked for guidelines by constant online consultations, as well during the CCIC meetings organized respectively on 24 November 2015 in Brussels, Belgium, 21 – 22 November 2016 in Vienna, Austria, and on 14 - 16 June 2017 in Modrá, the Czech Republic.