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## FINAL MEETING REPORT

### 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Budapest, Hungary, 11- 13 December 2019

*The CCIC 2019 recommendations are reflected after every reporting sector, as well as collectively annexed to the Meeting Report (Annex 1)*

*All the presentations delivered during the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting are available on the Carpathian Convention website*

#### ***Welcome by Secretariat and opening of the Meeting by the Hungarian Presidency, opening remarks and brief report on the Hungarian Presidency activities***

Mr. Harald Egerer, the Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention welcomed the participants of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and invited Mr. Zsolt Belánszky-Demkó, the Deputy State Secretary for International Affairs, of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, to open the meeting on behalf of the Hungarian Presidency. In his opening speech Mr. Belánszky-Demkó stressed that the progress report distributed by the Secretariat presents impressive achievements towards the implementation of the provisions of the Carpathian Convention and thanked the Parties and the international partners for their fruitful cooperation and contribution in this respect. Furthermore, Mr. Belánszky-Demkó shortly reported on the Presidency's activities, which were undertaken in 2019 and further plans until the COP6 when Hungary will pass the Presidency to Poland. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Péter Király, Head of International Relations Department, on behalf of the Hungarian Presidency and the Secretariat.

#### ***Adoption of the Agenda***

The Agenda was adopted with a minor change of the items' order.

#### ***Update on the status of signatures and ratification of the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention and the Article 12bis on Climate Change***

The Depository of the Carpathian Convention, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, provided a short update on the status of signatures and ratifications of the Protocols. According to the information provided, the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development to the Carpathian Convention enters into force for Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic on 1 January 2020. Regarding the Article 12bis on Climate Change, until now only Hungary has completed all internal procedures necessary for a successful ratification of the new Article. The updated information is available on the Carpathian Convention website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/status-of-signature-and-ratification.html>

## *Updates from the Science for the Carpathians*

Ms. Katalin Mazsa, Chair of the Science for the Carpathians (S4C) delivered a presentation providing updates on the S4C activities, including information about the 6th Forum Carpaticum, scientific conference gathering researches from the Carpathians and beyond, which will take place in Brno, the Czech Republic on 22 - 26 June 2020. The theme of the 6th FC is Linking science, policy, and practice for a sustainable future in the Carpathians and it aims at establishing links between S4C, local and regional authorities and various stakeholders. A Carpathian ESD Seminar, as a follow up to the ESD Seminar in Budapest, April 2019 will be organized within the 6th Forum Carpaticum. Details about the 6th FC are available in the presentation and will be also communicated to the Carpathian Convention stakeholders in due course.

Ms. Katalin Mázsa, informed about the intentions to organize an Interdisciplinary Summer School for Young Scientists (2020-2021), which shall aim at new interdisciplinary networks and initiations interdisciplinary papers.

Furthermore, the ongoing cooperation between the Science for the Carpathians and the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region (SNC-mt), was acknowledged and much appreciated by the CCIC as a great example of experience sharing.

S4C website ([carpathianscience.org](http://carpathianscience.org)) includes a new feature providing information about recent research papers and events (Carpathian data), which includes the [S4C Newsflash](#).

## *Implementation of the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention – Progress Report – presentation of and discussion about ongoing and planned activities*

### **Implementation of the Carpathian Convention:**

The Secretariat reported on activities undertaken to develop the comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sectors. Due to complex nature of the current draft, the Parties will provide comments in writing. However, in general the Parties asked for simplification of the reporting format and suggested that COP6 could adopt a provisional reporting template, which would allow further improvements in the future.

The Secretariat sustains the idea of project development focusing on outreach programs targeting local, regional authorities and other stakeholders to increase awareness of the importance of protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region. However, due to time constrains, the development of a relevant project proposal has been postponed.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to prepare a first draft of the COP6 Decisions together with the outgoing and incoming Presidencies, and consult it with the CCIC, finalize it and submit for the COP6 adoption;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to prepare all relevant documents for the COP6 adoption in due course;*
- *If needed, an additional CCIC meeting will be convened prior to the COP6. The Secretariat will be responsible for sharing information and preparation in this regard;*

- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to be in regular contact with the incoming Presidency regarding the organization of the COP6, and shall ensure regular information sharing with the Parties;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the first draft of guidelines and reporting template and asks the Parties to provide comments in writing to the draft by the end of February 2020;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further work on the draft guidelines and reporting template and finalize it in consultation with Parties, WGs, and CCIC, submit for the COP6 approval, possibly as a provisional reporting template;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat, in cooperation with relevant project partners, to develop and submit a project proposal on outreach programmes, targeting local, regional authorities and other stakeholders, for the next possible call of the International Visegrad Fund.*

### **Cooperation with local and regional level**

The Secretariat suggested to establish a new sector of the Programme of Work related to cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders, which should be reflected in the next COP Decision as “Cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders”. The CCIC supported that idea.

Ms. Justyna Róg, representing the Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland, presented activities of the Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie Region at the regional and European level, including promoting the Carpathian Region in the European Committee of the Region, supporting development of the Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians, and organization of meetings of the Carpathian Regions, which has become a regular event hosted by the Podkarpackie Region focused on debate on interregional cooperation for the sustainable development of the Carpathians. The next meeting of the Carpathian Regions will take place in September 2020 in conjunction to the Carpathian Convention COP6.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC supports the idea of establishing a separate sector of the Programme of Work related to cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders, which should be reflected in the next COP Decision as “Cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders”.*

### **Cooperation with the European Union**

The Secretariat reported on the recent activities related to cooperation with the European Union, including cooperation with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and providing comments to the new EUSDR Action Plan and promotion of the Carpathian Convention during the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed about the undertaken consultation and planned next steps towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention, which were then approved by the CCIC, see Annex 2 - Road Map towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention).

Mr. Péter Kovács, the President of International Commission on Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), stressed the importance of the EU involvement in the work of the Carpathian Convention. Recalling experiences of the ICPDR, Mr. Kovács said that many activities would not have been possible without the EU as a Party to the Danube River Protection Convention and encouraged the Parties to make all the necessary efforts in order to realize the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC recommends implementing the Road Map towards the official high-level request of the Carpathian Convention to the European Union to accede to the Carpathian Convention;*
- *The CCIC invites the UNEP Executive Director to inform the European Commission that the Carpathian Convention has expressed its interest to engage in the process, which should lead to an official high-level request to the Council of European Union for the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable mountain development (A/RES/74/227), which appreciates the Carpathian Convention and its work, as well as “encourages greater efforts by States, all relevant stakeholders and the international community towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the enhancement of the well-being of their local populations”.*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further cooperate with EUSDR PAs and contribute to the implementation of the revised EUSDR Action Plan;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further monitor the initiative for development of a Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians and the possible available transnational and Interreg programs, including the ENI CBC Hungary-Romania-Slovakia-Ukraine programme;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to continue cooperation with the Interregional group “Carpathians” of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Marshal’s Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the support on promotion of the Carpathian Convention given by the Romania Presidency of the Council of the European Union.*

### **Cooperation with other Conventions and international bodies**

The Secretariat reported on activities undertaken in the light of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Parties appreciated the Secretariat’s work in this respect and requested further involvement in promoting the Carpathian Convention in this Post-2020 process as it gives a unique chance to become a role model for other regions and substantially increase the Convention’s visibility at the international level. The CCIC recognized a great opportunity in combining the Carpathian Convention’s involvement in the Post-2020 process with the EU dimension of cooperation by contributing to the process and promoting the Carpathian Convention as not only a regional mechanism for the CBD implementation but also a model for mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors.

The Secretariat informed about the draft Memorandum of Cooperation between Euromontana and the Secretariat, strengthening cooperation between both organizations, particularly in the field of sustainable agriculture, rural development and cultural heritage. The draft MoC was shared with the CCIC for consultation. Editorial comments were received from Romania. The Secretariat will send the current version of the MoC for final round of comments and then approval.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the Secretariat's engagement in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions and requests the Secretariat to continue contributing to the process, including increasing visibility of the Convention at the international level and preparation of relevant documents on role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post-2020 Framework, to be adopted at the COP6, and then announced at the CBD COP15 in China;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further support efforts in raising the importance of mountain biodiversity within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further consult with UNEP and other biodiversity related conventions regarding possible synergies for the implementation of the Post-2020 Framework, including possible contribution and involvement of the Carpathian Convention in Data Report Tool for MEAs (DaRT);*
- *The CCIC recommends involvement of the Carpathian Convention in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030 and requests the Secretariat to consult with UNEP on possible activities;*
- *The CCIC recommends the Secretariat to consider and consult possible ways and means for promoting the Carpathian Convention at the UN Summit on Biodiversity in New York 2020 to be held on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to circulate the draft Memorandum of Cooperation between Euromontana for final consultation, finalization and approval prior to the COP6;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the Alpine Convention and discuss with the respective Secretariat of the Alpine Convention on possible common activities, especially in the field of climate change and biodiversity, the latter possibly in the light of the MoU between the Carpathian Convention, the Alpine Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the Danube River Protection Convention and discuss with the ICPDR Secretariat on possible common activities;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the initiative to designate a Ukrainian-Romanian Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in the Maramures Ridge of the Carpathian Mountains.*

### **Biodiversity**

The session on Biodiversity started with the presentation of the Ukrainian proposal to establish the Ukrainian-Romanian Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Designation in the Maramures Ridge of the Carpathian Mountains, presented by Ms. Victoria Shevchuk on behalf of UA Focal Point.

Then, the Secretariat provided a brief report on two last meetings of the Working Group on Biodiversity (May 2019, Ostrava, Czech Republic and November 2019, Coltesti, Romania). The main objective of both meetings were activities on large carnivores, including elaboration of the International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management of the Carpathian populations of large carnivores and the Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in each Carpathian country. The update on the latter was provided by Mr. Kristóf Hecker representing the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation.

Furthermore, Mircea Verghet, Chair of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) Unit, presented the CentralParks project and updates on the CNPA activities, including current cooperation with the ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS and CNPA and also on planned further actions, including the CNPA Steering Committee meeting in November 2020 in the

Czech Republic and the Conference for the Carpathian Protected Areas within the ConnectGREEN and Centralparks projects to be organized by mid-2021. The CCIC requested further information and strengthening communication with the CNPA Steering Committee.

Ms. Hildegard Meyer, representing WWF CEE, presented the ongoing ConnectGREEN project and its main activities and the recent project proposal SaveGREEN projects – Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin - submitted under the third call of the EU Danube Transnational Programme. The CCIC was asked to lobby for the SaveGREEN project proposal, if possible.

Mr. Jan Kadlečík, representing the Carpathian Wetland Initiative updated on the recent designation of new Ramsar sites in the Carpathians (Poland and Ukraine). Furthermore, Mr. Kadlečík reported on the international course on Sustainable agriculture in wetlands, held on 22-27 September 2019 in the Czech Republic and the available report ([http://www.cwi.sk/files/Course-report\\_11\\_2019\\_JK.pdf](http://www.cwi.sk/files/Course-report_11_2019_JK.pdf)), and informed with appreciation about the voluntary contribution to CWI made by Hungary. Last but not least, Mr. Kadlečík informed about the recently published book on the Carpathian plants, currently the publication is available only in Czech language. Mr. Kadlečík asked for funds to translate it into English and potentially other Carpathian languages.

The Secretariat briefly presented an idea of a project on pan-European ecological connectivity to be possibly launched by UNEP under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The CCIC appreciated the idea and requested the Secretariat to follow up on it.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes efforts made in strengthening the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol and requests the WG Biodiversity to provide further inputs into the Comprehensive reporting format for the Carpathian Convention;*
- *The CCIC welcomes prioritization of the large carnivores' topic in the work of the WG Biodiversity;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the draft International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian Populations of Large Carnivores, and requests the WG Biodiversity, with support of the Secretariat and other partners, to finalize and submit it to CCIC for adoption at the COP6;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 9th WG Biodiversity meeting and EUSDR PA2 Energy workshop on 29-31 May 2019 in Ostrava, Czech Republic and thanks the Czech Republic and the Secretariat for organization;*
- *The CCIC welcomes organization of the joint meeting of transboundary workshops on large carnivores and 10th WG Biodiversity meeting on 25 - 28 November 2019 in Coltesti, Romania and thanks WWF Romania for provided support;*
- *The CCIC welcomes contributions of the WG Biodiversity and International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) to the development of the Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in the Carpathians and requests the WG Biodiversity, together with the Secretariat and CIC to finalize the Report at the earliest convenience;*
- *Based on the Report, the CCIC encourages the above-mentioned partners to discuss and come up with proposals on harmonization of monitoring of large carnivores in the Carpathians;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the approval of the Centralparks project, approved under the Interreg Central Europe, and encourages the CNPA, WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to further support its implementation;*
- *The CCIC encourages the CNPA chair to further strengthen communication and sharing relevant information with the CNPA Focal Points;*

- The CCIC welcomes the implementation of the project “Three Networks, Two macroregions, One vision - development of Green Infrastructure to foster ecological connectivity between Danube, Carpathians and Alps”, and requests CNPA to share the result of the project;
- The CCIC welcomes the cooperation between the ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS, CNPA and CWI under the ALPBIONET2030 project and the elaboration of Recommendations and Action Plan ALPS-DANUBE-CARPATHIANS cooperation for ecological connectivity, and requests the CNPA chair to share the final version of the document with the CNPA Focal Points, the WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat as soon as available;
- The CCIC welcomes the organization of a CNPA Steering Committee Meeting back to back to the Centralparks Project Partners meeting at the end of November 2020 in the Czech Republic;
- The CCIC encourages the WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to support the organization of the Conference for the Carpathian Protected Areas within the ConnectGREEN and Centralparks projects by mid-2021;
- The CCIC welcomes the idea of a project on pan-European ecological connectivity proposed by UNEP under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and requests the Secretariat to follow up on it.
- The CCIC welcomes the organization of the international course on Sustainable agriculture in wetlands, held on 22-27 September 2019 in the Czech Republic by the CWI and the Czech Republic;
- The CCIC welcomes the designation of the new Ramsar sites in the Carpathians, namely in Poland: Czerwone bog woodland - nature reserve ([Ramsar Site no. 2339](#)), Glacial lakes in the Tatra National Park ([Site no. 2340](#)), Peat bogs in the Tatra National Park ([Site no. 2341](#)). In Ukraine: Prut River Headwaters ([Site no. 2395](#)), Pohorilets River Headwaters ([Site no. 2397](#)), Romania-Friendship Cave, ([Site no. 2396](#)), Narcissi Valley ([Site no. 2390](#)), Ozirnyi-Brebeneskul ([Site no. 2394](#)), Black Bog ([Site no. 2389](#)), Nadsiania Raised Bog ([Site number 2392](#)).
- The CCIC welcomes the voluntary contribution made by Hungary to the Carpathian Wetland Initiative and encourages other Parties to do so as well;
- The CCIC welcomes submission of a project proposal SwiPE-Successful Wildlife Crime Prosecution in Europe under the EU LIFE Programme 2019 call, done by the WWF with support of the Secretariat; and requests the Secretariat to further discuss joint activities between UNEP, UNODC and WWF, if the project proposal is successful;
- The CCIC welcomes the ongoing implementation approval of the ConnectGREEN project under the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, and encourages WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to further support its implementation, especially concerning the development of the Strategy for the identification and conservation of ecological corridors in the Carpathians to be ideally adopted at COP6 in 2020.

## Spatial Development

Following the development of the map presenting all administrative units where the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols are being implemented, the Secretariat would like to confirm with the Parties the accuracy of the map available on the Carpathian Convention [website](#). The CCIC did not see the need for separate maps reflecting the scope of application of the Protocols.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- The CCIC requests the Secretariat to circulate the map to the Focal Points for checking and approval.

## **Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management**

Mr. Sandor Szalai, Szent Istvan University, representing the Hungarian Presidency and chair of the CC climate adaptation WG presented an update on cooperation with the ICPDR and Tisza Group, as well as on cooperation with EUSDR Priority Area 4 – Water and Priority Area 5 - Environmental Risks and on the potential to further develop them.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC encourages the Secretariat and the respective WGs to strengthen cooperation and develop a project proposal together with the ICPDR/Tisza Group and the EUSDR PA4 and PA5.*

## **Sustainable agriculture and rural development**

The session on Sustainable agriculture and rural development was attended by Ms. Aniko Juhasz, Deputy State Secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary who addressed the meeting and emphasized the importance of the implementation of the SARD Protocol and suggesting consideration of exchange and cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and [BioEast](#)– Central and Eastern European initiative for knowledge-based agriculture, aquaculture and forestry in the bioeconomy. Ms. Juhasz, on behalf of the Hungarian Presidency, supported the idea of hosting the next meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on SARD in Hungary. The Secretariat will follow up with the Presidency on the meeting details and content. In respect to the new Common Agriculture Policy, the Secretariat asked the Parties and especially the Hungarian Presidency for support in finding the best opportunities to use new CAP for the implementation of the SARD Protocol. Consultation in this respect will continue in the light of the upcoming WG SARD meeting.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the proposal of Hungary to host the next meeting of the WG SARD and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization;*
- *The CCIC encourages the WG SARD to further prioritize strategic actions for the implementation of the SARD Protocol, including consideration of the table Towards Implementation of the SARD Protocol developed at the last WG SARD meeting in September 2018 in Vatra Dornei, Romania;*
- *The CCIC asks the Parties, especially the Hungarian Presidency, for support in finding the best opportunities to use new CAP for the implementation of the SARD Protocol;*
- *The CCIC welcomes submission of the project proposal on Mountain Value Chains to the Horizon 2020, and encourages the Secretariat to support the representation of the Carpathians in the project and the project implementation, if successful;*
- *The CCIC requests the Secretariat to circulate the draft Memorandum of Cooperation between Euromontana for final consultation, finalization and approval prior to the COP6; (repeated from section on Activities related to cooperation with other conventions or international bodies);*

- *The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to share information about the intergroup of the European Parliament - "SMART Villages for Rural Communities in Sparsely populated, Mountainous and Rural Territories" in order to promote support of the MEPs from the Carpathian countries.*

### **Sustainable forest management**

Mr. Marco Trombetti, representing the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Center on Urban, Land and Soil system, reported on the status and progress of undertaken activities supporting the work of the WG on Sustainable Forest Management, especially regarding the finalization of the Inventory of the Virgin Forest.

Mr. Andreas Beckmann, representing WWF CEE made an intervention regarding the illegal logging in the Carpathians, which was then reflected in the CCIC recommendations. WWF CEE asked to address the illegal logging issues during the workshop on close to nature forest management which is offered by the Czech Republic in cooperation with Slovakia. WWF CEE will consult with the Secretariat and the hosts of the workshop on this matter in due course.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes organization of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WG Forest in June 2019 in Zvolen, Slovakia, and thanks Slovakia for its organization in cooperation with the Secretariat;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the work and support of the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Center on Urban, Land and Soil System, especially on development of the Inventory of Virgin Forest and integration of the Carpathians forest data in the Forest Information System for Europe; and asks for further support;*
- *The CCIC urges the Parties, which have not yet done so, to complete the revision of the official Inventory of Virgin Forest;*
- *The CCIC asked the Parties to consider possible extension of the Inventory of Virgin Forest of other degrees of naturalness;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the proposal of the Czech Republic and support offered by Slovakia to organize a workshop on close-to-nature forest management for the Carpathian countries; and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the idea of an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services and requests the WG Forest, WG Climate Change, relevant partners to support its development, and the Secretariat to facilitate the process;*
- *The CCIC recognizes that illegal logging is a significant and complex issue across a number of the Carpathian countries, which can have trans-boundary effects that require international cooperation;*
- *The CCIC supports the exchange of information and coordination of efforts to address the problem of illegal logging*

### **Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy**

Ms. Hildegard Mayer, representing WWF CEE presented the outcomes of the project TRANSGREEN - Green Infrastructure Planning in the Danube-Carpathian Region for the Benefit of People and Nature. It was commonly agreed

that great results of the project, such as the [Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature in the Carpathian countries](#), should be widely promoted and used.

The Secretariat reported on the status of the Sustainable Transport Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathians and informed that after incorporating the comments to the document received from the Czech Republic and Romania, an advance draft will be circulated to the CCIC and the WG Transport and WG biodiversity for a hopefully last round of consultation.

Mr. Hryhorii Parchuk, in personal expert capacity, informed about the initial idea of developing a new Protocol to the Carpathian Convention on Sustainable Energy.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 9th meeting of the WG Transport, done by the Secretariat in cooperation with the TRANSGREEN project;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the results of the TRANSGREEN project (such as the Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature in the Carpathian countries); encourages the Parties and the Secretariat to further promote them at the Carpathian, European level;*
- *The CCIC urges the Parties and the WG Transport to finalise the Strategic Action Plan for fostering the implementation of the Transport Protocol, to be then submitted to the COP6 for adoption;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the submission of the SAVEGREEN project proposal to the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme and encourages the Secretariat to support its implementation, if successful;*
- *The CCIC takes note of the initial information on the intent to develop the Protocol on Sustainable Energy to the Carpathian Convention to be further discussed at the expert level.*

#### **Sustainable tourism**

Ms. Alina Szasz, Brasov County Council, on behalf of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) presented the interim report on CSTP activities. The Secretariat will follow up with the respective Parties regarding the draft Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) and its Centres.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC invites the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) to share information on CSTP activities on more regular basis; requests that in the future the CSTP reports should become an integral part of the overall Carpathian Convention Progress Report;*
- *The CCIC reiterates its advice to the CSTP partners to provide an update on progress in CSTP Centers' establishment and their formal structure;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the comments received from Poland on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the CSTP Centres Poland and the Secretariat, thanks the Secretariat for drafting the MoC and requests the relevant CSTP Centres to provide comments to the draft;*

- *The CCIC notes the implementation of the “Cooperation of V4+ rural tourism actors through social and digital innovation project” under the Visegrad Fund and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;*
- *The CCIC notes the implementation of the “Ethno Carpathia” project related with the already existing international Carpathian brand CARPATHIA, under the cross-border Interreg Poland-Slovakia Programme, and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;*
- *The CCIC notes the implementation of the project “Thematic Trail Trigger” under the Interreg Europe Programme and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the proposal of Romania (or other) to organize the next meeting of the WG Tourism and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization in due course.*

### **Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge**

Ms. Danuta Cichoń Danuta, Director of Regional Economy Department of the Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland, in the capacity of the project leader, presented the project proposal – Carpathian Route - exploring, promoting and protecting the richness of the cultural and natural heritage of the Carpathian Region under the first call of the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation. The project proposal is still under assessment.

The Secretariat mentioned the relevance of implementation of the Road Map to Achieve the Objectives of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention and asked the Parties to undertake voluntary activities deriving from the Road Map.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the submission of the project proposal Carpathian Route to the first call of the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation; requests the WG Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge and the Secretariat to support its implementation, if successful;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Parties to undertake other tasks deriving from the Road Map to Achieve the Objectives of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention;*
- *The CCIC notes that one of the possible project outcome documents of the Carpathian Route project includes a draft thematic Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge to the Carpathian Framework Convention.*

### **Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning**

The updates related to the cooperation with the Science for the Carpathians is reflected in the prior part of the meeting report (page 2.) Cooperation with the European Environment Agency on further development and integration of the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System ([CCIBIS](#)) into the EU/EEA information systems and on preparation of a regional fact-sheet on the Carpathian region to promote and raise awareness on specific aspects of the region were appreciated and expected to continue in the future.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the cooperation with the European Environment Agency, in particular the possible further development and integration of the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System, data platform and preparation of a regional fact-sheet on the Carpathian region to promote and raise awareness on specific aspects of the region, and requests the Secretariat to facilitate the processes;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the special session with the Science for the Carpathians during the 9<sup>th</sup> WG Biodiversity meeting for a better exchange of scientific information in order to support decision making processes; and encourages the S4C and the Secretariat to further support the process;*
- *The CCIC welcomes information on organization of the next Forum Carpaticum in Brno, the Czech Republic on 22 - 26 June 2020; and encourages the Secretariat to further support its organization;*
- *The CCIC welcomes other activities undertaken by the Science for the Carpathians, including organization of the Interdisciplinary Summer School for Young Scientists, the Cooperation with the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region, as well as improving information sharing, especially on the Carpathian research data; and invites S4C to further support the Carpathian Convention work.*

### **Climate Change**

Mr. Sandor Szalai, Szent Istvan University, in his capacity as the chairman of the Working Group on Climate Change, delivered a short presentation on the WG Climate Change activities and presented the Presidency discussion paper on a structured step-by-step approach for strengthening networking and collaboration on climate change in the Carpathians, including proposals for the structure, timeline, role and concrete tasks of the Working Group, in particular with regard to the implementation of Article 12bis. The Parties were asked to provide written comments to the discussion paper<sup>2</sup>.

Poland welcomed the idea of strengthening the role of the WG Climate Change and the importance of mainstreaming the climate actions into other sectors. Poland suggested to incorporate into the activities of the WG Climate Change issues related to water managements (water retention, wetlands, floods)

The Secretariat informed about the recommendation of the WG Forest and WG Climate Change to develop an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services. The CCIC agreed to this idea. The details of the process were entrusted to the Secretariat, which will follow up on it in due course.

### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC encourages the Parties to accelerate the ratification processes of the Article 12bis prior to the Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6) in 2020;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to consult with S4C the inclusion of the climate change topic in the Forum Carpaticum programme, either in a form of a dedicated session or focus on mainstreaming climate change topic into other sessions;*

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<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat will send a separate notification to the Parties in this respect.

- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 6th meeting of the WG Climate Change on October 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, and thanks Hungary for its organization in cooperation with the Secretariat;*
- *The CCIC welcomes organization of training on the Climate Data Store (CDS), part of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) User Learning Services, organized for Hungary with a kind invitation extended to representatives of other Carpathian countries. CDS training was kindly offered by Wageningen University & Research;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the Hungarian Presidency discussion paper on strengthening the mandate of the Working Group on Climate Change, in particular with regard to the implementation of Article 12bis acknowledging the importance of mainstreaming climate actions into other sectors; requests the Parties to provide written comments to the Presidency discussion paper; and asks the Secretariat to support the process outlined in the paper;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the offer by Hungary to host the next meeting of the Working Group on Climate Change, in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020, if possible and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Working Group on Climate Change to consider closer cooperation with the Alpine Climate Board, especially regarding the implementation of the Alpine Climate Target System 2050;*
- *The CCIC encourages the Parties to consider the inclusion of mountainous aspects into their national reports for Global Stocktake Under the Paris Agreement;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the idea of an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services and requests the WG Forest, WG Climate Change, relevant partners to support its developments, and the Secretariat to facilitate the process (repeated from the Forest Section);*
- *The CCIC encourages the WG Climate Change to further consider ideas for cooperation with the EUSDR PA4 and PA5; as well as with the ICPDR Tisza Group;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the side event From Andes to Alps and other mountains: Elevating regional cooperation on monitoring and climate change adaptation to be organized at the UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid, Spain on 11 December 2019.*

### **Awareness raising, education and public participation**

Ms. Zita Gellér representing the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary reported the first Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development, which was organized mainly by the Hungarian Presidency with support of the Secretariat on 16 -18 April 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, and presented the Seminar recommendations.

#### CCIC 2019 recommendations:

- *The CCIC welcomes the organization of the Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development done by the Hungarian Presidency in cooperation with the Secretariat;*
- *The CCIC will further consider the recommendations of the ESD Seminar, including the idea of holding follow-up Carpathian ESD seminars and meetings on a periodic basis, in order to facilitate networking, communication and exchange on education for sustainable development in the framework of the Carpathian Convention, and joint projects, including among ESD experts from the Carpathian countries and beyond;*
- *The CCIC welcomes the results of the project Integrating nature protection and sustainable tourism development into the Carpathian region via science-practice-policy interface provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety by the Advisory Assistance Programme for environmental protection in*

the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighboring the European Union (AAP); and requests the Secretariat to apply for a follow up project;

- The CCIC noted the update on the Svydovets case, where a recreation complex is to be built, provided by the Free Svydovets Initiative Group; and welcomes the proposal by Ukraine to send an official position in writing to the CCIC on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection of Ukraine in this respect.

### ***Date and venue of the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention***

Poland, the host of the COP6, informed that the COP6, which will be held in Rzeszow, Poland, is tentatively scheduled on 14-16 September 2020. The confirmation of the COP6 dates will follow shortly. Poland thanked the Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie Region for its support to and cooperation on the organization of the COP6 meeting and also the kind offer to host the Summit of the Carpathian Regions in conjunction with the COP6. The preliminary priorities of the future Polish Presidency will be to focus on the EU accession and cooperation on regional and local levels.

More information will be communicated by the Secretariat in due course.

### ***Upcoming meetings of the Carpathian Convention***

The Secretariat informed that a tentative list of the Carpathian Convention meetings to be organized in 2020 will be circulated together with the CCIC 2019 Meeting Report.

### ***Other matters***

Poland informed about initial plans to organize a working meeting of selected representatives of three relevant Carpathian Convention's Working Groups: WG Biodiversity, WG Spatial Development, WG SARD - supplemented by experts and practitioners in environmental education and awareness raising - is being proposed to be organized in Poland in the fall of 2020. The meeting would be supported by the LIFE project "Green-Go! Local initiatives for deployment of green infrastructure within Natura 2000 sites in the Carpathians", implemented in years 2017-2020 by UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre.

Ms. Iryna Shchoka, representing European Wilderness Society and the Free Svydovets Initiative Group, made an intervention regarding the recreation complex to be built in Svydovets, Ukraine. Ukraine informed that the official position of the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection of Ukraine will be sent in writing.

The CCIC noted the report of the Secretariat on the highly appreciated regular contributions by the Parties, and on the information that no increase of contributions to the Carpathian Convention is to be considered for the next implementation period 2020 – 2023.

### ***Closure of the meeting***

The Presidency, Hungary, together with the Secretariat, thanked the CCIC meeting participants for their active participation and contribution to the meeting discussion and closed the meeting. The Parties expressed appreciation towards the Secretariat's work and commitment.

## ANNEX1

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE BY SECTORS

CCIC 2019 recommendations/next steps prior COP6 – based on the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention, 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020

Activities	Actions deriving from CC PoW 2018 – 2020	CCIC 2019 recommendations/next steps prior COP6
<b>Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and Conference of the Parties (COP)</b>		
<p><b>Documentation for COP, including documentation on sectoral issues, integrated reports, strategies/ strategic action plans/protocols for priority issues,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>WGs Terms of Reference,</b></li> <li>- <b>Meeting reports and recommendations</b></li> <li>- <b>6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Parties, shall prepare comprehensive information and documentation for the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention – COP6, including guidance and overview of the implementation and work conducted under thematic Working Groups, review of MoUs, agreements and other relevant initiatives under the Convention.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to prepare a first draft of the COP6 Decisions together with the outgoing and incoming Presidencies, and consult it with the CCIC, finalize it and submit for the COP6 adoption;</li> <li>2) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further develop a discussion paper on improving structure and operations of the Working Groups, including clear proposals in this regard, especially on the role of the Chair of WGs; consult it with the CCIC in written procedure and/or at the additional CCIC meeting prior to the COP6, finalize and submit for the COP6 approval, if needed;</li> <li>3) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to prepare all relevant documents for the COP6 adoption in due course;</li> <li>4) If needed, an additional CCIC meeting will be convened prior to the COP6. The Secretariat will be responsible for sharing information and preparation in this regard;</li> </ol>
	<p>Secretariat, in consultation with the host government and the CCIC, shall make all necessary arrangements and preparations for the organization of the COP6.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to be in regular contact with the incoming Presidency regarding the organization of the COP6, and shall ensure regular information sharing with the Parties;</li> </ol>
<b>Implementation of the Carpathian Convention</b>		

<p><b>Development of a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secretariat shall develop guidelines and reporting template in consultation with the Parties, to be approved by the COP</li> <li>- Secretariat and Working Groups shall assist the Parties in the preparation of their first national report, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>6) The CCIC welcomes the first draft of guidelines and reporting template and asks the Parties to provide comments in writing to the draft by end of February 2020;</p> <p>7) <i>The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further work on the draft guidelines and reporting template and finalize it in consultation with Parties, WGs, and CCIC, submit for the COP6 approval, possibly as a provisional reporting template;</i></p>
<p><b>Other activities related to implementation of the Carpathian Convention deriving from the COP5 Decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secretariat shall develop projects establishing outreach programmes targeting local and regional authorities, universities and other relevant stakeholders to increase their awareness of the importance of the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region, and of the Convention's activities;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall continue to promote the Carpathian Convention and sustainable mountain development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall continue taking all necessary efforts, in collaboration with the Parties and stakeholders, to mobilize financial means for development and implementation of projects in order to foster the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols;</li> <li>- Parties shall further solicit support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention from the relevant financial instruments.</li> </ul>	<p>8) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to, in cooperation with relevant project partners, develop and submit a project proposal on outreach programmes for the next possible call of the International Visegrad Fund;</p> <p>9) The CCIC supports the idea of establishing a separate sector of the Programme of Work related to cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders, which should be reflected in the next COP Decision as "Cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders";</p>
<p><b>Cooperation with the Europe Union</b></p>		

<p><b>Activities related to the cooperation with EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall further engage in common activities with the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region and respective Priority Areas;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall continue promoting the integration of Carpathian priorities into the related Transnational "European Territorial Cooperation" (ETC) Programmes for the period 2014-2020, as well as other relevant funding programmes;</li> <li>- The Parties shall further cooperate with EU bodies in further promoting the Carpathian region within existing EU macroregional strategies;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall monitor development of the EU Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathian Region;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall coordinate with the interregional group "Carpathians" within the Committee of the Regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10) The CCIC recommends implementing the Road Map towards the official high-level request of the Carpathian Convention to the European Union to accede to the Carpathian Convention;</li> <li>11) The CCIC invites the UNEP Executive Director to inform the European Commission that the Carpathian Convention has expressed its interest to engage in the process, which should lead to an official high-level request to the Council of European Union for the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention;</li> <li>12) The CCIC welcomes the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable mountain development (A/RES/74/227), which appreciates the Carpathian Convention and its work, as well as "encourages greater efforts by States, all relevant stakeholders and the international community towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the enhancement of the well-being of their local populations".</li> <li>13) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further cooperate with EUSDR PAs and contribute to the implementation of the revised EUSDR Action Plan;</li> <li>14) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further monitor the developments related to Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians and the possible available transnational and Interreg programs, including the ENI CBC Hungary-Romania-Slovakia-Ukraine programme;</li> <li>15) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to continue cooperation with the Interregional group "Carpathians" of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland;</li> <li>16) The CCIC welcomes the support on promotion of the Carpathian Convention given by the Romania Presidency of the Council of the European Union.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies</b></p>		

<p><b>Activities related to cooperation with other conventions or international bodies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall continue to strengthen the cooperation with the Alpine Convention in fields such as institutional cooperation, the exchange of information and experience, the development and implementation of common projects, collaboration on implementation of the Conventions and their respective Programmes of Work, the implementation of the Programmes of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on Protected Areas and on Mountain Biodiversity and collaboration in the field of protected area networks in the Alps and the Carpathians;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall continue the cooperation with the Alpine Convention on implementation of the Declaration of the Conference the Role of Women in Mountain Regions and its recommendations, raise awareness on the topic and present this initiative in various international fora, among which the World Mountain Forum in 2018;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall further follow cooperation between the Secretariats of the Carpathian and Alpine Conventions and the Regional Academy on the United Nations (RAUN) in mentoring a group of researchers for the development of a study on women's 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, in January 2018 in Vienna, Austria;</li> <li>- The Parties and the CNPA members shall consider joining the organization of the Youth at the Top events in the future;</li> <li>- The Parties shall support the establishment and implementation of programmes to foster the further experience exchange between the Alps, Carpathians and other mountain regions;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17) The CCIC welcomes the Secretariat's engagement in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions and requests the Secretariat to continue contributing to the process, including increasing visibility of the Convention at the international level and preparation of relevant documents on role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post-2020 Framework, to be adopted at the COP6, and then announced at the CBD COP15 in China;</li> <li>18) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further support efforts in raising the importance of mountain biodiversity within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions;</li> <li>19) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to further consult with UNEP and other biodiversity related conventions regarding possible synergies for the implementation of the Post-2020 Framework, including possible contribution and involvement of the Carpathian Convention in Data Report Tool for MEAs (DaRT);</li> <li>20) The CCIC recommends involvement of the Carpathian Convention in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030 and requests the Secretariat to consult with UNEP on possible activities;</li> <li>21) The CCIC recommends the Secretariat to consider and consult possible ways and means for promoting the Carpathian Convention at the UN Summit on Biodiversity in New York 2020 to be held on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly;</li> <li>22) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to circulate the draft Memorandum of Cooperation between Euromontana for final consultation, finalization and approval prior to the COP6;</li> <li>23) The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the Alpine Convention and discuss with the respective Secretariat of the Alpine Convention on possible common activities, especially in the field of climate change and biodiversity, the latter possibly in the light of the MoU between the Carpathian Convention, the Alpine Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall implement the required activities and promote partnerships with other mountain regions, including interregional cooperation; UN Environment, all interested partners and donors, shall participate in and contribute to the process;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall further represent the Carpathian Convention in the external relations, and further cooperate and share experience with relevant partners and projects.</li> </ul>	<p>24) The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the Danube River Protection Convention and discuss with the ICPDR Secretariat on possible common activities;</p> <p>25) The CCIC welcomes the initiative to designate a Ukrainian-Romanian Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in the Maramures Ridge of the Carpathian Mountains;</p>
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
<p><b>Finalization of the Carpathian Red Lists</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall submit the official comments and/or positions on the Lists;</li> <li>- The CCIC shall consider the submission by the Parties;</li> <li>- The Parties shall consider undertaking further actions in instance of needed additional work to complete the Red Lists.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Consideration of the National Reports on the Implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CCIC shall consider the conclusions of the summary of the reports prepared by the Secretariat with the aim to strengthen the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol in the future;</li> <li>- The Parties/WG Biodiversity shall take steps in order to strengthen the implementation, as proposed by the CCIC.</li> </ul>	<p>26) The CCIC welcomes efforts made in strengthening the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol and requests the WG Biodiversity to provide further inputs into the Comprehensive reporting format for the Carpathian Convention;</p>
<p><b>Development of International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Biodiversity shall prioritize its work on large carnivores;</li> <li>- WG Biodiversity, with support of the Secretariat, shall elaborate an International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian Populations of Large Carnivores.</li> </ul>	<p>27) The CCIC welcomes prioritization of the large carnivores' topic in the work of the WG Biodiversity;</p> <p>28) The CCIC welcomes the draft International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian Populations of Large Carnivores, and request the WG Biodiversity, with</p>

<p><b>Carpathian populations of large carnivores</b></p>		<p>support of the Secretariat and other partners, to finalize and submit it for adoption at the COP6;</p> <p>29) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 9<sup>th</sup> WG Biodiversity meeting and EUSDR PA2 Energy workshop on 29-31 May 2019 in Ostrava, Czech Republic; and thanks the Czech Republic and the Secretariat for organization</p> <p>30) The CCIC welcomes organization of the joint meeting of transboundary workshops on large carnivores and 10<sup>th</sup> WG Biodiversity meeting on 25 - 28 November 2019 in Coltesti, Romania and thanks WWF Romania for provided support;</p>
<p>Harmonization of methodologies for the population-based monitoring of large carnivores</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat shall work together with the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation through a work plan for concrete activities, including possible harmonization of methodologies for the population-based monitoring of large carnivores</li> </ul>	<p>31) The CCIC welcomes contributions of the WG Biodiversity and International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) in developing of the <i>Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in the Carpathians</i>; and requests the WG Biodiversity, together with the Secretariat and CIC to finalize the Report at the earliest convenience;</p> <p>32) Based on the Report, the CCIC encourages the above-mentioned partners to discuss and come up with proposals on harmonization of monitoring of large carnivores in the Carpathians;</p>
<p><b>Relevance of the topic on Invasive Alien Species for the Carpathians</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Biodiversity to explore the relevance of this topic for the Carpathians, and suggest possible actions for the consideration of the CCIC at its next meeting</li> <li>- WG Biodiversity / Parties shall take actions as proposed by the CCIC</li> </ul>	<p>-</p>
<p><b>Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and its further activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ANPAA shall restore active communication with the CNPA Focal Points;</li> <li>- CNPA shall carry out concrete activities in order to implement the CNPA Medium – Term Strategy;</li> </ul>	<p>33) The CCIC welcomes the approval of the CentralParks project, approved under the Interreg Central Europe, and encourages the CNPA, WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to further support its implementation;</p> <p>34) The CCIC encourages CNPA chair to further strengthen communication and sharing relevant information with the CNPA Focal Points;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CNPA shall further cooperate with ALPARC and DANUBE PARKS on ecological connectivity, exchanges on protected areas matters, education and other specific topics common to the three networks.</li> </ul>	<p>35) The CCIC welcomes the implementation of the project <i>Three Networks, Two macroregions, One vision - development of Green Infrastructure to foster ecological connectivity between Danube, Carpathians and Alpes</i>, and requests CNPA to share the result of the project;</p> <p>36) The CCIC welcomes cooperation between the ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS and CNPA under the ALPBIONET2030 project and elaboration of <i>Recommendations and Action Plan ALPS-DANUBE-CARPATHIANS cooperation for ecological connectivity</i>, and requests the CNPA chair to share the final version of the document with the CNPA Focal Points, WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat as soon as available;</p> <p>37) The CCIC welcomes the organization of a CNPA Steering Group Meeting back to back to the Centralparks Project Partners meeting at the end of November 2020 in the Czech Republic;</p> <p>38) The CCIC encourages the WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to support the organization of the Conference for the Carpathian Protected Areas within the ConnectGreen and Centralparks projects by mid-2021;</p> <p>39) The CCIC welcomes the idea of a project on pan-European ecological connectivity proposed by UNEP under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and requests the Secretariat to follow up on it.</p>
<p><b>Activities on the Carpathian wetlands</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CWI shall enhance cooperation with Ramsar Convention;</li> <li>- CWI shall mobilize resources;</li> <li>- CWI shall take appropriate action on the effective conservation, restoration, management and sustainable use of Carpathian wetlands;</li> <li>- CWI shall take appropriate action on development of education and training in these topics;</li> </ul>	<p>40) The CCIC welcomes organization of the international course on Sustainable agriculture in wetlands, held on 22-27 September 2019 in Czech Republic by the CWI and the Czech Republic;</p> <p>41) The CCIC welcomes designation of the new Ramsar sites in the Carpathians, namely in Poland: Czerwone bog woodland - nature reserve (<a href="#">Ramsar Site no. 2339</a>), Glacial lakes in the Tatra National Park (<a href="#">Site no. 2340</a>), Peat bogs in the Tatra National Park (<a href="#">Site no. 2341</a>). In Ukraine: Prut River Headwaters (<a href="#">Site no. 2395</a>), Pohorilets River Headwaters (<a href="#">Site no. 2397</a>), Romania-Friendship Cave, (<a href="#">Site no. 2396</a>), Narcissi Valley (<a href="#">Site no. 2390</a>), Ozirnyi-Brebeneskul (<a href="#">Site no. 2394</a>), Black Bog (<a href="#">Site no. 2389</a>), Nadsiania Raised Bog (<a href="#">Site number 2392</a>).</p>

		42) The CCIC welcomes the voluntary contribution made by Hungary to the Carpathian Wetland Initiative and encourages other Parties to do so as well;
<b>Activities on wildlife crime prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall disseminate the results of the Assessment of the Wild for DC project to relevant international initiatives with a view to support synergies;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall explore ways of possible cooperation on joint activities addressing the issue of wildlife crime, including possible cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall work on project development on wildlife crime prevention, in cooperation with WWF DCP and relevant stakeholders;</li> </ul>	43) The CCIC welcomes submission of a project proposal <i>SwiPE- Successful Wildlife Crime Prosecution in Europe</i> under the EU LIFE Programme 2019 call, done by the WWF with support of the Secretariat; and requests the Secretariat to further discuss joint activities between UNEP, UNODC and WWF, if the project proposal is successful;
<b>Support for ConnectGREEN project (if successful)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Biodiversity shall involve in project activities, especially in respect to the development of a strategy on the identification, preservation, management of ecological corridors focusing on large carnivores' needs in the Carpathian region;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall follow the process and participates in it by providing expertise through an agreement with the Lead Partner.</li> </ul>	44) The CCIC welcomes the approval of the ConnectGREEN project, approved under the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, and encourages WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat to further support its implementation, especially concerning the development of the <i>Strategy for the identification and conservation of ecological corridors in the Carpathians</i> to be ideally adopted at COP6 in 2020;
<b>Spatial Development</b>		
<b>Activities related to the local administrative units (LAU) within which the Parties implement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall submit the LAUs to the Secretariat if they have not done so yet;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall publish and disseminate this information, including to local and regional stakeholders involved in the</li> </ul>	45) The CCIC requests the Secretariat to circulate the map to the Focal Points for checking and approval;

<p><b>the Convention and its Protocols</b></p>	<p>implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the region.</p>	
<p><b>Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management</b></p>		
<p><b>Cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, including the Tisza Group</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall explore possibilities for enhanced cooperation with the ICPDR/Tisza Group on with a special focus on climate change adaptation, agriculture or water nexus;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall continue providing relevant expertise to the JOINTISZA project;</li> </ul>	<p>46) The CCIC encourages the Secretariat and the respective WGs to strengthen cooperation and develop a project proposal together with the ICPDR/Tisza Group and the EUSDR PA4 and PA5;</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</b></p>		
<p><b>Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD Protocol)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall undertake, whenever possible, actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol;</li> <li>- WG SARD shall prepare and prioritize strategic actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol;</li> <li>- Secretariat shall enhance cooperation with ICPDR on sustainable agriculture and rural development.</li> </ul>	<p>47) The CCIC welcomes the proposal of Hungary to host the next meeting of the WG SARD and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization;</p> <p>48) The CCIC encourages the WG SARD to further prioritize strategic actions for the implementation of the SARD Protocol, including consideration of the <i>table Towards Implementation of the SARD Protocol</i> developed at the last WG SARD meeting in September 2018 in Vatra Dornei, Romania;</p> <p>49) The CCIC asks the Parties, especially the Hungarian Presidency, for support in finding the best opportunities to use new CAP for the implementation of the SARD Protocol;</p> <p>50) The CCIC welcomes submission of the project proposal on Mountain Value Chains to the Horizon 2020, and encourages the Secretariat to support the representation of the Carpathians in the project and the project implementation, if successful;</p>

		<p>51) As per point 22;</p> <p>52) The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to share information about the intergroup of the European Parliament - “SMART Villages for Rural Communities in Sparsely populated, Mountainous and Rural Territories” in order to promote support of the MEPs from the Carpathian countries;</p>
<p><b>Sustainable forest management</b></p>		
<p><b>Finalization of the inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties, with support of the WG Forest and other relevant stakeholders, shall complete the inventory of virgin forest before the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention;</li> </ul>	<p>53) The CCIC welcomes organization of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WG Forest in June 2019 in Zvolen, Slovakia, and thanks Slovakia for its organization in cooperation with the Secretariat;</p> <p>54) The CCIC welcomes the work and support of the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Center on Urban, Land and Soil System, especially on development of the Inventory of Virgin Forest and integration of the of Carpathians forest data in the Forest Information System for Europe; and asks for further support;</p> <p>55) The CCIC urges the Parties, who have not yet done so, to complete the revision of the official Inventory of Virgin Forest;</p>
<p><b>Activities related to the natural forest in the Carpathians</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Forest shall continue work on typology of natural forests;</li> <li>- WG Forest shall propose voluntary guidelines for measures unifying methodologies for the sustainable management of natural forests in the Carpathian region, implementing, inter alia, Article 11 of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention;</li> </ul>	<p>56) The CCIC asked the Parties to consider possible extension of the Inventory of Virgin Forest of other degrees of naturalness;</p> <p>57) The CCIC welcomes the proposal of the Czech Republic and support offered by Slovakia to organize a workshop on close-to-nature forest management for the Carpathian countries; and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization;</p>

<p><b>Strengthening cooperation with WG Climate Change</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Forest shall strengthen its cooperation with the WG Climate Change to facilitate the implementation of Article 14 of the Forest Protocol;</li> </ul>	<p>58) The CCIC welcomes the idea of an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services and requests the WG Forest, WG Climate Change, relevant partners to support its development, and the Secretariat to facilitate the process;</p>
<p><b>Activities on prevention of illegal logging in the Carpathians</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall take urgent and forceful measures to address the problem of illegal logging in the Carpathians;</li> </ul>	<p>59) The CCIC recognises that illegal logging is a significant and complex issue across a number of the Carpathian countries, which can have trans-boundary effects that require international cooperation;</p> <p>60) The CCIC supports the exchange of information and coordination of efforts to address the problem.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy</b></p>		
<p><b>Implementation of the Transport Protocol</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Transport, with support of the TRANSGREEN project, shall develop a Strategic Action Plan for fostering the implementation of the Transport Protocol, other Working Groups and relevant stakeholders are invited to support the process,</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall continue to participate in the TRANSGREEN project by providing expertise through an agreement with the Lead Partner.</li> </ul>	<p>61) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WG Transport, done by the Secretariat in cooperation with the TRANSGREEN project;</p> <p>62) The CCIC welcomes the results of the TRANSGREEN project (such as the Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature in the Carpathian countries); encourages the Parties and the Secretariat to further promote them at the Carpathian, European level;</p> <p>63) The CCIC urges the Parties and the WG Transport to finalise the Strategic Action Plan for fostering the implementation of the Transport Protocol, to be then submitted to the COP6 for adoption;</p> <p>64) The CCIC welcomes the submission of the SAVEGREEN project proposal to the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme and encourages the Secretariat to support its implementation, if successful;</p>

		65) The CCIC takes note of the initial information on the intent to develop the Protocol on Sustainable Energy to the Carpathian Convention proposed by Ukraine;
<b>Sustainable tourism</b>		
<b>Implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall actively participate in implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall elaborate collaborative agreements with the centers of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP);</li> <li>- WG Tourism, the CSTP and its centers shall contribute to the Carpathian wide report on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols;</li> <li>- CSTP and its centers shall further elaborate on the development of the common Carpathian brand</li> <li>- WG Tourism shall consider the Set of Indicators for measuring the positive and negative effects of tourism in the Carpathians as a useful source for the implementation of Article 24 of the Tourism Protocol;</li> </ul>	<p>66) The CCIC invites the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) to share information on CSTP activities on more regular basis; requests that in the future the CSTP reports should become an integral part of the overall Carpathian Convention Progress Report</p> <p>67) The CCIC reiterates its advice to the CSTP partners to provide an update on progress in CSTP Centers' establishment and their formal structure;</p> <p>68) The CCIC welcomes the comments received from Poland on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the CSTP Centres Poland and the Secretariat; thanks the Secretariat for drafting the MoC and request the relevant CSTP Centres to provide comments to the draft;</p> <p>69) The CCIC notes the implementation of the "Cooperation of V4+ rural tourism actors through social and digital innovation project" under the Visegrad Fund and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;</p> <p>70) The CCIC notes the implementation of the "Etno Carpathia" project related with the already existing international Carpathian brand CARPATHIA, under the cross-border Interreg Poland-Slovakia Programme, and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;</p> <p>71) The CCIC notes the implementation of the project "Thematic Trail Trigger" under the Interreg Europe Programme and encourages the CSTP to share the result of the project;</p>

		72) The CCIC welcomes the proposal of Romania (or other) to organize the next meeting of the WG Tourism and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its organization in due course;
<b>Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge</b>		
<b>Promotion of the World Heritage Sites in the Carpathians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat, in close cooperation with WG Cultural Heritage and potentially WG Tourism, shall take necessary action to develop the concept of promoting the World Heritage Sites in the Carpathians with an aim to support sustainable tourism development in the region;</li> </ul>	<p>73) The CCIC welcomes the submission of the project proposal Carpathian Route to the first call of the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation; requests the WG Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge and the Secretariat to support its implementation, if successful;</p> <p>74) The CCIC encourages the Parties to undertake other tasks deriving from the Road Map to Achieve the Objectives of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention;</p>
<b>Reconsideration of the need for the Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge and other relevant activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG Cultural Heritage shall reconsider the need for the Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge and identify priorities for the implementation of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention;</li> </ul>	75) The CCIC notes that one of the possible project outcome documents of the Carpathian Route project includes a draft thematic Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge to the Carpathian Framework Convention;
<b>Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning</b>		
Activities related to implementation of the Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall explore possibilities of cooperation with the ICPDR and the EUSDR on environmental safety/accidental prevention control in order to facilitate implementation of Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention;</li> </ul>	76) The CCIC welcomes cooperation with the European Environment Agency, in particular to possible further development and integration of the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System and preparation of a regional fact-sheet on the Carpathian region to promote and raise awareness on specific aspects of the region, and requests the Secretariat to facilitate the processes;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretariat shall further develop, with support of the TRANSGREEN project and possible future projects, the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS), as an information system accessible to all the Parties, gathering available data sets, information on local and regional administrations, outcomes of projects and other relevant data;</li> <li>- The Parties shall consider engaging of respective European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) Focal Points in the implementation of Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention;</li> </ul>	<p>77) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the special session with the Science for the Carpathians during the 9<sup>th</sup> WG Biodiversity meeting for a better exchange of scientific information in order to support decision making processes; and encourage the S4C and the Secretariat to further support the process;</p> <p>78) The CCIC welcomes information on organization of the next Forum Carpaticum in Brno, the Czech Republic on 22 - 26 June 2020; and encourages the Secretariat to further support its organization;</p> <p>79) The CCIC welcomes other activities undertaken by the Science for the Carpathians, including organization of the Interdisciplinary Summer School for Young Scientists, the Cooperation with the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region, as well as improving information sharing, especially on the Carpathian research data; and invites S4C to further support the Carpathian Convention work.</p>
<p><b>Climate Change</b></p>		
<p><b>Implementation of the Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention on Climate Change</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties shall begin the implementation of the Article 12bis by further development of climate change related activities in the Carpathian region;</li> <li>- WG Climate Change to prepare and prioritize strategic actions in this respect.</li> </ul>	<p>80) The CCIC encourages the Parties to accelerate the ratification processes of the Article 12bis prior to the Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6) in 2020;</p> <p>81) The CCIC encourages the Secretariat to consult with S4C inclusion of the climate change topic in the Forum Carpaticum programme, either in a form of a dedicated session or focus on mainstreaming climate change topic into other sessions;</p> <p>82) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the 6th meeting of the WG Climate Change on October 2019 in Budapest, Hungary, and thanks Hungary for its organization in cooperation with the Secretariat;</p>

- 83) The CCIC welcomes organization training on the Climate Data Store (CDS), part of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) User Learning Services, was organized for Hungary with a kind invitation extended to representatives of other Carpathian countries. CDS training was kindly offered by Wageningen University & Research;
- 84) The CCIC welcomes the Hungarian Presidency discussion paper on strengthening the mandate of the Working Group on Climate Change, in particular with regard to the implementation of Article12bis acknowledging the importance of mainstreaming climate actions into other sectors; requests the Parties to provide written comments to the Presidency discussion paper by 31 January 2020, and asks the Secretariat to support the process outlined in the paper;
- 85) The CCIC welcomes the offer by Hungary to host the next meeting of the Working Group on Climate Change, in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020, if possible;
- 86) The CCIC encourages the Working Group on Climate Change to consider closer cooperation with the Alpine Climate Board, especially in regard to implementation of the Alpine Climate Target System 2050;
- 87) The CCIC encourages the Parties to consider inclusion of mountainous aspects to their national reports for Global Stocktake Under the Paris Agreement;
- 88) As per point 58;
- 89) The CCIC encourages the WG Climate Change to further consider ideas for cooperation with the EUSDR PA4 and PA5; as well as with the ICPDR Tisza Group;
- 90) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the side event *From Andes to Alps and other mountains: Elevating regional cooperation on monitoring and climate change adaptation* to be organized at the UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid, Spain on 11 December 2019;

Awareness raising, education and public participation

<p><b>Activities related to implementation of the Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Parties and other stakeholders shall get actively involved in development and promoting of the Mountain Biodiversity for our Wellbeing online platform, and the Secretariat shall support the process;</li> <li>- The Secretariat shall support organization of a seminar in 2018/2019 on the issues on environmental and sustainable development education and awareness raising in kindergartens and schools with the aim of exchanging best practices in the Carpathian region and exploring of further cooperation, as proposed by the Hungarian Presidency;</li> <li>- The Parties, the Secretariat and relevant partners, among others the UNECE and S4C, shall consider common activities on awareness raising, for instance, establishing contest for school students and/or young scientists with reference to the Carpathian matters;</li> <li>- The Secretariat and relevant stakeholders shall consider development of a follow up project of the Lifelong Learning project Innovation in Rural Tourism (InRuTou).</li> </ul>	<p>91) The CCIC welcomes the organization of the Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development done by the Hungarian Presidency in cooperation with the Secretariat;</p> <p>92) The CCIC will further consider the recommendations of the ESD Seminar, including the idea of holding follow-up Carpathian ESD seminars and meetings on a periodic basis, in order to facilitate networking, communication and exchange on education for sustainable development in the framework of the Carpathian Convention, and joint projects, including among ESD experts from the Carpathian countries and beyond;</p> <p>93) The CCIC welcomes the results of the project Integrating nature protection and sustainable tourism development into the Carpathian region via science-practice-policy interface provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety by the Advisory Assistance Programme for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighboring the European Union (AAP); and requests the Secretariat to apply for a follow up project;</p> <p>94) The CCIC noted the update on the Svydovets case, where a recreation complex is to be built, provided by the Free Svydovets Initiative Group; and welcomes the proposal by Ukraine to send an official position in writing to the CCIC on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection of Ukraine in this respect.</p>
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## ANNEX2

### *Carpathian Convention and the EU accession*

The Carpathian Convention, a multilateral environmental agreement on protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region was signed in 2003 by seven countries (5 EU Countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and 2 non – EU Countries: Serbia and Ukraine), entered into force in 2006.

The Carpathian Convention unites seven Carpathian countries in a unique partnership, providing a transnational framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy integration, an open forum for participation by stakeholders and the public, and a platform for developing and implementing transnational strategies, programmes and projects for protection and sustainable development of the region.

**The Carpathian Convention provisions and its Protocols, consistent with the EU legislation, facilitate the implementation of the EU policies in all the Parties to the Convention and, therefore, the Carpathian Convention plays an important role in the framework of the EU environmental and regional policies. Furthermore, the Carpathian Convention strengthens regional cooperation between the five EU Member States in Central Europe and, at the same time, facilitates the integration process of strategic non – EU countries such as Ukraine and Serbia.**

The Carpathian region faces many challenges which are of the European importance and, therefore, require better cooperation at the EU level. The accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention, as it is the case for other regional conventions such as the Alpine Convention or the Danube River Protection Convention and other, would allow for **better and more substantial cooperation in terms of preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, climate change and sustainable transition of the Carpathian region.**

In this respect the Carpathian Convention Parties would like to reiterate their strong desire of the EU's participation to the Carpathian Convention, and engage in discussion with the EU institutions on the relevance of the Carpathian Convention for promoting sustainable development and protection in Europe, giving an excellent example for regional cooperation at the European but also international level.

Formally, the invitation for the EU to join the Convention has been expressed, inter alia, in numerous official letters and COP's Decisions starting from COP1 in 2006 and is still maintained. Currently, the Parties to the Convention are in consultation with the Secretariat regarding the **next steps for the EU accession process** (see the Road Map towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention below).

The accession to the Carpathian Convention by the European Union would contribute to raising the profile of the Carpathian region and its environmental challenges, supporting green and **sustainable future of the region for the benefit of both, the Carpathians and the European Union**. At the same time, the Carpathian Convention can play an important role as a **regional instrument for implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework** and a model for **mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors**.

Support of relevant actors, such as the Parties, especially the Ministries responsible for the Environment and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, other EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, UNEP and other institutions, in this process will be instrumental for bringing it to successful conclusions.

## ***Road Map towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention:***

- **11-13 December 2019, Budapest** - 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, which is responsible for preparing COP's Decisions.
  - CCIC recommends engaging in the process;
- **19 December 2019, EU Environmental Council** - meeting of UNEP and the European Commission (*postposed*)
  - Clear political message from the Carpathian Countries should be communicated during the meeting.
- **March 2020, EU Environmental Council** - meeting between HU Minister, PL Minister and the EU Commissioner for Environment on the margins of the Environmental Council
  - The Carpathian Ministers will inform the Commissioner about the political will for the European Union accession to the Carpathian Convention, asking for consideration of this issue and inviting for COP6;
- **September 2020, 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6)**
  - official request (tbc) made by the Heads of Delegations (in a form of a declaration, or a letter,) ideally in the presence of the Commissioner/other EU representative
- **October 2020, EU Environmental Council**
  - official request by the Polish Presidency to the Council for the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention