



Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians on its Fourth Meeting (Mikulov, Czech Republic, 23-26 September 2014)

1. Opening of the meeting

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP4) was held at Hotel Galant in Mikulov, Czech Republic, from 23 to 26 September 2014. The meeting was opened by Mr. Rastislav Rybanič, General Director, Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, (Presidency COP3). Mr. Jan Plesnik, advisor, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, made a welcome statement in which he stressed the importance of people living in the region as an integrated part of the nature and landscape. He also thanked the outgoing Slovak Presidency for its great work and ensured that the new Czech Presidency will do its best to continue successful efforts.

2. Organizational matters

In accordance with the Rules of Procedures for the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, the meeting elected the following Officers:

Czech Republic – Mr. Jan Plesnik /President

Hungary – Ms. Klára Szekér, represented by Ms. Mária M. Galambos in the plenary session

Poland – Ms. Bożena Haczek

Romania – Ms. Liliana Vârtopeanu

Serbia – Ms. Aleksandra Došlić / Rapporteur

Slovak Republic – Mr. Rastislav Rybanič

Ukraine – Mr. Sergiy Gubar



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Delegations were requested to submit their Credentials and Full Powers to Mr. Harald Egerer, Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention for his review.

The meeting adopted the provisional Agenda without any changes contained in UNEP/CC/COP4/DOC1/REV2.

3. Status of contributions, status of ratification of the Biodiversity Protocol, the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management and the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism

Mr. Harald Egerer informed on the status of signatures and ratifications of the Protocols: the Biodiversity Protocol¹ entered into force for all Parties, the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management² entered into force for the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary and finally the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism³ entered into force for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic. Furthermore, it will enter into force for Romania in November 2014.

Serbia informed participants that the ratification of the Protocols on Sustainable Forest Management and on Sustainable Tourism is expected to happen soon. Ukraine stated that the ratification of the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism is ongoing but due to internal political situation the process might take longer. Poland announced that internal procedures regarding the Protocol are almost finished and the document should be ratified soon.

Mr. Egerer informed the meeting about the status of contributions.

¹ Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

² Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

³ Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians



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4. Implementation of the Carpathian Convention – Draft Decisions for COP4

Mr. Harald Egerer, made a presentation of the progress report highlighting the successes, challenges, current actions and future priorities for the Carpathians.

In order to agree on the final versions of Decision COP4/4 on sustainable agriculture, rural development and forestry, COP4/7 on cultural heritage and traditional knowledge and COP4/16 on Permanent Secretariat the special contact groups were established.

Considering the list of decisions contained in documents UNEP/CC/COP4/DOC10/REV1, the Parties:

- Agreed on Decisions COP4/3 on sustainable and integrated water/river basin management, COP4/5 on sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy, COP4/6 on sustainable tourism, COP4/8 on environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning, COP4/9 on awareness raising, education and public participation, COP4/10 on adaptation to climate change, COP4/11 on cooperation with European Union, COP4/12 on cooperation with the Alpine Convention, COP4/13 on Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies, COP4/15 on Administration and financial management of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols, COP4/17 on guidelines for the use of the logo of the Carpathian Convention, COP4/18 on date and venue of the Fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, COP4/19 on the Presidency of the Carpathian Convention; for adoption by the Ministerial segment;
- Reviewed and agreed on the amended Decisions COP4/1 on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, COP4/2 on spatial development, COP4/4 on sustainable agriculture, rural development and forestry, COP4/7 on cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, COP4/14 on the Program of work and budget of the Carpathian Convention, COP4/16 on Permanent Secretariat; for adoption by the Ministerial segment.

By agreeing on the Decision COP4/1, the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the format of the National Report on the Implementation of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Carpathian Convention, the revised Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity,



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as well as the Medium-Term Work Plan 2013 - 2017 of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas.

By agreeing on the Decision COP4/4, the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management and the Criteria and indicators for selection of virgin forests in the Carpathians, as amended on the basis of the discussions and reporting by the contact group on Forest.

By agreeing on the Decision COP4/5, the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians.

By agreeing on the Decision COP4/6 the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the text of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians to the Carpathian Convention.

By agreeing on Decision COP4/10, the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the text of the Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region.

By agreeing on the Decision COP4/14, the Parties recommended to the Ministerial segment to adopt the Programme of Work for 2015 - 2017 of the Carpathian Convention, the Budget for 2015, 2016 and 2017 for the Carpathian Convention and the revised Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.

By agreeing on the decision 4/15, the Parties requested UNEP to continue to administer the Trust Fund for administering and meeting the objectives of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols, while at the same time asking the Executive Director to delegate the necessary administrative authorities to the Head of the Secretariat in Vienna, and maximize the use of the 13% PSC for the benefit of the Convention and its Secretariat.



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5. Permanent Secretariat arrangements of the Carpathian Convention – Update on offers and positions

For the time being, the Secretariat has received offers for hosting the Permanent Secretariat from Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. During the COP4 meeting only Poland requested to present its offer, which was done by the representative of the Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Mr. Jaroslaw Reczek. The Parties requested UNEP to continue to administer the Secretariat in Vienna and review this decision at COP5 if a consensus on another location has been found.

6. Preparation of the Ministerial Declaration and Statement of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties

The Parties considered and reviewed the Ministerial Declaration on Cultural Heritage of the Carpathians and the Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change for adoption by the Ministerial segment.

7. Date and venue of the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP5)

The Delegation of Hungary made the offer to host the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP5) in 2017 in Hungary. The Parties welcomed the offer and recommended it to the Ministerial segment for adoption.

8. Other matters

Mr. Harald Egerer informed the meeting about the upcoming first Joint Meeting of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity and the Working Group on Spatial Development, which will be organized with the support of the Carpathians Unite project and will be held in Kluszkowce, Poland on 22 – 24 October 2014.



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Ministerial Segment

A welcome speech on behalf of Mr. Richard Brabec, Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic was delivered by Mr. Vladislav Smrž, Directorate of the Minister, Director General, the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. Afterwards, Mr. Jan Dusik, Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe, delivered a welcome message on behalf of UNEP stressing the uniqueness of the Carpathians and the importance of the region for the European natural and cultural heritage. It was highlighted that the Carpathian Convention, which has become a source of inspiration for other mountain regions worldwide, since now on by adopting the Protocol on Sustainable Transport will also have “an important legal and policy instruments that will guide the future work of the Convention and lead to concrete action on the ground” in terms of sustainable transport. Mr. Jan Dusik assured the meeting about the continuous support of UNEP to the Carpathian Convention, and informed that UNEP is prepared to continue to service the secretariat through its Vienna office.

In the following, Mr. Harald Egerer gave the presentation highlighting successes, challenges and future prospects of the Carpathian Convention process.

The Rapporteur, Ms. Aleksandra Došlić, Focal Point of the Carpathian Convention of the Republic of Serbia, presented a brief report on the plenary sessions (24-25 September 2014). The finalization of the report was entrusted to the Secretariat to be submitted in due course.

Statements were made by Mr. Antonín Prachař, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic and Mrs. Veronika Vilímková, Director of Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; Ms. Katalin Tóth, Deputy State Secretary for International Relations, the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary; Mr. Piotr Otawski, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Environment of Poland; Mr. Attila Korodi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Romania; Mr. Danilo Golubović, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Serbia; Mr. Jan Ilavský, State Secretary, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic and Mr. František Palko, State Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic; Mr. Oleksandr Danylenko, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The following observers also made statements: Ms. Silvia Giulietti, European Environmental Agency (EEA), Mr. Paolo Angelini, President of the Permanent



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Committee of the Alpine Convention, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of the Republic of Italy; Mr. Markus Reiterer, Secretary General, Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention; Mr. Florian Carius, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation; Mr. Ivan Zavadsky, Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR); Mr. Harald Egerer on behalf of Mr. Marco Onida, DG REGIO, EU Commission, Ms. Olga Buto, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The stakeholders' messages were delivered by: Ms. Eleonora Musco, European Academy Bolzano (EURAC); Mr. Lubos Halada, Science for Carpathians Network (S4C); Mr. Andreas Beckmann, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme (WWF DCP).

The Conference of the Parties adopted the draft Decisions prepared by the plenary sessions (24-25 September 2014) on a number of issues relevant to the items on the Agenda of the meeting,

The Ministers and High-level Representatives adopted the Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, and Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic signed the Protocol, whereas Hungary, Poland and Ukraine expressed their commitment to sign the Protocol after fulfilment of its internal procedures. Romania made the following reservation:

“The Government of Romania declares that it interprets Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Protocol, only according to the provisions of and limitations to the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, done at Kiev on 22 May 2003”.

The Conference of the Parties adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Cultural Heritage of the Carpathians and the Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change.

The Secretariat confirmed that the credentials, as well as the full powers necessary for the signature of the Protocols, of all participating representatives of Parties were found to be in conformity with the Rules of Procedure for COP and recognized their validity. The originals of the credentials/full powers will be kept by the Secretariat.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 13.00 hours on Friday, 26 September 2014.



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Development of the Carpathians**

The Parties expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Czech Republic for having hosted the COP4.