



Carpathian Convention – international agreement on protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians

From the Carpathians to the Andes – exchange on regional approaches to sustainable mountain development

14th Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting, 14-16 June 2023, Mszana Dolna

Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention



Photo: [krystianwin](#)

Carpathians at a glance

- **Eco-region shared by 7 European countries:**
 - 5 EU Member: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia
 - 2 Non-EU Member States: Serbia, Ukraine
- One of Europe's largest and longest mountain ranges
- Provides **essential ecosystem services** for 17 million of inhabitants, living mostly in rural areas
- Europe's last great wildernesses areas with **exceptional levels of biodiversity**
- Hosting largest remaining stands of **primeval and old-growth forests** of Europe with over 50% of the territory natural and semi-natural forests
- Habitat for the largest European **populations of brown bears, wolves, and lynxes**
- Vast number of protected areas; core component for a truly coherent European ecological network
- Home to **headwaters of major rivers:** Vistula and the Dniester and their tributaries
- Exceptional **cultural heritage** as distinguishing feature of the region in Europe and globally



The Carpathian Convention process – initiation



- Initiated by **Ukraine in 2001**
- UN Environment Programme requested to facilitate the intergovernmental consultation process among the countries
- Formation of the **Alpine – Carpathian Partnership**
- WWF Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative – support from NGOs and stakeholders
- Gaining momentum within the **International Year of the Mountain 2002**
- **Danube - Carpathian Environment Summit in Bucharest, Romania in 2001** organized by the Government of Romania and WWF



"The purpose of the summit and of the declaration is to proclaim the commitment of the participating governments to the protection of the Danube-Carpathian region, and I think it is a remarkable political achievement.,,"

- Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, honorary president of the WWF

The Carpathian Convention process – negotiations

- Initial, informal meeting hosted by the Government of Ukraine, November 2001 - agreeing on the list of areas for cooperation
- Formal negotiation facilitated by UNEP – 5 meetings outside the Carpathians
- Political support from outside of the region (Italy, France, Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein) was provided
- Several international organization, academic institutions and NGOs provided support
- Inspired by the model of the Alpine Convention

Underlining principle supporting the process –

an international agreement is an effective tool to enhance the impact of national efforts and ensure a coordinated approach across the Carpathians



The Carpathian Convention process – adoption and ratification

- **Adopted and signed on 22 May 2003** at the **Fifth Ministerial Conference „Environment for Europe”** Kiev, Ukraine
- Reference to the Convention in the Ministerial Declaration, encouraging the early entry into force
- **Entered in force on 4 January 2006**
- Ratified by all the seven Carpathian countries, as:
 - framework Convention for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination
 - platform for joint strategies for sustainable development
 - forum for dialogue between all stakeholders involved
- Since 2004, UNEP Vienna Office provides the Secretariat for the Carpathian Convention

**Goal: Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development
of the Carpathian Region**



The Carpathian Convention – provisions

Holistic and cross-sectoral approach for coordinated efforts in achieving a balance between economic progress and environmental protection of the region

Structure of the Convention - 23 Articles providing:



➤ **Preamble:** “being aware of the fact that efforts to protect, maintain and sustainably manage the natural resources of the Carpathians **cannot be achieved by one country alone and require regional cooperation**, and of the added value of transboundary cooperation in achieving ecological coherence”

➤ **General provision: objectives, principles and scope of application**

➤ **Substantive obligation in thematic sectors:**

 Biodiversity  Water/river basin management  Agriculture  Forests

 Transport and infrastructure  Industry and Energy  Climate Change  Tourism

 Cultural Heritage  Environmental assessment and monitoring  Awareness raising and education

➤ **Institutional set-up of the Convention’s bodies and obligation of the Parties including on financial contributions**

➤ **Standard closing clauses of international agreement: amendments, entry into force, withdrawal, depositary**




Institutional Structure



Conference of the Parties (COP)

Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC)





Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity

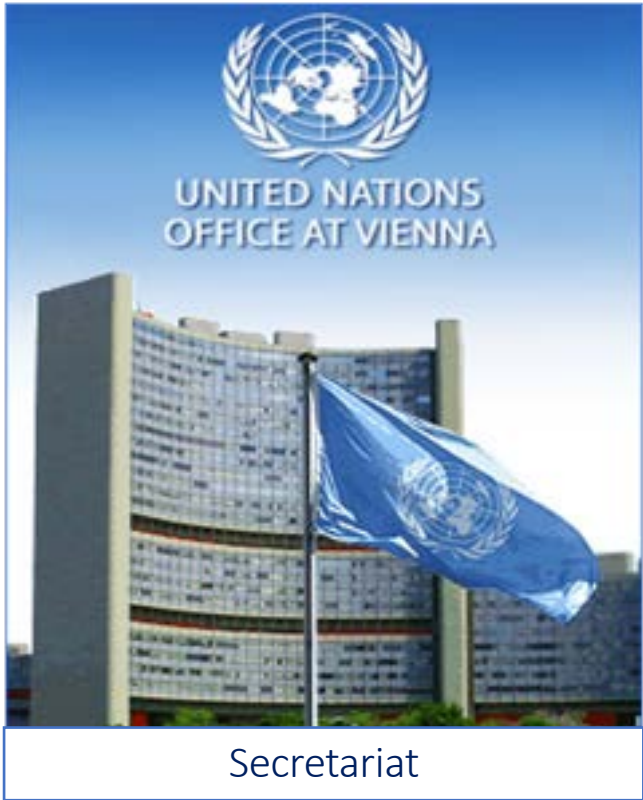

Protocol on Sustainable Tourism


Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management


Protocol on Sustainable Transport


Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

 Protocol in place





Conference of the Parties

The main decision-making body of the Convention

Adopts COP Decisions, Scale of Contributions, Budget and the Programme of Work

Gathers every 3 years

Handing over a presidency of the Convention

Presidency's priorities

- *Current Polish Presidency focus on closer cooperation with the EU and local stakeholders*

COP1 – 2006, Ukraine; COP2 – 2008, Romania, COP3 – 2011, Slovakia; COP4 – 2014, Czech Republic; COP5 -2017; Hungary, COP6 – 2020, Poland/Online

Next COP, to be held in **Serbia in 2023**, starting the Serbian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention

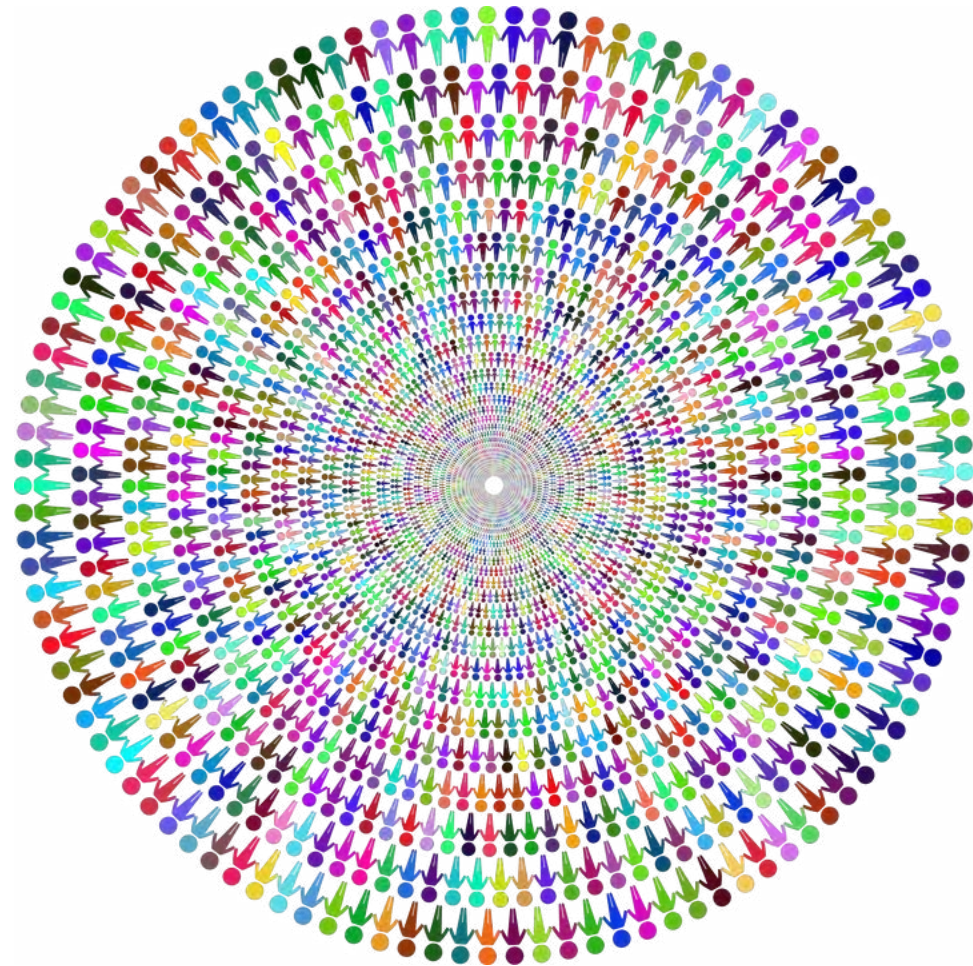
Very active involvement of Parties and stakeholders

- 6 meetings of the Conference of the Parties
- 14 meetings of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee
- 14 meetings of the Working Group on WG Biodiversity
- 10 meetings of the Working Group on Working Group on Sustainable Transport
- 10 meetings of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism
- 10 meetings of the Working Group on Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change
- 9 meetings of the Working Group on Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management
- 5 meetings of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage Traditional Knowledge
- 6 meetings of the Working Group on Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

and various workshops, trainings and seminars...



Great cooperation with many international actors



European Environment Agency
European Topic Centre on Urban,
Land and Soil Systems



eurac
research



Austrian
Development Agency



Visegrad Fund

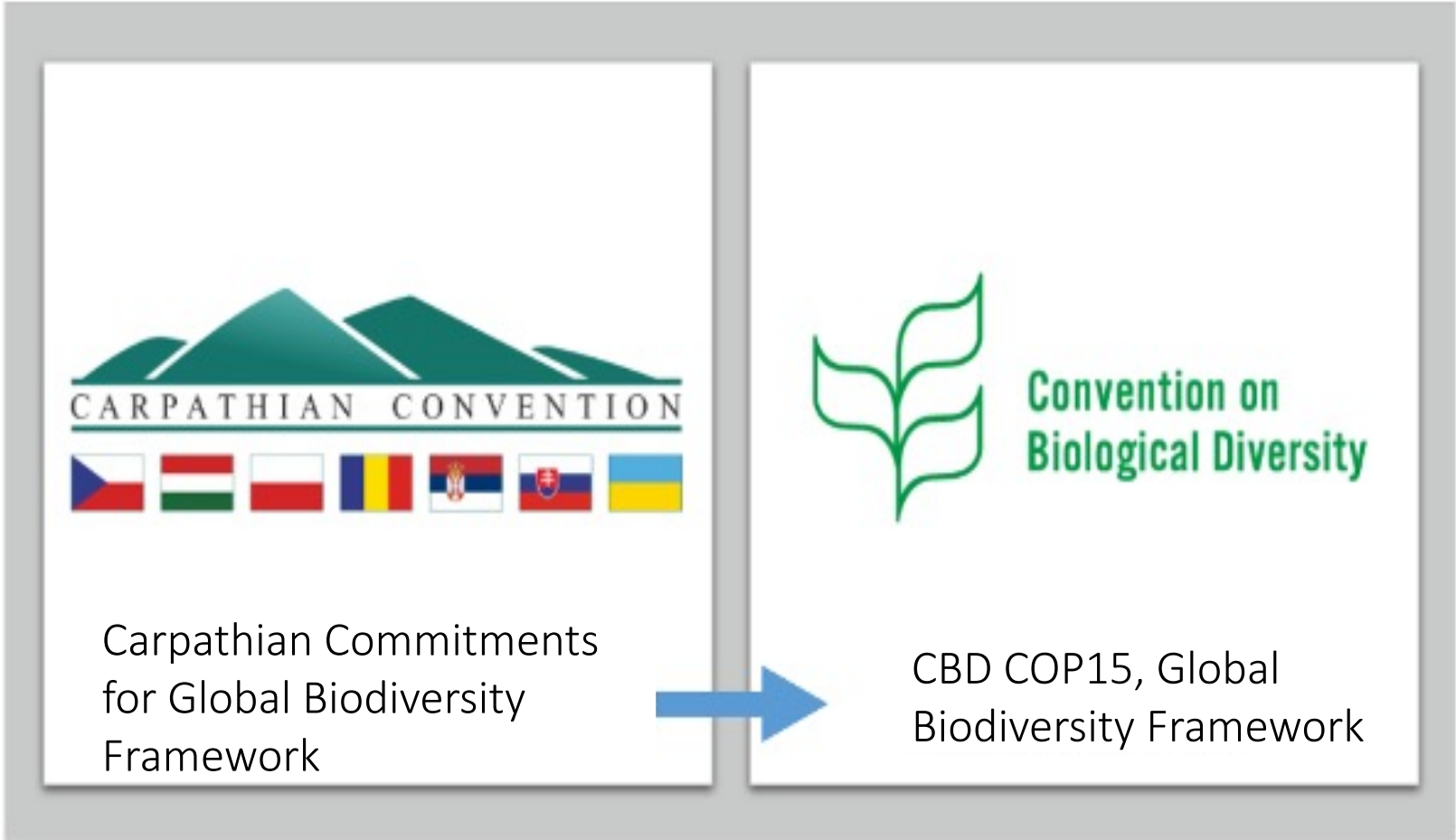
www.visegradfund.org



Carpathian Convention - regional instrument for enhancing implementation of global and European policies



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



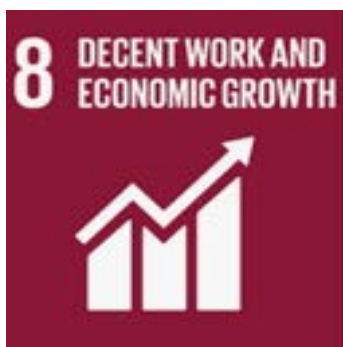
4.7



6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.A



7.2, 7.A



8.4



9.1



11.4, 11.A,



12.2, 12.4, 12.8,
12.A, 12.B



13.1, 13.2, 13.3



15.1, 15.2, 15.3,
15.4, 15.5, 15.7,
15.8, 15.9, 15.A



16.7



17.14, 17.16

Promoting the Carpathians at the global level: UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

- Joint statement of the Carpathian Convention and its Observers welcoming the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**
- The Carpathians promoted in the 10 World Restoration Flagships of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration - selected Multi-Country Mountain Flagship celebrating the success story of mountain restoration efforts in Kyrgyzstan, **Serbia**, Uganda and Rwanda.



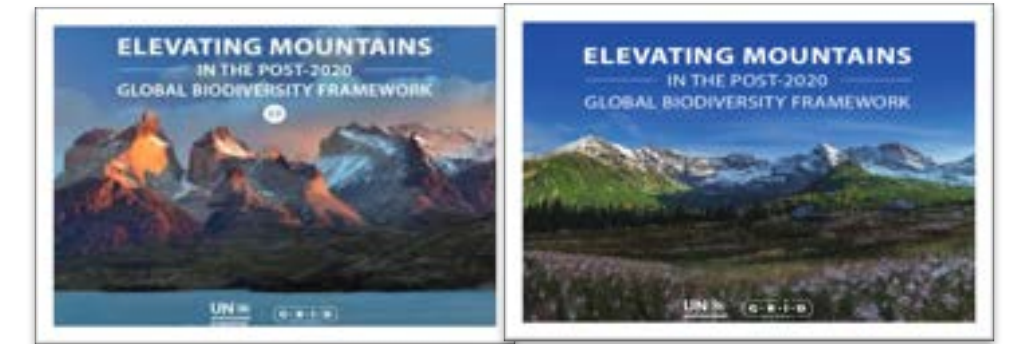
Promoting the Carpathians at the global level: Carpathian Convention receiving attention at the United Nations General Assembly

UN Resolution - Nature knows no borders: transboundary cooperation – a key factor for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use

- adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session held on 16 April 2021
- recognizes the Carpathian Convention as a regional initiative supporting cooperation and transboundary approaches in respect to biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use
- further impetus for the Carpathian Convention work on biodiversity and ecological connectivity in the Carpathian region, and, moreover, initiate further exchange and cooperation with various actors and initiative\

UN Resolution - “Sustainable Mountain Development” adopted in 2022, with a focus on proclaiming the period of 2023–2027 as Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions





Promoting the Carpathians at the global level: Carpathian Convention implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Global process

- New global biodiversity framework to under auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity to be adopted at CBD COP15 in 2022
- active engagement of the Secretariat in raising the importance of mountain biodiversity and promoting the Carpathian Convention with the global process

Role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention

- CC as regional mechanism for the implementation, an example of unique regional cooperation
- advocating for mountain biodiversity (insights, policy briefs, indicators, side-events)
- enhancing synergies among different biodiversity-related conventions + review of implementation and reporting (DaRT)
- possible Carpathian Commitments for the implementation of the Post-2020 GBF

Memorandum of Cooperation

- trilateral MoC between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention
- updated and undergoing consultation, to be signed after COP 15
- instrument for enhancing synergies and supporting common activities on topic of mutual interest

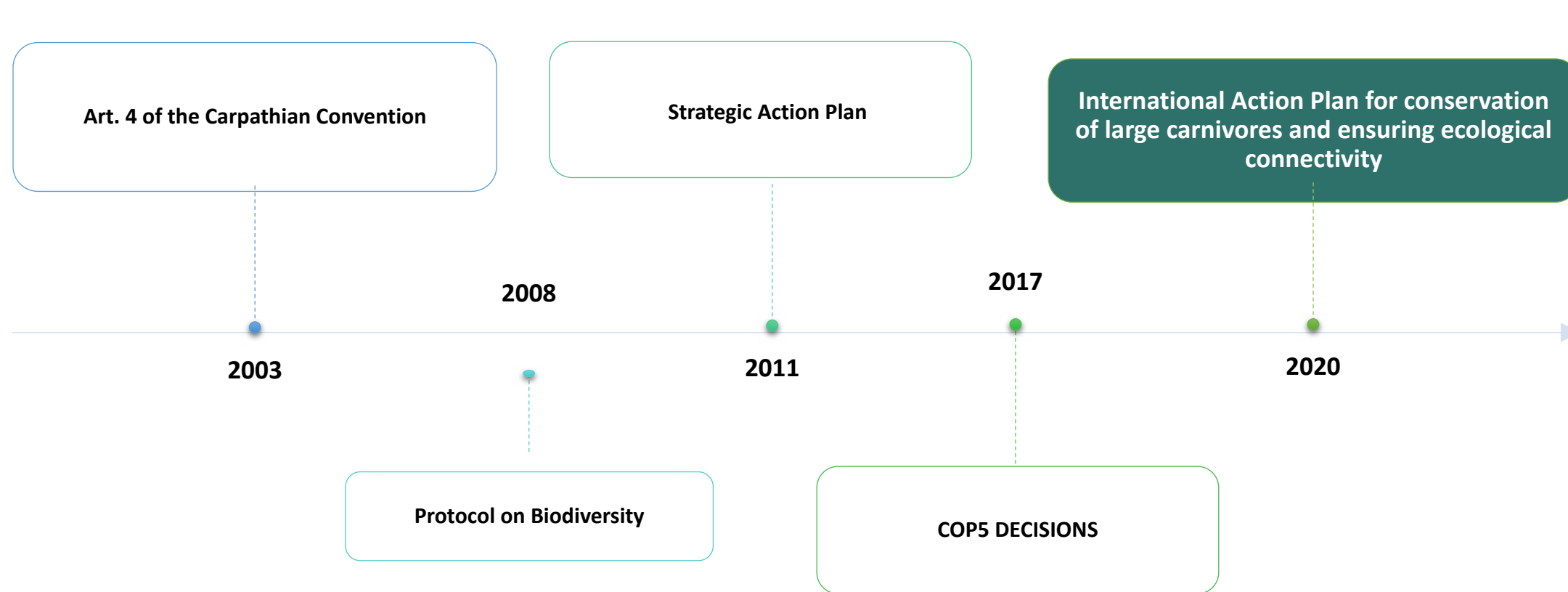


Cooperation with the European Union

- COP6 reiterated the previous COP Decisions inviting the **European Union to join the Carpathian Convention as a Party,**
- COP6 adopted the **Road Map for the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention**
- considering introducing a "Regional Economic Integration Organization Clause" into the Carpathian Convention, making it possible for the EU to become Party to the Convention
- Need for establishing a dialog with the EU Commission regarding the EU accession to the Convention
- **Organizing the Carpathian Convention Ministerial Conference in 2022 in Poland**
- Following the process of establishing the **Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians**



Implementation mechanism for biodiversity actions



Projects implementation



LECA (Interreg CE) – Supporting the coexistence and conservation of Carpathian large carnivores

NEW PROJECTS

NaturaConnect (Horizon Europe) Designing a resilient and coherent Trans-European Network for Nature and People

Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA)

- strengthening governance and cooperation

- The **Carpathian Network of Protected Areas** was established under the umbrella of the Carpathian Convention, in order to ensure cooperation and coordination among the precious PAs – for example by facilitating thematic exchanges to identify key issues and creating joint instruments.
- The Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) was created in December 2006 as a means of implementing the Carpathian Convention and has increased the potential for cooperation within the massif and with neighboring mountain areas.
- **Over 100 Members – PAs involved from all 7 Carpathian countries**
- Facilitating extension of Protected Areas (two National Parks to be soon established in the Serbian Carpathians).



Joint project Centralparks (EU funding) was implemented 2018-2022 for management capacities of protected area administrations and other public sector entities dealing with the protection and sustainable use of natural resources



Reconciling and linking the conservation of biological and landscape diversity to sustainable local socio-economic development



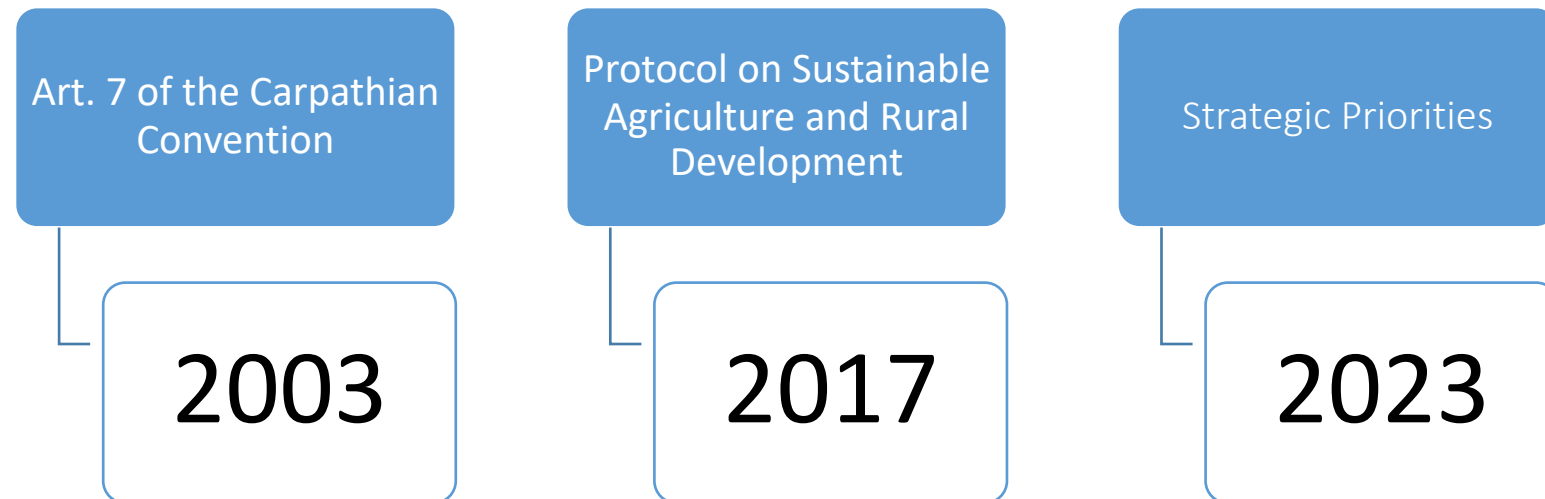
Promoting the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas as the framework and tool for transnational collaboration between the protected areas of the Carpathian countries in the Central Europe cooperation area.

Strengthening cooperation of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative

- The **Carpathian Wetland Initiative** (CWI) is a regional initiative of the Ramsar Convention that seeks to ensure and support the effective conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Carpathians and beyond.
- The CWI facilitates collaboration between the Carpathian Convention and the Ramsar Convention and its Parties in their efforts in conservation and wise use of wetlands in the Carpathian region and beyond, through local, national, regional and international activities.
- Facilitate extension and designation of new Ramsar sites in the Carpathians.



Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development



SARD Protocol in force !

The Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development to the Carpathian Convention in force for almost all Carpathian Convention Parties
Last two meetings of the WG SARD defined the priorities for the implementation of the WG SARD Protocol:

- 1. Best practices models: Short food supply chains – Farm to fork**
- 2. Quality schemes and certification of „Mountain Products”**
- 3. Associations for farmers and food producers in the mountain area - benefits and best practice models**
- 4. Promoting and protecting traditional pastoral practices in the Carpathians – contribution to the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026.**

Working Group on Climate Change

Art. 12bis on Climate Change of the Carpathian Convention

2017

Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians

2020

WG Climate Change Work Plan 2021 - 2023 setting out concrete activities

2021

Article 12bis on Climate Change in force since 5 August 2021 for Hungary, Poland, Romania and Ukraine !



Strengthening cooperation with other initiatives

- Alpine Climate Board
- ICPDR Tisza Group
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative
- Global EbA Fund
- Forum Carpaticum
- UNFCCC

Cooperation on sustainable forest management under the Carpathian Convention



Active cooperation of the Parties and stakeholders allowed to adopt the **Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management (2011)** - the first and so far only legally binding instrument on sustainable forest management in Europe.

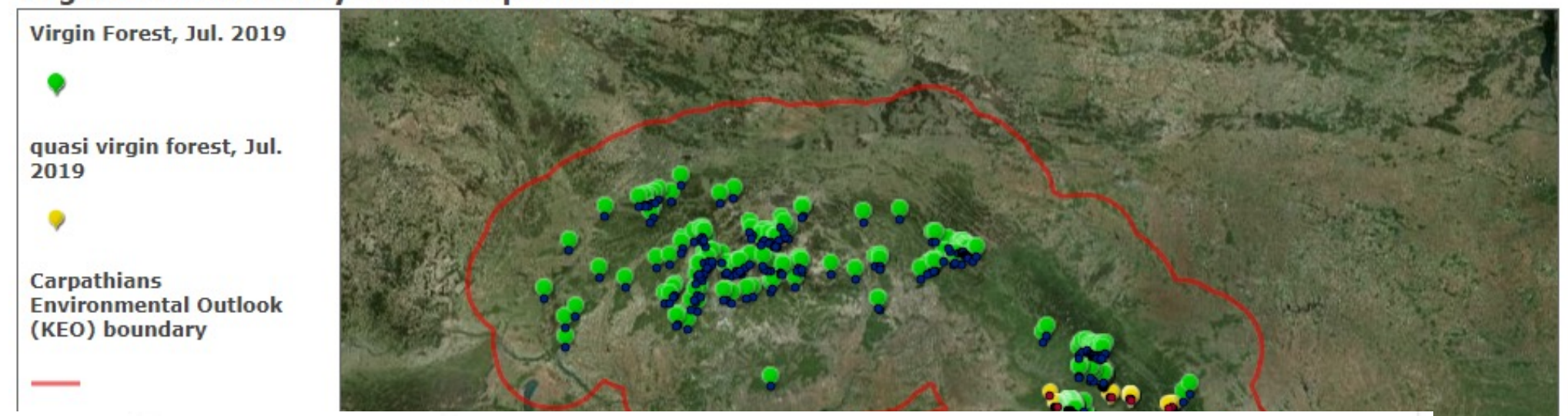
The Strategic Action Plan guides the implementation of the Forest Protocol.

Currently, the establishment of the **Inventory of virgin forest of the Carpathians** is the priority action for the Carpathian Convention.

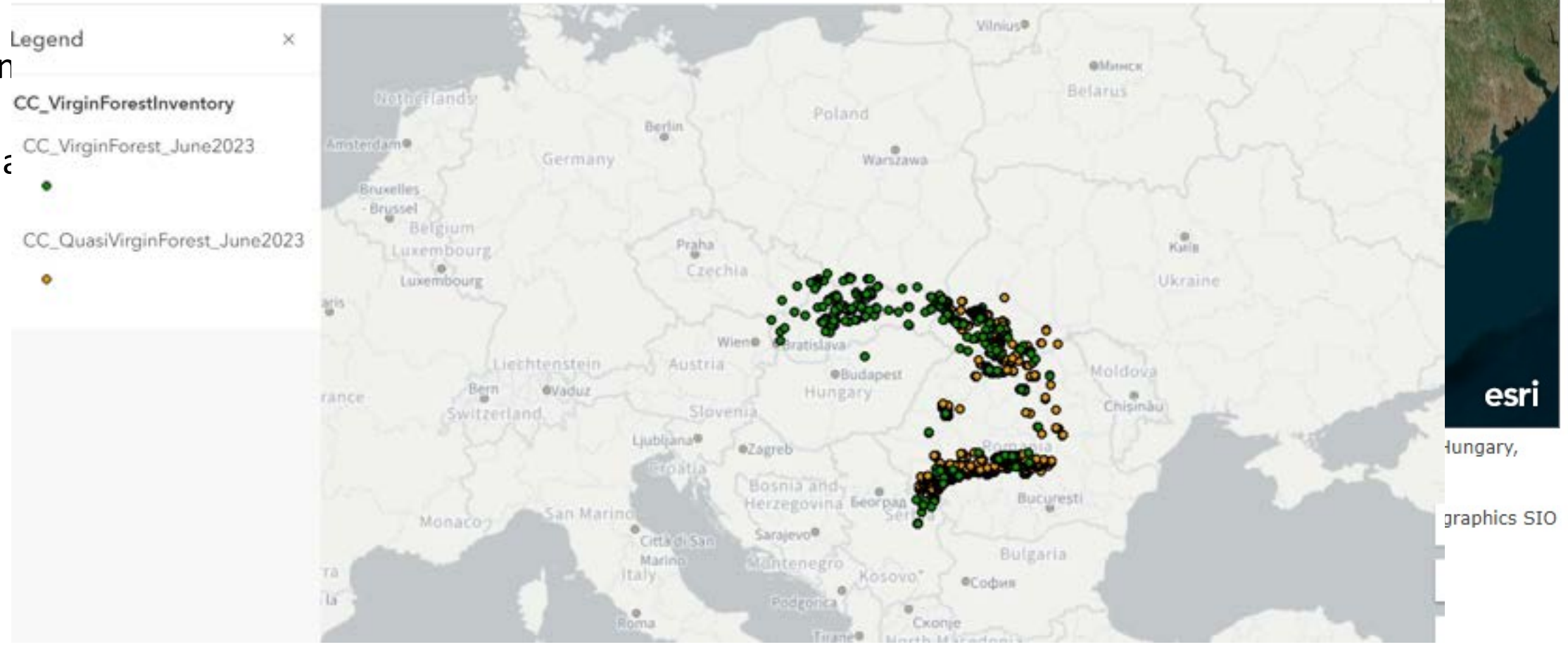
Inventory of virgin and natural forest in the Carpathians

- Strategic activity of the CC Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (WG Forest)
- Developed in close cooperation with the with **European Environment Agency** and the European Topic Center on Urban, Land and Soil System (EEA/ULS)
- Official data submitted by the Parties to the Convention based on the criteria developed by the WG Forest
- Shall ensure protection of precious forest of the Carpathian
- To be finalized in 2023, the final results shall be presented at the Carpathian Convention COP7 in 2023
- **To be extended to the other degree of naturalness, particularly to natural forest (currently under discussion, 9th Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management meeting, 16 May 2023 - online)**

Virgin forest inventory of the Carpathians



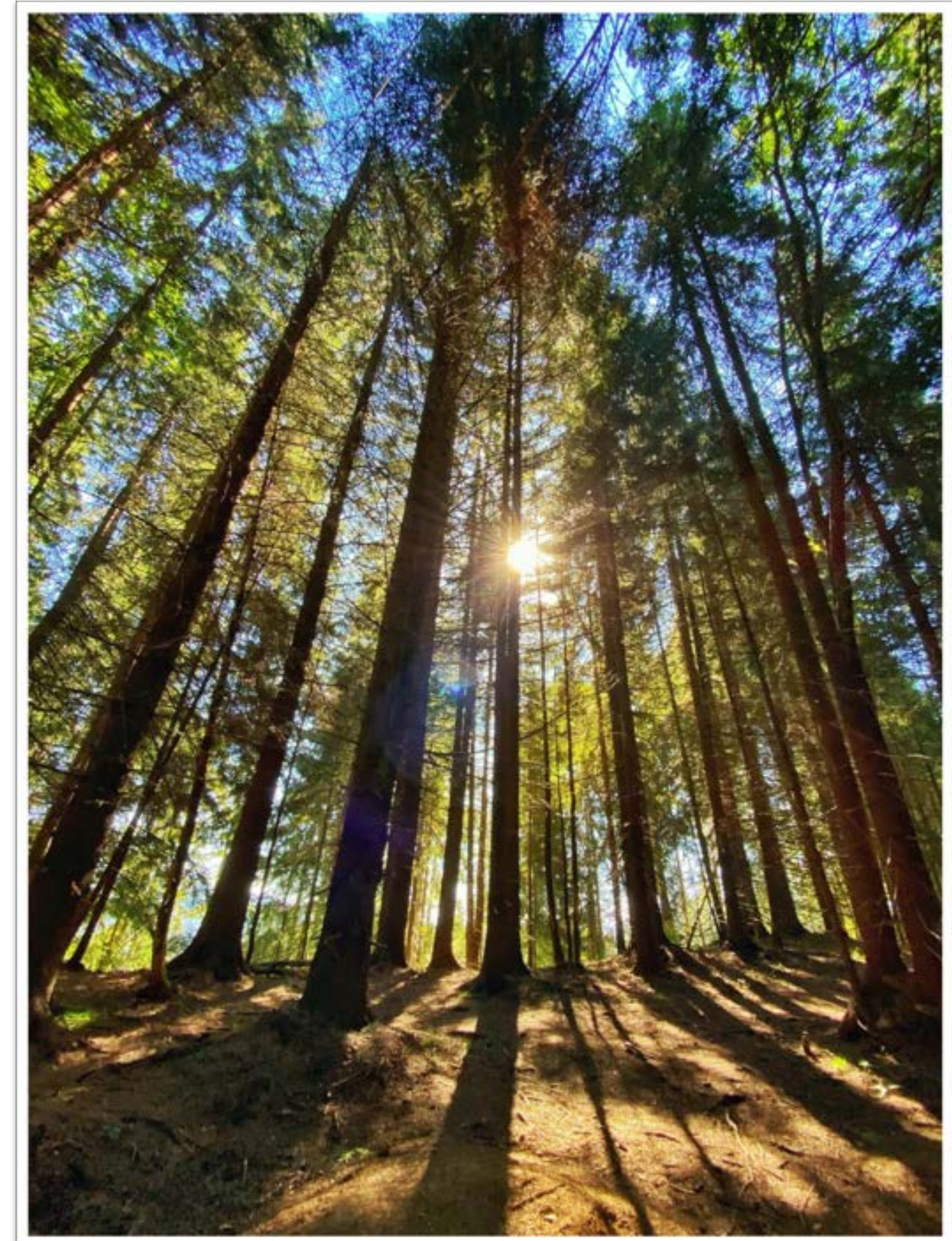
Virgin Forest Inventory of the Carpathians, version draft June 2023 Open in Map Viewer Classic



Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management

Assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystems services

- This initiative was recommended at the 6th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Conference of the Parties (COP6, 2020) and is part of the **Long term Vision 2030 for combating climate change in the Carpathians**.
- **Approach:** Analysis was done by coding survey responses to highlight frequent risks, impacts, and adaptation responses.
- **Triangulation Method:** This allowed for the identification of top concerns, presented as findings.
- **Assessment of CC:** altered disturbance regimes, drought risks, altered hydrologic regimes & flood risks, declines in forest growth and productivity, altered species composition and distribution.
- the Secretariat consolidated feedback and provided an updated/expanded version to the **CCIC meeting**
- To be launched at **the CC COP7 in October 2023** with a special focus on **policy recommendations presented to the political level**



Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS)

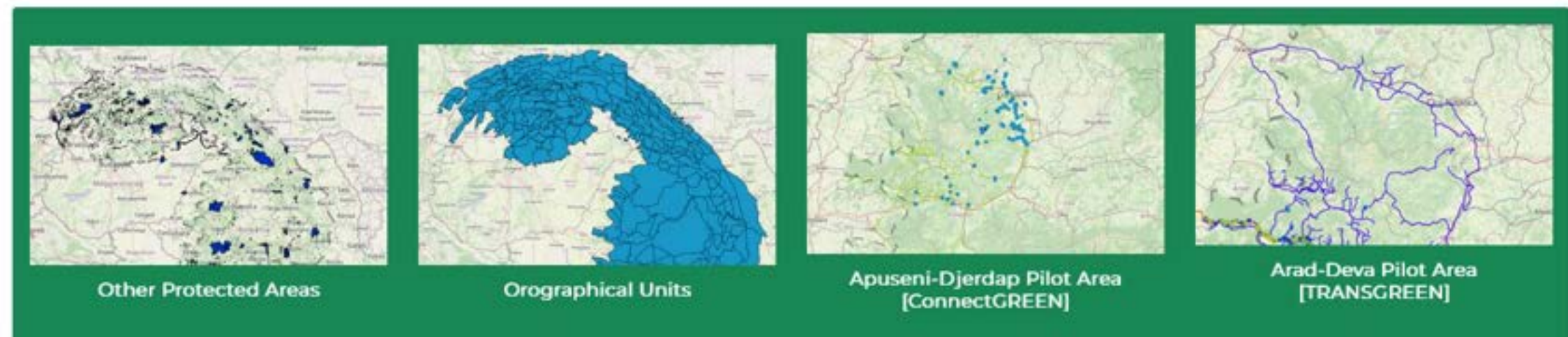
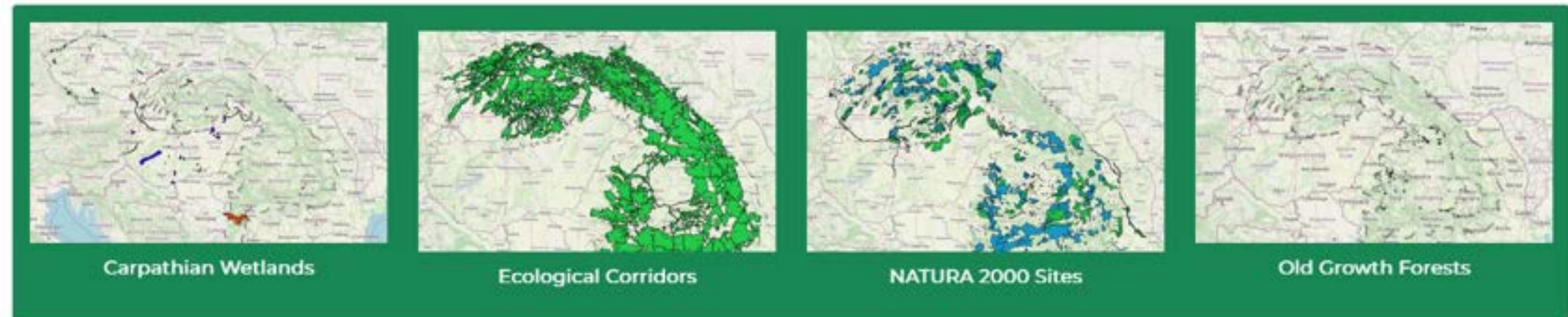
Welcome

Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System
CCIBIS



CCIBIS is an information portal for spatial data and notable publications related to environmental conservation in the Carpathian Ecoregion.

- Continuing cooperation with various partners (WWF CEE, SPECTRA, towards installation of the CCIBIS within the Carpathian Convention server.
- Continuing cooperation with the EEA for further development and integration of the CCIBIS into EU/EEA information systems.



Carpathian Convention activities on Education for Sustainable Development

- Implementing project **“Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface”**, funded by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP)
- building a network of ESD experts from the Carpathian region
- co-creating recommendations for strategies and actions on how best to integrate ESD into Carpathian Convention activities and vice-versa
- **2nd Carpathian Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development – autumn 2022 in Poland**






Cooperation with the Alpine Convention

- Memorandum of Cooperation
- Close cooperation between the Secretariats
- Mutual exchange of information and expert participation in the meetings
- Cooperation between the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) and the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC)



Carpathian Convention Ministerial Conference

- Autumn 2022 in the Podkarpackie Region - proposal by the Polish Presidency
- The Conference theme to be focused on biodiversity



Carpathian Convention COP7 Serbia, late autumn 2023

- Serbia taking over the CC Presidency for the implementation period 2024 – 2026



Thank you for your attention!

UNEP Vienna Programme Office
Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

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