

FINAL MEETING REPORT*

9th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Ostrava, Czech Republic, 30 - 31 May 2019

The 9th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity), held in Ostrava, Czech Republic on 30 – 31 May 2019, was organized by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, with substantial support of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

1) Opening of the WG Biodiversity meeting, round of introductions and adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was opened by the host of the meeting, the Czech Ministry of the Environment and the Secretariat. After delivering opening remarks and the round of introductions, the meeting agenda was adopted without any changes.

2) Comprehensive presentation of the relevant projects

The agenda item 2, allowed for presentation of ongoing projects relevant for and contributing to the WG Biodiversity objectives and activities. For better access of information about the projects, the Secretariat prepared a document briefly presenting the projects, their general information, activities and meetings being of interest of the WG Biodiversity. The document *Background document – projects relevant for the Carpathian Convention WG Biodiversity* is annexed to the Meeting Report (Annex1).

Mr. Cristian Remus Papp from WWF Romania presented comprehensive presentation of three project TRANSGREEN, ConnectGREEN and EUROLARGE CARNIVORES, which are especially important for the Carpathian Convention activities related to green infrastructure, connectivity and monitoring of large carnivores. Mr. Papp informed about a possibility of organizing a WG Biodiversity meeting under the EUROLARGE CARNIVORES project in November 2019, which could be connected to the Transboundary workshop on (1) harmonizing the methodologies for monitoring LCs and (2) on reducing poaching – 11-14 November 2019 (the 2 workshops will be organized back to back). He also stressed that documents to be developed under the ConnectGREEN and EUROLARGE CARNIVORES will hugely contribute to the implementation of the CC activities on large carnivores and the Large Carnivores Action Plan. Therefore, involvement and consultations of the WG Biodiversity will be required and encouraged.

Concerning the TRANSGREEN project, after short presentation of the *Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature of the Carpathian countries – Wildlife and traffic in the Carpathians*, produced by the project, the WG Biodiversity acknowledged the importance of this document and need for promoting it at the national level for consideration by the Ministries responsible for transport and infrastructure development. The document shall be welcomed by the COP6. The WG Biodiversity recommended to prepare a summary of the Guidelines for the policy makers (2-3 pages).

Next Mr. Filippo Favilli from Eurac Research presented the project Centralparks, which is focused on building management capacities of Carpathian protected areas for the integration and harmonization of biodiversity protection and local socio-economic development.

* All the presentations delivered during the meeting are available at the Carpathian Convention website <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/eventdetailwg-biodiversity/events/id-9th-meeting-of-the-working-group-on-biodiveristy-eusdr-pa2-workshop-on-minimising-the-negative-impacts-of-power-lines-on-bird.html>

Mr. Mircea Verghelet, CNPA Unit, contributed to the meeting with updates on CNPA activities and cooperation with ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS.

All the project presentations are available on the Carpathian Convention [website](#), furthermore information about the projects are contained in the Annex1.

Furthermore, Mr. Jan Kadlecik from the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic and the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative, presented the current and planned activities of CWI and informed the meeting participants about the idea of developing a project proposal for the LIFE Programme based on the Interreg DTP Seed Money Facility Project "Three Networks, Two Macroregions and One Vision", where CWI and CNPA are involved. The LIFE project proposal should use the outputs and lessons learned from the current project „[INTERREG Alpine Carpathian River Corridor](#)" (Interreg Slovakia – Austria) and should tackle current challenges in improving ecological connectivity. The proposed project theme subject is tributaries as bio-corridors. Until the end of 2019 a LIFE Concept Note should be developed together with current project and strategic partners.

Next, the meeting participants were informed about the international course on Sustainable agriculture in wetlands, to be organized on 22-27 September 2019 by the Czech Republic. As requested, the Secretariat forward the invitation to the CC WG Biodiversity (for more information about the course, please contact Mr. Kadlecik at jan.kadlecik@sopsr.sk Ms. Libuše Vlasáková at libuse.vlasakova@mzp.cz).

Concerning the future governance of CWI, it was advised to consult with the Ramsar Convention Focal Points as the best way forward.

Poland informed about designation of [3 new Ramsar sites in Poland](#), all of them located in the Polish Carpathians.

3) Programme of Work on Biodiversity issues as adopted by the COP 5

The Secretariat presented the conclusion of the of national reports on implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol received from most of the Parties. The summary conducted by the Secretariat showed that the current reporting format is not bringing specific added value for the implementation of the Biodiversity Protection in the Carpathians, since the vast majority of measures reported by the Parties have been implemented under other legal and policy instruments than the Carpathian Convention and its Protocol, e.g. other international conventions (in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity), EU policies and strategic documents (incl. the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and the Common Agricultural Policy), and various national policies, strategies, programmes and action plans currently in force, implemented at the scale of the whole country. Thus, with no particular focus on the Carpathians.

The following recommendation shall be taken into consideration while preparing a template for the comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sectors, requested by the COP5:

- National Reports should first and foremost focus on activities and achievements resulting from the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocol, in particular those implemented and achieved in cooperation with other Parties, which would then prove the real added value of implementing the Convention and its Protocol
- National Reports should provide an opportunity to monitor the implementation of the Protocol with the use of Protocol - specific progress indicators (quantitative and/or qualitative) instead of extensive descriptions, in particular if such could overlap with publicly available national reports to other relevant Conventions (e.g. the CBD)

- need for better involvement of Carpathian local self-government units in the implementation of the Protocol on similar terms as bodies, organizational units and institutions belonging to government administration;
- need for awareness raising about the Protocol among stakeholders

The Secretariat will prepare a template for the comprehensive report and will share it with all relevant WGs and with Focal Points for consultation as soon as possible.

The WG Biodiversity agreed to apply need-based approach to the topics on Invasive Alien Species, Illegal killing of wild birds due to the lack of needs expressed by Parties of actions to be taken at the level of the Carpathians as well as of human and financial resources at the moment.

The Czech Republic reported on the Expert workshop on Minimising the negative impacts of power lines on birds which was organized back to back to the WG Biodiversity meeting on 29 May 2019 in Ostrava. The Secretariat thanked the Czech Republic for organizing the workshop and stressed the relevance of discussion about the negative impact of expending electricity power grids on biodiversity. It was suggested that the topic could be included in the agenda of the next Forum Carpathicum.

The WG Biodiversity discussed a possibility to develop a position paper on the new EU Common Agricultural Policy with the focus on biodiversity aspects. The Secretariat will prepare a first draft of the document and will consult it with the WG Biodiversity

4) Possible contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the post-2020 process within CBD

Mr. Andreas Beckmann from WWF CEE, with a presentation on the New Deal for Nature, opened a discussion on substantive contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process focusing on synergies and reinforcement of the biodiversity-related conventions, potentially translating the global targets on the regional scale relevant for the Carpathians. The WG Biodiversity requested the Secretariat to follow the global process. The WG Biodiversity discussed a possibility of adapting a COP6 Declaration, which would serve as the Carpathian contribution to the CBD process to be reflected at the CBD COP15 in China 2020. The consultation on this matter will be intensified within next months through the email exchange.

5) Achieving the international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores

This session was opened by the Secretariat presenting the steps taken Towards elaboration of the *International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores*. It was followed by presentation of the good examples of large carnivores monitoring and conservation in the Czech Republic by Mr. Matyáš Adam from University in Zlín, and Miroslav Kutal from the Friends of the Earth Czech Republic. Furthermore, Mr. Filippo Favilli, Eurac Research presented the status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in the Alps.

The one of the current main activity of the WG Biodiversity is elaboration of the Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in every Carpathian country, which should lead then to possible

harmonization of monitoring methods in the Carpathians. The progress in elaboration of the country reports/chapters was presented by Mr. Ovidiu Ionescu, representative of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation.

As an example of the national reports/chapters, Ms. Anna Boklan and Ms. Anna Pridun from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, presented the population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in Ukraine.

Secretariat note: As of the beginning of July, the Secretariat received the national reports on large carnivores monitoring from all the Carpathian countries and now the review and editing process will be undertaken by the University of Natural Resources and Life Science of Vienna (BOKU) under the leadership of prof. Klaus Hackländer, representative of CIC supporting the CC activities based on the MoC from 2016. The authors of the national reports/chapters might be contacted by the Secretariat and prof. Hackländer for needed clarification or further information.

The Secretariat, together with WWF Romania, presented the first draft of the *International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivore* (Large Carnivores Action Plan). As a result of the discussion, the WG Biodiversity agreed to revise the text of the document, making sure that the objectives and proposed actions are more specific in terms of timeframe, actors involved and funding.

Reduction of number of objectives was also suggested. The WG Biodiversity proposed to focus the Action Plan on smaller number but more feasible actions, with a special focus on monitoring of large carnivores, connectivity and capacity building activities for experts, especially those dealing with monitoring. There was a consensus that gaining more knowledge on the large carnivores' populations in the Carpathians is the prerequisite for determining the subsequent priorities of the action plan. The Secretariat in consultation with the WWF and CIC will revise the current version of the document and submit a new proposal to the WG Biodiversity, before its next meeting.

It was stressed that the Carpathian Convention should take the leadership on the topic of large carnivores at the EU scale, which will help to mobilize resources for further activities. In this spirit, the Secretariat shall present the Carpathian Convention work on this topic at the Ministerial Environmental Conference: "Large Carnivore Management - Challenges and Solutions", 6-7 June 2019 in Bucharest, organized by the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

6) Cooperation with Science for the Carpathians – presentations and workshop on science in decision-making – how to improve knowledge exchange among scientists and decision makers in the Carpathian

Organization of the special session with the Science for the Carpathians (S4C) representatives, which took a form of a little workshop, followed the 9th CCIC recommendation (December 2018) on possibilities for better systematic exchange of scientific information supporting decision making processes. The Secretariat would like to warmly thank the S4C Initiative for great support and engagement.

The aim of the workshop was to initiate exchange among S4C and the experts working in the field of Biodiversity in the Carpathians, with the objective to establish stronger science- policy-practice cooperation in this field, as well as in fields related to Biodiversity, such as protected area management, sustainable tourism development, community participation, education, etc.

Mr. Luboš Halada from the S4C gave a brief presentation on the highlights in S4C research in the field of Biodiversity, as well as other plans and developments of the S4C network. Following the presentation, participants discussed the following questions in a World Cafe format:

- what are the most urgent knowledge gaps in the field of Biodiversity for the Carpathian Convention? How can they be addressed in the research agenda and in research projects?
- what are important interdisciplinary areas and research questions under the Carpathian Convention strongly related to Biodiversity, which can be addressed by S4C?
- what are concrete ways and opportunities for scientists to cooperate with WG on Biodiversity and CC Secretariat in order to support CC work in this field?

The summary of the workshop is available in the Annex 2.

7) Closing remarks and closure of the meeting

The host country, the Czech Republic together with the Secretariat, thanked the meeting participants for their active participation and contribution to the meeting discussion and closed the meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

- The WG Biodiversity recommended the authors of the *Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature of the Carpathian countries* to prepare a summary for policy makers (2-3 pages);
- Contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process; the Secretariat will consult with the FPs and the WG Biodiversity the process;
- Finalization of the report on Large Carnivores Monitoring in the Carpathian Mountains; the Secretariat together with CIC will share the final draft as soon as possible. Individual consultation with the authors of national reports for clarifications or further information are possible;
- Revision of the *International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores* - Secretariat with support of WWF and CIC, the next version shall be circulated within several weeks, prior to the next WG Biodiversity meeting;
- Organization of the next WG Biodiversity meeting, the Secretariat will consult with WWF Romania concerning the possibility of organizing the meeting back to back to the EUROLARGE CARNIVORES workshops in November 2019;
- The Secretariat will circulate an overview of the projects with clear identification of activities and meetings relevant for the WG Biodiversity
- The Secretariat will propose a draft template for the comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sectors;
- The Secretariat will prepare a first draft of the Carpathian Convention position paper on the new CAP with the focus on biodiversity aspects.