

## FINAL MEETING REPORT

### Meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention COP 1 July 2020 - ONLINE MEETING

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#### **1) Opening of the Bureau meeting by the Secretariat and the Presidency (Hungary)**

The meeting was opened by Mr. Harald Egerer, the Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention who welcomed the Members of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention COP and invited Mr. Péter Király, Head of International Relations Department in the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, and representing the Hungarian Presidency, to chair the Bureau meeting.

In his opening remarks, the Chair pointed out that the meeting of COP Bureau was organized in order to discuss organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6) in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair informed that the Bureau Members should decide on the proposal by Poland, the host of COP6 and the incoming Presidency, to change the formula of the COP6 from the physical meeting in Rzeszow, September 2020, to the virtual technical oriented meeting due to the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to organize a high-level event in 2021 for the political debate.

#### **2) Introduction and adoption of the meeting agenda**

The Agenda was adopted with no changes.

#### **3) Update, discussion and agreement on the organization of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6) and related COVID-19 implications**

The Chair invited Poland to update the Bureau Members on the situation related to the organization of the COP6 and its proposal to change the format of the meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Bożena Haczek, Bureau Member representing Poland, informed that having considered uncertainties related to the coronavirus pandemic and possible restrictions linked to that, as well as the need to ensure safety and comfort of work of all the participants of the conference, Poland would like to propose a change of formula of COP6. Poland suggests organization of an online COP6 meeting at the technical level, which would adopt necessary decisions. This meeting would take place this fall. In addition to that, in 2021 Poland would like to organize a ministerial conference in Rzeszów, at a date that would be decided at a later stage. This meeting would constitute an occasion for the Carpathian community to meet and at the same time – for the ministers to hold political debate related to the important topics that will be on the agenda next year.

Next, the Secretariat delivered a presentation on organizational matters and related implication of moving the COP6 to the online format, including presentation of operating procedures to supplement

the Rules of Procedures of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (a note on operation procedures for a virtual meeting was shared with Bureau Members prior to the meeting), relevant information on decision making, nature and duration of the COP6 in an online format and a draft COP6 agenda<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the Secretariat informed about pre-discussed with the Presidencies a possible timeline for the COP6 and the other related meetings preparation.

After short statements, the Bureau Members agreed on the proposal by Poland to move the COP6 to the online format that should take place in the 4<sup>th</sup> week of November 2020 (week of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020). The Bureau Members appreciated and agreed as well on the kind offer by Poland to organize a ministerial conference of the Carpathian Convention in 2021 that would allow for a physical meeting of the Carpathian community and political debate on important global and regional topics that are relevant for the Carpathians. Possible combination of the event with other conference in the Carpathian region will also be considered (as originally envisaged with the COP6).

Furthermore, the Czech Republic and Hungary enquired whether Poland was considering an option to combine the ministerial conference of the Carpathian Convention with other high-level events (possibly – a ministerial meeting) that might be organized by Poland during its Presidency of the Visegrad Group that overlaps with the Polish Presidency of the Carpathian Convention.

The Bureau Members opened a discussion on procedure of submitting the credentials relevant for the COP6. The Secretariat will consult this topic with UNEP legal department, however, most likely the Parties will be requested to send a scan copy of the credentials to the Secretariat by email, prior to the COP6, as well as send originals by post to the respective embassies in Vienna or to the Secretariat directly. The Secretariat will consult internally on who should sign the credentials (most probably national internal procedures will apply). The Secretariat will provide needed information and explanations shortly.

Furthermore, the Bureau Members asked about role and number of participants to be allowed joining the COP6 meeting online. In principle, the current online platforms allow for a big number of participants attending a meeting, however, due to the technical and time limitation in respect to the online meetings, the Secretariat suggested to limit number of interventions of the observers, therefore, the Secretariat offered to make a preliminary survey of interest and prepare a list of speakers that will provide observers' statements at the COP6, according to the draft proposed agenda. The list of observers will be consulted with the observer's group.

Concerning the note on operating procedures for virtual meeting that was prepared by the Secretariat, it was agreed by the Bureau Members that it should be considered as a supplement to the current Rules of Procedures of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. If there will be a need to update the Rules of Procedures in the context of virtual meetings that could be foreseen as a regular practice, the Parties could consider revision of the RoP between the COP6 and CO7, as suggested by the Secretariat. Due to the time limitation to undergo such process before the upcoming COP6 is not feasible. The necessity of other changes in the document might also be considered in this regard, as suggested by the Presidency.

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<sup>1</sup> The presentation is made available to the Bureau Members with this report.

Hungary raised a point on simultaneous translation that might be needed for the high-level representative of the Ministry, however, due to short duration of the COP6 meeting, the most efficient option for this issue, would be the consecutive translation arranged by the Party itself, as suggested by the Bureau Members.

Importantly, Serbia in its statement kindly offered to host the COP7.

#### **4) Discussion and agreement on organization of the 11<sup>th</sup> Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting and general update on ongoing Carpathian Convention activities relevant for the COP6 meeting**

The Secretariat made a short presentation on organization of the 11<sup>th</sup> Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting that should be organized virtually as well, including a draft agenda of the 11<sup>th</sup> CCIC meeting. Furthermore, the Secretariat presented the main activities that should be finalized by the CCIC prior the COP6<sup>2</sup>.

The Bureau Members agreed on the online meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> CCIC meeting and considered 8 October 2020 as the date of the meeting. The Secretariat will confirm the dates with the CCIC members shortly by sharing the invitation.

The Bureau Members stressed the importance of timely and efficient preparation/finalization of the COP6 documents, including the COP6 Decisions. The Secretariat proposed to send a first draft of the COP6 Decisions in early August for the first round of consultations with the Working Groups and the CCIC. The other documents relevant for the COP6 are in progress and being further consulted with the Working Group and Focal Points.

#### **5) Any Other Business**

There were no topics for discussion under the agenda item on AoB

#### **6) Conclusions and next steps**

The Secretariat in its conclusions provided that the Bureau meeting:

- agreed on organization of the COP6 meeting and the 11<sup>th</sup> CCIC meeting in the online format in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic
- welcomed the offer by Poland to organize the Ministerial Conference of the Carpathian Convention in Rzeszow, Poland in 2021
- took note of the COP6 and 11<sup>th</sup> CCIC agendas and dates
- took note on the way forward regarding the preparation of the COP6 Decisions and relevant documents
- took note of the offer by the Serbia to host COP7

Secretariat noted that all the Bureau Members were well connected to the meeting, and the online meeting provided by the CISCO WebEx platform worked without any major problems.

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<sup>2</sup> Presentation is made available for the Bureau Members



## 7) Closure of the meeting

The Chair and the Secretariat thanked the Bureau Members for active participation in the meeting and the Secretariat for preparations of the meeting.

Poland thanked the Bureau Members for accepting the proposal of the online COP6 and informed that exact date of the COP6 will be communicated to the Parties as soon as the Minister for the Environment will give the necessary approval.

The meeting was declared closed.

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