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## Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Climate Change

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FINAL COP6

### Background

The Third Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the Carpathian Convention (Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 25-27 May 2011) by its Decision COP3/15 emphasized the importance of climate change and its impact for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and decided to establish a **Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change** and adopted its Terms of Reference (CC/COP3/DOC12<sup>1</sup>). The overall task for the Working Group (WG) has been defined to aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in their cooperation for the implementation of relevant articles of the Convention, including Article 12 on environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning.

The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Carpathian Convention (Mikulov, Czech Republic, 23-26 September 2014) by its Decision COP4/10 para 1 adopted the *Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region*<sup>2</sup>. Under the “Potential Priority Climate Change Adaptation Actions” the Strategic Agenda recommends to “continue the work of the Working Group on Climate Change with the mandate of the Contracting Parties to advice the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties on policies, actions, research, data gathering and projects relevant for mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts in the Carpathians. The WG has the overview of relevant projects and policies relevant for climate change in the Carpathians and bears the responsibility to coordinate climate change adaptation policies and projects in the Carpathians with other relevant government and non-government organizations”.

At its Fifth Meeting (COP5 - Lillafüred, Hungary, 10-12 October 2017) the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention adopted an amendment to the Carpathian Convention the new Article 12bis on Climate Change (CC/COP5/DOC4<sup>3</sup>) in order to emphasize the importance of the climate change issues in the Region.

Article 12bis on Climate Change addresses both climate change mitigation and adaptation. It requests Parties to pursue policies aiming at climate change mitigation in all sectors relevant to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/3.1.1.3%20COP3%20Decisions.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/3.1.1.3%20COP3%20Decisions.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2014\\_COP4\\_Mikulov/Follow%20Up/DOC12\\_Climate%20Change%20Strategic%20Agenda\\_FINAL\\_26Sep.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2014_COP4_Mikulov/Follow%20Up/DOC12_Climate%20Change%20Strategic%20Agenda_FINAL_26Sep.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2017\\_COP5\\_Lillafuered/outcomes\\_documents/Article%20on%20Climate%20Change\\_FINAL\\_ADOPTED.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2017_COP5_Lillafuered/outcomes_documents/Article%20on%20Climate%20Change_FINAL_ADOPTED.pdf)

the Convention as well as policies aiming at climate change adaptation. For adaptation, it highlights in lit.b that Parties to the Convention shall, inter alia, promote transnational cooperation and, and foster local adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions, especially in the most vulnerable areas and sectors. Article 12bis also addresses disaster risk reduction by particularly promoting to take integrated measures for risk reduction, especially of extreme weather events.

Further to introducing the Carpathian Convention's Article 12bis on Climate Change, there have been substantial policy developments in the European Union (esp. the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (2013) and the EU 2030 climate and energy framework (2014)<sup>4</sup>) and at relevant global processes (esp. the 2015 Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the upcoming Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework). Taking all policy developments into account and considering the increasing urgency for lifting the level of ambition for exponential climate action, it is suggested to reinforce the WG on Adaptation to Climate Change **with a stronger mandate especially for defining implementation needs and pathways for Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention.**

## Purpose and Strategic objectives

Revising and strengthening the mandate of the Working Group should be geared towards the implementation of the dedicated Article 12bis on climate change in order to achieve **the following objectives:**

- Climate Action is given higher awareness and attention in mountain areas at Carpathian level in response to the EU and international commitments (UNFCCC, 2015 Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) and obligations;
- Regional cooperation and interaction are strengthened through identifying common priority actions and harmonizing with national efforts on climate change in the Carpathians, and beyond;
- Possible areas of synergy between national and sub-national approaches are identified towards delivering successful outcomes coping with climate change, considering interlinked environmental and socio-economic opportunities and constraints and promoting Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA);
- Synergies and co-benefits of climate action are examined with concrete mitigation and adaptation measures and actions identified for transboundary cooperation;

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<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en)

- Interlinkages between climate issues and other relevant areas of work of the Carpathian Convention, such as, biodiversity, forestry, tourism, agriculture, water/river basin management are established;
- Science-policy - practice interfaces and innovative approaches are further explored and promoted;
- Joint efforts are taken on identifying funding opportunities and drawing the attention of donors towards the benefits of greater regional cooperation;
- Climate research on both qualitative and quantitative levels is promoted, including fostering the application of its results;
- Instrumental and organizational tools for sharing experience, good practice and lessons learnt as well as scientific exchange regarding climate change in the Carpathians are improved and operational.

## Role and Name of the Working Group

Following the strategic objectives, the Working Group shall form the main body towards steering activities for the Carpathian Convention towards the implementation of Article 12bis on Climate Change.

Therefore, the Working Group will focus its activities on both climate change mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the existing legal framework of the Carpathian Convention with its Protocols and Decisions, and guided by the overall targets of EU and global commitments. The WG will work towards a long-term Vision 2030 for climate-neutral and climate-resilient Carpathians and actively promote pathways for climate proof development in relevant sectors. Considering the wider scope laid down in Article 12bis on Climate Change, the name of the Working Group will change from “Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change” to ***Working Group on Climate Change (WG CC)***.

## Composition and responsibilities

The WG CC is composed of the National Focal Points for the Carpathian Convention and national climate change representatives/experts nominated by them. With reference to the cross-cutting nature of climate change, further national experts can be consulted and invited to participate along with specific topics under discussion. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of the WG CC are open for observers. In conducting its business, the WG CC will base itself on the applicable Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

The Chair will be appointed by the WG CC at its first meeting after approval of the Terms of Reference (at the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, COP6 - Rzeszów, Poland) and will be responsible for calling and chairing all meetings. The Chair will also seek interaction with Chairs from other Working Groups established by the Conference of the Parties to foster mainstreaming of climate change and explore possible cooperation.

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (SCC) will act as Rapporteur.

Members of the WG CC will have the following general roles:

- to share relevant information, knowledge and experience in relation to climate change action in their countries with a particular focus on mountain areas;
- to actively contribute to agreed activities and gather information from colleagues, if needed;
- to undertake tasks as requested by the Working Group respecting agreed timelines;
- to contribute to the Agenda for Working Group meetings.

## Operation of the Working Group

The WG CC will meet on a regular basis as determined by the Working Group to discharge its duties, with a minimum of one face to face meeting per year, while additional meetings can be determined as necessary and organized in online formats.

Working Group members will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and costs unless otherwise agreed.

Meeting agendas and relevant documents will be provided at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention is responsible - in cooperation with the WG CC Chair and the Convention Presidency – to prepare and organize the meetings and provide minutes of the outcomes.

## Activities

The WG CC activities aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in their cooperation for the implementation of Article 12bis on Climate Change.

All activities and tasks will follow a long-term Vision 2030 (to be drafted and approved by the COP6 in Poland) with complementary strategic targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation, providing an overall framework for focus and direction.

The following tasks shall be accomplished for implementing the long-term Vision 2030:

- Elaborate a structured workplan along with the strategic targets on implementing Article 12bis with milestones and deliverables for the next implementation period 2021-2023 that guides the agenda and work of the WG CC and possibly supporting bodies (e.g. other thematic WGs; further relevant national institutions in each country working on climate change and disaster risk reduction; the Science for the Carpathians Initiative (S4C); Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI); other relevant international organizations);
- Develop approach(es) for defining and promoting concrete climate actions and identify funding opportunities for implementation of climate action in the Carpathians;
- Support project development and cooperate on resource mobilization with relevant stakeholders and donors;
- Establish mechanisms to mainstream climate change in all relevant areas of activities under the Carpathian Convention;
- Identify key actors for exchange and collaboration regarding:
  - fulfilling EU and international commitments and obligations;
  - set the transnational dimension for collaborative action on climate change in mountainous areas to a higher agenda;
  - monitoring and research needs, including opportunities for funding.

## Coordination and cooperation

The WG is accountable for:

- Establishing close cooperation and exchange with the other thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. through regular meetings of the Chairs of the WGs to be possibly organized back to back with the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meetings) in order to:
  - encourage consideration of climate actions in all the Carpathian Convention Working Groups' topics and activities in order to ensure mainstreaming and exchange of information of relevant areas of work,
  - discuss and agree on a timeframe for proposing and implementing activities;
- Collaborating with other regional frameworks/platforms/initiatives and related institutions and organizations, especially from mountain and neighbouring regions, for knowledge exchange and learning;
- Collaborating on EU and international commitments and obligations and develop ideas to raise the attention to climate change in mountain areas at the global level.

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## Term

This Terms of Reference is effective upon approval at the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in Rzeszów, Poland, and continues at least for the implementation period 2021-2023.

## Amendment, Modification or Variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) together with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.