

IMPROVING FUNCTIONING OF THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION WORKING GROUPS — DISCUSSION PAPER

The Carpathian Convention Working Groups, established by the decisions of the respective Conferences of the Parties¹ in accordance with Article 14 paragraph 2 (e), have a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the Carpathian Convention by providing the necessary expertise and technical assistance for the Convention's decision-making bodies, such as the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and the Conference of the Parties. The Working Groups (WGs) contribute as well to development of many strategic activities of the Convention, including elaboration of relevant documents, supporting projects' implementation and assisting other processes and initiatives. While the implementation of the Carpathian Convention is advancing, the growing number of its activities results in increasing need for better communication between the relevant actors (WGs themselves, as well as between the Parties, the Secretariat and external organizations), in order to ensure proper coordination of the activities, exchange of information and enhancing synergies.

Therefore, improving the WGs' functioning and strengthening their role in the Convention's implementation process is encouraged, and it shall lead to WGs' greater ownership of the Convention's activities and provide them with means for better coordination and communication with the other Convention's bodies, including the other WGs and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

According to the currently available Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Working Groups, at each meeting the WG shall elect its Chair and Co-Chair while the Secretariat shall act as rapporteur. However, the provision on electing a chair of each meeting has not been effectively implemented so far. In this respect and in order to ensure continuation in leading the WGs activities, there is a proposal, supported by the ongoing and incoming Presidencies, Hungary and Poland respectively, to strengthen the role of the WG Chairpersons by their official designation (at the level of the Parties) by the COP decision for a 3-year period following the implementation period of the Carpathian Convention (from COP to COP, with possible extension of their terms).

The COP decisions would indicate a name of a Party taking the leadership of a particular WGs only. Then, through the Secretariat, the Parties would communicate the name of an individual person being designated as the Chairperson of the particular WGs. Afterwards, the Secretariat would provide the list of the WG Chairpersons to the CCIC and circulate it further among the WGs for the ease of contact.

¹ COP1 established WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (Decision COP1/4 para 1), WG on Spatial Planning (Decision COP1/11 para 4), WG on Agriculture and Rural Development (Decision COP1/7 para 3), WG on Sustainable Forest Management (Decision COP1/7 para 3), WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure (Decision COP1/7 para 3), WG on Sustainable Tourism (Decision COP1/10 para 2), WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge (Decision COP1/6 para 2), while the COP3 established the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change (Decision COP3/15 para 3).

Ideally, each Party should nominate a Chairperson of at least one Working Group², who should be responsible for giving substantial support to the decision-making bodies and the Secretariat while undertaking the Convention's activities, including support in elaborating the WGs' meeting agenda, chairing the meetings of WGs, communicate with the other Working Groups' Chairs, leading and initiating the activities of the WGs.

While the Secretariat will still be responsible for communication and dissemination of information between the Working Groups and other actors, the WG Chairpersons will ensure regular communication and exchange of strategic information between the other WG Chairpersons, allowing for enhancing synergies and common activities between the Working Groups, avoiding an isolated approach while implementing the activities under of the Carpathian Convention. The Chairpersons of the WGs will meet at every meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee and the COPs in order to provide a substantial support to the discussions and ensure the exchange of information. In-between sessions, they will communicate with each other as well as with the Secretariat via email or e-meetings to maintain regular contact and exchange of information.

Currently there are eight thematic Working Groups established by the CC COPs:

- WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity
- WG on Spatial Development
- WG on Agriculture and Rural Development
- WG on Sustainable Forest Management
- WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure
- WG on Sustainable Tourism
- WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge
- WG on Adaptation to Climate Change

With this proposal the Presidencies envision improvement in functioning of the Working Groups', including more predictable scheduling of meetings, which will hopefully bring substantial benefits to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and operations of its bodies. Furthermore, it could support organization of joint meetings of interested WGs allowing for better synergies and common activities relevant for the implementation of the Convention.

If the proposal on improving functioning of the WGs will be approved by the 11th CCIC, the COP6 may adopt suitable decision, asking further for the relevant update of the Terms of Reference for the Working Groups.

Proposed activities by the WG's Chairpersons:

- Regular communication with other WGs Chairpersons and Focal Points for information exchange (at the meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, COPs)

² Annex 1 contains a table to be fill out by the Parties indicating their preferences regarding the Working Group they would like to take the leading role of. The Parties are kindly asked to indicate their 1st and 2nd choice

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- Substantial support in organization of the WG meeting, including suggesting topics for a meeting agenda, charging of the WG meeting
- Reporting to the CCIC on the activities undertaken by the WGs
- Guiding the implementation of the WG's activities.

All, the above activities will be realized in regular contact with and with strong support of the Secretariat.

Annex 1 – Table indicating the Parties' preferences regarding taking the leading role of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups (WG) for the period of 2021 – 2023 (from COP6 to COP7)

Name of the Working Group	1 st choice ³	2 nd choice
WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity		
WG on Spatial Development		
WG on Agriculture and Rural Development		
WG on Sustainable Forest Management		
WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure		
WG on Sustainable Tourism		
WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge		
WG on Adaptation to Climate Change		

³ Please add a name of a Party next to the Working Group that you would like to lead. Kindly indicate your 1st and 2nd choice.