
Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable
Development of the Carpathians

CCIC11/DRAFT1

DRAFT PROGRESS REPORT

for the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention

based on the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention 2018-2020¹

*All the documents mentioned in the Progress Report are available
on the Carpathian Convention website under section of the CCIC meeting²*

DECISION COP5/1 Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Activities³: *Development of a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sector*

1. The Secretariat has developed a [draft guidelines and reporting template](#) for a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sectors that was shared with the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. However, the complex nature of the Carpathian Convention and broad scope of thematic sectors under its implementations, as well as the request by the Parties to make the reporting specific to the Carpathian Region only, requires more time for consultations and further elaboration. At the same time, the Secretariat has engaged in consultation on possibilities to include the reporting on the Carpathian Convention in in Data Report Tool for MEAs (DaRT) being developed by UNEP. [More information about DaRT](#).

Activities: Other activities related to implementation of the Carpathian Convention deriving from the COP5 Decisions

1. The Hungarian Presidency brought forward an idea of improving operations of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups, which shall support cooperation and exchange of information among WGs and other relevant actors for the Convention, inter alia, by an official designations of the WG Chairs, which would lead the work of a respective WG during the implementation period (from COP to COP). In cooperation with the Secretariat, elaborated was a discussion paper on *Improving functioning of the Carpathian*

¹ Annex 1, p. 43.

² [Link to the 11th CCIC meeting website](#)

³ All the activities reported derive from the Programme of Work for the Carpathian Convention 2018-2020 available as Annex 1 to this Progress Report, p. 43.

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Convention Working Groups, that was consulted with the CCIC. The new updated draft, following recommendation by the 10th CCIC shall be a subject of discussion of the 11th CCIC meeting and will be submitted to the CCIC prior to the meeting.

2. The Secretariat has started consultation on a possible submission of a project proposal on establishing outreach programmes targeting local and regional authorities, universities and other relevant stakeholders to increase their awareness of the importance of the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region, and of the Convention's activities. The Secretariat aims at one of the International Visegrad Found's call for proposals for the possible project submission. More information about the project proposal will be share with the Parties in due course.
3. On 22 - 23 May 2018, the Secretariat together with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine and the Austrian Embassy organized two events celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the Carpathian Convention. The high-level event on 22 May 2018 was personally attended by the Minister Semerak and Deputy Minister Poluyko of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, alongside with representatives of various institutions and the Parliament of Ukraine, as well as the representatives of the Carpathian Parties and other crucial partners, like the Alpine Convention. Minister Semerak stressed the importance of the Carpathian Convention for Ukraine and announced to prioritize the Convention in national policies and parliamentary procedures. On the second day, a very well attended technical workshop on "National Parks – Engines for Sustainable Development of mountain regions" took place. The Workshop pointed to the economic opportunities for national parks in the current decentralization process in Ukraine.
4. The Secretariat was involved in the organization of the event – CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: Environmental development in Central and Eastern Europe, Past and Future on 8 November 2018 in Vienna. This symposium examined the development of the environment and of the environmental movement in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989 and cast a look forward to future opportunities and challenges. It brought together a group of people from across the region and beyond that played both very direct and indirect roles in the development of the region, bringing together their insight as well as personal stories.
5. On several occasions the Secretariat promoted the Carpathian Convection and sustainable mountain development in the context of the SDGs, including among other, celebrations of the World Environment Day hosted at the VIC on 5 June 2018 or participation at the Plastic Cup race aiming at cleaning the Tisza River from the waste pollution and raising awareness about the problem. The UNEP Vienna Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention was a part of the JoinTisza team, brought together by the EU-funded JoinTisza Project, which supports the shared management of Tisza river, and by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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DECISION COP5/2 Cooperation with the European Union

Activities: Activities related to cooperation with the EU

1. The Secretariat has been actively promoting the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention at various levels. Several communication channels and close cooperation with the Focal Points, and especially with the current Hungarian and the incoming Polish Presidencies, have been established for this purpose. The Secretariat prepared a document providing general information about the region, the Convention, previous attempts and rationales concerning the EU membership in the Convention, serving as [a background paper - EU accession to the Carpathian Convention – briefing note and rationales](#).
2. Furthermore, the 10th CCIC meeting recommended the [Road Map towards the accession of the European Union to the Carpathian Convention](#), which proposes the next steps to be undertaken in that respect⁴. Great support for this process has come from the Hungarian Presidency and especially the Hungarian Permanent Representation in Brussels that has been facilitating contact with the DG Environment in respect to relevant consultation, including the meeting between the Secretariat representative and the Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Sinkevičius, held on 5 February 2020. The main objective of that meeting was to express intention of a meeting between the Ministers responsible for environment from Hungary and Poland and the Commissioner for Environment to bring forward to the idea of the EU accession to the Convention. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 that meeting has not taken place yet.

Initiatives supporting the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention:

- MEP, Mr. Michal Wiezik (SK) during the last European Parliament's ENVI committee meeting (21 Jan 2020) asked the Croatian Minister of the Environment, in his capacity of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, if the Croatian Presidency would look into the issue of the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention. Please see the [link](#) to meeting recording.

The Secretariat has established regular contact with the office of MEP Mr. Michal Wiezik, which greatly promotes the Carpathian region at the EU level.

- MEP, Ms Anna Zalewska (PL) made an official question regarding the Carpathian Convention, specifically about the EU accession and the role of the Convention in the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Please see the link to the [Question](#) by Ms. Zalewska and the relevant [Reply in writing](#) by Commissioner Sinkevičius.

⁴ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related implication the process has been slowed down, thus the Road Map requires updating, possibly by upcoming the 11th CCIC meeting.

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The Secretariat established contact with the office of MEP Ms. Zalewska, which expressed an interest in organizing a public hearing on the Carpathian Convention in the European Parliament. This initial idea will be further consultant by the Secretariat in due time.

- The Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, Ms. Inger Andersen, fully briefed on the Carpathian Convention and the intention by the Parties to request the EU accession to the Convention, made an intervention on this topic at High-Level Meeting between UNEP and the European Commission on 2 March 2020. The Secretariat will further seek support from UNEP, including the UNEP Brussels Office in respect to the closer cooperation with the EU. The Secretariat is in contact with the EU Permanent Representation to UNEP/UN HABITAT in Kenya, which facilitates the communication
 - The Secretariat has established contacts with the Permanent Representatives responsible for environmental issues from Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. In order provide information on the EU accession topic and seek support in this respect.
3. During the first half 2019, Romania held the Presidency of the EU Council and substantially supported the Secretariat in promoting the activities of the Carpathian Convention, including invitation for the Nature Directors Meeting of EU (8-9 April 2019, Brasov, Romania), where the Secretariat delivered a comprehensive presentation on importance of governance mechanisms for environmental protection and sustainable development in Europe based on the case of the Carpathian Convention. Furthermore, Romanian Presidency ensured a prominent place for the Secretariat in the agenda of the Ministerial Conference on Large Carnivores – Challenges and Solutions (6 – 7 June 2019, Bucharest, Romania), giving an opportunity to present activities on conservation and sustainable management of large carnivores in the Carpathians in the framework of the Carpathian Convention.
 4. The Secretariat has been involved in activities of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, especially through active participation in the meetings of Priority Areas 2 (Energy), Priority Areas 4 (Water), Priority Areas 5 (Environmental Risks) and Priority Areas 6 (Biodiversity).
 5. The Secretariat established also a contact with the Danube Strategy Point to discuss the best communication channels and practical means of coordination and EUSDR, however it was advised to maintain a direct contact with the EUSDR PAs Coordinators regarding the substantive matters of cooperation. The Secretariat provided extensive inputs to the [EUSDR Action Plan](#), which has been recently revised.
 6. On 29 May 2019 in Ostrava, in conjunction with the 9th meeting of the Working Group on Biodiversity (WG Biodiversity), took place an expert workshop on minimizing the negative impacts of power lines on birds, which was organized by the Priority Area 2 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic together with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. The workshop was addressed to representatives from energy companies, biodiversity experts, policy

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makers and other stakeholders from the Danube/Carpathian region. The workshop allowed for deeper understanding of negative impacts of expanding electricity power grids on biodiversity. It also presented several related projects implemented in different countries of the Danube/Carpathian region and it also provided an opportunity to exchange experience and share examples of good and feasible practice, as well as of unsuitable solutions. The workshop report, including a [Policy paper on protecting birds from power lines focusing on countries of the Danube/Carpathian Region](#) and other related documents are available online on the [workshop website](#).

7. The Secretariat was invited to participate in the seminar on Mountain Dimension of cooperation at the EU level organized by the European Commission, especially by the DG Regio, 9 November 2018 in Brussels, Belgium. The objective of the one-day workshop was to discuss on policies, projects and governance that contribute to the development of mountainous areas in the EU. The Secretariat presented the Carpathian Convention as a governance mechanism, and demonstrated a lack of supporting instruments at the EU level, like financing programmes, macroregional strategy, as well as ratification of the Convention by the European Commission. The Commission stressed the importance of strong and consolidated requests coming for the Member States that is currently missing. Recommendation - stronger lobby for the Carpathian region and the Carpathian Convention in Brussels.
8. The Secretariat has been closely monitoring the developments related to the Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians, led by the Polish Government, especially by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy. There have been several meetings organized in this respect by the Polish Government, including meetings at the Economic Forum in 2018, 2019 and 2020 in Krynica, including a panel discussion focused on the Carpathian Region within the Europe of the Carpathians session. During the Economic Forum in Krynica, Poland in 2018, the [Declaration of Intent to Create the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region](#) was signed by Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine. Furthermore, the Secretariat was invited by the Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Mrs. Małgorzata Jarosiński - Jedynek for the inaugural meeting of the Carpathian Executive Board, held on 21 February 2020 at the Krasiczyn Castle, Poland. The Secretariat was kindly requested to deliver brief intervention, summarizing the current state of play regarding the implementation of the Carpathian Convention.
9. The Secretariat was informed about the proposal by the Polish Government concerning Interreg 2021-2017 programme for the Carpathian Region, which talks about extension of the currently existing ENI CBC Hungary-Romania-Slovakia-Ukraine programme to include in there the area of the Polish and remaining Ukrainian Carpathian area. The Secretariat currently has no updates on this issue. Further consultation with the concerned Parties is recommended.
10. The Secretariat have been in regular contact with the representatives of the Interregional group "Carpathians" of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), which is chaired by the Mr. Wladyslaw Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland. The Secretariat participated in the several meetings of "Carpathians"

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CoR's Interregional Group in Brussels, in order to present the current and planned activities of the Convention, underlining the importance of enhanced involvement of local and regional level and the EU level in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention. Furthermore, the Secretariat took part in the Meeting of the Carpathian Regions organized in the frame of the CoR's Interregional group "Carpathians" by the Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region on 8-9 August 2019 in Muczne, Poland. The Secretariat participate in the panel discussion on the future for the Carpathians stressing the need of better recognition of the region at the EU but also at local level. On the margins of this meeting, the Secretariat discussed with the Marshal Ortyl a possibility of organizing the next meeting of the Carpathian Regions/Summit of the Carpathian Regions in conjunction to the COP6 in Poland in 2020. The idea was appreciated and taken forward by the Marshal's Office. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of the Conference is under discussion.

11. Moreover, the European Committee of the Regions prepared an own-initiative opinion to facilitate a bottom-up initiative to establish the EU Macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian Region and appointed Mr. Władysław Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region of Poland, as the rapporteur. The [Opinion](#), adopted at the 137th Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions in December 2019, inter alia, acknowledges the positive impact of the Carpathian Convention, the importance of its objectives and their convergence with the EU's priorities, and calls on the European Commission to take action towards the EU joining this Convention as a party. Prior to the adoption, the opinion was shared with the Secretariat for comments and inputs.

DECISION COP5/3 Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies

Activities: Activities related to cooperation with other conventions and international bodies

1. Further to the discussions and recommendations of the 9th CCIC meeting and the 9th WG Biodiversity meeting on possible contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Secretariat prepared a [working document presenting possible role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post2020 process](#) in order to facilitate discussion and exchange on this topic. This working document was prepared prior to the First meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG-1), 27 - 30 August 2019 - Nairobi, Kenya, attended by the Secretariat. During the OEWG meeting, the Secretariat organized a Carpathian meeting with the CBD Focal Points from the Carpathian Countries to further discuss possibilities for the Carpathian Convention' contribution to the process. Furthermore, thanks to Poland, the Secretariat was invited to present the Convention and its possible role in implementation of the Post-2020 Framework, at the EU Coordination meeting on 28 August 2019. The Secretariat made also statement on the importance of

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mountain biodiversity and possible contribution of the Carpathian Convention as regional mechanism for the implementation of the Post-2020 Framework at the Plenary Session of the OEWG-1. The Secretariat participated as well in the Second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG-2), held on 24 – 29 February 2020 in Rome, promoting further the Carpathian Convention at the global biodiversity forum, including several bilateral meeting in this respect with the CBD Secretariat, the European Commission, UNEP, various CBD Focal Points and other partners.

The Secretariat's involvement in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, contributes as well to raising the importance of mountains and mountain biodiversity at the global political agendas. In this regard, together with UNEP Vienna Office and other partners, the Secretariat contributed to and supported organization of several events and publications, among others, two informal thematic consultations were organized on the margins of the OEWG-1 and OEWG-2, where the latest scientific evidence on importance of mountain biodiversity ([Elevating Mountains - Policy brief](#) and [Elevating Mountains 2.0 – Policy brief](#)) were presented and the discussion held on why mountains matter for the Post-2020 process. The aim of the discussion was to seek further political support for better recognition of the mountains and their importance for healthy ecosystems in the political agendas. During the meetings, attended by the CBD Focal Points from mountain countries and other partners, the Secretariat presented the Carpathian Convention and its activities in biodiversity sector. The Secretariat will further engage in the Post-2020 process promoting the Carpathian Convention as the regional mechanism for the implementation of the Post-2020 Framework, as well as promoting the relevance of the mountain ecosystems.

The Secretariat continues supporting this process and currently is involved in organization of a side event on mountain biodiversity – CBD 24th meeting of Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Mountain Biodiversity Day at the IUCN Biodiversity Congress, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the format and date of both events is still to be determined. More information on the further involvement of the Secretariat in the Post-2020 progress will be shared with the Parties as soon as available.

2. Furthermore, following consultation on the Post-2020 process with UN Environment Programme, the Secretariat was invited to join the Steering Committee for Synergies for Biodiversity Project, that is mainly financed by Switzerland and the European Commission and led by UNEP. The project is designed to support the implementation of biodiversity-related MEAs and contribute to the improvement of environmental governance within the Member States, especially regarding enhancing cooperation and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions and other mechanism with respect to Post-2020 process. This project supports development of the Data Report Tool for MEAs (DaRT) for the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, that is hosted by [InforMEA](#) (the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements). The Secretariat is undergoing consultation with UNEP on possible contribution and involvement of the Carpathian Convention in DaRT, that could support the reporting on the Carpathian Convention. More information will be shared in due course.

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3. The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention was involved by UNEP in the development of the project proposal *“Building national biodiversity information supply and demand in Pan Europe to support implementation & progress review of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”*, in relation to Ukraine participation within the project. The project is financed by the European Commission-DG Environment and it aims at supporting CBD Parties in Pan-Europe to have suitable information on biodiversity for implementation and progress reporting for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In Ukraine, project activities will be coordinated with the ongoing reporting efforts foreseen under the Carpathian Convention, which are supported by the European Environment Agency as well. The Carpathian Convention is also planning to include its reporting system under the DaRT/InforMEA for an integrated Carpathian Convention and CBD reporting. This process could be used in the future for upscaling project activities, by establishing a model for connecting different strategic reporting systems. Under the project, a workshop will be organized, in coordination with the Carpathian Convention Secretariat, focused on the Ukrainian case as a model on the production and dissemination of biodiversity information for government decision-making contribution to the Post-2020 Framework and MEAs implementation.
4. The Secretariat has been in regular contact with the Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and its relevant bodies, include Alpine Climate Board, seeking further opportunities for cooperation and common activities. The representatives of both Secretariats were mutually invited and present in most of the meetings of the Conventions.
5. Furthermore, the Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention (2008) is being consulted regarding its update in the context of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Secretariat considers that the updated MoC can become a solid and relevant instrument for enhancing synergies among the Conventions and will support common activities. The trilateral MoC shall be signed at the mountain side event that is planned at the margins of the CBD COP15. The Parties will be consulted on the MoC content shortly. More information about the mountain side event at the CBD COP15 will be shared as soon as available, however the involvement of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention will be a part of its engagement in the Post-2020 process.
6. The Secretariat was involved in the organization of the CBD COP14 side event that was stressing the importance of adaptation to climate change in the biodiversity sector. The side event called *“VANISHING TREASURES”* and held on 26 November 2018 Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt was organized with support of the [Vanishing Treasures programme](#), which is funded by the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, is led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with a number of national, regional and international partners, who each bring their long-standing expertise to support the conservation of these mountain species and strengthen the resilience of local communities in a changing climate.

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7. The Secretariat was involved in organization of a side event called “*From Andes to Alps and other mountains: Elevating regional cooperation on monitoring and climate change adaptation*”, held at the UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid on 11 December 2019 (International Mountain Day). The side event witnessed the presentation of the new IPCC Special report on oceans and cryosphere in a changing climate that has a strong focus on mountains, as well as launch of new SDC global programme on mountains and climate change adaptation. High level Representatives of mountain regions and countries joined (Andes, Caucasus, East Africa, Himalayas, Alpine region, Carpathians) the meeting. One of the keynote speeches was delivered the UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen.
8. The Carpathians were represented at the UNFCCC COP24 in Katowice, Poland, within the side event on Mountain adaptation, which gathered high level representatives of mountain regions from across the world and featured the launch of two adaptation reports including the [Synthesis Report on global state of mountain adaptation](#). The side event called “*Mountain adaptation: Vulnerable peaks and people*” took place on the International Mountain Day, 11 December 2018 and was greatly supported by Poland, including the involvement of the Polish Minters for the Environment, Mr. Henryk Kowalczyk as the keynote speaker.
9. Following the previous discussions (WG SARD, 27 September 2018, Vatra Dornei, Romania) and 9th CCIC meeting, the Secretariat prepared a finalized [Memorandum of Cooperation between Euromontana and the Secretariat](#), strengthening cooperation between both organization, particularly in the field of sustainable agriculture, rural development and cultural heritage. While the MoC is ready for signature, the corresponding Workplan is under elaboration.

DECISION COP5/4 Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity
Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention

9th meeting of the Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) was held on 30 -31 May 2019 in Ostrava, Czech Republic ([meeting report](#)), **10th meeting of WG Biodiversity and the Workshop on large carnivores monitoring and conservation** was held on 25-28 November 2019 in Coltesti, Romania ([meeting report](#)), and the **11th WG Biodiversity meeting** was held on 10 March 2020 in online format ([meeting report](#)).

Activities: Finalization of the Carpathian Red Lists

Following the recommendation of the 9th CCIC, the Secretariat asked the Parties to submit concrete suggestions on how to further work regarding the Carpathian Red Lists in line with decision COP5/4 which calls upon the Parties to submit the official comments and/or positions on the Lists to the CCIC.

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Decision COP5/4 para 1.

Reiterating paragraph 7 of decision COP4/1 on Carpathian Red List of Habitats, the Carpathian Red List of Species and the Lists of Invasive and Endemic Species in the Carpathians, notes with concern the lack of progress in finalization of the Red Lists, further notes that for some Parties more work and projects are needed in order to complete them, calls upon the Parties to submit the official comments and/or positions on the Lists to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (hereinafter CCIC) for consideration at its next meeting, as a step forward in achieving the implementation of Article 8 and 12 of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (hereinafter Biodiversity Protocol);

Only the Czech Republic responded to this request, sustaining its position on the issue from 2017, suggesting that at this stage the revision or completion of the Carpathian Red Lists should be done at national level, if needed by any Party. Furthermore, no more discussion on the topic should take place until new inputs are provided by the Parties in question.

The Czech Republic, which expressed readiness to adoption of the Carpathian Red List of Forest Habitats and the Red List of Vascular Plants of the Carpathians, however having in mind that for some of the Parties the list in questions are not exhaustive, the Czech Republic sustains its proposal to submit both lists to the COP for adoption as provisional Red Lists. The following argumentation was provided - “even the report elaborated within the BioREGIO Carpathians project recognizes that it is only the first summary of the draft red lists (the present lists are drafts based on recently available data and knowledge that are in many cases not sufficient for objective assessment) and that, namely in the case of forest habitats, “the list should be considered as very preliminary Red List, which should be commented and revised according to new data and adapted list of limits and criteria and sub criteria.” The report itself mentions several flaws concerning methodological approaches and results. Taking into account that further improvement of current lists is necessary, yet not to be foreseen in any near future due to lack of financial as well as personal capacity, and that at the same time, the Protocol on Biodiversity does stipulate that the Conference of the Parties shall adopt a list of endangered natural and seminatural habitat types as well as of endangered flora and fauna species native to the Carpathians, the Parties find themselves in a tricky position”

Since no further responses were provided, the topic of the Red Lists was not officially added to the agenda of the last meeting of the 9th Working Group on Biodiversity.

Activities: Consideration of the National Reports on the Implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol

During the 9th the Secretariat presented the [conclusion of the of national reports on implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol](#) that were received from 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

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Protocol in the Carpathians, since the vast majority of measures reported by the Parties have been implemented under other international instruments e.g. other international conventions (in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity), EU policies and strategic documents (incl. the EU Biodiversity Strategy) and various national policies, strategies, programmes and action plans currently in force, that are being implemented at the scale of the whole country. Thus, with no particular focus on the Carpathians.

Based on the summary, 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

As mentioned in the sector on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention, the Secretariat has developed a draft of guidelines and reporting template for a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sector that was shared with the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. However, the complex nature of the Carpathian Convention and broad scope of thematic sectors under its implementations, as well as the request by the Parties to make the reporting specific to the Carpathian Region only, requires more time for consultations and further elaboration. At the same time, the Secretariat has engaged in consultation on possibilities to include the reporting on the Carpathian Convention in in Data Report Tool for MEAs (DaRT) being developed by UNEP.

Activities:

- Development of the International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores;
- Harmonization of methodologies for the population-based monitoring of large carnivores

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1. Following the COP5 Decisions, the Secretariat and the Parties prioritized work on large carnivores, as the main activities of the WG Biodiversity, for the implantation period 2018 - 2020. For this reason, the Secretariat in cooperation with the Focal Points established an informal group of Large Carnivores experts within the WG Biodiversity supporting the consultations and elaboration of relevant documents.

The first official meeting in this respect took place during the workshop "[*Towards the standardization of monitoring procedures for large carnivores populations in the Carpathians*](#)", organized at the Forum Carpticum 2018, in Eger, Hungary on 15 October 2018.

The main objective of the workshop was to explore possibilities for standardization of sound monitoring procedures and improved transboundary coordination of large carnivore monitoring within the Carpathian region. Thus, the workshop contributed to the WG Biodiversity/Large Carnivores activities towards achieving the International Action Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian Populations of Large Carnivores, which has been requested by the COP5 Decisions (COP5/4 para3).

During the workshop, participants from all the Carpathian countries presented various monitoring procedures and experiences in this field, which was followed by a discussion on possibilities of enhanced harmonisation, standardisation, and stakeholder involvement in monitoring and transboundary coordination. [Meeting report including the recommendations is available online.](#)

The results of the workshop in a form of report/recommendations were submitted to the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity and CCIC for its consideration and further actions. The draft recommendations are added also below.

Recommendations of the workshop:

- elaboration of a report presenting the population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in every Carpathian country;
- elaboration of joint guidelines on standardized methods estimating population status and promoting common standards;
- better stakeholder involvement in monitoring and transboundary coordination;
- common action preventing illegal activities especially in the border areas;
- standardization/integration of the microsatellite markers and protocols
- reciprocal exchange and access to DNA samples to determinate the geographical and populations;
- accessible online database for the Carpathian countries;
- improvement of educational programs.

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The workshop was organized in the in the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation.

2. During the 9th meeting of the WG Biodiversity, the Secretariat presented the steps taken towards elaboration of the *International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores* (Large Carnivores Action Plan), which shall consider the harmonization of methodologies for the population-based monitoring of large carnivores as a part of the Large Carnivores Action Plan. The draft Large Carnivores Action Plan, prepared by the Secretariat with inputs from WWF Romania, have was consulted and discussed with the WG Biodiversity via online consultation and during the WG Biodiversity meetings, including the 10th meeting of Working Group on Biodiversity, organized together with the *Transboundary workshops on promoting case studies and best practices on implementation of monitoring of large carnivores' populations and fostering transnational information exchange and transboundary cooperation on illegal killings* (25-28 November 2019, Coltesti, Romania). The Joint meeting is being organized by the Life project EUROLARGE CARNIVORES and ConnectGREEN project with support of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. The final draft of the Large Carnivores Action Plan will be sent to the CCIC for possible final approval and submission for the COP6 approval.
3. Another related to the Large Carnivores Action Plan activity of the WG Biodiversity is an elaboration of the *Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in every Carpathian country*, which should lead to possible harmonization/standardization of monitoring methods in the Carpathians. As of the beginning of July 2019, the Secretariat received the national reports on large carnivores monitoring from all the Carpathian countries and currently the review and editing process have been undertaken by the University of Natural Resources and Life Science of Vienna (BOKU) under the leadership of prof. Klaus Hackländer, representative of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), supporting the Carpathian Convention activities based on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Convention and CIC from 2016. The Report should be shared with the WG Biodiversity and the CCIC shortly.

Activities: *Relevance of the topic on Invasive Alien Species for the Carpathians*

The WG Biodiversity agreed to apply need-based approach to the topics on Invasive Alien Species and illegal killing of wild birds due to the lack of interest of the Parties for actions to be taken at the Carpathian level, as well as due to the limited human and financial resources available during this implementation period.

Activities: *Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and its further activities*

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1. [Carpathian Network of Protected Areas](#) (CNPA) and the Secretariat has been actively involved in the implementation of the [CentralParks project](#) – *Building management capacities of Carpathian protected areas for the integration and harmonization of biodiversity protection with the local socio-economic development*. The CentralParks project was approved under the Interreg Central Europe, its implementation started on 01.04.2019 and will continue until 31.03.2022.

Centralparks aims at improving management capacities of protected areas. Project will support nature protection and local sustainable development, improve integrated environmental management capacities and policies, enhance transnational cooperation, and mitigate current threats and pressures to biodiversity.

Centralparks promotes joint actions for integrated management of biodiversity, including joint transnational thematic task forces, involving experts from Carpathian countries. The project will reconcile nature conservation and local socio-economic development, raise support and involvement of local communities. It will develop and test innovative environmental management tools, such as the ESS Toolkit, and laser scan surveying method for habitat evaluation and management planning. Centralparks encourages transnational networking, aims at harmonizing approaches at the international level, and will facilitate the harmonization of measures undertaken in border areas and transboundary-protected areas.

The Carpathian Convention is represented in Centralparks by the Secretariat and relevant Ministries of the Parties to the Convention as the Associated Project Partners in order to ensure the policy uptake of the project results, implementing the Carpathian Convention provisions.

Project Partners:

1. European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen (Eurac Research), IT (Lead Partner)
2. The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, SK
3. NFA-Romsilva-Piatra Craiului National Park Administration R.A., RO
4. Ekopsychology Society, PL
5. Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate HU
6. Pronatur NGO, SK
7. European Wilderness Society, AT
8. Education and Information Centre of Bilé Karpaty Mountains, CZ

Associated partners:

1. Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea – IMELS, IT
2. Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, SK
3. Ministry of Environment of Poland, PL
4. Ministry of Environment of Romania, RO
5. Danube Parks, AT

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6. CEEweb for Biodiversity, HU

7. European Beech Forest Network, DE

8. Ministry of Ecology and Natural and Resources of Ukraine, UA

Under the project, three thematic transnational Task Forces (TTTF) are developing, among other outputs, the following policy support documents and tools, to be submitted for endorsement by the Carpathian Convention:

- i. Strategy on biodiversity conservation outside and inside protected areas
- ii. Strategy for local sustainable tourism development based on natural heritage of the Carpathians
- iii. Guidelines and training on communication with local communities
- iv. Carpathian Ecosystem Services Toolkit (CEST) - adapted for the Carpathian/Central European conditions as a supporting tool for completing and using ESS assessment for decision making for PAs managers and public authorities, available in English and 4 Carpathian/Central European languages (CZ, HU, PL, SK).

Centralparks project activities were presented at several meetings of the Carpathian Convention (Biodiversity WG and CCIC), furthermore a specific session on the cooperation with CNPA was organized during the online 11th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity on 10 March 2020. CNPA Steering Committee members took part in the meeting and were invited to support the activities of the project, especially in view of the organization of a CNPA roundtable in autumn 2020, financed by Centralparks project, and of organization of the Carpathian Protected Areas Conference in Visegrad, Hungary, scheduled for 20-22 April 2021, in cooperation with ConnectGREEN project partners.

Thanks to the cooperation between Centralparks and ConnectGREEN, two sessions on the project activities will be organized: one during the EU Green Week on 28 September 2020 and another one during the EU Week of Regions and Cities called "EU eco-corridors: a mountain to climb" on 13 October 2020. More information will follow to the target groups.

2. CNPA was involved in the implementation of the Programme 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube Project "[Three Networks, Two Macroregions and One Vision - Development of Green Infrastructure to foster ecological connectivity between Danube, Carpathian and Alps](#)", supporting collaboration of the the Protected Area Networks (DANUBEPARKS, ALPARC, CNPA), which formed the "[ADC Net](#)" based on the [join Memorandum of Cooperation between the Networks of 2016](#). The project aimed at strengthen this strategic cooperation, anchoring ADC Net better on policy level, identifying joint best-practice actions to improve ecological connectivity, elaborating an Interreg-project proposal to better connect the Alps and the Carpathians through the Danube, qualify the Networks for future leading roles in the main project. – delivering good practice for cooperation among the EU-macro regions: on site, on operational and on policy level.

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3. Furthermore, the Parties were informed about further collaboration between the ALPARC, DANUBEPARKS and CNPA under the ALPBIONET2030 project and the elaboration of [Recommendations and Action Plan ALPS-DANUBE-CARPATHIANS cooperation for ecological connectivity](#). The document was shared with the CNPA Focal Points, WG Biodiversity and the Parties.

Activities: Activities on the Carpathian wetlands

1. At the 9th meeting of the WG Biodiversity, the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI) presented the current and planned activities of CWI ([priorities of the CWI work for 2019 – 2024](#) and a [draft work plan and activities of CWI planned for Year 2019](#)).
2. CWI, together with the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, cooperated on organization of [two international course for stakeholders of the Carpathian countries on at wetlands conservation, management and restoration](#). First of them, held on 22-27 September 2019 in Czech Republic, was focused on sustainable agriculture in wetlands, while the second one, on wetland (especially peatland) restoration is planned on 5-9 October 2020 (modalities to be confirmed). As requested, the Secretariat forward the invitations for the workshops to the CC WG Biodiversity.
3. Poland and Ukraine informed about designation of new Ramsar sites located in the Carpathians. In Poland: Czerwone bog woodland - nature reserve ([Ramsar Site no. 2339](#)), Glacial lakes in the Tatra National Park ([Site no. 2340](#)), Peat bogs in the Tatra National Park ([Site no. 2341](#)). In Ukraine: Prut River Headwaters ([Site no. 2395](#)), Pohorilets River Headwaters ([Site no. 2397](#)), Romania-Friendship Cave, ([Site no. 2396](#)), Narcissi Valley ([Site no. 2390](#)), Ozirnyi-Brebeneskul ([Site no. 2394](#)), Black Bog ([Site no. 2389](#)), Nadsiania Raised Bog ([Site number 2392](#)).

Activities: Activities on wildlife crime prevention

1. The Secretariat supported the submission of a WWF Project under the EU LIFE Programme 2019 called SwiPE-Successful Wildlife Crime Prosecution in Europe, which was successfully selected for funding by the European Commission. The project is planning to implement the recommendations of the [UN Environment-WWF-Eurac Booklet on wildlife and forest crime in the Danube Carpathian Region](#). The overall project objective is to discourage and thus ultimately reduce wildlife crime by increasing the number of successfully prosecuted offences. The project will follow a risk-based approach and therefore concentrate its efforts on cases in EU Member States with considerable gaps in WLC prosecution (BG, HR, HU, PL, RO, SK) and those with some good practice to share (BE, IT, ES) as well as UA, BiH and SR - countries that are an important source and transit points for trafficked wildlife and host populations of protected species that expand across the EU borders. In case the proposal is funded, Joint activities (e.g. trainings, conferences, raising awareness events) between UNEP, UNODC and WWF are now under discussion.

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2. The findings of the Wild for DC project were presented during a conference held in Rome at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 February 2019, called “Paradise Broken”, an event aimed at stimulating the debate on the topic of environmental crime, discussing both the macro side of the issue, through an analysis of the Italian, European and global picture, as well as the micro perspective.
3. Furthermore, the findings of the Wild for DC project were also shared with the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime/Sustainable Livelihoods Unit (GP/SLU) of UNODC, with Member States present in Vienna and with Lieutenant-Colonel Christian Tournié, Europol EMPACT Leader on Environmental Crime and Mission Leader to the French National Central Office against Environmental and Public Health Crime.

Activities: *Support for the ConnectGREEN project*

The [ConnectGREEN](#) project - *Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin* project was approved and financed by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme. The project runs from November 2018 until May 2021 under the leadership of WWF Romania. The main objective of the project is to maintain and improve the ecological connectivity between natural habitats, especially Natura 2000 and other protected area categories of transnational relevance in the Carpathian ecoregion through identification of ecological corridors, reconciliation of nature conservation and spatial planning practices, as well as capacity building of protected areas' staff and development of management measures by using active stakeholder engagement processes.

List of the project partners:

1. WWF DCP Romania (Lead Partner) (RO);
2. National Institute for Research and Development in Constructions, Urban Planning and Sustainable Spatial Development (RO);
3. Piatra Craiului National Park Administration (RO);
4. WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme (AT);
5. Nature Conservation Agency (CZ);
6. Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening (CZ);
7. CEEweb for Biodiversity (HU);
8. Szent Istvan University (HU);
9. State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SK);
10. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava - SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU (SK);
11. Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia (RS);
12. National Park Djerdap (RS).

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As in the case of the CentralParks project, the Carpathian Convention is represented in ConnectGREEN by the Secretariat and relevant Ministries of the Parties to the Convention as the Associated Project Partners in order to ensure the policy uptake of the project results, implementing the Carpathian Convention provisions.

The Secretariat is in regular contact with the Project Lead Partner, supporting the project activities and participating the project meetings.

Among many relevant project results, two of them shall be considered as particularly interesting and important for the Carpathian Convention, namely the *Action Plan/Guidelines framework for the identification, conservation, restoration, and management of ecological corridors in the Carpathian Ecoregion* and the *Methodology for identification of ecological corridors in the Carpathian countries by using large carnivores as umbrella species*. These documents will be shared with the WG Biodiversity as soon as available, expecting possible support for their implementation at the Carpathian level.

The Methodology is divided into two parts - the main part and the supporting part in order to keep the document transparent and easily applicable for users.

- i. The main part of the Methodology consists of 5 Chapters (Preface, How to use this Methodology, Background information to the Methodology, Use of results, Defining the ecological network for large carnivores). The Chapter 5 – “Defining the habitat of large carnivores” is the key chapter and describes the step-by-step process of desktop research and field work for defining the ecological network both on Carpathian level and pilot areas level.
- ii. The supporting part of the Methodology provides more detailed information on topics which are relevant for a comprehensive understanding of the Methodology. This part consists of 7 documents: Intro of Carpathians, Previous projects, Connectivity and Fragmentation, Target species (lynx, wolf, bear), Barriers, Measures for securing connectivity, Monitoring of measures.

In principle, the document on identification, conservation, restoration, and management of ecological corridors in the Carpathian Ecoregion, shall follow the format of other currently being developed Carpathian Action Plans, on sustainable transport (see chapter on sustainable transport) and on large carnivores (see chapter on biodiversity), and in this respect, would provide a bridge between the topics of transport and large carnivores by focussing on relevant for both topics – ecological connectivity. It should be noted that though a strategy or an action plan is a non-binding document, national (including public) and international consultations (e.g. between the Ministries of Environment, or by the relevant CC Working Group) can only be beneficial for its final shape (e.g. structure, wording).

The documents and their implementation should be acknowledged by the COP6. The documents should be presented at the 11th CCIC meeting.

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DECISION COP5/5 Spatial development Article 5 of the Carpathian Convention

***Activities:** Activities related to the local administrative units within which the Parties implement the Convention and its Protocols*

The Secretariat has tentatively published on the [Carpathian Convention website](#) information about the administrative units where the Parties consider implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols at the national level. The information (administrative units) were received from the Parties and reflect the Parties' own interpretation of the area where the Convention and its Protocols are applied.

Further to the recommendation of the 10th CCIC, the Secretariat circulated the map and the table containing all the information received from the Parties to the Focal Points for checking and approval. According to the Decision COP5/5 para 1, the Parties shall, with support of the Secretariat, publish and disseminate information (administrative units within which they implement the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols). However, it provides no legal obligation and should not be considered as official map of. At the same time, the map could be used for information purposes and support awareness raising among the stakeholders and general public.

The Secretariat will further consult with the EEA on possibilities for making the map of the Carpathian administrative units more operational and user friendly, possibly as a part of a bigger information system.

DECISION COP5/6 Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention

***Activities:** Cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, including the Tisza River*

1. The Secretariat continued regular exchange of information with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), as well as participated and supported with its expertise the meeting of the [JoinTisza project](#), that aimed at strengthening cooperation between river basin management planning and flood risk prevention to enhance the status of waters of the Tisza River Basin. The project, financed by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, ended on 30 September 2019.
2. Currently the Secretariat with substantial support of the Hungarian Presidency is consulting with ICPDR and EUSDR Priority Area 4 (Water) on a follow up project to be submitted within the next calls of the Interreg programme of the Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union. The project shall

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have a strong focus on climate change action, therefore more information can be found in the Climate Change chapter of the Progress Report.

DECISION COP5/7 Sustainable agriculture and rural development Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention

4th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD) was held in Vatra Dornei, Romania, 27 September 2018 ([meeting report](#)).

Activities: Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

1. After successful completion of the necessary internal procedures, the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD Protocol) was ratified by Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic and entered into force on 1 January 2020 for the respective Parties.
2. The Secretariat with the great support of the Agency for Mountain Areas (AZM, Romania), the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture of Romania and EUROMONTANA, organized the fourth meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, held in Vatra Dornei, Romania, 27 September 2018. The meeting aimed at initiating discussion on priority topics for the implantation of the SARD Protocol following the COP5 Decisions, which requested the WG SARD to prepare and prioritize strategic actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol (COP5/7 para 2). Therefore, the Parties were invited to present national best practices of the mountain farming/farming in the Carpathians, which could be transferred to other mountain areas but also could serve as a source of inspiration for activities at the Carpathian scale. Furthermore, the Secretariat asked to propose priority topics relevant for the SARD Protocol implementation facilitating the discussion during the meeting. As the result, the Secretariat created a table [Towards Implementation of the SARD Protocol](#), that contains all potential priorities for the implementation of the SARD Protocol proposed by the WG SARD. The table shall be further elaborated/specified at the next WG SARD meeting.
3. The Hungarian Presidency kindly offer to host the 5th meeting of the WG SARD, possible in conjunction with the WG Climate Change in order to explore possible joint activates between the WGs. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic to organization of the meeting was postponed.
4. The Secretariat elaborated a [Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and Euromontana](#), which was finalized and shared with the CCIC. The documents shall be signed at/prior

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to the COP6 in 2020. The cooperation shall focus on promoting mountain area, especially the Carpathians, with the EU institutions, cooperation in project development and implementation, as well as enhancing collaboration with the research institutions and international organization.

[Euromontana](#) is the European multisectoral association for co-operation and development of mountain territories. It embraces regional and national mountain organisations throughout Europe, including regional development agencies, local authorities, agriculture organisations, environmental agencies, forestry organisations and research institutes. Euromontana's mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas. To achieve this, Euromontana facilitates the exchange of information and experience among these areas by organising seminars and major conferences, by conducting and collaborating in studies, by developing, managing and participating in European projects and by working with the European institutions on mountain issues.

Euromontana is active in many sectors, which are also of interest of the Carpathian Convention, like cultural heritage, sustainable tourism or forestry to mention a few. However, the Secretariat recognizes a potential for cooperation particularly in the field of sustainable agriculture and rural development. One of the potential activities could be promotion local product, where Euromontana has some considerable experience and achievements. Perhaps we could also consider in the MoU cooperation on climate change.

5. The Secretariat supported development of the MountainValues project – “Mountain value chains that provide private and public goods to increase resilience to climate change and other challenges”, which was submitted under the Horizon 2020 call in September 2019. However, the proposal was not selected for funding.

The overall objective of the Mountain Values project was to prepare mountain value chains for the future challenges through changes of climate, ecology, demography, policy, and socio-economic context. The project provides approaches for supportive policies at EU, national and regional level, and identifies possible value chain development strategies to deliver private and public goods in the coming decades. In order to arrive at targeted solutions, the project was supposed work closely with selected case studies/value chains, which of primary production take place in mountain areas, as well further processing and thus also the creation of value takes place as long as possible in the mountain area. A few case studies from the Carpathians were include in the project.

6. A Carpathian session – “[Role of local products in agritourism: a Carpathian approach for sustainable rural areas](#)” - was organized on 7-8 November during the Congress on Agritourism in Bolzano, Italy. During the first part of interactive session, followed by a framework setting presentation of the Carpathian Convention, participants from various Carpathian countries, representing different aspects of the

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Agritourism sector (practitioners and researchers, as well as participants involved in governance) presented information about the main challenges of agritourism development in the Carpathians. During the second part the results of the discussion were presented, and information about Forum Carpathicum 2018, and specifically its aspects linked with Agritourism were shown, followed by a scientific presentation focused on potential for agritourism development in Hungary. In addition to presentations focused on the Carpathians, case studies from other countries have been shared, which resulted in an international exchange on good examples and challenges in the field of agritourism.

An important observation from the global Agritourism congress was that the unique feature of the Carpathian region is that small scale farms are dominating in the Carpathian countries, as opposed to many other countries and regions, where large scale agricultural production is more dominant. This positions the Carpathians as a region with unique potential for sustainable agritourism initiatives. However, one of the challenges is the lack of cooperation among actors in the Carpathian region. The good example from Austria and Italy demonstrated the importance of strong associations promoting and supporting farmers in agritourism development. Online are available [the abstract of the Carpathian Session and a short summary](#).

DECISION COP5/8 Sustainable forest management
Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention

7th meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (WG Forest) was held on 27-28 June 2019 in Zvolen, Slovakia ([meeting report](#))

Activities *Finalization of the inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians*

1. During the 7th WG Forest meeting, a progress of work on the inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians was presented by the European Environment Agency and the European Topic Center on Urban, Land and Soil System (EEA/ULS), which since 2014 and based on the Partnership Agreement, supports the WG Forest in setting the basis to locate, monitor and priorities virgin and HNV forest areas, especially by supporting development of the virgin forest inventory for better conservation and developing an integrated data platform to host data.

During 2019, the work on the finalization of the virgin forest inventory has been further progressing integrating updated information from the Parties and discussing the current options for filling the existing gaps.

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Based on this revision, a new version of the Virgin Forest Inventory has been produced, including the EUNIS forest type classification and updated information about forest plots, their spatial location and ownership (figure 1).

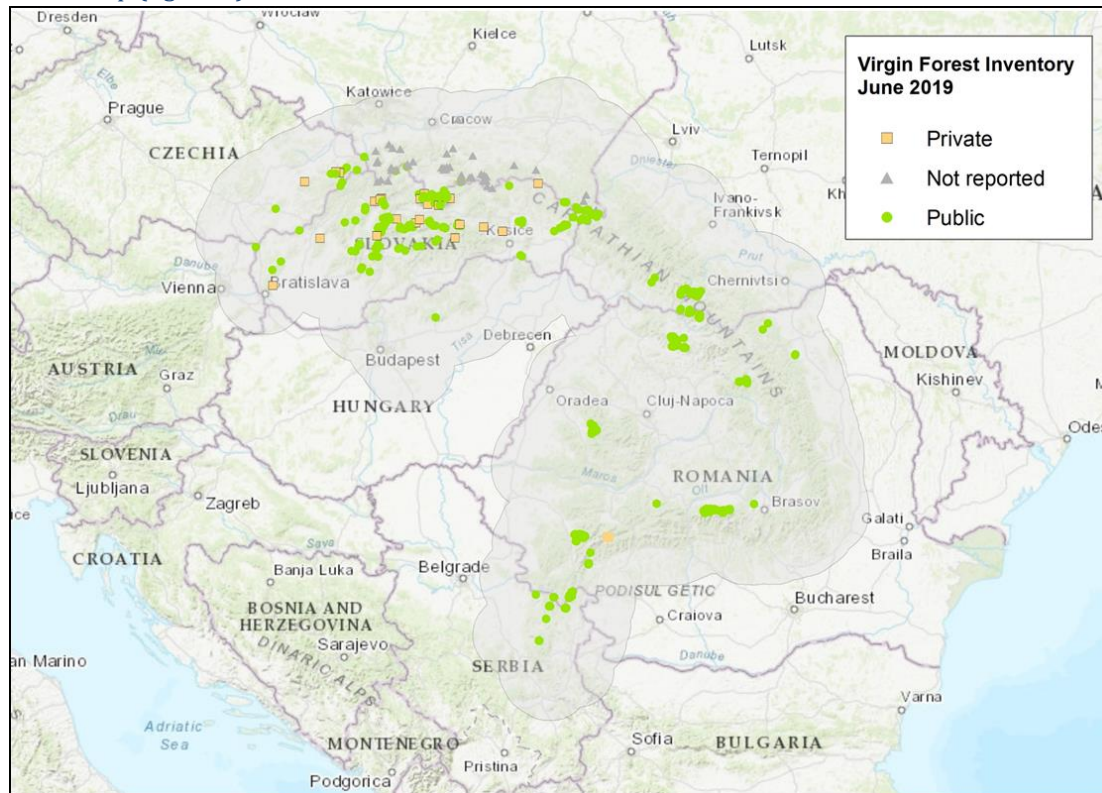


Figure 1: Classification of the Virgin Forest plots in the last version of the Inventory (June 2019) according to the ownership status

The available version of the inventory was presented at the 7th WG Forest meeting where future options were also discussed with the Secretariat, the Parties and the WWF representatives.

The lack or partial lack of official information from some of the Parties hinders finalization of the inventory, which initially was supposed to be finalized prior the COP6.

In addition to the official virgin forest inventory, there are alternative sources of data that gather information about forests with a well-known conservation status. When available, this information will be added to the Inventory as “not official data” (at the moment, for Romania and Ukraine). The description of the conservation status may not fully comply with the Protocol of the Carpathian Convention, but it can

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be used to complement the existing information and provide a starting point for the development of an official inventory of forests with a different degree of naturalness.

Furthermore, EEA kindly proposed possible integration of Carpathians forest data in a European framework - the [Forest Information System for Europe](#) (including EEA-39 and not Ukraine, Moldavia), which is currently under development as a narrative and visualisation tool to communicate on basic forest information, which was launch in February 2020.

Activities: *Activities related to the natural forest in the Carpathians*

1. At the 7th WG Forest meeting best practices on close-to-nature forest management were presented by Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Both Parties informed about the cooperation with [Pro Silva](#), which is a European federation of professional foresters across 25 European countries who advocate and promote Pro Silva Close to Nature Forest Management Principles as an alternative to clear felling, short-term tree plantations. Currently Pro Silva includes full members from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and members under development from Poland, Romania and Serbia. Ukraine would like to also become a member of Pro Silva.
2. The Czech Republic announced, that with support of Slovakia and especially, the Forests of the Slovak Republic, a workshop on close-to-nature forest management for the Carpathian countries will be organized in order to allow exchange of experience and promote the close-to-nature forest management and it approaches in practice. The workshop could be supported by Pro Silva, which would facilitate further collaboration with the Carpathian Convention and its Parties. More information about the workshop will be shared through the Secretariat in due course.
3. Based on the [Strategic Action Plan](#) for the implementation of the Forest Protocol (SAP), the WG Forest decided that priorities for the next implementation period shall be: close-to-nature forest management, climate change, and mapping of the virgin and natural forest.

Activities: *Strengthening cooperation with WG Climate Change*

The Secretariat proposed developing an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services, which was appreciated and supported by the WG Forest. The idea of the assessment was welcomed by the WG Forest and recommended for further consideration for the WG Climate Change.

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As mentioned above, one of the WG Forest priority for the implementation of the Forest Protocol and its SAP shall be activities on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Carpathian forests.

DECISION COP5/9 Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy Article 8 of the Carpathian Convention, Article 10 of the Carpathian Convention

8th meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Transport (WG Transport) back to back to the IENE workshop on 16-17 May 2018 in Budapest, Hungary ([meeting report](#)).

9th meeting of WG Transport took place on 1-2 April 2019 in Budapest, Hungary ([meeting report](#)).

10th of WG Transport on 11 March 2020 – Online Meeting ([meeting report](#)).

Activities: Implementation of the Transport Protocol

1. On 14th January 2019 the Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Carpathian Convention entered into force for Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine.
2. In cooperation with [TRANSGREEN](#) project partners and Eurac Research, the Secretariat organized the 8th WG Transport meeting (16-17 May 2018, in Budapest, Hungary) which was held back to back to a IENE Workshop on Sustainable Transportation. The result of the WG meeting was the discussion on the development of a Transport Strategic Action Plan (SAP), implementing the Sustainable Transport Protocol to the Carpathian Convention. After a consultation with national transport experts about the Transport SAP focus and structure, WG Transport participants asked the Secretariat, to prepare, with the support of the TRANSGREEN partnership and Eurac Research, a first draft of the Transport SAP.
3. In cooperation with [TRANSGREEN](#) project partners and Eurac Research, the Secretariat organized the 9th WG Transport meeting (1-2 April 2019, Budapest, Hungary), which was held back to back to the TRANSGREEN Project Partners meeting. The result of the WG Transport meeting was the discussion on the third draft of the Sustainable Transport Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathians prepared by Eurac Research, which was involved in the development of the Transport SAP through a subcontract of the Slovak TRANSGREEN partner SPECTRA (Centre of Excellence of EU – Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava).

The Secretariat, as agreed with the WG participants, circulated a 4th draft of the Transport Strategic Action Plan, collecting inputs from the WG Transport meeting, developed with the support of the TRANSGREEN partnership and Eurac Research, before the 10th Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee. The

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comments to the 4th Sustainable Transport SAP were collected by the Secretariat and they were presented at the CCIC meeting in Budapest on 10-13 December 2019.

4. Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the physical meeting of the 11th Transport WG), generously organized by CEEweb for Biodiversity and set to take place in Budapest, Hungary, was shifted to an online format.

During the meeting, members of the Carpathian Convention Working Groups on Biodiversity and Sustainable Transport together discussed the advanced version of the Transport SAP, finally named “Joint Strategic Action Plan 2021 – 2026 for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Transport”, with the aim to develop the final version of the document, to be adopted at COP6. The Transport SAP calls for cooperative work between fields of transport and nature conservation and it is defined “joint” for its integrative aspects. Experts provided feedbacks on the Transport SAP’s text, which were collected by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention for the preparation of a new draft of the document.

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention circulated the [6th draft of the Transport SAP](#), integrating all the comments provided by the WGs participants. Base on the comments received, the 7th draft was prepared, and a final draft should be ready to be circuited and presented at the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) in October 2020, in view of its final adoption at COP6.

5. The Final Conference of the [TRANSGREEN](#) project on Integrated Transport and Green Infrastructure Planning in the Danube-Carpathian Region for the Benefit of People and Nature funded by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, was held in Bucharest on 25 June 2019, organized by WWF, under the aegis of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The Conference brought together representatives of national authorities, the EU Commission, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat and other international institutions, academia and NGOs working in the fields of transport, spatial planning, and nature conservation.

At the end of the event, international participants contributed to the adoption of the Bucharest Conference Declaration ([TRANSGREEN Final Conference Declaration](#)). for a greener transport infrastructure in Europe. The declaration calls on the European Commission, the European Parliament and the national governments of the Danube-Carpathian region to preserve the beauty and richness of the region's biodiversity by promoting coordination between national and international institutions for a systemic integration of biodiversity policies and transport objectives, including financial aspects.

Further outcome documents related to the TRANSGREEN project:

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[Report on State of the Art and Gap Analysis](#)

[Policy Recommendations](#)

[Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport infrastructure development on nature in the Carpathian countries](#)

[All Project Outputs are listed here](#)

[Here the project lookback](#)

6. The Secretariat supported development of a project proposal on “Strengthening Capacity building on Sustainable Transport for Ecology and People” – STEP, which was submitted to the to the first call of the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation (submitted June 2018). The project was not selected under the first step evaluation.
7. The Secretariat was involved in the preparation of the SaveGREEN project proposal, submitted under the third call of the EU Danube Transnational Programme. The project proposal was successfully selected by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme. The project that focuses on Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin, started on 1 July 2020 and will continue until 30 November 2022.

Project Partners:

- **Austria:** WWF Central and Eastern Europe, Environment Agency Austria (EAA)
- **Bulgaria:** Black Sea NGO Network; Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation
- **Czech Republic:** Friends of the Earth Czech Republic; Transport Research Centre Czech Republic
- **Hungary:** CEEweb for Biodiversity; Szent Istvan University
- **Romania:** Zarand Association; WWF Danube Carpathian Programme Romania
- **Slovakia:** WWF Slovakia; SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU

Associated Partners:

- **Austria:** Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation, and Technology; Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism
- **Bulgaria:** Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Executive Forest Agency; Southwestern State Enterprise SE – Blagoevgrad
- **Czech Republic:** Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
- **France:** Infrastructure and Ecology Network Europe (IENE)
- **Germany:** Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection

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- **Greece:** EGNATIA ODOS S.A.
- **Hungary:** NIF National Infrastructure Developing Private Company Limited; Ministry of Agriculture; Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate
- **Romania:** Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests; Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration; Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications
- **Slovakia:** State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic; National Motorway Company
- **Ukraine:** M.P. Shulgin State Road Research Institute State Enterprise – DerzhdorNDI SE; Department of Ecology and Nature Resources of Zakarpattia Oblast Administration

The SaveGREEN project will demonstrate that through integrated planning the design of appropriate mitigation measures and the adequate ways to maintain and improve the functionality of ecological corridors can be achieved. The monitoring of the impact of such measures will, moreover, allow the project to derive the proper set of recommendations for follow-up actions and policy design.

The project will aim to foster cross-sectoral and transnational cooperation, as well as building a comprehensive know-how, towards the development of concrete solutions aimed at improving, restoring and preserving the functionality of key ecological corridors in Carpathian, Alpine and Bulgarian mountain valleys. It will cover these areas due to the overlapping concentration of both human activities and critical points for wildlife migration, which renders high degrees of conflict.

Main expected results

The project expects that, through the improvement of cross-sectoral cooperation in the fields of nature conservation, natural assets management (i.e. wildlife, forests, water), transport, and land use/spatial planning, it will enhance GI coherence in the Carpathian, Alpine and Balkan mountain valleys. It will do so by planning and implementing coherent integrated mitigation measures to minimise the negative impact of economic development.

Project Activities (activities for a special interest of the Carpathian Convention and its bodies, especially CCIC and relevant WGs are highlighted below in red with a further elaboration of the activities below)

- a) Development of a standardised monitoring methodology for structural and functional connectivity
- b) Development of an application toolbox for the monitoring of structural and functional connectivity
- c) Development of a capacity building programme
- d) Engagement and cooperation with relevant stakeholders of specific pilot areas
- e) Development of cross-sectoral operational plans to safeguard the functionality of ecological corridors in the pilot areas
- f) Implementation of selected actions of the local cross-sectoral operational plans

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- g) **Support the mainstreaming of ecological connectivity into EU and global policies through cooperation among macro-regional strategies (i.e. EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention)**
- h) Development of recommendations towards the integration of mitigation measures/GI into sectoral policy and decision making
- i) **Strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation among key players, promotion of project results in the Danube basin and beyond, and capacity building at the national level**
- j) Deliverance of several types of publications
- k) Organisation of public events
- l) Digital communications
- m) Development of promotional materials

- **Support the mainstreaming of ecological connectivity into EU and global policies through cooperation among macro-regional strategiesⁱⁱ (i.e. EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention) through development of the high-level joint regional policy declaration**

The high-level joint regional policy declaration on maintaining and restoring ecological corridors/ green infrastructure will address the need for transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation in the Danube-Carpathian region, and will be elaborated together with the EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention. The overall goal is to develop and commit to a coordinated cross-border and cross-sector approach for spatial planning and nature conservation in the region. As a policy tool, the joint declaration will summarize principles and criteria for environmentally sustainable spatial planning in the Danube-Carpathian regions, including the maintenance of existing and the development of future GI infrastructures.

The Carpathian Convention has concluded Memoranda of Understanding with various EUSDR Priority Areas. This will be the basis for cooperation on the development of the high-level joint regional policy declaration and would raise the visibility of the Carpathian Convention in the context of EUSDR. Furthermore, the Carpathian Convention can be the link to global intentions to safeguarding ecological corridors among others. Here, we refer to CBD and its Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and UNEP Environment Programme.

- **Strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation among key players, promotion of project results in the Danube basin and beyond, and capacity building at the national level through capacity building programme plus training events**

The Capacity building programme addressing public authorities and other key stakeholders will provide a set of tools

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- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Toolkit,
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Toolkit including cost- benefit analysis of environmental impacts of the respective projects and
- Handbook of best practice examples

that allows a better understanding of human impacts on green infrastructure and the implementation of measures to prevent and reduce impacts. These tools will facilitate a better understanding of the impacts by all stakeholders, especially decision makers. The tools will integrate the experience of TRANSGEEN (Guideline on Wildlife and Traffic, EIA training package) and ConnectGREEN (Training package on identifying and managing ecological corridors) projects, as well as other EU projects with results of all SaveGREEN activities.

SEA and EIA are the two main instruments that ensure the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation of plans and project throughout the Member States, both procedures allowing the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Impact assessment is a technical process with many difficulties regarding the choice of methodologies, the assessment of alternatives, the involvement of stakeholders or the integration of other EU Directives requirements. Recently, requirements have been added regarding the adaptation to climate change or the need for an integrated assessment of the impact on green infrastructure, which is difficult without a step-by-step and easy to use toolkit. Among the new approaches proposed by these tools is the use of simple impact indicators that allow facile comparison of alternatives and financial quantification of the impacts on GI. The toolkits are essential for both decision makers and consultants in the field environmental assessments. We believe that this tool will support further sustainable transport infrastructure development in the Carpathians.

Towards the end of the project, national capacity training events for public authorities and key stakeholders will be organised in the participating countries, where we hope to get support from your side for the adaptation of the programme to national needs, advertising of the events and dissemination of the capacity programme in your respective countries.

[More detailed project description is available.](#)

**DECISION COP5/10 Sustainable tourism
Article 9 of the Carpathian Convention**

Activities: *Implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians*

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1. Following the recommendation of the 9th CCIC, the Secretariat prepared a draft Memorandum of Cooperation between the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) and its Centres. The drafts were consulted with the CSTP Centre Romania and CSTP Poland and submitted to the CCIC ([draft MoC with Centre RO](#), [draft MoC with Centre PL](#)).
 2. Furthermore, as advised by the 9th and 10th CCIC, the Secretariat asked the CSTP partners to provide an update on progress in CSTP Centers establishment and their formal structure. The Secretariat asked also CSTP to provide a written report on CSTP activities. The CSTP report shall be available shortly
 3. Meeting of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Centres (CSTC) took place on 25 – 26 January 2018 in Bratislava in order to discuss, among others, the joint work programme and indicators for the 3 CSTCs 2018-2020 and joint report format to the WG Tourism and CCIC ([meeting report](#)).
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DECISION COP5/11 Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention

[5th meeting of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge](#), held in Szentendre Open Air Museum (Skanzen) and Budapest, Hungary, 4 – 5 April 2018 ([meeting report](#)).

Activities: Further priorities of the WG Cultural Heritage

1. The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, with a generous support and hospitality of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, organized the 5th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge (WG Cultural Heritage), held in Szentendre Open Air Museum (Skanzen) and Budapest, Hungary, 4 – 5 April 2018. Following the discussion on potential development of the Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, it was agreed that together with the meeting report the Secretariat circulates a [zero draft of the Protocol](#) asking the Parties for comments, however, no feedback was received. Furthermore, during the WG Cultural Heritage meeting, the Czech Republic volunteered to undertake one of the tasks as set out in the [Road Map from 2014 to achieve the objectives of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention](#), namely to Prepare, maintain and update a list of relevant institutions from all the Parties. For this purpose, the Czech Republic prepared and circulated a template for collecting information on relevant Carpathian institutions and stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage. The information can be still provided through a google form: <https://goo.gl/forms/I6GM73KqLWNqv3u2>. The responses can be monitored through this website:

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<https://goo.gl/haehFj>. The Secretariat encourages the WG Cultural Heritage and relevant partners to provide their inputs.

2. The discussion held during the 5th WG Cultural heritage meeting resulted in a project idea that will support implementation of the Road Map and the Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention. The project, *Carpathian Route Carpathian Route - exploring, promoting and protecting the richness of the cultural and natural heritage of the Carpathian Region* was submitted to and approved by the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation. The project will start on 1 January 2020 and will run for three years.

The main project objective is to safeguard the common cultural and natural heritage and foster the sustainable socio-economic development of the Carpathian mountain region by sustainably using the cultural and natural heritage assets perceived as drivers for local economies' development.

The project will foster the sustainable socio-economic development of the Carpathian region through implementation of common innovative solutions to shared challenges related to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage. Furthermore, the project shall strengthen existing and initiate new cooperation networks, enhance regional cross-border cooperation between seven Carpathian countries and their transnational cooperation with the two donor countries (Norway and Liechtenstein).

The main expected project results are the enhanced joint management and safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the shared Carpathian region, and improved transnational policy coordination between involved beneficiary countries. The project will reconcile heritage conservation and local economic development, raise support for conservation activities, and encourage the use of best available European practices in cultural resources management for sustainable local development. Regional transboundary and transnational cooperation enhanced by the project will allow networking, exchange of information and knowledge, transfer of know-how and experience, capacity building and improved cultural heritage management capacities. The project shall support the development of cultural tourism, by inventorying existing and designing new cultural heritage routes, as well as the revival of vanishing traditional occupations and crafts, by promoting traditional local products. Overall, it will produce several thematic workshops and related handbooks and compendium of best practices, study visits to Norway and to the Alps, project's conferences, a Carpathian Cultural Route Guidebook, and the Carpathian Cultural Heritage Inventory. Furthermore, it will lay foundation for obtaining the certification of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in the future. The project proposal envisages also support for development of the Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, which implementation should guarantee the sustainability of the project.

Below are listed main project outputs, as foreseen in the project documents:

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- commonly agreed work approaches, data collection format templates and criteria for Cultural Heritage Inventory
- jointly developed Carpathian regional inventories (of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, traditional local products, heritage trails and their operators, cultural and natural heritage museums present in the Carpathians and other entities dealing with the documentation, safeguarding and research on the Carpathian cultural heritage)
- expertise / knowledge exchange and capacity building activities (incl. 13 workshops and 3 study visits, aimed at developing skills and competencies for cultural heritage management and its sustainable use for local economic development), supported by expertise Partners from Donor States
- publication "Guide to the Carpathian Cultural Heritage" (in English, and 7 "Carpathian" languages) based on the Carpathian Cultural Heritage Inventory
- Publication "Compendium of good pastoral practices"
- draft thematic Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge to the Carpathian Framework Convention.

Please see below the list of the Project Partners:

1. Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland (Lead Partner)
2. Wallachian Open Air Museum, Czech Republic
3. Humtour LLC, Hungary
4. Brasov County Council, Romania
5. Homeland Museum of Knjaževac, Republic of Serbia
6. The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, Slovak Republic
7. International Charitable Organisation Information Center "Green Dossier" / Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians NAS of Ukraine
8. UNEP Vienna - Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Austria (expertise partner)
9. GRID-Arendal, Norway (expertise partner)
10. CIPRA International, Liechtenstein (expertise partner)

The Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge of the Carpathian Convention would act as the Steering Group of the project. In the coming weeks, the Secretariat will contact the WG Cultural Heritage to share more detailed information about the project implementation.

The full project description will be available after finalization of the ongoing contractual phase.

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DECISION COP5/12 Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention

Activities: *Activities related to implementation of the Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention*

1. The Secretariat continue discussing with European Environment Agency (EEA) about further development and integration of the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System ([CCIBIS](#)), created and developed under EU Interreg Programme Projects, into EU/EEA information systems.

The Secretariat continue cooperation with the EEA with operational priorities focused on forests, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and ecological connectivity and there is a strong interest in further developing of the common activities. Preparation of a regional fact-sheet on the Carpathian region to promote and raise awareness on specific aspects of the region, is currently under discussion with EEA.

2. [The 5th Forum Carpaticum](#), a scientific conference gathering researches from the Carpathians and beyond, took place on 15-18 October 2018 in Eger, Hungary, covering a wide range of topics related to sustainability in the Carpathians, including land cover and land-use change, renewable energy, climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation, and connections between water and forests. The breadth of topics extended to the humanities, such as traditional ecological knowledge, spatial inequalities, and social innovation in mountain areas. In conjunction with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the 5th Forum Carpaticum especially highlighted topics on biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism development and education for sustainable development (ESD), as well as the importance of science-practice-policy interface.
3. The Secretariat strongly supported the organization of the 5th Forum Carpaticum by obtaining funds from the German Federal Environment Ministry's Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP), the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the German Environment Agency. The project titled "[Integrating nature protection and sustainable tourism development into the Carpathian region via science-policy-practice interface](#)" supported integrating the results from the previous CC work on sustainable tourism development and biodiversity protection into a comprehensive follow-up in the Carpathians, via strengthening the science-policy-practice interface and transdisciplinary dialogue on sustainable development, as well as building synergies among the researchers and practitioners. Specifically, the project supported participation of young scientists, social and interdisciplinary scientists and practitioners who could especially benefit from these approaches and also facilitate their integration in the Carpathian region. Science of the Carpathians (S4C) presented [results and recommendations of the 5th Forum Carpaticum](#) during the CCIC meeting held in Vienna on the 17-19 December 2018.

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4. [The 6th Forum Carpaticum](#), was originally scheduled to take place in Brno, the Czech Republic on 23 - 26 June 2020, however, it has been postponed to 21 - 25 June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference is planned as a hybrid event (with opportunities to participate both in person and electronically), but the final format will be adapted based on the COVID-19-related situation at the time of the conference. The aim of the event is to establish links between S4C, local and regional authorities and various stakeholders. Like in the case of the 5th Forum Carpaticum, S4C aims to produce recommendations for the Carpathian Convention, based on the conference results.
5. The 6th Forum Carpaticum is also building on the results of the 5th Forum, via addressing more cross-cutting topics and science-policy-practice interface. Moreover, an Interdisciplinary Summer School for Young Scientists will be organized by the Science for the Carpathians initiative in the Summer of 2021, which shall aim at forming new interdisciplinary networks, linking research with the Carpathian Convention priorities, and initiation of interdisciplinary papers. The Forum Carpaticum and the Summer School will be financed with support of the Visegrad fund, based on the project titled "Linking Science, Policy and People for Sustainable Carpathians," developed by S4C with support from the Secretariat.
6. The Secretariat asked the Chair of S4C to consider including the climate change topic into the programme of the 6th Forum Carpaticum, either in a form of a dedicated session or via mainstreaming the climate change topic into other sessions. The consultations in this respect between the Secretariat and S4C will continue once the preparation for the Forum Carpaticum 2021 resumes. Information about a proposed session on climate change during the 6thFC are available in the climate change chapter on this Progress Report (p.36).
7. Following the recommendations of the 9th CCIC meeting, a special workshop with S4C representatives was organized during the 9th meeting of the WG Biodiversity. The aim of the workshop was twofold: 1) to explore possibilities for a better systematic inputs of scientific information into the decision making processes and to try new formats of integrating scientific, policy and practice-related knowledge to enhance the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and 2) 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. 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 Café 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?

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- 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.](#) Further session on better exchange of scientific information supporting decision making processes should be organized in the future, if possible.

8. A [Memorandum of Understanding for the Cooperation between the Science for the Carpathians Network \(S4C\) and the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region \(SNC-mt\)](#) has been elaborated with support by the Secretariat in order to strengthen scientific exchange between the Carpathians and the Caucasus mountain regions. The MoU should be signed at the next Forum Carpaticum in 2021.

DECISION COP5/13 Climate change Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention

[6th meeting of the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change \(WG Climate Change\)](#) was held on 9 October 2019 in Budapest, Hungary ([meeting report](#)).

[7th meeting of WG Climate Change](#) held in an online format on 15 May 2020 ([meeting report](#))

Activities: Implementation of the Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention on climate change

1. The Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP5, 2017) adopted an amendment to the Convention, the new Article 12bis on Climate Change. Discussion on the pending ratification processes was one of the 6th WG Climate Change meeting, that was organized by the Secretariat with the great support of the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary and the Hungarian Meteorological Service in Budapest, Hungary on 9 October 2019.

Until now only Hungary completed all internal procedures necessary for the successful ratification of the new Article 12bis. Furthermore, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine informed about advanced phases of the ratification processes in their countries. The Secretariat informed about the written update

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received from Romania informing that the ratification process has been initiated and is advancing without any problems. More updates are expected at the upcoming 11th CCIC meeting.

2. The discussion held during the 6th WG Climate Change, that was mainly focused on cooperation with other WGs and another actors such as the Alpine Climate Board, EUSDR PA4 and PA5, relevant global and regional process in regard to climate change, sharing best practices and ideas for the implementation of the Article 12bis, led to idea of developing a *Presidency discussion paper on elevating mandate of the WG Climate Change*, proposing structured step-by-step approach for strengthening networking and collaboration on climate change in the Carpathians, including proposals for the structure, timeline, role and concrete tasks of the Working Group, in particular with regard to the implementation of Article 12bis. The Hungarian Presidency in close cooperation with the Secretariat prepared the document prior the next, the 7th WG Climate Change meeting and was debated but the WG during the online meeting on 15 May 2020.

As a result, based on the final version of the [Presidency discussion paper](#), it was agreed by the WG Climate Change that in order to establish a stronger mandate for the WG Climate Change, the following points shall be considered and undertaken:

- Revise the WG Climate Change,
- Draft a long-term Vision 2030 with complementary strategic targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation, providing an overall framework for focus and direction of subsequent activities;
- Elaborate a structured workplan along with the strategic targets that guides the agenda and work of the WG 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);
- Strengthen 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
- Further collaborate with other regional frameworks/platforms/initiatives and related institutions and organizations, especially from mountain and neighboring regions, for knowledge exchange and learning

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- Collaborate on EU and international commitments and obligations and develop ideas to raise the attention to climate change in mountain areas at the global level
- Develop approach(es) for defining and promoting concrete climate actions as well as good practices 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.

In this respect, the Secretariat has developed the relevant documents, namely the [revised Terms of Reference for the WG Climate Change](#), the [Draft long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians](#) and a corresponding draft [Workplan for the implementation period 2021-2023](#) (including mainstream climate change in all relevant areas of activities under the Carpathian Convention). The documents were shared with the WG Climate Change, then to be submitted to the CCIC for approval and further submission to the COP6. In addition, the Secretariat prepared a [Preliminary idea for potential topics for collaboration of the Working Group on Climate Change with other Carpathian Convention Working Groups](#).

3. Further to the request of greater inclusion of the climate change topics at the 6th Forum Carpaticum, William Keeton, Professor at the University of Vermont, Member of the Science for the Carpathians, highlighting the link between the forest and climate change, offered organization of a special session at the 6th Forum Carpaticum - *Forest ecosystem and resource vulnerabilities to climate change in the Carpathian Mountain Region* ([session description](#)). The WG Forest and Climate Change are encouraged to contribute and participate in the session.
4. Considering the recommendation of the 7th WG Forest meeting, to produce an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services, the WG Climate Change agreed to this proposal and asked the Secretariat to facilitate the process. This task shall become a part of the Work Plan being currently elaborated for the WG Climate Change.
5. On 8 October 2019, prior to the 6th WG Climate Change meeting, a training on the [Climate Data Store](#) (CDS), part of the [Copernicus Climate Change Service](#) (C3S) User Learning Services, was organized for Hungary with a kind invitation extended to representatives of other Carpathian countries. CDS training was kindly offered by Wageningen University & Research, which implements the C3S User Learning Services on behalf of Copernicus Climate Change Services.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service supports society by providing authoritative information about the past, present and future climate in Europe and the rest of the World, while the Climate Data Store provides easy access to a wide range of climate datasets via a searchable catalogue.

6. Further to the Joint Declaration of Cooperation, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, and especially ICPDR Tisza Group and the Carpathian Convention shall strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The cooperation on this topic is led by the Hungarian

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Presidency, and as informed by the Presidency, there are several topics to be considered for future common activities, such as, detection of flood formation areas, land use and land use changes (LUC) in the mountains, runoff modelling, effects of the LUC on the streamflow and sedimentation of rivers. One topic should be commonly agreed in near future with further plans to organize a workshop (2020) on that topic leading to development of a project proposal (2021).

7. The Hungarian Presidency have been supported closer cooperation with the EUSDR Priority Area 4 (Water Quality) and Priority Area 5 (Environmental Risks). Ideas for activities with PA4 includes: microplastic in the Carpathians, establishing biomonitoring, wastewater treatment in small settlements, agricultural good practices in mountainous areas, Natural Water Retention Measures including urban water retention, flash floods or soil degradation. Ideas for cooperation with the PA5 should be further explored.
8. The [European Climate Adaptation Platform Climate-ADAPT](#) is a partnership between the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA). Climate-ADAPT is maintained by the EEA with the support of the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation (ETC/CCA). Climate-ADAPT aims to support Europe in adapting to climate change helping users to access and share data and information on expected climate change in Europe, current and future vulnerability of regions and sectors, EU, national and transnational adaptation strategies and actions, adaptation case studies and potential adaptation options, and tools that support adaptation planning. Climate-ADAPT has developed a specific section on adaptation in the Carpathian Mountains that comprises the policy framework, the impacts and vulnerabilities and the adaptation actions. The site has not been updated in 2019. However, a fact sheet is regularly produced to monitor the use of the portal showing that case studies and country profiles get most visits.
9. The Secretariat and EURAC Research contributed to the development of the European Environment Agency “Technical Paper on Adaptation in European Transnational regions”, published at the end of 2018. In this context, they were responsible for the development of the paragraphs on the Central Europe and Danube Regions and the Carpathian Convention, in cooperation with the 21 colleagues of the European Topic Centre on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation of EEA. The Secretariat took also part in the ‘EIONET Workshop on ‘Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation’, organized by EEA on 5-7 June 2018 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The aim of the meeting was to discuss with EEA and EIONET Focal Points about future activities and initiatives on Climate Change.

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DECISION COP5/14 Awareness raising, education and public participation Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention

***Activities:** Activities related to implementation of the Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention*

1. The session “*Education on the Sustainable Carpathians*” and workshop “*Education for Science and Society in the Carpathians*” was co-organized by the Secretariat and the S4C during the 5th Forum Carpaticum (15-18 October 2018 in Eger, Hungary,). The session and workshop resulted in [recommendations](#), which have been communicated to the Secretariat and presented at the CCIC meeting by the S4C.
2. The Hungarian Presidency, together with the Secretariat and financial support by the German project⁵ organized a Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development, which took place on 16 -18 April 2019 in Budapest, Hungary. By organizing an international seminar, Hungary wished to establish a new and enduring tradition of transdisciplinary networking and cross-country exchange of experience in ESD in the region, thus supporting the joint mission of the Carpathian Convention Countries to work towards sustainability. As a result, several policy recommendations were proposed:
 - Seminar participants strongly supported the idea of holding Carpathian ESD seminars on an annual or biennial basis. Participants from Poland (unofficially) suggested the possibility of organizing the next seminar in Poland, during the period of Polish presidency of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. in 2020 or 2021).
 - Participants have recommended establishing a Working Group (or equivalent) on ESD under the Carpathian Convention. The Working Group (WG) would be tasked with facilitating continuous regional exchange on ESD, as well as exchange with experts from outside the region, supporting joint projects and other forms of collaboration, coordinating communication with donors, as well as potentially developing a respective protocol. Moreover, the WG on ESD would facilitate exchange with other WGs of the Carpathian Convention, to ensure relevant thematic inputs into the educational materials and initiatives, and vice-versa.

Specific recommendations on science - policy - practice interface included the following:

- Continuing to integrate discussions and regional exchange on ESD into the COPs of the Carpathian Convention, as well as the Science for the Carpathians events.
- Involving ministerial officials from the ministries of education and environment in research in order to facilitate integration of the best practices on the policy level.

⁵ Project provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety by the Advisory Assistance Programme for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union (AAP).

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- Accompanying the ESD process in the Carpathians with continuous research, including but not limited to encouraging researchers (from the Carpathian region and beyond) to work on evaluating ESD initiatives in the Carpathian countries and to co-create recommendations with practitioners and policy-makers in order to facilitate sustainability transformations in the region.
- Approaching funding programmes and donors to discuss elaboration of specific funding programmes and calls, focused on ESD and transdisciplinary learning for sustainability transformations in the Carpathian region.
- Linking science closer to the classroom, including via: 1) Involving teachers and students in research; 2) Supporting citizen science initiatives, with a focus on developing scientific inquiry competences among the teachers and students; 3) Reporting scientific findings back to the teachers and students, and communicating with them better.

More information about the ESD Seminar can be found in the [seminar report](#).

3. Based on these ESD-related developments, the project “Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention in cooperation with Leuphana University Lüneburg via science-policy-practice interface” has been elaborated by the Secretariat and submitted for consideration of the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP).

The project aims at:

- a) building collaboration between the Carpathian Convention partners and Leuphana University Lüneburg, to facilitate ESD and learning for sustainability transformations in the Carpathian region,
- b) building a network of ESD experts from the Carpathian region, in order to enable regular exchange and carry out similar tasks to those of a Carpathian Convention Working Group, including following up on ESD-related recommendations available to-date, development and implementation of projects, as well as elaboration of policies, and providing recommendations to the Carpathian Convention.
- c) co-creating recommendations for strategies and actions on how best to integrate ESD into Carpathian Convention activities and vice-versa, using a more rigorous reflection process and state-of-the-art knowledge about learning processes and transdisciplinary methods.

The project has been submitted on 30 December 2019 and is awaiting feedback from AAP. The Secretariat expects feedback from the donor in January 2021, due to the COVID-19 related processing delays.

4. Additional follow-up activities on ESD are planned by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Parties and stakeholders, including a respective session and workshop at the 6th Forum Carpathicum, involvement of ESD experts in an inter-sectoral project meeting planned by UNEP GRID/Warsaw and presenting ESD-related activities of the Carpathian Convention at the 11th World Environmental Education Congress, planned to take place on 4-8 Oct 2021 in Prague, Czech Republic. The secretariat

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also supported the Ministry of Human Capacities and Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary in elaborating an application for a workshop titled “Emerging collaboration: ESD in the Carpathian Convention Network” at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD.

5. The Secretariat elaborated a [briefing on ESD-related Carpathian Convention activities](#) for the Carpathian Convention focal points, highlighting their development to-date, their relevance to the recently adopted UNESCO Global Framework on ESD for the period of 2020-2036, consolidated recommendations from participatory discussions and workshops during COP 5 (October 2017), Forum Carpathicum 2018 (October 2018) and Carpathian ESD Seminar (April 2019), and a summary of ESD-related references in COP decisions and documents.

⁶ UNESCO. 2019. Framework for the implementation of education for sustainable development (esd) beyond 2019. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370215> (accessed 17.04.2020).

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Annex 1

Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention, 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020

Topic	Activities	Actions to be undertaken
Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and Conference of the Parties (COP)	<p>Development of documentation for COP, including documentation on sectoral issues, integrated reports, strategies/ strategic action plans/protocols for priority issues,</p> <p>Meeting reports and recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Parties, shall prepare comprehensive information and documentation for the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention – COP6, including guidance and overview of the implementation and work conducted under thematic Working Groups, review of MoUs, agreements and other relevant initiatives under the Convention, - Secretariat, in consultation with the host government and the CCIC, shall make all necessary arrangements and preparations for the organization of the COP6.
Implementation of the Carpathian Convention	<p>Development of a comprehensive National Report on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention covering all the Protocols and other relevant sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall develop guidelines and reporting template in consultation with the Parties, to be approved by the COP, -
	<p>Other activities related to implementation of the Carpathian Convention deriving from the COP5 Decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall promote, at the national level, efficient and consistent processes for implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including information, involvement and capacity building of relevant stakeholders and civil society, - Secretariat shall develop projects establishing outreach programmes targeting local and regional authorities, universities and other relevant stakeholders to increase their awareness of the importance of the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region, and of the Convention's activities, - Secretariat shall continue to promote the Carpathian Convention and sustainable mountain development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals,

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall continue taking all necessary efforts, in collaboration with the Parties and stakeholders, to mobilize financial means for development and implementation of projects in order to foster the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols, - Parties shall further solicit support for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention from the relevant financial instruments.
Cooperation with the European Union	Activities related to the cooperation with EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall further engage in common activities with the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region and respective Priority Areas, - Secretariat shall continue promoting the integration of Carpathian priorities into the related Transnational "European Territorial Cooperation" (ETC) Programmes for the period 2014-2020, as well as other relevant funding programmes, - Parties shall further cooperate with EU bodies in further promoting the Carpathian region within existing EU macroregional strategies, - Secretariat shall monitor development of the EU Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathian Region, - Secretariat shall coordinate with the interregional group "Carpathians" within the Committee of the Regions.
Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies	Activities related to cooperation with other conventions or international bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall continue to strengthen the cooperation with the Alpine Convention in fields such as institutional cooperation, the exchange of information and experience, the development and implementation of common projects, collaboration on implementation of the Conventions and their respective Programmes of Work, the implementation of the Programmes of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on Protected Areas and on Mountain Biodiversity and collaboration in the field of protected area networks in the Alps and the Carpathians, - Secretariat shall continue the cooperation with the Alpine Convention on implementation of the Declaration of the Conference The Role of Women in Mountain Regions and its recommendations, raise awareness on the topic and present this

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		<p>initiative in various international fora, among which the World Mountain Forum in 2018;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall further follow cooperation between the Secretariats of the Carpathian and Alpine Conventions and the Regional Academy on the United Nations (RAUN) in mentoring a group of researchers for the development of a study on women's access to natural resources, participation in natural resource preservation and management in mountain areas, to be presented at the RAUN 2017 - 2018 Conference on Women and Girls in a Changing World: Prospects and Challenges, in January 2018 in Vienna, Austria, - Parties and the CNPA members shall consider joining the organization of the Youth at the Top events in the future, - Parties shall support the establishment and implementation of programmes to foster the further experience exchange between the Alps, Carpathians and other mountain regions, - Secretariat shall implement the required activities and promote partnerships with other mountain regions, including interregional cooperation; UN Environment, all interested partners and donors, shall participate in and contribute to the process, - Secretariat shall further represent the Carpathian Convention in the external relations, and further cooperate and share experience with relevant partners and projects.
Biodiversity	Finalization of the Carpathian Red Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall submit the official comments and/or positions on the Lists - CCIC shall consider the submission by Parties - Parties shall consider undertaking further actions in case of needed additional work to complete the Red Lists
	Consideration of the National Reports on the Implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCIC shall consider the conclusions of the summary of the reports prepared by the Secretariat with the aim to strengthen the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol in the future. - Parties / WG Biodiversity shall take steps in order to strengthen the implementation, as proposed by the CCIC

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	Development of International action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Biodiversity shall prioritize its work on Large Carnivores - WG Biodiversity, with support of the Secretariat, shall elaborate an International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian Populations of Large Carnivores
	Harmonization of methodologies for the population based monitoring of large carnivores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Biodiversity and the Secretariat shall work together with the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation through a work plan for concrete activities, including possible harmonization of methodologies for the population based monitoring of large carnivores
	Relevance of the topic on Invasive Alien Species for the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Biodiversity shall explore the relevance of this topic for the Carpathians, and suggest possible actions for the consideration of the CCIC at its next meeting - WG Biodiversity / Parties shall take actions as proposed by the CCIC.
	Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and its further activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ANPAA shall restore active communication with the CNPA Focal Points, - CNPA shall carry out concrete activities in order to implement the CNPA Medium – Term Strategy, - CNPA shall further cooperate with ALPARC and DANUBEPARKS on ecological connectivity, exchanges on protected areas matters, education and other specific topics common to the three networks.
	Activities on the Carpathian wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CWI shall enhance cooperation with Ramsar Convention - CWI shall mobilize resources - CWI shall take appropriate action on the effective conservation, restoration, management and sustainable use of Carpathian wetlands - CWI shall take appropriate action on development of education and training in these topics
	Activities on wildlife crime prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall disseminate the results of the Assessment of the Wild for DC project to relevant international initiatives with a view to support synergies,

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Biodiversity shall prepare of proposal of possible joint activities with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) for the consideration by the CCIC, - Secretariat shall work on project development on wildlife crime prevention, in cooperation with WWF DCP, WG Biodiversity and relevant stakeholders.
	Support for ConnectGREEN project (if successful)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Biodiversity shall involve in project activities, especially in respect to the development of a strategy on the identification, preservation, management of ecological corridors focusing on large carnivores' needs in the Carpathian region, - Secretariat shall follow the process and participates in it by providing expertise through an agreement with the Lead Partner.
Spatial Development	Activities related to the local administrative units (LAU) within which the Parties implement the Convention and its Protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties with support of the Secretariat shall publish and disseminate this information, including to local and regional stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in the region.
Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management	Cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, including the Tisza Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall explore possibilities for enhanced cooperation with the ICPDR/Tisza Group on with a special focus on climate change adaptation, agriculture or water nexus, - Secretariat shall continue providing relevant expertise to the JOINTISZA project.
Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development	Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD Protocol)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall undertake, whenever possible, actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol, - WG SARD shall prepare and prioritize strategic actions taking into account the provisions of the SARD Protocol, - Secretariat shall enhance cooperation with ICPDR on sustainable agriculture and rural development.
Sustainable forest management	Finalization of the inventory of virgin forest in the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties, with support of the WG Forest and other relevant stakeholders, shall complete the inventory of virgin forest before the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention.

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	Activities related to the natural forest in the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Forest shall continue work on typology of natural forests, - WG Forest shall propose voluntary guidelines for measures unifying methodologies for the sustainable management of natural forests in the Carpathian region, implementing, <i>inter alia</i>, Article 11 of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention.
	Strengthening cooperation with WG Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Forest shall strengthen its cooperation with the WG Climate Change to facilitate the implementation of Article 14 of the Forest Protocol.
	Activities on prevention of illegal logging in the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall take urgent and forceful measures to address the problem of illegal logging in the Carpathians, - WG Forest shall compile and disseminate information on illegal logging in the Carpathian, as well as to recommend measures for addressing this problem that take into account socioeconomic issues.
Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy	Implementation of the Transport Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG Transport, with support of the TRANSGREEN project, shall develop a Strategic Action Plan for fostering the implementation of the Transport Protocol, other Working Groups and relevant stakeholders are invited to support the process, - Secretariat shall continue to participate in the TRANSGREEN project by providing expertise through an agreement with the Lead Partner.
Sustainable tourism	Implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall actively participate in implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians, - Secretariat shall elaborate collaborative agreements with the centers of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP), - CSTP and its centers shall further elaborate on the development of the common Carpathia brand, - WG Tourism shall consider the Set of Indicators for measuring the positive and negative effects of tourism in the Carpathians as a useful source for the implementation of Article 24 of the Tourism Protocol.

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Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge	Promotion of the World Heritage Sites in the Carpathians	- Secretariat, in close cooperation with WG Cultural Heritage and potentially WG Tourism, shall take necessary action to develop the concept of promoting the World Heritage Sites in the Carpathians with an aim to support sustainable tourism development in the region.
	Future priorities of the WG Cultural Heritage	- WG Cultural Heritage shall identify priorities for the implementation of Article 11 of the Carpathian Convention and shall propose next steps to the CCIC, including the possibility of the development of a redrafted Protocol on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge.
Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning	Activities related to implementation of the Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall explore possibilities of cooperation with the ICPDR and the EUSDR on environmental safety/accidental prevention control in order to facilitate implementation of Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention, - Secretariat shall further develop, with support of the TRANSGREEN project and possible future projects, the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS), as an information system accessible to all the Parties, gathering available data sets, information on local and regional administrations, outcomes of projects and other relevant data, - Parties shall consider engaging of respective European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) Focal Points in the implementation of Article 12 of the Carpathian Convention.
Climate Change	Implementation of the Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention on Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties shall begin the implementation of the Article 12bis by further development of climate change related activities in the Carpathian region, - WG Climate Change to prepare and prioritize strategic actions in this respect.
Awareness raising, education and public participation	Activities related to implementation of the Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention	- Parties and other stakeholders shall get actively involved in development and promoting of the Mountain Biodiversity for our Wellbeing online platform, and the Secretariat shall support the process,

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat shall support organization of a seminar in 2018/2019 on the issues on environmental and sustainable development education and awareness raising in kindergartens and schools with the aim of exchanging best practices in the Carpathian region and exploring of further cooperation, as proposed by the Hungarian Presidency, Parties, the Secretariat and relevant partners, among others the UNECE and S4C, shall consider common activities on awareness raising, for instance, establishing contest for school students and/or young scientists with reference to the Carpathian matters, - Secretariat and relevant stakeholders shall consider development of a follow up project of the Lifelong Learning project Innovation in Rural Tourism (InRuTou).
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