

MEETING REPORT

8th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Climate Change

6 May 2021 – ONLINE MEETING

1) Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the Polish Presidency and the Chair of the Working Group on Climate Change

The 8th meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Climate Change (WG CC) was opened by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Mr. Harald Egerer, Head of the UNEP Vienna Programme Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, welcoming the participants and giving technical instructions for smooth running of the online meeting. The Secretariat welcomed and gave the floor for delivering opening remarks to Mr. Péter Király, Head of the Department for International Relations of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, Carpathian Convention Focal Point representing Hungary as the Chair of the WG CC, and the Polish Presidency of the Carpathian Convention represented by Ms. Bożena Haczek.

Mr. Péter Király informed that due to unforeseen reasons, the official Chair of the WG CC, Mr. Sandor Szalai, Szent István University, was not able to join the meeting. In this regard, he invited the Secretariat to take over the chairing and moderating of the 8th meeting of the WG CC.

2) Welcoming new members of the WG CC and round of introduction

The Secretariat warmly welcomed the new members of the WG CC and invited all participants to introduce themselves starting from the official delegates of the Parties in alphabetic order, then moving to the observers.

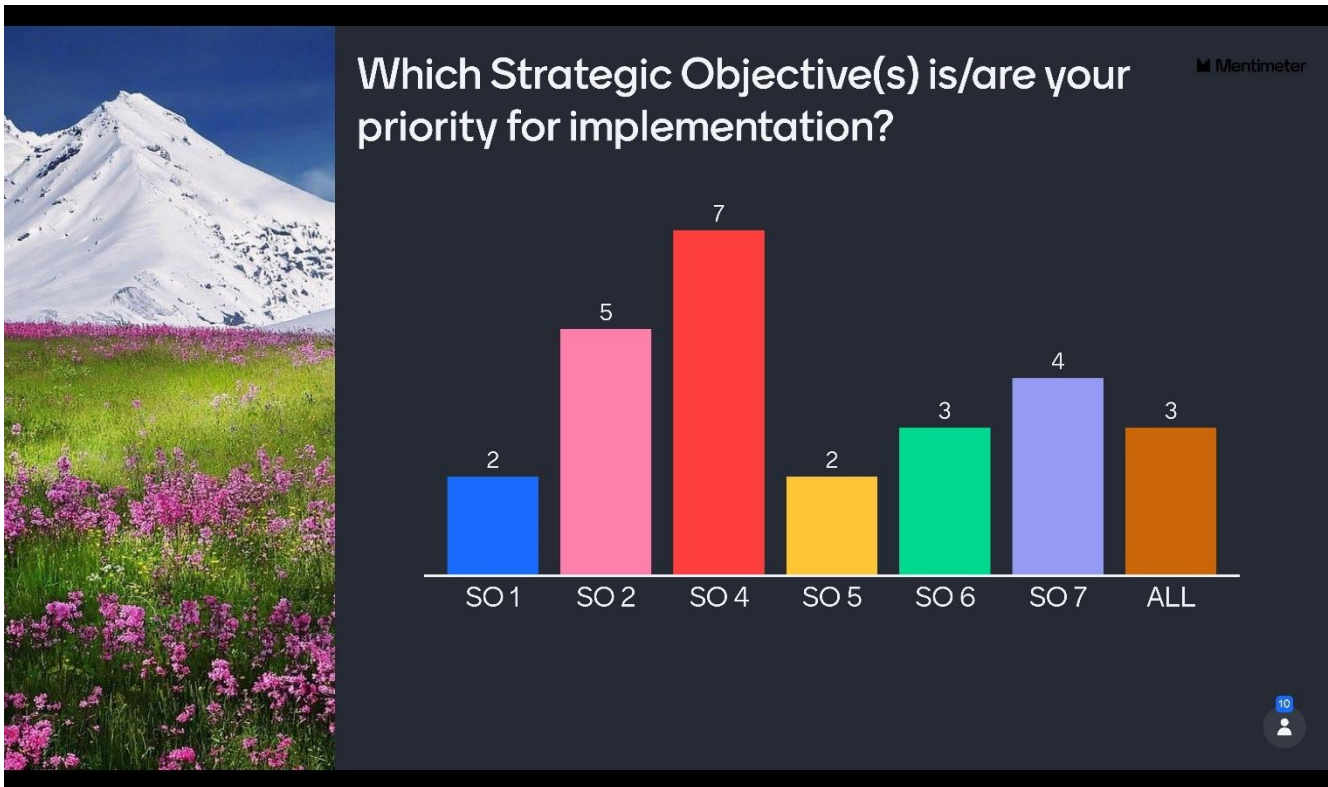
3) Introduction to the meeting Agenda and its adoption

The meeting Agenda was adopted without any changes.

4) Introduction to the Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians and presentation/discussion of the related DRAFT Workplan 2021-2023 including feedback received

Ms. Sabine McCallum, representing the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, gave an introductory presentation on the process leading to the elaboration of the **the Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians** that was adopted by the by the Carpathian Convention COP6 (November 2020) – presentation is available on the CC [website](#). Furthermore, Ms. McCallum presented the **draft WG Climate Change Work Plan 2021-2023** that sets out concrete activities and expected results for the implementation period 2021-2023 with regard to achieving the strategic objectives and related targets of the Long-term Vision. Suggested activities and their wording are selected from the accompanying [Implementation Framework 2030](#), that provides overall guidance for the Working Group's agenda and related Workplans for the upcoming implementation periods starting 2021 up to 2030. All the comments and inputs to the **WG Climate Change Work Plan 2021 – 2023** were addressed during this session, allowing the Secretariat to prepare a final revised version of the document for approval by the WG CC, to be circulated after the meeting.

Discussing proposed activities under the respective Strategic Objectives, Mr. Harald Egerer made an intervention informing the WG CC participants about a small grant received from UNEP for *developing and undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services, including climate change effects on large carnivores and their habitats and possibly further relevant topics* (proposed activity under SO4).



The above results on Strategic Objectives of the WG Climate Change Work Plan 2021-2023 to be prioritized for implementation show a clear focus on **SO4** (*Interlinkages between climate issues and other relevant areas of work of the Carpathian Convention are taken into account*) and **SO2** (*Regional cooperation and interaction among the Parties of the Carpathian Convention are strengthened through identifying common priority actions and harmonizing them with ongoing regional and national efforts on climate change in the Carpathians*).

Based on the most voted Strategic Objectives, the participants shared recommendation for implementation.

For the **SO4 on cooperation with other thematic Working Groups**, the following suggestions were made (slide below):

- Considering climate change as a cross-cutting and urgent topic, the meetings of the WG CC should be attended by Chairs of all other thematic Working Groups,
- Identifying the right experts, be outcome oriented and plan pragmatically,
- Taking into consideration effective methodologies, best practices and lessons learned, science base choices,
- Organizing joint Working Groups,
- Developing joint projects,
- Identifying national experts,
- Concerning development of the assessment on climate change impact on forest and its ecosystems in the Carpathians, a feasible methodology should be chosen and national experts identified,
- Presenting the work of the WG CC as an excellent example of cooperation that should be shared with other regions.

For implementing the highest rated SO: Please share your recommendation (s)

Mentimeter

- So4 To choose really feasible methodology of assessment
- Identify national experts for assessment of climate change and forests / ecosystems
- organizing joint working groups
- Showing role model to other régióba in Europe through excellent e of cooperation
- Get the right people on board, be outcome oriented, plan pragmatically.
- Working Group chairs and Lead Countries to play important role
- Because CC is cross cutting and urgent to tackle chairs of other wg should attend CC wg meetings
- Science based choices are very important to focus on. Effective methodologies, best practices and lessons learned should be taken into consideration.
- Develop joint projects

16

For the next most voted Strategic Objective, **SO2 on regional cooperation on identifying common priority actions/stocktaking**, the following suggestions were made (slide below):

- Active participation of members,
- Securing commitment of the Parties to deliver through allocating required resources,
- Communicating clearly how the stocktaking activity could help the Parties with implementation of climate related commitments,
- Identify and making a list of all strategies relevant for the Carpathians (help from other Ministries might be needed),
- Update the Climate-ADAPT platform hosted by the European Environment Agency (EEA) to include more information about national strategies,
- Making sure that post COVID-19 recovery does not result as a step back in terms of the climate footprint in the region.

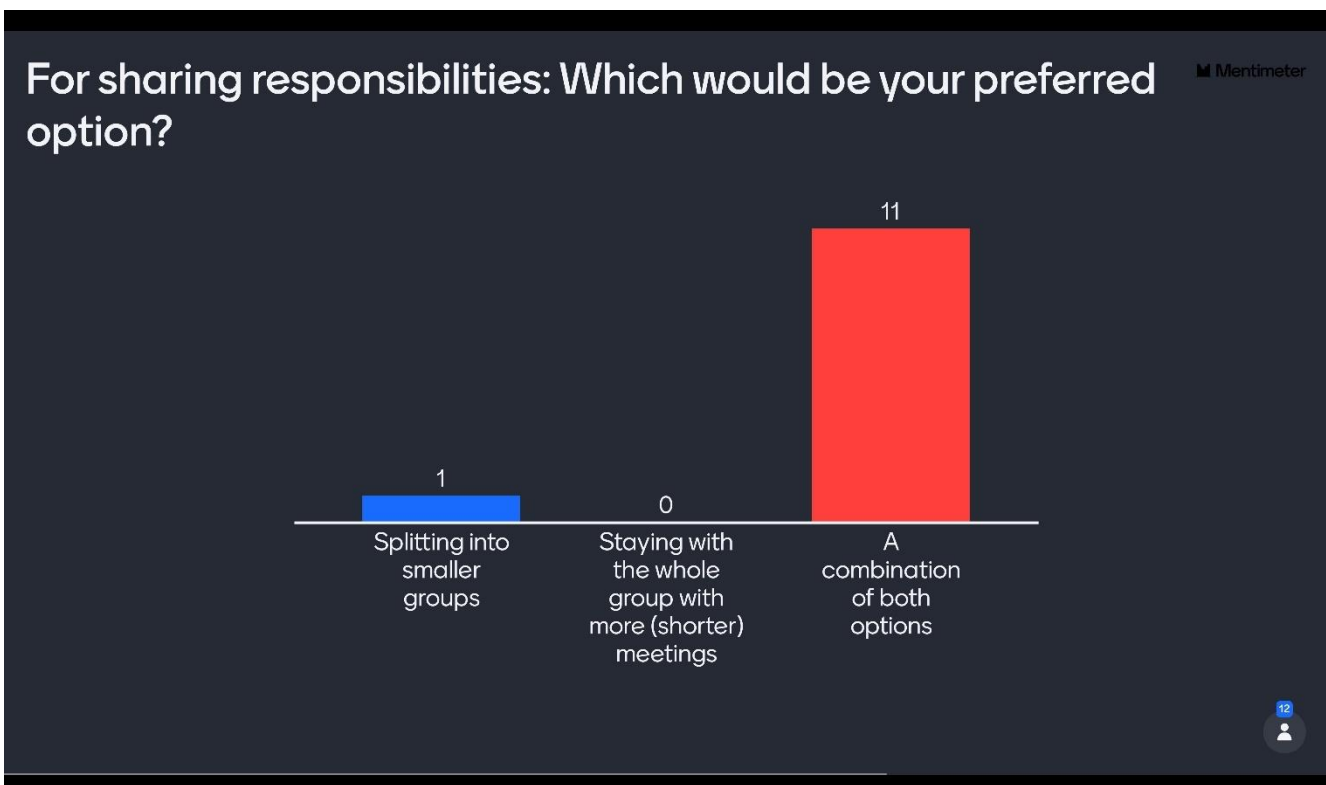
For implementing the 2nd highest rated SO: Please share your recommendation (s)

Mentimeter

- active participation of all members
- Communicate clearly how this could help to Parties in their implementation of climate related commitments.
- Update ClimateAdapt platform hosted by EEA to include more information about national strategies
- Pay attention to guarantee that post COVID recovery is not resulting a step back in terms of the climate footprint of the region
- Identify and make a list of all relevant for Carpathians strategies. Help from other ministries may be needed
- Secure commitment of parties to deliver through allocating required resources
- Maybe create the subcommittee of responsible Member of WG from Parties for poličky of CC in parties

7

The interactive exercise continued with question on the best way of organizing work in regard to the implementation of the WG CC Workplan 2021-2023, which resulted with a general agreement on combining to split into smaller groups of experts focusing on particular activities of the Workplan with meetings of the whole group (WG CC) on a regular basis to oversee the progress on implementation of the Workplan activities.



Participant's responses to main success factors for the implementation of the Workplan 2021-2023 (slide below), strongly highlighted the need for country ownership and regular monitoring of progress, among others, in order to effectively undertake the proposed activities.

In regard to the country ownership, the Secretariat invited the Parties to take a leading role on one of the Strategic Objectives of the Workplan 2021-2023. The Parties requiring more time for internal consultation on possible commitment on which SO or particular activity of the Workplan they would like to lead or contribute to, proposed to proceed with a written exchange on this topic after the meeting. Poland has initially shown interest in leading SO2, however the final decision requires internal consultations.

The Secretariat will provide further information/guidance on the process as a part of the meeting follow-up.



6) Collaboration with other Thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention (in line with Workplan 2021-2023)

The Secretariat initiated another brainstorming on collaboration with other thematic Working Groups by presenting the list of [initial ideas of joint activities](#) compiled prior the 7th WG CC meeting in May 2020.

Mr. Henk Zingstra, Wetlands International, suggested requesting the other thematic Working Groups to indicate specific ideas and plans regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation in the respective sectors, which shall facilitate cooperation and allow for identifying joint activities.

Ms. Klaudia Kuras, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, provided an update on already ongoing considerations of climate change within current activities of the Convention, specifically within the WG Biodiversity, including adoption of the [International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity](#) by the Carpathian Convention COP6, which includes a Strategic Objective on decreasing impacts of climate change on large carnivores and their habitats. The implementation of this Action Plan will be discussed during the upcoming 12th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biodiversity to be held on 19 -

20 May 2021 in an online format. The WG CC was warmly welcomed to join the meeting – [link to the WG Biodiversity meeting](#).

Furthermore, the Secretariat informed about the mandate given by the COP6 to follow and contribute to the development and future implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework currently being negotiated under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity (background paper on role and contribution of the CC to the Post-2020 GBF). The WG Biodiversity Chair – Czech Republic represented by Ms. Eliška Rolfova, confirmed that the WG Biodiversity will consult with other Working Groups, especially the WG CC, on the Carpathian commitments for the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in due course.

The Secretariat informed about possibilities of organizing joint meetings of the Working Groups or back-to-back meetings in the future, which would require consultations with relevant Working Group Chairs.

7) Exchange on funding opportunities supporting concrete action towards implementation of the Long Vision 2030

Regarding exchange on funding opportunities that could facilitate and support activities of the WG CC Work Plan, the participants provided suggestions as per below slide:



Mr. Henk Zingstra, Wetlands International, made an intervention regarding establishing the Carpathian Climate Fund that could act as umbrella body under the Carpathian Convention through which funding could be generated and projects implemented on climate change topics, supporting to achieve the Carpathian Convention objectives and its Programme of Work.

The Secretariat concluded that in the near future it will be necessary to develop a larger project supporting the Carpathian priorities in the context of climate change seeing opportunities in the upcoming new Interreg Programmes 2021 – 2027 to be launched soon, as well as the Horizon Europe. The Secretariat will continue

monitoring funding opportunities that could support activities on climate change in the region in consultation with the relevant partners and WG CC.

8) Upcoming events 2021 and engagement of the WG CC

- Presentation of the session and workshop Forest ecosystem and resource vulnerabilities to climate change in the Carpathian Mountain Region¹ to be held at the Forum Carpaticum 2021

Mr. William Keeton, University of Vermont, informed the participants about the upcoming 6th edition of the Forum Carpaticum, which will take place on 21-25 June primarily in online format. More information about the Forum Carpaticum can be access through the [LINK](#) to the conference website. Furthermore, Mr. Keeton informed about the special session and workshop on *Forest ecosystem vulnerabilities to climate change in the Carpathian Mountain region* to be organized in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention at the Forum Carpaticum 2021. This special session should be used as a kick-off for the development of the assessment of climate change on Carpathian forest that was mentioned during the meeting several times. The session and workshop would lay the foundation and facilitate organization of work regarding elaboration of the assessment.

The event will consist of two parts, a **morning session** providing several scientific presentations relevant to the topic of the assessment, and an **afternoon workshop**, which shall define the scope goals, possible methodologies, key partners and next steps for development of the assessment. The workshop will consist of 1) brief presentations by the Parties and 2) breakout group and facilitated discussion.

The Secretariat will further consult with the WG CC and the Focal Points regarding the national experts to be involved and invited to the special session and workshop at the Forum Carpaticum, providing necessary information and guiding questions/pre-workshop questionnaire to provide structure for the workshop.

The presentation delivered by Mr. Keeton is available on the Carpathian Convention [website](#).

- Other possible events (side event at UNFCCC COP26, Interregional workshop Adaptation at Altitude)

UNFCCC COP26:

Ms. Sabine McCallum informed about three side events currently planned to be organized by the UNEP Vienna Programme Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention at the upcoming UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, UK, which are summarized below:

Side event	Involved actors	Comment
Potential High-Level UNFCCC Side event	ACB (AT); CC (PL); South Caucasus (GE); HKH (NP tbd); East Africa (UG tbd); Andes (PE)	Synergies with Adaptation at Altitude (concept currently being developed with Austria)
Mountain Cryosphere Crisis (UK Presidency event)	UNEP; The Last Glaciers; Malcolm Wood; UIAA; IOC; ICIMOD etc.	Submitted by FarNorth Productions; in IMAX cinema
Mountain EbA for Resilient Communities	Nepal; UNEP GAN; ICIMOD; VT; etc.	submitted by Nepal with support from the Global Adaptation Network (GAN)

Adaptation at Altitude – Interregional Workshop for exchange and action learning “Mountains Connect”:

Building on the outcomes of the Austrian-funded project “*Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective*” (ended 2019) where a series of assessments have been undertaken (published as [Mountain Adaptation Outlooks](#)) and first regional policy action has been catalysed, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has launched a new **global programme “Adaptation at Altitude – Taking Action in the Mountains” (2019-23)**. It aims to

- develop and improve mountain observation data and monitoring, as well as access to such data;
- strengthen science-policy dialogue platforms and foster the integration of mountain adaptation into planning and policy making in 4 designated mountain regions (Andes, East Africa, Hindu Kush Himalayas and South Caucasus);
- share information and knowledge on adaptation solutions;
- mainstream mountain adaptation at global policy processes.

Please find more information about the programme here: www.adaptationataltitude.org.



One important transversal focus of the Adaptation at Altitude programme is to **foster interregional exchange and action learning**. The world's mountain regions are facing similar challenges when it comes to regional cooperative action on climate change adaptation. Exchanging on the approaches and mechanisms for regional governance and opening the opportunity to learn from each other aims to inspire key mountain actors and support governance processes.

The aim of the interregional exchange workshop is to

- connect mountain adaptation stakeholders from the Alps, the Andes, the South Caucasus, the Carpathians, East Africa and the Hindu Kush Himalayas;
- exchange and learn from practical experiences with regional governance mechanisms;
- offer an innovative space where interregional dialogue shall be inspired by collaborating on common governance challenges in a fictive mountain region;
- initiate new and strengthen existing partnerships between mountain regions, including regional cooperation Secretariats.

The exchange and action learning workshop for fostering cooperation on mountain adaptation will take place as a closed by-invitation-only event.

We invite representatives from:

- Competent authorities (Ministries/ Agencies dealing with climate change adaptation and sustainable mountain development, i.e. UNFCCC/ mountain focal points)
- Mountain governance institutions and frameworks (i.e. Secretariats)

A total of 35- 50 participants from over 30 countries are expected to participate.

This 3 - day physical meeting is currently scheduled to take place on **9-11 December 2021** at the Vienna International Centre **in Vienna, Austria**. Following closely the developments of the global Covid-19 pandemic, a final decision about hosting the meeting in December 2021 or postponing to first quarter of 2022 will be made in June.

9) Information sharing and exchange about ongoing initiatives from WG CC Members

- Alpine Climate Board

Mr. Helmut Hojesky, Alpine Climate Board, provided a comprehensive presentation on current activities of the Alpine Climate Board of the Alpine Convention, including on operationalizing of the Alpine Climate Target System 2050. The presentation delivered by Mr. Hojesky is available on the CC [website](#).

- ICPDR Tisza Group

Mr. Peter Kovacs, representing the ICPDR Tisza Group delivered a presentation on the brief history of the ICPDR Tisza Group, its milestones, cooperation framework with the Carpathian Convention and the next steps, inviting the Carpathian Convention to join as a partner for JOINTISZA 2.0 as a follow up to the previous project. The full presentation is available [here](#).

- Carpathian Wetland Initiative

Mr. Jan Kadlecik, Coordinator of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, delivered updates on relevant project proposals and ongoing projects focusing on wetlands as nature-based solution for climate change mitigation, including the recently submitted to the European Climate Initiative project proposal CARPWET, which among the other activities, would implement a large-scale survey of wetland carbon-rich soils in the Western Carpathians. More information on presented projects can be found [here](#).

- Global EbA Fund

Ms. Sabine McCallum gave a brief introduction on the recently established [Global Ecosystem-based Adaptation Fund](#) (GEBAF) which provides rapid and targeted support through seed capital for innovative approaches to ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) to climate change.

The grant needs to be **complementary and add value to existing work** by filling a gap in an existing project or upscaling existing work. Also, it needs to be **well-grounded in the proposed region or area of work**; have experience of the size and type of project proposed; and **inclusive of local communities, indigenous knowledge and gender perspectives**.

The Global EbA Fund supports projects that are either targeted to one or more countries which are [eligible for official development assistance \(ODA\)](#), which applies to Serbia and Ukraine in the Carpathian region.

More information can be found in the [presentation](#) kindly made available from Lis Mullin Bernhardt, GAN and GEBAF Coordinator at UNEP.

10) AOB

No matters were raised during the AOB.

11) Conclusion and next steps

The Secretariat proposed the following next steps:

- The Secretariat will distribute a final draft of the WG CC Work Plan 2021 – 2023 for a last round of comments, in particular for indicating interest and willingness for taking a leading or contributing role for the Strategic Objectives and proposed activities. The Work Plan should be then approved by the WG CC in a written procedure.
- The Secretariat will propose a way forward for engagement with other Working Groups.
- Regarding the special session at the Forum Carpaticum, the Secretariat will send a separate email providing necessary information and guidance.
- All the presentation will be shared on the Carpathian Convention [website](#).
- The meeting report should be circulated withing 1 week after the WG CC meeting.

Mr. Egerer informed that 3 Parties have already ratified the Article 12bis on Climate Change to the Carpathian Convention, however, according to the provisions of the Convention, the 4th ratification is required for the Article to enter into force. Mr. Egerer encouraged the Parties to make all the necessary efforts for bringing the Article into force. Furthermore, Mr. Egerer stressed that there is clear need for developing and implementation of new projects supporting the WG CC activities and its tasks asking the WG CC to support these processes in the future.

12) Closure of the meeting

On behalf of the Secretariat, Mr. Egerer thanked all the participants for contributions to the meeting deliberation and declared the meeting closed.