



## “Carpathian Biodiversity Days”

### Meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention

2 March 2009, Vienna, Austria

### MEETING REPORT

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention (hereinafter referred to as the Bureau) was opened at 14:00 on 2 March 2009, by Mr. Frits Schlingemann (UNEP Regional Office for Europe in Geneva). Mr. Schlingemann (Co-Chair of COP2) chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr. Silviu Megan<sup>1</sup> (Ministry of Environment of Romania) on behalf of the Romanian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention as of COP2 (17-19 June 2009, Bucharest, Romania).

#### **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the Agenda**

Mr. Schlingemann welcomed the participants and underlined the importance of the meeting for the future activities under the Carpathian Convention reminding that the Carpathian Project had finished in August 2008 (which implies limited funds available); thus, the Bureau should give guidance on how to further advance and financially support the Carpathian Convention process.

The Agenda of the Meeting was adopted with a new point 9 as proposed by Mr. Serhiy Gubar (Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine) – the Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. A round of introductions followed.

#### **2. Status of voluntary contributions**

Mr. Harald Egerer (UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention) informed the meeting that all the Parties to the Convention paid their contributions for 2008, except Serbia, for whom the Carpathian Convention entered into force in 2008. As for 2009, the interim Secretariat has not yet issued the invoices as it did not know the exact amount that the countries would pay taking into consideration the decision COP2/13<sup>2</sup> adopted in Bucharest; therefore, the countries were invited to inform the meeting (and the interim Secretariat) on this matter. The following information was provided by the Bureau members:

→ **Czech Republic** – 30 000 EUR as agreed at COP2 in Bucharest;

→ **Hungary**<sup>3</sup> – Hungary paid additional voluntary contributions in the past, and will again complement the 21 500 EUR with an additional voluntary contribution up to 8 500 EUR;

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Silviu Megan was unable to attend the meeting due to unexpected travel delays. In his absence, Ms Liliana – Viorica Virtopeanu represented Romania in the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Decision COP2/13 paragraph 15 “noting the financial implications of strengthening the interim Secretariat related to the enhanced implementation of the Carpathian Convention, invites Parties to consider seconding staff to the (interim) Secretariat and/or increasing for the period 2009-2011 their contribution with an indicative scale of Euro 8 500 or more per year, with a view to assist in meeting the core cost and ensuring full and proper implementation of the Programme of Work”.

<sup>3</sup> During the meeting Ms. Arohkati said that hopefully Hungary would be able to pay the same amount of the last years – 30 000 USD (= 22 000 EUR)



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- Poland** – Invoice to be issued for 21 500 EUR; efforts are made to increase the contribution with an indicative scale of 8.500 or secondment, as decided by COP2;
- Romania** – Further consultations within the Ministry are required, efforts are made to increase the contribution of 21 500 EUR with an indicative scale of 8 500 EUR or secondment, as decided by COP2, and the outcome will be communicated to the interim Secretariat, in order to trigger the invoice with the appropriate amount;
- Serbia** – no concrete information at this point; the official procedure for the payment of contributions of Serbia to MEA’s has been initiated and Ms. Piscevic expressed her expectation that the contribution to the Carpathian Convention would be paid soon;
- Slovak Republic** – 21 500 EUR, efforts are made to increase the contribution with an indicative scale of 8 500 EUR or secondment, as decided by COP2;
- Ukraine** – One invoice for the core contribution of 21 500 EUR should be issued; an additional request for an increase of the contribution with an indicative scale of 8 500 should be issued.

Mr. Schlingemann reminded the participants that the additional voluntary amount of 8 500 EUR was well tailored during COP2 in Bucharest to meet the required actions for the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol and development of the CNPA, and was agreed upon by all Parties.

Furthermore, Ms. Jana Vavrinova (Ministry of Environment of Czech Republic) emphasised that the additional amount of 8 500 EUR was agreed by all the Parties during COP2 and therefore everyone should comply with this engagement.

Mr. Schlingemann explained the purpose and meaning of the additional 8 500 EUR:

- the workload (objectives of the Carpathian Convention) of the Secretariat has increased: promoting the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol, servicing the Biodiversity Working Group, the servicing of the CNPA Steering Committee, project development for EU submission;
- also, the contributions are catalyst and an encouraging political message to potential donors (European Union, etc.);
- there are also other means – innovative – of making contributions: organising/hosting meetings of the working groups, seconding staff to the interim Secretariat, financing travel for the official representatives to the meetings of the working groups.

The Bureau agreed that a message be sent on their behalf to their national authorities requesting compliance with the decision COP2/13 (paragraph 15).



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### **3. Biodiversity Protocol – update on the status of signatures and the ratification process**

Mr. Gubar - on behalf of the Depository of the Biodiversity Protocol - informed the meeting on the status of signature of the Protocol which is unchanged since COP2, meaning that the Republic of Hungary and the Slovak Republic did not signed it yet. He also reminded that the deadline for signature of the Protocol is 19 June 2009.

Furthermore, each country was invited to inform the meeting on the ratification of the Protocol at the national level:

- **Ukraine** – the procedure has been started and hopefully it would completed by the end of 2009;
- **Slovakia** – the procedure would be started once the Protocol would be signed – hopefully by 19 June 2009;
- **Serbia** – no information was available at this point;
- **Romania** – no information was available at this point;
- **Poland** – the procedure was started already in 2008 and expected to be finalized by the end of April 2009;
- **Hungary** – signing the Protocol will not be a problem and the ratification would probably be done by the end of 2009 as the process had already been started;
- **Czech Republic** – the procedure was started in 2008, and it is expected that the ratification process would be completed by the end of April 2009.

The Bureau agreed that a message be sent on its behalf to the Parties urging them to sign and ratify the Biodiversity Protocol.

### **4. The “Follow-up Platform”, update on project development, “Carpathian Space”, need for action**

Mr. Schlingemann introduced point no. 4 on the Agenda. He reminded the participants that the most important source of funding for the activities/developments of the Carpathian Convention – the Carpathian Project – ended in August 2008. The “Follow-up Platform” represents a collection of projects submitted/approved/under consideration/ and constantly improved with new project ideas but it does not represent a secure source of funding.

Furthermore, Mr. Egerer presented the idea of a Carpathian Space following the example of the Alpine Space based on funding from the European Union programmes, as the long-term goal of the Carpathian Convention. Also, he informed the meeting about his participation in the CADSES Closing Conference (25 November 2008, Venice, Italy) where the Carpathian Project was presented as one of the successful projects of the programme. In his speech delivered in Venice, Mr Egerer, launched the idea of a Carpathian Space as the follow-up to the Carpathian Project.



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Mr. Schlingemann stressed the need for strong coordination between the interim Secretariat and the national authorities (Ministries of Environment) towards identifying the right counterparts (national contact points for the respective EU programme in the countries) and obtaining the necessary support for platform projects and ultimately the achievement of the Carpathian Space. Further, the members of the Bureau were invited to present their point of view/suggestions on a possible way to identify, make and lobby the necessary connections:

→ Czech Republic – it is important to reach the National Contact Point (EU programmes) and Ms. Vavrinova believes and suggested that an official letter/approach by UNEP Vienna as the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention would be helpful, as the Czech Republic has only 7% of the mountain range which makes it not a top priority issue at national level when it comes to distribution of funds (e.g. Swiss Contribution Funds to the EU Enlargement);

→ Hungary – it is important to convince the national focal points for EU programmes to cooperate on the issue of the Carpathian Convention; Ms. Arohkati expressed her support;

→ Poland – similar situation to CZ and HU – the funds are administrated by the Ministry of Regional Development, and the Ministry of Environment has limited influence when it comes to allocation, decisions and distribution of funds;

→ Serbia – so far, not sufficient importance is being attached to the Carpathian Convention, having as result that opportunities of EU funds are not sufficiently exploited;

→ Slovakia – Mr. Ambros shared from his experience as former member of the national steering committee on EU projects emphasising the importance of the regional authorities and their support in the process;

→ Ukraine – the situation is similar to the other countries when it comes to involving other ministries or authorities and determine their active cooperation in the Carpathian Convention.

Mr. Egerer introduced the concept of the ECONET – C project on ecological connectivity and regional development in the Carpathians (see the project concept attached). ECONET-C could benefit from the experiences of and partnership with a successful project currently implemented in the Alps with funding of the Alpine Space programme (ECONNECT). The ECONET-C could become a flagship project of the Carpathian Convention, as the first ever project fully originating from and developed in the framework of the Carpathian Convention. ECONET-C could be built upon the pillars of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA), the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI), the Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI) and relevant European programmes, policies and legislation (i.p. Natura 2000), and aim at supporting future implementation of the Carpathian Convention Biodiversity Protocol.

The intended target programme for submission of the ECONET-C project will be the SEE programme of European Territorial Cooperation (<http://www.southeast-europe.net>), it is expected that the next competitive call for proposals of this programme to be open in early fall 2009. Once the call opens, the – for sure highly technical and complicated – rules of the call will be known. The ECONET-C project proposal will then need to be adapted to the rules, the required forms will need to be filled in and submitted to a competitive process (probably competing with several hundred other projects!) within the given deadline (together



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with further required documents, such as the co-financing statements of partners). The consortium will be key for EU projects and it could include Ministries, Nature Protection Agencies, national parks, regional and local authorities, as well as NGOs. Project partners need to be able to co-finance 15% (85% reimbursed by EU), but co-financing can usually be provided through staff time or other in-kind contributions (see the ECONET-C concept in the annex, which also includes a summary of the programme rules). A strong lead partner from a SEE country is required and Romania expressed some interest. If Ministries of Environment prioritize the project and communicate this to EU programme focal points, there would be a good chance of approval.

At this point of the meeting extended discussions took place; and a number of pertinent remarks/conclusions were made:

- strong lobby to the EU, and in particular DG Regio, through sensibilisation of the national Focal Points towards the goals of the Carpathian Convention and the great potential benefits of a proposed Carpathian Space programme, and by the political decision makers at all levels in each country, is needed in order to achieve the goal of having a Carpathian Space;
- the European Union is Party to the Alpine Convention and therefore, should also become Party to the Carpathian Convention; concrete action and lobby towards DG Environment should also take place, once the new Commission will be in place (the present Commission's term of office runs until 31 October 2009), this could be achieved through the Carpathian Convention Focal Points and the Ministries of the Environment;
- there is limited capacity in Ministries and other public environmental institutions in the Carpathian region to participate in EU programmes and absorb funds, so such capacity should be built in a sustainable manner;
- it was clarified that Serbia and Ukraine as non-EU members would still be involved and receive funds if projects would be approved under the European programmes.

The Bureau decided on a few key steps to be taken :

- the “Follow-up Platform” will be further revised (including a more detailed presentation of the envisaged outcomes, role of and benefits for the project partners, etc.) and circulated to the members of the Bureau by the interim Secretariat;
- based on the updated version “Follow-up Platform” the members of the Bureau will help identify suitable project partners (regional administrations, governmental bodies, academics, NGOs) in their countries;
- VASICA “Visions and Strategies in the Carpathian Area” – outcome of the Carpathian Project, represents a starting point in development of the Carpathian Space; the study will be soon finalized and sent to the relevant national authorities, and in particular Ministers of the Environment, with a cover letter,



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- Upon request of the interim Secretariat, the Carpathian Convention National Focal Points will submit letters of support for specific projects included in the “Follow-up Platform”;
- Priority will be given to the ECONET-C project development. Bureau members will be individually approached for further partner identification. The Lead Partner question will be further explored with the Romanian Ministry of Environment and the National Forest Administration. Concerted efforts will be needed to ensure prioritization of the proposal with national EU programme focal points (Ministries of Environment usually have “one shot” to express specific support, which should hit the right target).

Mr. Schlingemann concluded that the projects composing the “Follow-up Platform” represent a short-term objective, while the “Carpathian Space” represents a long-term objective and operational framework for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention. Both initiatives are under continuous preparation and improvement. The ECONET-C project is a priority to test the strategy of using EU structural funds for the Carpathian Convention’s implementation.

#### **5. Update on the 1st CNPA Conference**

Mr. Egerer informed the meeting about the 1<sup>st</sup> CNPA Conference – which took place on 23-24 September 2008 in Poiana Brasov, Romania and was organized by the WWF-DCP with the support of Romania, and in partnership with CERI, ALPARC and UNEP. As requested by COP2 the Conference reviewed and offered comments on the two strategic documents: the CNPA Medium-term Strategy and the CNPA Work Plans for 2009 and for 2010-2015. A final report of the Conference has not yet been produced by the organisers.

Mr. Schlingemann presented a Note on the CNPA offering an overview of the decisions and developments in place taken by the different responsible bodies of the Convention – COP, CCIC, Bureau. Further, he drew the attention to the current ineffective tendency to focus the discussions on institutional developments and/or strategic documents; instead, he suggested to concentrate the negotiations/discussions on concrete activities of the Network – including the finalization and implementation of the CNPA Medium-term Strategy and the Work Plan (2009, 2010-2013), emphasising that the institutional arrangements are in any case in the hands of the political decision makers.

The meeting welcomed the Note by the Co-Chair of COP2 and suggested to be distributed also to the CNPA Steering Committee as guideline for future discussions.

Mr. Ladislav Ambros (Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic) informed the meeting that Slovakia would take the lead in the negotiation process among the three



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countries – Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine – that offered to host the permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention as well as the CNPA Unit / management unit / permanent arrangements, by organizing a meeting to facilitate discussions/negotiations between the Parties interested. The outcomes of such meeting would be presented to all Parties for further consideration .

Ms. Bozena Haczek (Ministry of Environment of Poland) informed the meeting of her participation in the 1<sup>st</sup> CNPA Conference and emphasized the importance and necessity of having an official report outlining the discussions that took place during the meeting; and in accordance with the decision COP2/1 the inputs/suggestions/comments from the participants – parks’ representatives – must be included and reflected in the Medium-term Strategy as well as in the Work Plan.

Ms. Vavrinova added that the CNPA Steering Committee should present a concrete proposal – terms of reference – on the organisation (funding sources) and envisaged responsibilities of a CNPA unit / permanent arrangements to the CCIC/Bureau/COP in accordance with decision COP2/1<sup>1</sup>.

Also, Mr. Gubar emphasised that COP3 would decide on the permanent arrangements for the CNPA and agreed that the CNPA Steering Committee should focus on developing and carrying out concrete activities/actions.

Therefore, it was decided that the Secretariat would prepare an informative note on behalf of the Bureau which recommended to the CNPA Steering Committee to focus their discussions on development of the Network through concrete action and activities rather than on the required institutional arrangements for the CNPA.

### **6. Programme of work of the Carpathian Convention – envisaged activities and tentative schedule of meetings for year 2009 (2010)**

Mr. Egerer, presented the Progress Report on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention – activities/developments since COP2 (17-19 June 2008).

The Bureau recommended the next meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) to be held in November / December 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision COP2/1 paragraph 6 “takes note of the proposal for a permanent arrangement for the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) established under the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) and submitted for further consideration and decision by COP3, and requests the CNPA Steering Committee to further discuss and elaborate that proposal taking into account results of the Protected Areas Conference to be held on 23-24 September 2008 (in Brasov, Romania)”



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The next meeting of the WG on Biodiversity could meet again beginning/half of 2010. The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CNPA Steering Committee could meet in autumn – e.g. September 2009.

Also, in the context of limited funds for development and finalisation of 3 draft Protocols – Forestry, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Transport – for adoption by COP3, the Bureau decided to give priority to the further consideration of the Protocol on Forestry, as it is the most advanced and might need 2-3 more meetings (working sessions) to be finalized. The other Working Groups should meet based on the availability of resources.

#### **7. Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (tentative date and location of the 2nd meeting of the CCIC, draft agenda)**

The date of the next Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting was scheduled for the first half of November 2009.

#### **8. Next meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention**

The next meeting of the Bureau would be held in conjunction with the CCIC (duration – half day).

#### **9. Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention**

The three offering countries – Romania, Slovak Republic, Ukraine – renewed their offers to host the Permanent Secretariat.





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### **ANNEXES:**

- 1. Agenda**
- 2. Programme of work**
- 3. List of participants**
- 4. ECONET-C Project Concept for the SEE programme**

### **ANNEX 1 – Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the Agenda
2. Status of voluntary contributions
3. Biodiversity Protocol – update on the status of signatures and the ratification process
4. The “Follow-up Platform”, update on project development, “Carpathian Space”, need for action
5. Update on the 1<sup>st</sup> CNPA Conference
6. Programme of work of the Carpathian Convention – envisaged activities and tentative schedule of meetings for year 2009
7. Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (tentative date and location of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the CCIC, draft agenda)
8. Next meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention
9. Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention



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#### ANNEX 2 – Programme of work

**Meeting venue:**

ROOM: **F0817** (F-building, 8<sup>th</sup> floor)  
Vienna International Centre (VIC)  
Wagramer Strasse 5  
1220 Vienna  
Austria

**Monday, 2 March 2009 (Day one)**

*Arrival of the participants*

<b>14:00 – 19:45</b>	<b>Session 1</b>
<i>16:00 – 16:30</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>
<b>19:30</b>	<b>Closure of the meeting</b>



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### ANNEX 3 – List of participants

<i>No.</i>	<i>Carpathian Country</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Position</i>
1.	Czech Republic	DOSTALOVA	Alena	Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection	
2.	Czech Republic	VAVRINOVA	Jana	Ministry of the Environment	Carpathian Convention National Focal Point
3.	Hungary	AROKHATI	Zsuzsanna	Ministry of Environment and Water	Senior Advisor Carpathian Convention National Focal Point
4.	Hungary	PROHÁSZKA	Tamas	Ministry of Environment and Water	Counsellor
5.	Poland	HACZEK	Bozena	Ministry of the Environment	Minister’s Advisor Carpathian Convention National Focal Point
6.	Romania	VÎRTOPEANU	Liliana - Viorica	Ministry of Environment	Counsellor – Nature Protection Directorate Carpathian Convention National Focal Point
7.	Serbia	PISCEVIC	Nevena	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	Advisor
8.	Slovakia	AMBROS	Ladislav	Ministry of the Environment	Senior Adviser – Department of Nature Protection for Spatial Protection
9.	Ukraine	GUBAR	Sergiy	Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine	Deputy Director – Directorate of Biotic Resources and Econet Carpathian Convention National Focal Point



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<i>No.</i>	<i>Entity</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Position</i>
10.	UNEP ISCC	BUCUR	Andreea	UNEP Vienna Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Consultant
11.	UNEP ISCC	EGERER	Harald	UNEP Vienna Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Head
12.	UNEP ROE	SCHLINGEMANN	Frits	UNEP Geneva Regional Office for Europe	Senior Adviser