



Carpathian Convention and its role and contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Submission by the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) as a response to **NOTIFICATION 2020-001** inviting submissions of additional views and suggestions regarding the draft proposals to strengthen technical and scientific cooperation in support of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Carpathian Convention's submission is mostly relevant for point (b) of the Notification on ***examples of effective institutional mechanisms, partnerships, networks, and regional and sub-regional institutional arrangements.***

The **Carpathians**, the second largest mountain region in Europe after the Alps, are one of the most important biodiversity reservoir and living ecosystem of Europe. The Carpathian region is recognized as one of Europe's last great wildernesses **areas with exceptional levels of biodiversity** and a distinctive cultural heritage with **traditional knowledge and practices** having survived to this day. In terms of ecological characteristics, the Carpathians host largest remaining stands of primeval forests and grasslands of Europe. Such environments are hotspots for biodiversity, serving as habitats for the biggest populations of large carnivores including brown bears, lynx and wolves in Europe. Moreover, the Carpathians are a crucial supplier of freshwater to major rivers of Europe.

The **Carpathian Convention**, a multilateral environmental agreement, was established by seven Carpathian countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine), in order to protect outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the region and to support its sustainable development.

The Carpathian Convention unites seven Carpathian countries in a unique partnership, providing a transnational framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy integration, an open forum for participation by stakeholders and the public, and a platform for developing and implementing transnational strategies, programmes and projects for environmental protection and sustainable development.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process and its future implementation offer an exceptional opportunity for improving synergies and reinforcing biodiversity related conventions in order to maximise their efforts in halting biodiversity loss and restoring ecosystems. The Carpathian Convention, as the **international treaty on environmental protection and sustainable development**, and one of only two international agreements specifically dedicated to mountain region worldwide, can play a substantial role in **translating the global biodiversity targets at regional level** and becoming an **important regional instrument for implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.**

The Carpathian Convention is equipped, through the Article 4, its Protocol on Biodiversity and Sustainable Forest Management, with a specific mandate to safeguard the biological and landscape diversity in the region. The Convention, aided by its eleven strategic partnerships, including with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Alpine Convention, and broad network of stakeholders, is therefore perfectly placed to address the pressing environmental challenges facing the region and the



world, and can make a valuable contribution to the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and its implementation, as a **regional mechanism** through its institutional arrangements.

The Carpathian Convention and its involvement in the Post-2020 process will strengthen the global biodiversity movement by becoming a **role model for other regions** sharing similar problems and challenges due to regions' characteristics and specificities, especially **mountain regions**.

The Carpathian Convention addresses various thematic sectors relevant for sustainable development of the region, however, biodiversity shall be considered as the key, underpinning element where all the other sectors meet and depend on. And therefore, the Convention can be considered as a great **model for mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors**.

Points to be considered for further discussion about the role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

1) An example of unique regional cooperation and institutional mechanism

The **Carpathian Convention** should be recognized as a role model for other regions, emphasizing its efforts in **protecting strategic biodiversity hotspot in Europe**. The Parties, while fulfilling the obligations of the Carpathian Convention, will contribute to the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework on a regional scale.

- Integration of the Carpathian Convention specific targets into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and into respective national plans could help avoiding isolated approaches for implementation and make the best use of limited financial and human resources.
- Addressing global biodiversity loss and ecosystems restoration through coordinated actions will give the Parties an opportunity for better integration of the Carpathian Convention in their national policies.
- In the context of NBSAPs, the Carpathian countries could set, corresponding to the global targets, targets relevant for the Carpathian Convention complemented by additional indicators adopted to the Carpathian context. At the regional level it will support the Parties in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and, simultaneously, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

2) Synergies of biodiversity-related convention

Successful implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework depends great deal on cooperation and coordination of biodiversity-related conventions, **including the regional conventions**, which importance seems to be overlooked in the current process.

Therefore, greater attention should be provided to **regional instruments**, e.g. the Carpathian Convention, for the implementation of the new framework due to the fact that regional cooperation mechanisms are reflecting characteristics, needs and challenges of the region much more precisely than the global ones.

Highly recommend are joint actions or statements during relevant high-level events, to promote political attention to the need and benefit of an integrated and global biodiversity framework.



Furthermore, a dialog among the focal points and/or secretariat of the convention should be supported, through regular meeting and/or online exchange.

3) Memorandum of Understanding between the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention (2008)

With reference to the previous paragraph on synergies, the Carpathian Convention would like to further implement the MoU, which underlines that cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention will lead to better implementation of CBD in the Contracting Parties, recognizing as well that the Alpine and the Carpathian Conventions are platforms for regional cooperation for the protection of the environment and the sustainable development in mountain regions. As the MoU calls for institutional cooperation between the Conventions' Secretariats, exchange of information and experience, and furthermore collaboration on the implementation of the Conventions, it gives a perfect framework for undertaking joint actions in addressing the biodiversity issues and shall be further explored for the effective implementation of the Post-2020 Framework.

4) Mainstreaming biodiversity

Increased collaboration across sectors is needed for better integration of nature and biodiversity conservation, as well protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services, within relevant sectors. There is a clear need for mainstreaming biodiversity in other policies, and for that, other sectors require greater ownership of environmental issues and to get involved in the process. The Carpathian Convention is a perfect platform for mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors, however implementation of this approach needs to be reinforced and strengthened at the national level, potentially by **setting biodiversity mainstreaming as a national priority for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.**

5) Mainstreaming mountain biodiversity into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Mountains are home to all of the world's principal biome types and support a wide variety of ecosystems. Many of these ecosystems have a higher richness of species and levels of endemism than adjacent lowlands, providing refuge to threatened animal and plant species. Mountain environments are found in every continent and comprise roughly one quarter of the world's land surface,¹ with 25 of 34 biodiversity hotspots located entirely or partly in these areas. Around 1.15 billion people live in mountainous areas worldwide, which also provide livelihoods for many millions living downstream. Given the vital importance of mountain ecosystems for the world's population and of maintaining the world's biological diversity, particularly in the tropics and warmer temperate latitudes, **mountains should be given high priority in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and mainstreamed throughout.**

The Carpathian Convention promotes greater consideration of the **mountain biodiversity** in the Post-2020 process and together with UN Environment Programme and other partners and mountain countries, it would like to support inclusion of the mountain biodiversity and ecosystems in current discussions.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework process shall consider the adoption of goals and targets which are specific for mountain biodiversity.



6) Giving the ownership to local level

The Carpathian Convention recognizes that **greater inclusion of local communities, local and regional authorities and civil societies in the implementation processes** is a crucial element of meaningful and successful biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use, contributing to a major global transformation for living in harmony with nature.

Building capacity for local communities and civil society to ensure proper decision making and implementation of environmental law is then essential. The IPBES global assessment clearly identifies the need for strengthening environmental laws and policies and improving their implementation as a key lever for protecting biodiversity. Equally sustainable outcomes are more likely where local communities are involved and participating in decision making.

Therefore, in response to this, the Carpathian Convention at its sixth meeting of the Parties shall decide and commit to involve local communities and regional and local authorities in the implementation process, potentially by:

- Organization of an event at the Carpathian Convention COP6 with local authorities and civil society representatives giving them greater ownership of the Carpathian Convention implementation process, contributing directly to their quality of life and local sustainable development; generating a societal sense of responsibility to act for biodiversity at the local, regional, national and international levels and among all actors;
- Possible voluntary commitment by the local and regional authorities and civil societies to actively contribute to conservation and restoration of the biodiversity in the Carpathians, contributing to the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

7) Importance of traditional knowledge

The Carpathians Convention puts great emphasis on traditional knowledge and practices of the Carpathian local communities, which contribute to sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity. The Parties shall acknowledge the importance of the traditional knowledge and practice of local communities, which should be fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention. The Parties should consider the best way of ensuring preservation and use of the local traditional knowledge.

8) UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

The Carpathian region, as one of the most unique eco-regions on the European and global scale, should contribute to and receive special attention in the context of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**.

The Carpathian Convention would like to contribute to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, especially considering the impact of climate change on the Carpathian forest and the associated ecosystems. **The UN Decade should be also reflected in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.**



9) Carpathian Convention (COP6 -14-16 September 2020 in Rzeszów, Poland)

The Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, to be held just before the CBD COP15 in Kunming, will be perfect opportunity to adopt the **Carpathian commitments under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**, to be then presented at the CBD COP. Furthermore, a joint event by the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention, in the framework of the above-mentioned MoU, will be organized underlining the **relevance of regional instrument for implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and their synergies**.