

# Presentation on national best practices of the mountain farming and identification of the priority topics for implementation of the SARD Protocol –

(name of the Party)

## Republic of Serbia

### Carpathian Convention

Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

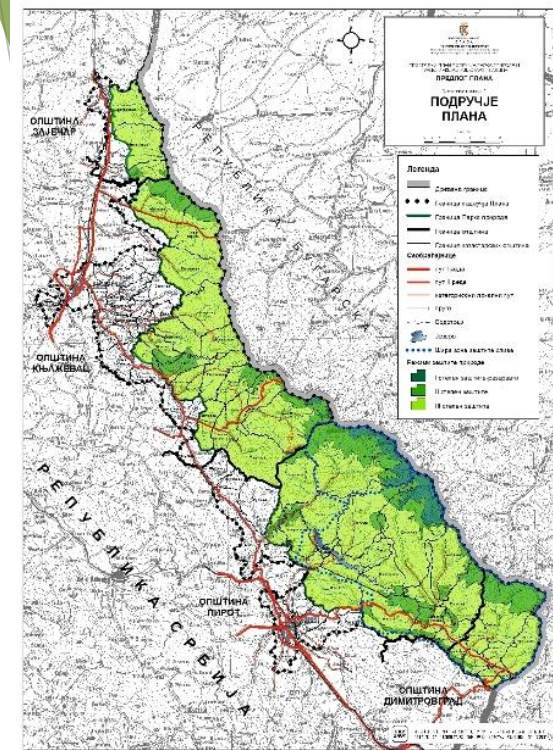
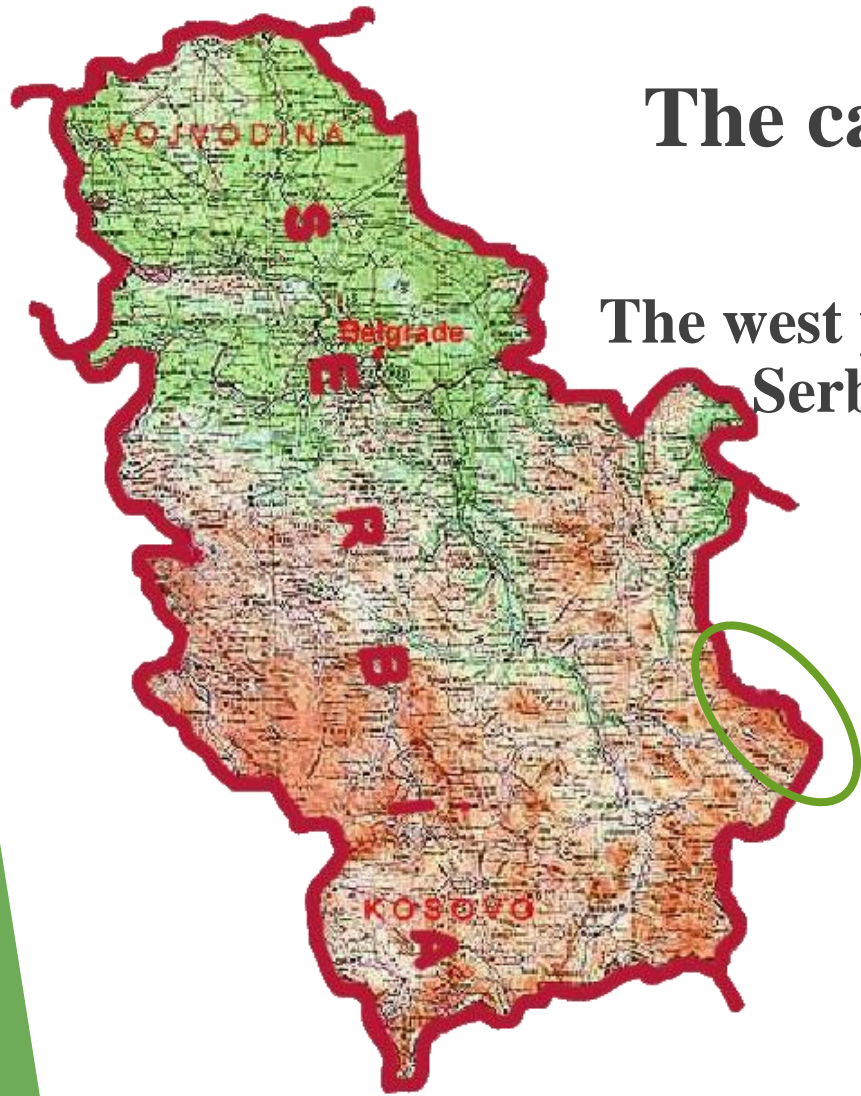
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Vatra Dornei, Romania



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# The case of West Balkan Mountain

The west part of West Balkan Mountain is in East Serbia, the rest is in Republic of Bulgaria



The West Balkan Mountain is Natural Park from 1997 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 19/97).



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# Outstanding area:



**morpho-hydrological  
diversity**



**geological diversity**



**biodiverse  
flora and fauna**



## ... rich in water

Two main rivers: Nišava and White Timok.



There are also many springs and dense small watercourses network



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## ... rural tradition and multiethnic culture



The precious traditional way of life has been created and maintained, whose elements are reflected in the production activities, but also the valuable cultural heritage



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# High Nature Value Farmland is useful for identifying beneficial management practices and farming systems

Identification of the HNV farming within the West Balkan Mt. is based on three agricultural land use categories in the whole region of Natural Park as identified by Zlatkovic (2006):

1. The zone of livestock production, where grazing takes place (high mountain areas and to less extent lower grasslands of combined use),
2. The zone of crop production situated in the river valleys, and
3. The transitional zone situated between the two above mentioned zones.



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# HNV Farmland in the West Balkan Mountain

1. **HNV farmland type 1** (high proportion of semi-natural or natural vegetation) of main interest within the case study region is linked to the Zone A (high mountain areas managed by extensive grazing by sheep, cattle and goats and by mowing but not where housed or more intensive livestock production occurs). It implies maintenance or restoration of semi-natural grassland:

- (1) hilly mowed meadows and grazing pastures,
- 2) thermophilus mowed meadows and grazing pastures,
- 3) mountainous grazing pastures and mowed meadows,
- 4) sub-alpine grazing pastures and mowed meadows,
- 4) alpine grazing pastures, and
- 5) bog vegetation\*.



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\* Suzana Đorđević-Milošević, Study for IUCN

# HNV Farmland in the West Balkan Mountain

2. **HNV farmland type 2** (mosaic of habitats and/or low-intensity land uses) can be associated with Zone B (crop production situated in the river valleys) and Zone C (transitional zone situated between A and B Zone) of the Natural Park. Low intensity grasslands and arable mosaics are predominantly present in the valley bottoms where crop production, mowing and some grazing takes place.

They are harbouring high species diversity, including even rare species and species of Global/European importance. Agricultural inputs are very low, and the size of agricultural households is very small (average 1.18 ha).\*



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# HNV Farmland in the West Balkan Mountain

3. **HNV farmland type 3** (supports a few rare species and are otherwise low in biodiversity) is found where more intensive management of grassland or arable land takes place within the case study region, i.e. Zone B (crop production situated in the river valleys) and Zone C (transitional zone situated between A and B Zone). The land may be then classified as either:

- HNV farmland type 3 (intensive grassland systems, more intensive arable systems - but only where associated with the presence of rare species and species of Global/European importance);
- Land which is not classified as HNV.\*



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# Disappearance of HNVF practices - a threat to the economic and ecological value of the area



**A reduced number of animals, moving in a restricted area closer to the villages can cause erosion in the pastures and nitrification of the individual parts on which the livestock is retained for longer period of time.**

**Lack of grazing on higher pastures can lead to the penetration of invasive species and the reduction of biodiversity.**



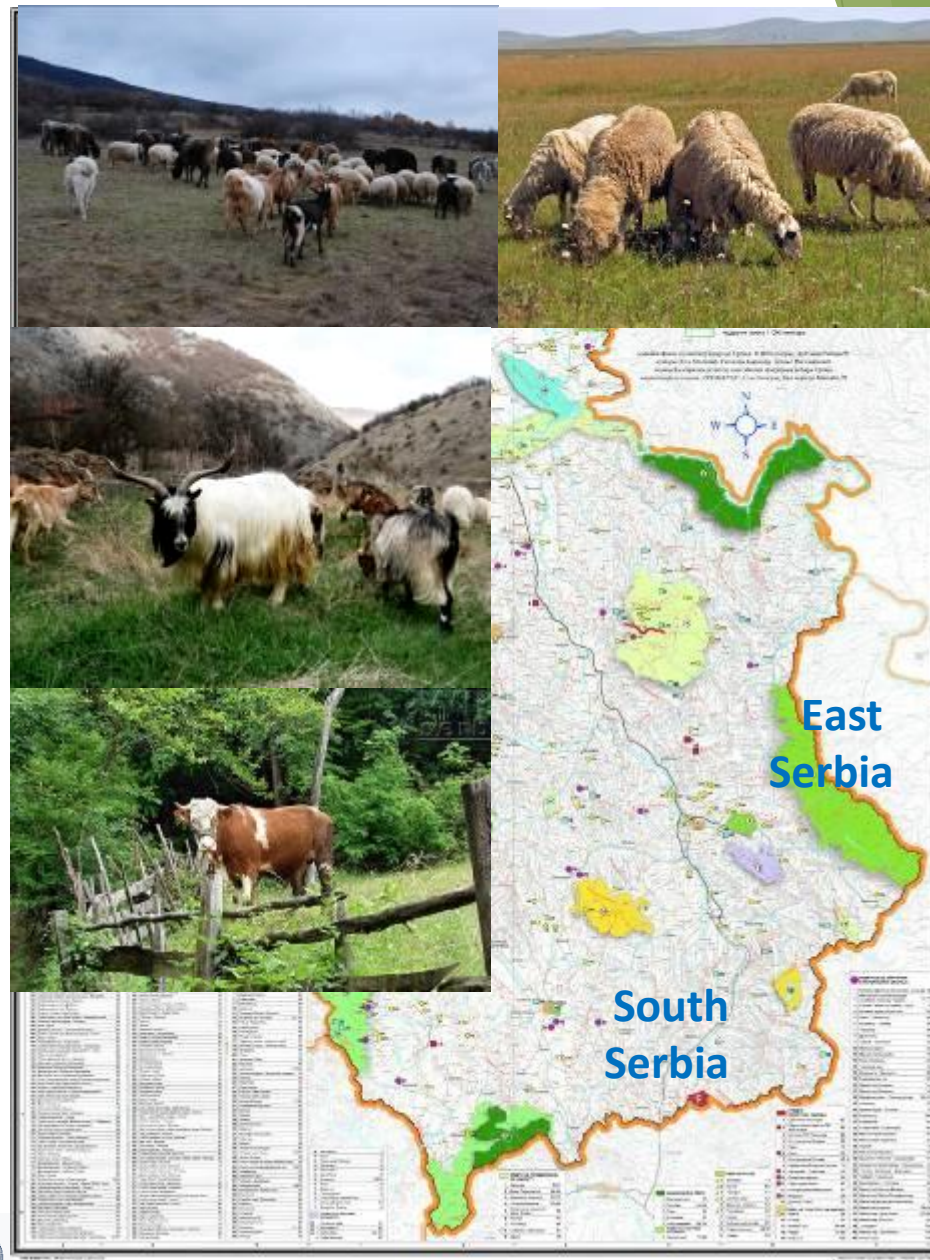
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## Traditional Livestock Production system

Mainly sheep production, as the successor to the horizontal nomadic way, represented with a specific half-nomadic livestock production, which follows seasonal changes in vegetation along the vertical migration seasonal route - altitudes.

1. winter-spring grazing in the valleys
2. daily migration to meadows
3. migration of herds to highland pastures
4. withdrawing herds through meadows in autumn



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## The benefits from traditional livestock production: .... the *quality of autochthonous animal food products*

- milk products:  
*old mountain hard cheese (kačkavalj),  
lard (maslo) and green cheese (urda),  
white soft cheese, acid milk;*
- production of lamb, goatling, beef meat and  
the meat of autochthonous pigs from free-  
range system
- wool products (Pirot rug, clothing items,  
woolen covers etc.



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# THE LAST ACTIVE DAIRY IN THE NATURE PARK



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## ... traditional crafts



- ▶ Characteristic ethno motifs from this area are on folk costumes and Pirot carpet.
- ▶ The group of ethnographic values includes pottery, leather and embroidered products, as well as other wool products.



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# *The priority topics for implementation of the SARD Protocol*

## **Sustainable diversification of rural economy**

- **Rural and agro-tourism**
- **Eco-tourism**
- **Sport and recreational tourism**
- **Health and wellness tourism**
- **Scientific tourism**
- **Hunting and fishing tourism**
- **Ethno tourism**
- **Student and excursion tourism**



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# *The priority topics for implementation of the SARD Protocol*

## **Sustainable diversification of rural economy**

- **Traditional food production in agriculture and livestock**
- **Traditional crafts**
- **Production of products with eco-labels**
- **Production of products with a geographical origin, etc.**
- **Collection from the nature (medicinal herbs, wild edible herbs / fruits, mushrooms)**
- **Beekeeping, aquaculture**



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## *The priority topics for implementation of the SARD Protocol*

- **Breeding of traditional autochthonous animal breeds and plant varieties**
- **Preserving biodiversity and agrodiversity**
- **Habitats protection**
- **Stopping depopulation of rural areas**



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**PhD Srdjan Stojanović**  
**Ministry of Agriculture,**  
**Forestry and Water**  
**Management**

**Thank you for**  
**your attention**



*Pictures by: Suzana Đorđević-Milošević, Sergej Ivanov and others.*