

FINAL Meeting Report*

Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
Fourth Meeting
Vatra Dornei, Romania | 27 September 2018

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, 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 (see full list of participants attached).

The WG SARD meeting was organized in frame of [the XI European Mountain Convention on "Cultural Heritage as an Engine for Creativity, Innovation and Socioeconomic Development of Mountain areas"](#) held on 25 - 27 September 2018 in Vatra Dornei.

Opening of the WG meeting and adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was officially opened by prof. Radu Rey, co-founder of the Center for Training and Innovation for Development in the Carpathian Mountains – CEFIDEC and the Agency of the Mountain Areas. It was followed by opening remarks by Mr. Harald Egerer, Head of the UN Environment Vienna Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, who also introduced the agenda of the meeting.

Status of signatures and ratification of the SARD Protocol

Mr. Egerer presented the current stats of the signatures and following ratifications of the SARD Protocol. Until now (including the very recent signature by the Slovak Republic done on 9.10.2018) five Parties have signed the Protocol, namely, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic (in the alphabetic order). Hungary has completed the ratification of the Protocol.

Sharing best practices of the mountain farming/farming in the Carpathians, identification of the priority topics relevant for the SARD Protocol implementation

Bearing in mind that it was the first meeting of this Working Group after the adoption of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (Lillafüred 2017), 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.

"Building Resilient Mountain Value Chains for delivering Private and Public Goods" Horizon 2020 project proposal

Ms. Miram Weiß, Eurac Research, presented a Horizon 2020 project idea on Mountain Value Chains providing private and public goods resilient to climate change and other future challenges.

The overall objective of the Mountain Values project is 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 will 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. Currently possible case studies are being collected and it brings an opportunity to include a few case studies from the Carpathians.

* Presentations delivered at the meeting are available on the Carpathian Convention [website](#).



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The Parties were requested to consider this possibility and suggest potential case studies from their countries. More information about the selection criteria for case studies will be shared soon by the Secretariat.

High Nature Value (HNV) farmland in the Carpathians

The topic of High Nature Value (HNV) farmland and farming was introduced by the European Environment Agency's representatives, Ms. Doris Marquardt and Mr. Jan-Erik Petersen. It was agreed that EEA will provide more information about of past and recent work on HNV with a special focus on the Carpathian countries.

Next, Mr. Ionel – Mugurel Jitea, Department of Economic Sciences University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, gave detailed presentation on HNV farming in the Carpathians, focusing on HNV concept and area (recognised by public policies and possible area), sustainability and trends – based on past researches; HNVLink project and its results in terms of HNV innovation/needs and finally EIP Agri focus group.

Furthermore, Mr. Rozvan Popa, Fundația ADEPT Transilvania, presented activities focused on Protecting Romania's unique high-biodiversity landscapes and the small-scale farming communities.

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System – shall the Carpathians submit joint proposal/proposals?

Mr. Yoshihide Endo, GIAHS Coordinator Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, remotely presented the initiative called the Globally Important Agriculture Heritage System (GIAHS), which is the FAO Programme. The overall goal of the GIAHS Programme is to identify and safeguard, from bad effects of modernization, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their associated landscapes, traditional agriculture, agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems through dynamic conservation and sustainable management in order to pass them to future generations.

The Parties were asked to consider a possible designation of a site in the Carpathians, which would bring global recognition to the Carpathian region, mobilize the national government to adopt policies that support traditional small-scale farming, and finally supporting local communities and providing them with technical assistance for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Financial mechanisms relevant for the implementation of the WG SARD activities – New CAP and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – How can we make use of it?

Mr. E. Sandulescu, General Directorate for Rural Development and the Managing Authority for the National Program for Rural Development of Romania, presented the general changes in terms of the new general objectives and budget allocation for the future Common Agriculture Policy post 2020. A possible adoption of the next CAP 2021-2027 is foreseen for spring 2019, and possible entry into force of the Strategic Plans in 2021.

Euromontana - sharing experiences on mountain agriculture and rural development -

Ms. Marie Clotteau, Euromontana - European association of mountain areas, presented the main objective of the association and its history, including main activities in the field of agriculture and rural development. A special focus was laid on Euromontana's work on mountain product, stretching over 15 years from initial research, through European legislation to implementation. Having in mind extensive experience of Euromontana in relevant for the WG SARD sector, a closer cooperation was highly recommended by the Secretariat, as well as by the WG SARD. Furthermore, exchange of information, joint technical and institutional visits, better networking, and consultation on common political messages regarding the mountain areas to be brought together to e.g. European Parliament, European Commission (events, amendments), common projects have been encouraged. In order to increase collaboration between the Carpathian Convention and Euromontana, the WG SARD agreed to elaborate a memorandum of cooperation, which potentially could be signed at the COP6 in Poland in 2020. The draft will be prepared by the Secretariat and consulted with the WG SARD.

Towards the Road Map for implementation of the SARD Protocol - Decision COP5/7 para 2 - WG SARD is requested to prepare and prioritize strategic actions taking into account provisions of the SARD Protocol

During the discussion on the priority topics for implementation of the SARD Protocol the following topics were proposed by the Parties:

- Elaboration of a database on agriculture in the Carpathians (structure of land use). The Secretariat will analyze the already existing reports and documents, which could be useful in respect of the database creation;



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- Preparation of a list of the biggest problems in the field of agriculture and rural development in the Carpathian area that the Parties are facing. Based on the inputs from all the Parties, the WG SARD will be able to identify common problems;
- Better involvement of local stakeholders in the Agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) in a form of a specific Operational Group or Thematic Network within the EIP-AGRI;
- Closer cooperation of the WG SARD with the WG Climate Change;
- Promotion of organic production;
- Strengthening development of local products;
- Common presentation of local products at the big fairs or conferences;
- Better understanding of farming systems in the Carpathian countries, what is the level of sustainability of these systems, which would be particularly relevant for local product;
- Need for strengthening cooperation between the Carpathian farmers; elaboration of guidelines on ways and means for a better cooperation between the farmers, best practice exchange;
- Farmers associations should be strengthened as well e.g. through advisory services;
- Better understanding better of the management status of meadows and pastures;
- Identification of good practices on innovation in agri sector;
- Better promotion of the extensive farming;
- Workshop on local breeds of local animals / common approach on agribiodiversity.

NEXT STEPS

- 1) The Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development – need for smooth ratification processes by the Parties giving a strong mandate for the implementation activities.
- 2) Next meeting of the WG SARD – Secretariat remains open for receiving offers to host the next meeting/s.
- 3) EEA will share information on HNV farmland.
- 4) Mountain Value Chain Horizon 2020 project – identification of the case studies on value chain in the Carpathians. The Secretariat will send a separate email with more information including the selection criteria for the case studies.
- 5) Secretariat will analyze already existing documents and report relevant for agriculture and rural development in the Carpathians, including the Background paper substantiating the decision on the elaboration of the SARD Protocol.
- 6) Elaboration of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and Euromontana to be signed at the COP6 in 2020. The first draft will be prepared by the Secretariat and consulted with the WG SARD
- 7) Preparation of a matrix linking the discussed ideas for the implementation with the Articles of the SARD Protocol.
- 8) Further discussion on the Priority Actions to be linked to the Background paper and potentially presented/adopted at the COP6 in 2020



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