

Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management

Final, September 2022

Background and mandate

The Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forests Management (WG Forest) was established, initially together with the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, **by the decision COP1/7 para 3** of the First Conference of the Parties¹ (COP1) to the Carpathian Convention (Kyiv, 2006).

The Third Conference of the Parties² (COP3, Bratislava, 2011) adopted the [Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management](#) (hereinafter Forest Protocol) by its **decision COP3/4 para 3**, as well as the former Terms of Reference for the WG Forest by the decision COP3/4 para 2.

The Fourth Conference of the Parties³ (COP4, Mikulov, 2014) welcomed the entry into force of the Forest Protocol and by its **decisions COP4/4 para 4** adopted the [Strategic Action Plan](#) for its implementation. Furthermore, the COP4 adopted the [Criteria and indicators for selection of virgin forests in the Carpathians](#) and welcomed the progress made towards the establishment of a Carpathian Inventory of Virgin Forests.

The Fifth Conference of the Parties⁴ (COP5, Lilafured, 2017) by its **decision COP5/8** took note of the progress made in preparing the Inventory of virgin forests, appreciated the work done by the WG Forest and the European Environment Agency (hereinafter EEA) involved in the process, and asked the Parties, with support of the WG Forest and other relevant stakeholders, to complete the Inventory of virgin forest.

The Sixth Conference of the Parties⁵ (COP6, online, 2020) in its **decision COP6/13 para 2** encouraged the WG Forest to continue its work on identification and protection of natural and virgin forests, on promotion of close to nature forestry, and on forestry and climate change in order to implement the respective objectives of the Strategic Action Plan, undertake relevant actions and propose concrete activities in this respect, with the support of the Secretariat and relevant partners.

Furthermore, the COP6 invited the WG Forest, EEA, the European Topic Centre on Urban, Land, and Soil Systems (ETC-ULS), as well as other relevant actors, to continue cooperation and knowledge sharing with the Carpathian Convention and the WG Forest to achieve the implementation of Article 10 of the Forest Protocol with reference to the finalization of the Inventory of Virgin Forests of the Carpathians,

Moreover, the COP6 requested the WG Forest and partners to support the development of the assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services, and lastly to exchange information and coordinate efforts to address the problem on illegal logging taking into account already existing mechanisms and platforms, as appropriate.

¹ [COP1 Decisions](#)

² [COP3 Decisions](#)

³ [COP4 Decisions](#)

⁴ [COP5 Decisions](#)

⁵ [COP6 Decisions](#)

Strategic objectives

WG Forest shall aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention towards their cooperation for the implementation of Article 7 on sustainable forestry and other related Articles of the Carpathian Convention. WG Forest will steer and guide activities of the Carpathian Convention towards implementation of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan, relevant COPs Decisions and related Carpathian Convention Programme of Work.

Finally, WG Forest shall cooperate with other working groups of the Carpathian Convention, particularly WG Climate Change, in order to encourage the comprehensive approach for environmental protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, including through enhancing synergies and facilitating exchange of information.

Global and European policies and processes

While conducting its activities, WG Forest will take into account and support implementation of relevant global and EU policies and processes, particularly the [EU biodiversity strategy for 2030](#), the [EU forest strategy for 2030](#), [the European Green Deal](#), the incoming Nature Restoration Law, and the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), as well as the goals of achieving sustainably managed forests, halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Composition and organization of work

WG Forest is composed of the National Focus Points for the Carpathian Convention and/or persons nominated by them. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of WG Forest are open for observers. In conducting its business, WG Forest will apply the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

The Chair will be appointed by the Party taking the leading role of WG Forest in line with DECISION COP6/1 para 7 and will be responsible for convening and chairing all meetings. The Chair will also seek interaction with Chairs from other Working Groups established by the Conference of the Parties to foster exchange of information and explore possible cooperation.

WG Forest meets on a regular basis as determined by the Working Group to discharge its duties in an agreed format (physical or online meetings).

Meeting agendas and relevant documents will be provided at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention is responsible - in cooperation with WG Forest Chair - for preparing and organizing the meetings and provide minutes of those meetings, including its outcomes.

Parties hosting WG Forest meetings bear the costs of meeting rooms and equipment related to organization of a meeting, unless otherwise decided.

WG Forest meeting participants cover their respective travel and accommodation expenses, unless otherwise decided.

Responsibilities

Members of WG Forest will have the following general responsibilities:

- to share relevant information, knowledge and experience in relation to sustainable forest management in their countries with a particular focus on mountain areas;
- to actively contribute to agreed activities and gather information from colleagues, if needed;
- to consult on the activities of WG Forest with their national, regional and local stakeholders (public administration, NGOs, private sector, etc.), share the stakeholders' view with WG Forest when necessary and to ensure the stakeholders involvement in the implementation;
- to undertake tasks as requested by WG Forest respecting agreed timelines;
- to report to the Conference of the Parties through the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.

Activities

Further to the strategic objectives of the WG Forest, the following activities and task shall be undertaken and supported by the WG Forest:

- Proposing and undertaking strategic actions for the implementation of the Forest Protocol and its Strategic Action Plan,
- Supporting identification and involvement of key actors (including national, regional and local stakeholders) for exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable forest management in the Carpathians,
- Supporting project development and cooperate on resource mobilization with relevant stakeholders and donors for the implementation of the Forest Protocol,
- Sharing best practice and expertise supporting activities on sustainable forest management in the Carpathian region and beyond for exchange of knowledge with other mountain regions,
- Promoting activities of the Carpathian Convention on sustainable forest management at various fora;
- Collaborating on developing ideas to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable forest management for the Carpathian region in terms of economy, social aspects, environment, natural and cultural heritage
- Enhancing transnational and cross-border cooperation on sustainable forest management in the region,
- Considering cooperation with and exchange with relevant working groups on cross-cutting issues and activities of common interest, including the, WG on Climate Change, WG on Biodiversity, WG

- on Agriculture and Rural Development, WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, as well as WG on Sustainable Tourism.
- Providing recommendations to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) on further implementation of the Forest Protocol and its priority actions.
- Providing inputs such as guidance, recommendations and policies for CCIC, COP of the Carpathian Convention and other WGs, if requested.

Coordination and cooperation with other WGs and stakeholders

The WG Forest shall exchange information and foster communication with other relevant WGs of the Carpathian Convention and might seek cooperation with other interested institutions and stakeholders within or beyond the Carpathian Convention. Special emphasis shall be given to development of cross-border partnerships and cooperation. In this respect, the WG Forest shall:

- Establish close cooperation and exchange with the other thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. through regular meetings of the Chairs of the WGs to be possibly organized back to back with the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee and COP meetings) in order to:
 - ensure regular communication and exchange of strategic information between WGs, which will allow for enhancing synergies, consideration of common activities, providing relevant inputs and avoiding isolated approaches while implementing the activities of the Carpathian Convention;
 - support organization of joint meetings of interested WGs, if relevant;
 - discuss and agree on a timeframe for proposing and implementing activities.
- Collaborate with other regional frameworks/platforms/initiatives and related institutions and organizations, especially from mountain and neighbouring regions, for knowledge exchange and learning.

Term

This Terms of Reference is effective upon approval of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee and continues at least until end of 2023 and can be extended by the COP.

Amendment, Modification or Variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the CCIC together with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.