

# 8<sup>th</sup> Forum Carpathicum 2025

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Taking stock and building  
partnership for  
sustainable development  
of mountain and rural  
areas



FACULTY OF SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES  
Comenius University  
Bratislava



Science for the Carpathians

# Forum Carpathicum 2025

- Sub-theme I: “Building capabilities and facilitating participation of vulnerable groups in rural and mountain regions through SSE in multi-level sustainable development policy”
- Sub-theme II: “Bridging natural and social sciences for sustainable development through transdisciplinary approaches”





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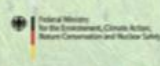
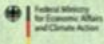
# Forum Carpathicum 2025

**170+ participants across research  
and academia, civil society, and  
policy from 20+ countries**

**40+ participants from Ukraine**



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## Main goals of the conference:

- Facilitating transdisciplinary dialogue between social and natural sciences (plastics in the mountains, water, energy poverty)
- Bridging science with policy creating space for new partnerships (side events and policy addresses with contributions from UNIDO, Association of Towns and Municipalities in Slovakia, Association of Self-Governing Regions in Slovakia, MEPs)
- Showcasing social and environmental impact and agency of local initiatives (Carpathian Fair, art exhibition)
- Addressing the lack of resources via donors' meeting (EUKI, DBU, EU CERV, IVF)
- Connecting S4C with European scientific landscape – synergies with three Horizon Europe projects (SERIGO, ESIRA, RURACTIVE)





## Next steps:

- Strengthening the network via development of collaborative projects research, teaching and education
- New cross-sectoral streams of work to focus on vulnerable groups – building on the MoU and EUKI project, Empowering Roma Communities in the EU Green Deal as well as Horizon Europe projects, SERIGO, ESIRA and RURACTIVE, with a focus on bottom-up social innovations and social and solidarity economy through participatory action research
- Book proposal submitted for Routledge Sustainability Series on Inclusion and Participation of Vulnerable Groups in the EU Green Deal





Science for the Carpathians

## Key Messages and Recommendations from Science for the Carpathians for the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee

**based on Forum Carpacitum 2025**  
**“Taking stock and building partnership for  
sustainable development of the mountain and  
rural areas”**  
**Bratislava, Slovakia, 9th-11th September 2025**

**Editors:** Tamara Mitrofanenko, Rudolf Škovira, Dariia Kholiavchuk, Jakub Csabay,  
William Keeton, Joanna Zawiejska, Elena Matei and Mariana Melnykovich

**COP7/1** Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

**COP7/2** Cooperation with regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders

**COP7/3** Cooperation with the European Union

**COP7/4** Cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme

**COP7/5** Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies

**COP7/6** Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

**COP7/8** Strengthening science-policy-practice interface and cooperation with scientific networks

**COP7/9** Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity

**COP7/10** Spatial planning

**COP7/11** Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management

**COP7/12** Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

**COP7/13** Sustainable Forest Management

**COP7/14** Sustainable transport and infrastructure, industry and energy

**COP7/15** Sustainable tourism

**COP7/16** Cultural Heritage and traditional knowledge

**COP7/17** Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning

**COP7/18** Climate change

**COP7/19** Awareness raising, education and public participation

**Integrated recommendations from:** European Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE Europe) 2025, Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS Europe) 2025, Multifunctional farming Conference 2025)





# S4C Key Messages



## DECISION COP7/1 Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

### Key Messages from Forum Carpaticum 2025

Session: Transboundary Strategies for Strengthening Carpathian Integrated Landscape Management Governance (RPS)<sup>7</sup>

- Safeguarding the Carpathians' ecological integrity requires not only **scientific innovation** (mapping, monitoring, digital models, risk assessment) but also **policy integration** (binding corridors in planning, cross-border governance, financial mechanisms) and **societal engagement** (heritage narratives, participatory monitoring, conflict management) as well as **education** - a crucial part of encouraging youth engagement, raising awareness of natural and cultural heritage and facilitating civil participation in monitoring
- **The Carpathian Convention has the unique role** of convening member states to harmonize approaches, pilot transboundary solutions, and ensure that ecological connectivity, forest protection, sustainable tourism, and hazard resilience are addressed as interdependent pillars of a sustainable mountain future.

Session: Collaborative Environmental Justice Initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe across Urban and Rural Divides (RPS)<sup>8</sup>

- There is a need for a multi-actor and multi-level approach for tackling vulnerability with active participation of the vulnerable groups. It is vital that Roma communities are recognised as frontline communities

Session: Empowering communities to act for change (RPS)<sup>9</sup>

- Carpathian communities do not want to be passive recipients of designed policies, but active contributors to their development.
- Empowering communities to act for change requires establishing inclusive governance mechanisms, supporting local leadership, and ensuring that community knowledge is systematically integrated into decision-making.
- Communities need support to run decentralized, community-led renewable energy projects.
- Cross-border science-policy-practice platforms are essential for knowledge transfer.
- Informal institutions (schools, moderators, citizen groups) play a central role.
- Innovation should be structurally embedded in regional development strategies

<sup>7</sup> **Session Leader:** Isidoro De Bortoli, Eurac Research (isidoro.debortoli@eurac.edu)

<sup>8</sup> **Session Leaders:** Jakub Csabay, Comenius University Bratislava (jakub.csabay@fss.uniba.sk) and Judit Bari, Hiszako Indie Produkciós Nonprofit Kft (Hiszako Indie)

<sup>9</sup> **Session Leader:** Mariana Melnykovich, Bern University of Applied Sciences BFH (mariana.melnikovich@bfh.ch)

# S4C Recommendations

- highlighted sections specific for the Carpathian Convention

## DECISION COP7/1 Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Session: Session on Ukraine<sup>12</sup>

### Specific Recommendations for the Carpathian Convention re Ukraine:

- Create a **Compliance mechanism**. Recommended steps towards this end include:
  - launching a consultation platform between CC parties and S4C on a potential Working Group to be created
  - best practices from other regions to be reviewed and presented to the CCIC
- Integrate a **Carpathian Convention** into the laws related to Green Recovery in Ukraine.
  - Recommended way forward: message to the Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture of Ukraine to be sent by CC Secretariat outlining key recommendations for Ukraine from the Forum Carpaticum.
- Integrate **renewable energy and energy communities** into Carpathian Convention programme of work



# S4C Recommendations to CCIC

## DECISION COP7/1 Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

- Apply complex, context-specific approaches to tackle root causes of vulnerability.
- There is a need for a **multi-actor** and **multi-level approach** (local, national, and EU levels) for tackling vulnerability with **active participation** of the vulnerable groups.
- Hold **regular meetings** that bring together all key just-transition actors: communities, municipalities, NGOs, researchers, businesses, and state agencies.
- **Consult** communities proactively and in ways that fit their local context when designing and implementing policies.

# S4C

## Recommendations to CCIC

*DECISION COP7/11  
Sustainable and integrated  
water/river basin management*

*key messages*

- Development of **Carpathian guidelines on water and river system health**, consistent across the region and integrating relevant provisions of the EU and member state legislations, **would greatly support** and enhance **water management specific to vulnerable mountain environments and communities**.
- Wetland, river and floodplain **restoration**, their connectivity and their ecological functions is key for biodiversity and management of flood hazard.
- **Environmental and social sustainability** must be central to water infrastructure governance.
- Research into **plastic impacts** and development of plastic waste management strategies in mountain environments is urgent and **critical for ecosystem and human health** in the entire river basins.