

FINAL MEETING REPORT

16th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee
2-3 December 2025, Belgrade, Serbia

Opening of the 16th CCIC meeting by the Secretariat and the Serbian Presidency

The 16th Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) meeting was opened by Mr. Harald Egerer, the Head of the UNEP Vienna Programme Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, welcoming the participants and thanking the Serbian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention for their support in organizing the meeting. Mr. Aleksandar Stanojević, the Carpathian Convention National Focal Point for Serbia, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia and the representative of the Serbian Presidency as Chair of the meeting, welcomed the meeting participants and invited the Minister of Environmental Protection of Serbia, Ms. Sara Pavkov, to deliver welcoming remarks.

Welcome remarks by the Minister

Ms. Sara Pavkov, Minister of Environmental Protection of Serbia, welcomed participants to Belgrade and to the 16th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee, noting that Serbia was honoured to host the meeting and to lead the Presidency at a crucial moment for the Convention. The Minister underlined the shared commitment of all Parties in protecting the Carpathians as a region of common natural and cultural heritage and to strengthening regional cooperation in addressing environmental and climate challenges. In this context, the Minister reaffirmed the Serbian Presidency's strong commitment to advancing cooperation among the Parties, providing strategic direction, and supporting concrete actions that enhance biodiversity protection, climate resilience and sustainable development across the Carpathian region.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without amendments.

Mr. Aleksandar Stanojević requested the Secretariat to support the Serbian Presidency in chairing the meeting.

Report on status of ratification of the Protocols to the Carpathian Convention and the Article 12bis

The Secretariat informed the CCIC that there were no updates on the status of ratifications. Poland had recently requested information from other Parties on the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management, as initial procedures related to the possible ratification of the Protocol by Poland are currently ongoing. The Secretariat encouraged all Parties to take the necessary steps to fulfil their ratification obligations.

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention: Progress reports

Report for Decisions COP7/1, COP7/3 - COP7/8, COP7/14, and COP7/17

The Secretariat delivered a general presentation on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention since the COP7 based on the draft Progress Report that was prepared in advance of the 16th CCIC meeting. The general presentation focused on activities related to Decisions COP7/1, COP7/3 - COP7/8, COP7/17, and COP7/19.

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/1 on Implementation of the Carpathian Convention, the Secretariat delivered the presentation "Support to Ukraine presentation on recent activities". It featured

the development of the GEF-8 project proposal "Enhanced Protected Areas Network for Biodiversity Conservation and Development" in Ukraine, as well as preparations for a donor conference titled "Ukrainian Carpathians Nature Recovery Dialogue" in 27-28 April 2026, Vienna, Austria. The Secretariat also delivered a presentation on the "CARPATHIAN LIFE project," providing a comprehensive overview of the current stage of development and next steps.

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/4 on cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme, the following presentation was delivered:

- "Multi-Country Mountain Flagship under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration – Serbia" by Ivan Svetozarevic, UNEP Consultant. [See the full presentation.](#)

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/8 on strengthening science-policy-practice interface and cooperation with scientific networks, the following presentation was delivered:

- "Forum Carpaticum 2025 and related recommendations for the Carpathian Convention" by the Science for the Carpathians (S4C) Scientific Steering Committee representatives Jakub Csabay, Comenius University Bratislava, and Joanna Zawiejska, University of the National Education Commission Krakow. [The S4C Recommendations](#) structure, aligned with COP7 decisions, was presented in order to guide the Parties through the document and facilitate uptake of the recommendations and follow-up with the S4C, if needed. Several recommendations were highlighted, e.g. on green recovery of Ukraine, on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, water and plastics. [See the full presentation.](#)

Based on the Forum Carpaticum recommendations presented, the S4C representatives proposed two additional recommendations for consideration by the CCIC. The first recommendation focuses on addressing the challenges of river and wetland restoration and water management in vulnerable mountain environments and communities in the Carpathian region, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach. The second recommendation calls for better inclusion of vulnerable groups in both existing and future activities of the Working Groups and projects under the Carpathian Convention. Both proposals were discussed and approved by the CCIC. The full text of both recommendations is available in the set of CCIC recommendations.

The Secretariat complemented inputs from the S4C SSC by informing the CCIC about the [new website of the S4C](#), hosted by Jagiellonian University, the signed Memorandum of Cooperation with the Forum Carpaticum 2025 organizers Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Slovakia and Roma Environmental Sustainability & Development Initiative – RESDI, and about collaborations important for engaging young scientists in the Carpathian Convention, including the [Student Conference on Conservation Science Europe](#) and [Project "Promoting Biodiversity through Transdisciplinary Learning Interventions in the Carpathians \(ProBioTIC\)"](#).

For each COP7 Decision, the relevant activities (based on the draft Progress Report) were presented, followed by the CCIC recommendations for the respective Decision, which were also prepared in advance of the meeting.

[CCIC Day 1 Progress Report Presentation](#)

[CCIC Day 2 Progress Report Presentation](#)

Report for Decision COP7/9 - Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity

The Working Group (WG) Biodiversity Chair, Ms. Eliška Rolfová of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, delivered a presentation on the main activities undertaken by the WG Biodiversity since the 15th CCIC meeting based on the draft Progress Report for Decision COP7/9. Notably, it featured activities related to the implementation of the International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians (mainly through the LECA project) and the related reestablishment of Large Carnivores Expert Group (LC Expert Group), and updates on the implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework and related developments of the CARPATHIAN LIFE Strategic Nature Project. Ms. Rolfová updated the CCIC on the next steps for developing the Carpathian Lynx Strategy, aimed at conserving the native lynx population in the Carpathians. Work will begin in early 2026 with support from the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, with the goal of completing the Strategy within

the year and submitting it to COP8 for adoption. Detailed next steps will be shared with the WG Biodiversity and the LC Expert Group early next year. This initiative will strengthen transboundary conservation and foster collaboration under multiple international conventions.

Mr. Mircea Verghelet, Chair of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, provided updates on the activities relevant for the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas. [See the full presentation.](#)

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/9, the following presentations were delivered:

- “LECA project: Supporting the coexistence and conservation of Carpathian Large Carnivores” by Mr. Martin Duľa of Mendel University in Brno and LECA project lead partner. Mr. Duľa presented the ongoing work and preliminary results of the pilot actions of the EU Interreg Central Europe LECA project. Mr. Duľa briefly presented three key LECA outputs: Thematic Guidance on large carnivore conservation in the Carpathians for monitoring, poaching investigation, and conflict prevention. These Thematic Guidances will be further consulted with the LC Expert Group in the next months. Furthermore, the LECA project will provide recommendations for the implementation and future revision (scheduled for 2026) of the International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians. This will include integrating innovative protocols outlined in the Thematic Guidances, which will be validated and consulted with the WG Biodiversity, paving the way for policy uptake, broader roll-out, and upscaling at the Carpathian level. [See the full presentation.](#)
- “NaturaConnect project: Building a resilient ecological network of conserved areas across Europe for nature and people” by Ms. Hildegard Meyer of WWF - Central and Eastern Europe. Ms. Meyer presented the recent activities and updates of the EU Horizon Europe NaturaConnect project, including the review and synthesis of “Best practices in governance and land use policies to implement TEN-N”, “Funding opportunities to support protected areas and ecological connectivity”, as well as the “Guidelines for connectivity conservation and planning in Europe”. Ms. Meyer informed participants about the planned webinar series on climate change and on land use change in spring 2026 (more information will follow in due time), as well as invited the Focal Points and WG Biodiversity members to join the NaturaConnect workshop “Strategic planning for Trans-European Nature Network,” scheduled for 20-21 January 2026 in Brussels, Belgium. [See the full presentation.](#)
- “Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI)” by Ms. Natália Kubicová, Coordinator of the CWI. Ms. Kubicová provided updates on the work of the CWI in 2025, including the organisation of the international training course on river and wetland restoration in 29 September–3 October 2025 in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, with great support of the Czech Republic. Ms. Kubicová informed participants about the election of Ms. Libuše Vlasáková (Czech Ministry of the Environment) as the new CWI Chair in October 2025. [See the full presentation.](#)

Report for Decision COP7/13 - Sustainable Forest Management

The WG Sustainable Forest Management Chair, Zlatica Šimoňáková of the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia, delivered a presentation on the main activities undertaken by the WG Sustainable Forest Management since the 15th CCIC meeting based on the draft Progress Report for Decision COP7/13. The presentation focused on the discussions and results of the 10th Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management, which was organized on 28-29 April 2025, Bratislava, Slovakia.

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/13, the following presentation was delivered:

- “ForestConnect project: Towards a climate-smart forest connectivity for large carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region” by Ms. Tanya Georgieva-Schnell, WWF Bulgaria. As part of the EU Interreg Danube Region ForestConnect project, Ms. Georgieva-Schnell informed participants about the current work on the Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience-Enhancing Forest Management in Ecological Corridors for Large Carnivores and invited the Carpathian stakeholders to join the consultation process. [See the full presentation.](#)

Report for Decision COP7/12 - Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development and COP7/16 - Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge

The Secretariat, on behalf of the WG Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Chair, delivered a presentation on the main activities undertaken by the WG SARD since the COP7 based on the draft Progress Report for Decisions COP7/12 and COP7/16. Notably, it featured a presentation on the project "Linking biodiversity, pastoralism, and cultural heritage through education for sustainable development project" by the Secretariat, which supported main activities of the Secretariat pertaining to these thematic areas. These activities included dedicated sessions on pastoralism and transhumance at the Forum Carpaticum 2025 and International Mountain Conference 2025, developing synergies with the Multifunctional Farming Conference, providing support to the development and submission of the Multinational Extension File "Transhumance - the seasonal droving of livestock" to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity", as well as collaborating with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026) Coalition. Follow-up plans include facilitating the development of a regional file "Safeguarding Carpathian Pastoralism", which requires one of the Parties to assume a coordinating role; supporting pastoralism and transhumance with Eurac Research and Euromontana, including at the XIV European Mountain Convention in June 2026; exploring collaboration with the FAO at the upcoming 7th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership "Mountains for the Future: Responsible Tourism, Thriving Communities" in March 2026; and exploring links between pastoralism and education.

As part of the Progress Report for Decisions COP7/12 and COP7/16, the following presentations were delivered:

- "Multifunctional farming conference" by Stephen Bramwell, Professor at the Washington State University. [See the full presentation.](#)
- "'Transhumance - the seasonal droving of livestock' file submission to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity" by Ms. Ioana Baskerville of the Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch and the National Focal Point of the Ministry of Culture of Romania for the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Ms. Baskerville presented on the submission of the Multinational file--coordinated by Romania and with participation of Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine--the role of the Carpathian Convention Secretariat, and the next steps, including the expected decision by UNESCO and collaboration on the Safeguarding measures. [See the full presentation.](#)

Following the comprehensive update provided by Ms. Baskerville, the representative nominated by the National Focal Point on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Serbia, Ms. Nataša Mladenović Ribić, Center for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, provided an overview of the process of the nomination and main participating actors in Serbia.

The Secretariat proceeded with presenting activities in the field of Cultural Heritage, including a Seminar in Slovakia, organized by the Slovak and Romanian ICH Focal Points; celebrating cultural heritage of Ukrainian Carpathians at Carpathian Fair at the Forum Carpaticum 2025; and collaboration with ICOMOS in the framework of the project ICOMOS World Heritage Transhumance Initiative: Defining a Thematic Approach Towards Sustaining Transhumance Cultural Landscapes in a Changing Environment" and providing inputs from Carpathian parties at the expert conference "Transhumance Landscapes of Global Importance" June 2025 reflected in the "Baku Declaration on the recognition, safeguarding, and transmission of the heritage of pastoralist transhumance"

Report for Decisions COP7/2 - Cooperation with regional and local authorities and all relevant stakeholders and COP7/15 - Sustainable tourism

Mr. Isidoro de Bortoli of Eurac Research and Alina Dragan of Braşov County Council and representative of the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform Romania contributed to a special session on the Central Mountains project, which was organized with support of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion. The progress, solutions, and future plans of the project were presented, highlighting strong alignment between the project's priorities and the mission of the Carpathian Convention, particularly in strengthening cooperation, governance, and sustainable development in mountain regions. Several proposed solutions were recognized as highly relevant for supporting the Convention's implementation. Some key project results that were discussed included:

- Designing and testing a new cooperation system for the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP)
- Improved cooperation framework for Civil Society Organizations in the Carpathian region
- Toolkit: transnational structures for long-term cooperation in mountain areas
- Alpine-Carpathian Toolkit for Participation in Mountain Areas of Central Europe
- Alpine-Carpathian joint strategy for community-led sustainable development in Central Europe

The session featured an active discussion to gather stakeholder feedback on these results, informing policy recommendations to be developed in 2026 within the Central Mountains project. The event was supported by the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion, with contributions from Eurac Research and Braşov County. [See the full presentation.](#)

Report for Decision COP7/18 – Climate change

Mr. Stanojević introduced Ms. Jovana Planojević from the Climate Change Adaptation Unit of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia who spoke about the key steps taken by the Republic of Serbia in the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the Climate Change Adaptation Programme, the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the Low-Carbon Development Strategy, and the Climate Atlas, which Serbia is particularly proud of, with a strong focus on adaptation and its importance.

Ms. Zsuzsa Piskóti, Head of the Coal Commission Secretariat presented the project “Sharing experiences on decarbonization and just transition - LIFE IP North-HU-Trans”. The project aims to support the implementation of the National Energy and Climate Plan, with a special emphasis on the decarbonization of Mátra Power Plant. [See full presentation.](#)

Report for Decision COP7/19 - Awareness raising, education and public participation

The Secretariat delivered a general presentation on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention since the COP7 based on the draft Progress Report. The general presentation focused on the Secretariat’s activities in the framework of the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development Expert Network (CESDEN), including main events organized by the Secretariat or CESDEN partners or those where they played an important role, including the 20th UNECE Steering Committee on ESD meeting, the International Carpathian School and Carpathian Day celebration in Ukraine, and the ESD Session at the Forum Carpaticum 2025. The Secretariat presented a Draft Carpathian ESD Roadmap, developed by Špirála, which translates the research-based recommendations presented at the Forum Carpaticum into a coherent set of actionable measures in line with the Carpathian Convention and CESDEN. Related projects, such as ProBioTIC and Empowering Roma Communities in the Green Deal, were mentioned. Future plans include events in collaboration with UNESCO and UNECE, such as the UNESCO ESD-NET Europe-North America Regional Workshop in Romania, the Whole Institutional Approach Workshop in the Czech Republic and the 3rd Carpathian ESD Seminar in Serbia (2026), as well as further strengthening youth participation and integrating pastoralism and ESD initiatives, with ongoing representation at international ESD forums.

Mr. Stanojević, provided a brief update on Serbia’s plans to co-organize the Carpathian ESD Seminar in 2026.

Report by Observers

Upon a written request, Ms. Natalya Voloshyna, representative of the NGO Ecosphere presented a report “On Violations of Environmental and Urban Planning Legislation of Ukraine during the Construction of Wind Farms at High Altitudes of the Mountain Ranges of the Ukrainian Carpathians.” [See the full presentation.](#)

CC COP8 - Updates and discussion

At the request of Ukraine, the Secretariat informed participants of the recent confirmation that Ukraine will host the Carpathian Convention COP8 in late 2026.

Conclusions and closure of the 16th CCIC meeting

On behalf of the Secretariat, Mr. Harald Egerer thanked the participants for their active and constructive contributions to the meeting, in particular to the negotiations of the CCIC recommendations. He also expressed gratitude to the Serbian Presidency for generously hosting the 16th CCIC meeting in Belgrade. The final drafts of the Progress Report and Recommendations will be circulated as soon as possible for final consideration by the CCIC. Mr. Aleksandar Stanojević then announced the meeting closed.