Carpathian Resilience: Biodiversity Conservation and the Socio-Economic Integration of Communities

Carpathian Convention COP8

Venue: CR 02 29 (C building, 2nd floor), Vienna International Centre
Time: 2 December 2026, 11:30 - 12:30 CET
Online link: Via Zoom
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87359442156?pwd=weLV6Q9eQrOKYmJoi7ovBye3BvRMw9.1
Passcode: 724060

Organisers: Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine, All-Ukrainian Ecological League, All-Ukrainian Public Organization "Living Planet", State Scientific Institution "Institute of Ecological Restoration and Development of Ukraine," with the support of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

Participants of COP8 and representatives of communities, businesses, educational and scientific institutions, national nature parks, NGOs, and experts are invited to participate in a discussion to exchange experiences on the implementation of tools to support sustainable development in the Carpathians.

Discussion Topics:

1. The need to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest resource management into the strategic and spatial plans of mountain communities.

2. Support for initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism and environmental certification for sustainable businesses, as well as the creation of new green jobs in the Carpathian region.

Since 2023, domestic tourism in Ukraine has been reviving, and the relatively safer western regions of the Carpathians have become the most popular destinations. Short-term visits to natural recreational areas have become the top choice for 11% of Ukrainians seeking peace and a connection with nature. The development of domestic tourism requires the hospitality industry to provide high-quality and safe services, reliable infrastructure, and effective management systems to prevent excessive impact on the environment and natural landscapes. Standards establishing environmental criteria for evaluating tourist accommodations contribute to economic growth, resource conservation, and the protection of the environment and natural ecosystems in the Carpathian region.

3. Management systems for recreational activities in natural areas, in line with international and European standards.

4. An innovative model for rehabilitation within the natural landscapes of the Carpathian region, combined with social adaptation programs for vulnerable groups, including veterans, peacekeepers, and displaced persons.

Countries in the Carpathian region (such as Poland, Romania, and the Czech Republic) have thousands of military personnel who have served in international missions and are now struggling with PTSD and depression. Ukraine is currently testing methods for ecological rehabilitation. Neighboring countries could benefit from established, field-tested "green therapy" protocols that could be implemented in the Tatra or Beskid Mountains.

5. The practice of assessing ecosystem health and developing biodiversity conservation programs using remote sensing and GIS technologies.

The use of remote sensing and GIS is of critical importance for the Carpathians, as the complex mountainous terrain and the inaccessibility of large mountain ranges make traditional field studies too expensive, slow, and incomplete. These technologies allow us to view the region as a single, cohesive ecosystem, unbound by administrative borders.

6. Establishment of the "Majestic Carpathians" National Nature Park to ensure the integrity of ecosystems and migration routes in the heart of Europe.

The establishment of a national nature park directly implements the provisions of the Protocol on the Conservation and Restoration of Ecological Networks and Corridors (in particular, the Carpathian Ecological Network). Large predators (brown bear, Eurasian lynx, wolf) and rare birds do not recognize national borders. Protecting their habitats and migration routes in Ukraine directly supports population stability throughout the Carpathian region. Building on this example, it may be possible in the future to establish joint cross-border biosphere reserves or sister parks, exchange expertise in forest management, and attract joint European funding.

Agenda:

Moderator – *Mykhailo Buchak, Head of International Projects / Head of the PR and Communications Department, State Scientific Institution "Institute of Ecological Renovation and Development of Ukraine"*

TIME	TOPIC AND SPEAKER
11:30 – 11:40	**Ukraine's policy aimed at striking a balance between the protection of vulnerable mountain ecosystems and the region's socio-economic development needs within the framework of the Carpathian Convention and European integration commitments** *Oleksandr Krasnolutskyi, Deputy Minister of Economy and Environment of Ukraine* *Eduard Arustamyan, Director of the Department of Nature Reserves, Protected Areas and Biodiversity at the Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine*
11:40 – 11:55	**Sustainable Tourism — Standards and Benefits for Communities and the Protection of Natural Areas** *Svitlana Berzina, president of All-Ukrainian NGO "Living Planet"* **EU Policy and Ecolabel.EU Criteria for Tourist Accommodations** *Małgorzata Gołębiewska, Team Leader at the European Commission's DG Environment, leading the group responsible for implementing the EU Ecolabel program, assessing the environmental footprint, and combating greenwashing (video message)*
11:55 – 12:05	**The natural power of the Carpathians for the social adaptation of vulnerable population groups, including veterans, peacekeepers, and displaced persons** *Tetyana Tymochko, Head of All-Ukrainian Environmental League*
12:05 – 12:20	**Technologies and Innovations for Assessing the Condition of Ecosystems and Developing Biodiversity Conservation Programs** *Mykhailo Buchak, Head of International Projects / Head of the PR and Communications Department, State Scientific Institution "Institute of Ecological Renovation and Development of Ukraine"*

	Establishment of the new "Majestic Carpathians" National Nature Park to ensure the integrity of ecosystems and migration routes in the heart of Europe *Anastasiia Drapaliuk, expert on PAs, NGO Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group*
12:20 – 12:30	**Questions for the Speakers and Conclusions**