The Carpathian Convention and its role in sustainable regional development of the Carpathian Mountain Region

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Summer Field School on MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Photo: Ewelina Zajac
Carpathians at glance

- Largest, second-longest, most twisted and fragmented mountain range in Europe
- Shared by 7 countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine
- Providing essential ecosystem services and goods for 17 million of inhabitants
Carpathians at glance

• Europe’s last great wildernesses areas with exceptional levels of biodiversity
  • largest remaining stands of primeval and old-growth forests of Europe
  • Over 50% of the territory - natural and semi-natural forests
  • Habitat for the largest European populations of brown bears, wolves, and lynxes
• Exceptional cultural heritage as distinguishing feature of the region in Europe and globally
Carpathian Convention

- A framework Convention for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination
  - Adopted on 22nd May 2003
  - Entered in force on 4th January 2006
  - Ratified by all the seven Carpathian countries

- A platform for joint strategies for sustainable development
- A forum for dialogue between all stakeholders involved
- UN Environment Vienna Office provides the Secretariat for the Carpathian Convention

Goal: Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Region
Carpathian Convention

• Includes 23 Articles providing:
  • general provisions, objectives, principles
  • institutional set-up of the Convention bodies and obligations of the Parties including on financial contributions
  • standard clauses of international agreement
  • substantive obligations in thematic sectors
    • Article 3 - Integrated approach to the land resources management
    • Article 4 - Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity
    • Article 5 - Spatial planning
    • Article 6 - Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management
    • Article 7 - Sustainable agriculture and forestry
    • Article 8 - Sustainable transport and infrastructure
    • Article 9 - Sustainable tourism
    • Article 10 - Industry and energy
    • Article 11 - Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge
    • Article 12 - Environmental assessment/information system, monitoring and early warning
    • Article 12bis - Climate Change
    • Article 13 - Awareness raising, education and public participation
Carpathian Convention - regional instrument for achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Carpathians

1. Quality Education
   - 4.7

2. Clean Water and Sanitation
   - 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.A

3. Affordable and Clean Energy
   - 7.2, 7.A

4. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
   - 9.1

5. Sustainable Cities and Communities
   - 11.4, 11.A

6. Responsible Consumption and Production

7. Life on Land
   - 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.A

8. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
   - 16.7

9. Partnerships for the Goals
   - 17.14, 17.16
Institutional Structure

Conference of the Parties (COP)

Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC)

- Working Group Biodiversity
- Working Group Climate Change
- Working Group Sustainable Tourism
- WG Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge
- Working Group Sustainable Forest
- Working Group on Transport
- Working Group SARD
- Working Group Spatial Development

- Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity
- Protocol on Sustainable Tourism
- Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management
- Protocol on Sustainable Transport
- Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Secretariat
Very active involvement of Parties and stakeholders

6 meetings of the Conference of the Parties
11 meetings of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee
12 meeting of the Working Group on WG Biodiversity
10 meetings of the Working Group on Sustainable Transport
10 meetings of the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism
8 meeting of the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change
7 meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management
5 meetings of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage Traditional Knowledge
4 meetings of the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

and various workshops, trainings and seminars...
Carpathian Convention via COP 6 Decisions

6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6)

25 November 2020, online

- **Poland took over the Presidency of the Carpathian Convention from Hungary for next 3 years**

- **Polish Presidency Priorities:**
  1) to promote the EU accession to the Carpathian Convention,
  2) closer cooperation with the local and regional level

- **156 Decisions within 24 chapters adopted**

- **Over 120 participants**

- **High level panel with:**
  - UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen,
  - Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Hungary, Mr. Sándor Farkas,
  - Deputy Minister of Climate and Environment, Mr. Adam Guibourge – Czetwertyński
  - Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region of Poland, Mr. Władysław Ortyl
Introducing a new COP Decision emphasising the importance of the Polish Presidency priority – cooperation with regional and local level

**Main decisions:**

- promoting and supporting implementation of the Carpathian Convention across the sectors at the regional and local level

- **encouraging regional and local authorities and relevant stakeholders to actively engage in and contribute to the process of implementation the Carpathian Convention in order to foster strong ownership of the convention and its activities undertaken in the Carpathian region**

- recommending development of projects supporting outreach programmes targeting local and regional authorities, universities and other relevant stakeholders
  - to increase their awareness of the importance of the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region and of the Convention’s activities

- welcoming ongoing cooperation with the regional governments of the Carpathians and encouraging the other regional and local authorities to follow...
welcoming the upcoming UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration 2021 – 2030 and calling upon the Parties to make strong commitments to achieve transformational ecosystem restoration
Supporting and contributing to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Main decisions:

- ...role of the Carpathian Convention as a regional mechanism for the implementation of the upcoming Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in the Carpathians

- revising the trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention in the light of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

- raising the importance of mountain biodiversity within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other global political agendas

- developing the Carpathian Commitments for the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in the form of the Political Declaration
Acknowledging the importance of science in the policy making processes

**Decision COP6/8**

*Strengthening science – policy - practice interface and cooperation with scientific networks*

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S4C Science for the Carpathians Network:  [http://carpathianscience.org/](http://carpathianscience.org/)

**Established in 2008, open membership**

- **5th Forum Carpaticum 2018** on Adaptation to Environmental and Social Risk in the Carpathian Mountain Region

- **6th Forum Carpaticum 2021** on Linking the Environmental, Political and Societal Aspects for Carpathian Sustainability
  - Memorandum of Understanding for the Cooperation between the Science for the Carpathians Network (S4C) and the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region (SNC-mt)

- **6th Forum Carpaticum 2023**
Decision COP6/9 on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity

Adopting the International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity

Main decisions:

- Adopting the International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity

Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (Biodiversity Protocol)

COP5 DECISIONS

International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Carpathian Large Carnivores Populations

Developing the Report on population status of large carnivores and monitoring methods in the Carpathians - supporting implementation of the Action Plan
Main decisions:

- encouraging continue work on identification and protection of natural and virgin forests, on promotion of close to nature forestry and on forestry and climate change...

- taking note of the progress in development of the Inventory of Virgin Forests of the Carpathians, appreciates the support of European Environment Agency (EEA), the European Topic Centre on Urban, Land, and Soil Systems (ETC-ULS), as well as other relevant actors, and inviting to continue cooperation and knowledge sharing in this respect

- Welcoming the proposal to organize a session on forest ecosystems and resource vulnerabilities to climate change in the Carpathian Mountain Region during the 6th Forum Carpaticum

- recognizing that illegal logging, despite its varying significance across the Parties, is an important and complex issue in the Carpathians, which can have trans-boundary effects that require international cooperation, requesting exchange of information and coordinate efforts to address the problem...

Main decisions:
- welcoming the ratification and the entry into force of the Protocol on Sustainable Transport
- adopting the Joint Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2021 – 2026 for the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Transport

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1
Reducing negative impact of existing transport infrastructure on ecological connectivity

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2
Ecological connectivity and wildlife-vehicle collisions are taken into account in the development of transport infrastructure

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3
Fostered cooperation of all relevant stakeholders of Carpathian Convention and enhancement of stakeholder participation in spatial planning, and development of transport infrastructure
Decision COP6/15
Sustainable tourism

Encouraging further cooperation with the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform

Main decisions:

- inviting close cooperation between the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP) and the Secretariat ...

Recent Tourism-related projects of the Convention partners:
Towards achieving climate-neutral and climate resilient development in the Carpathians

Main decisions:

- Encouraging ratification of the Article 12bis on Climate Change...
- adopting the “Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating climate change in the Carpathians”... and requesting the WG Climate Change to develop a Workplan for the Implementation period 2021-2023 based on this Framework;
- encouraging development of an assessment of the Impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystems services, including, if possible, climate change effects on large carnivores and their habitats
- encouraging to Identify and promote nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, to be best implemented at transboundary scale across the Carpathian region.

Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region
2014

Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change
2014

Joint Declaration of the ICPDR Tisza Group and the Carpathian Convention on the sustainable development of the Tisza River Basin within the Carpathian Region - signed
2015

New Article 12bis on Climate Change introduced to the Carpathian Convention – need for implementation!
2017

2030 Vision towards combating climate change in the Carpathians and corresponding Work Plan 2021-2023
2020
Decision COP6/18

Climate Change

Strengthening regional cooperation on climate change and mainstreaming climate action into other sectors

Main decisions:

• inviting **strengthen regional cooperation** and interaction through identifying common priority actions and harmonizing with national efforts on climate change in the Carpathian region

• encouraging **promoting sustainable climate change measures in mountain area** at Carpathian level in response to EU and international commitments (European Green Deal; UNFCCC, 2015 Paris Agreement; Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction; 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework)

• inviting **further development or enhance close cooperation and explore joint activities with the other thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention** in order to ensure incorporation of **climate change consideration into all relevant Convention’s topics and activities**
Selected decisions:

- Acknowledges the leadership of the Hungarian Presidency in advancing Education for Sustainable Development (hereinafter ESD) as one of its priority topics for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention.

- Welcomes the outcomes of the first Carpathian ESD Seminar, held in Budapest, Hungary, on 16-18 of April 2019... and requests the Secretariat and the Parties to act upon the recommendations elaborated at the Seminar, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.

Project:

- “Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface”, supported by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP).
Great cooperation with many international actors
Thank you for your attention!

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