

Carpathian Convention – role and contribution to the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The preparations for the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework gives exceptional opportunity to look for improved synergies and reinforcement of biodiversity related conventions for maximising their efforts in halting biodiversity loss. The Carpathian Convention, as the international treaty on environmental protection and sustainable development, and one of only two international agreements specifically dedicated to mountain region worldwide, can play a substantial role in translating the global biodiversity targets at regional level. Either in a form of voluntary contributions or as coordinated actions of a coalition of countries united under a distinctive international agreement, which would allow tailoring actions for their regional circumstances and highlighting the special role and challenges of the mountain biodiversity.

The Carpathian Convention will not only contribute to the Post2020 framework, but it will also apply a transformative approach in the Convention's implementation process in order to address the needed change in halting global biodiversity loss and a promoting sustainable use of the biodiversity resources at the regional scale.

The Carpathian Convention and its involvement in the Post2020 process will strengthen the global biodiversity movement by becoming a role model for other regions sharing similar problems and challenges due to regions' characteristics and specificities, e.g. mountain regions as the Carpathians.

Despite the fact that the Carpathian Convention refers to various thematic sectors relevant for sustainability of the region, connections and cross-cutting approach between biodiversity and other sectors must be underlined and clearly understood. Biodiversity shall be considered as the key, underpinning element where all the other sectors meet and depends on and mainstreaming of biodiversity can lead to sustainable development of current and future generations. Therefore, the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework can be perceived as a baseline also for the Carpathian Convention. If the Convention wants to contribute to reverting the trend of nature deterioration at the global level, it needs to ensure that the transformative change starts from it, from the region. The Post2020 process could be a great opportunity for the Convention to rethink its approach in implementing its provision and involving all relevant stakeholders and indispensable actors, such as local communities and authorities, which applying sustainable approaches on a microscale, will contribute to a major global transformation for living in harmony with nature.

Better involvement in the Post2020 framework discussions gives as well an opportunity to raise the visibility of Carpathians and promote its conservation at the international arena.

The global biodiversity movement should guide the preparation for the next implementation period of the Carpathian Convention, and potentially be reflected in selection of the future priorities for its implementation and the COP6 Decisions (COP6 will be held in September 2020 in Poland, prior CBD COP15).

The last WG Biodiversity meeting (May 2019, Ostrava, Czech Republic) requested the Secretariat to follow the Global Biodiversity Framework process. The WG Biodiversity discussed a possibility of adopting a COP6 Declaration, which would serve as the Carpathian contribution to the CBD process to

be reflected at CBD COP15 in China 2020. The consultation on this matter will be intensified within the next months through the email exchange and possible meetings.

Points to be considered for further discussion about the role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention to the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

Example of unique cooperation – in addition to national commitments, the Parties can promote themselves as an exceptional role model for other regions and emphasize their efforts in protecting strategic biodiversity hotspot in Europe. And while fulfilling the obligations of the Carpathian Convention contribute to the implementation of the Post2020 framework on a regional scale.

It can give the Parties better visibility and strengthen implementation process of Carpathian Convention by increasing awareness about the Convention at many levels, including the national and global levels.

- The Carpathian Convention gives an opportunity for its Parties to present a unique on a worldwide scale partnership/coalition on nature protection issues demonstrating that joining forces in the face of a common challenge is most appropriate way forward. And, at the same time, becoming a leading example for other regions in the world.
- Addressing global biodiversity loss through coordinated actions will give the Parties an opportunity for better integration of the Carpathian Convention in their national policies.
- Integration of the Carpathian Convention specific objectives into the Post-2020 framework and respective national plans could help avoiding isolated approaches to implementation and make the best use of limited financial and human resources.
- The Parties shall set corresponding objectives relevant for the Carpathian Convention at national level complemented by additional indicators adopted to the Carpathian context, which at the regional level will unite and help the Parties in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention.
- The Post2020 framework process shall also facilitate and encourage the development of thematic, regional targets and processes tailored to national and/or regional circumstances that can contribute to any Post2020 targets adopted.
- Importance of aligning a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with other international frameworks and processes was highlighted in the discussions.

Reporting on the Carpathian Convention as a review mechanism supporting Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework implementation at the local, regional and national level. This would mean that while reporting on the Carpathian Convention, the Parties would also report to Post2020 framework to certain extent. The new reporting format for the Carpathian Convention would take this approach into account, trying to avoid overlaps and additional work and burden on the reporting Parties.

- **Suggestion for the CC report indicators:** virgin forests cover; wetlands sites; surface of protected areas; Natura2000 (EU Member States) and Emerald Network (non-EU Member States) habitats degradation/loss; Capercaillie, black and hazel grouse as an indicator of forest biodiversity; some selected fish and crayfish species as an indicators of status of small rivers; saker falcon, imperial and lesser spotted eagle as an indicators of biodiversity at lower parts of the region; population of large carnivores (brown bear, wolf and lynx). Making sure that the CC comprehensive report includes indicators relevant for the Post2020 global biodiversity framework;

Mainstreaming of biodiversity. Increased collaboration across sectors is needed to better integrate nature and biodiversity conservation and protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services within relevant sectors. There is a clear need for mainstreaming of biodiversity in other policies, and for that, other sectors need greater ownership of nature and biodiversity conservation issues and to take responsibility in the process (especially those which are dependent on it); The Carpathian Convention is a perfect platform for mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors, however implementation of this approach needs to be reinforced and strengthened at many levels.

Giving the ownership to the local level. In various discussions greater inclusion of the local communities and civil societies in the implementation processes has been underlined as the necessary element of meaningful and successful biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.

In fact, also conclusion of the first round of reporting on implementation of the Carpathian Convention on Biodiversity Protocol stressed the need for better involvement of Carpathian local authorities and self-government units in the implementation of the Protocol on similar terms as bodies, organizational units and institutions belonging to government administration.

Building capacity for local communities and civil society to ensure proper decision making and implementation of environmental law is then essential. The IPBES global assessment summary clearly identifies the need for strengthening environmental laws and policies and improving their implementation as a key lever for protecting biodiversity. Equally sustainable outcomes are more likely where local communities are involved and participating in decision making.

Therefore, in respond to this, COP6 shall decide and commit to involve local communities and regional and local authorities in the implementation process. The means and ways to achieve this shall be further explored and discussed.

- Organization of an event at the COP6 with civil society representatives giving them greater ownership of the Carpathian Convention implementation process contributing directly to their quality of life and local sustainable development; generating a societal sense of responsibility to act for biodiversity at the local, regional, national and international levels and among all actors;
- Possible voluntary commitment by the local and regional authorities and civil societies to actively contribute to conservation and restoration of the biodiversity in the Carpathians, contributing to the implementation of the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Importance of traditional knowledge

The Parties shall put greater emphasis on traditional knowledge and practices of the Carpathian local communities, which contribute to sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity. The Parties shall acknowledge the importance of the traditional knowledge and practice of local communities, which should be fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention. The Parties should consider the best way of ensuring preservation and use of the local traditional knowledge. One of the possibilities is reopening the discussion on the Protocol on cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, knowing that the culture and nature in the context of the traditional knowledge are inseparable. Furthermore, the Parties could consider implementation of the Article 12 - *Traditional knowledge and practices* of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development as one of the Protocol's priorities.

Other relevant topics concerning implementation of the Carpathian Convention and potential priorities in the light of the Post2020 framework

- Connectivity
- Mitigation and adaptation of forests
- Wetlands
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Awareness raising - communicating to citizens and politicians hidden value of nature, biodiversity and ecosystems and their services; better communication and awareness raising on the importance of nature protection, biodiversity and ecosystems for the socioeconomic development and human well-being: global biodiversity loss has so far failed to attract the same level of attention and policy action as the agenda on climate change.

Mainstream mountain ecosystems into the Post2020 process discussion

The Parties shall support better mainstreaming of mountain biodiversity into the Post2020 ongoing discussions, with the ultimate aim that mountains get included in the list of thematic priorities.

UN Decade on Ecosystems restoration

The Carpathian region as one of the most unique eco-regions on the European and global scale should contribute to and receive special attention in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystems restoration.

Other relevant points to be considered

- Need for raising political will and ambition to implement effectively the necessary actions halting and reverting the nature and biodiversity deterioration process, which should become the top priority on the political agenda of Heads of States and not leave this crucial issue to environment ministers alone.



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- Advocating for greater financial allocation from the EU budget and the national budgets for nature and biodiversity actions.