Carpathian Peace Park: an initiative for cross-border cooperation in the Eastern Europe

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The Peace Park concept

Is based on the belief that the collaboration of bordering nations to **share in the management of the natural areas that lie between them**, promotes **peaceful relations** between these nations.

At the end of the Cold War, there was a realization that we could consider ways of **using ecology for peacebuilding** through a series of transboundary conservation areas.

This presentation will consider how we might move to the next step of using such zones instrumentally for **peace-building** through the much more deliberate notion of "Peace Parks".

Bucovina Natural Park

The **first phase** in the **establishment of the cross-border Carpathian Peace Park** framework we are proposing through this initiative is the formation of a national protected area at the northern border of Romania in the medium-elevation mountainous area of Suceava county: **Bucovina Natural Park.**
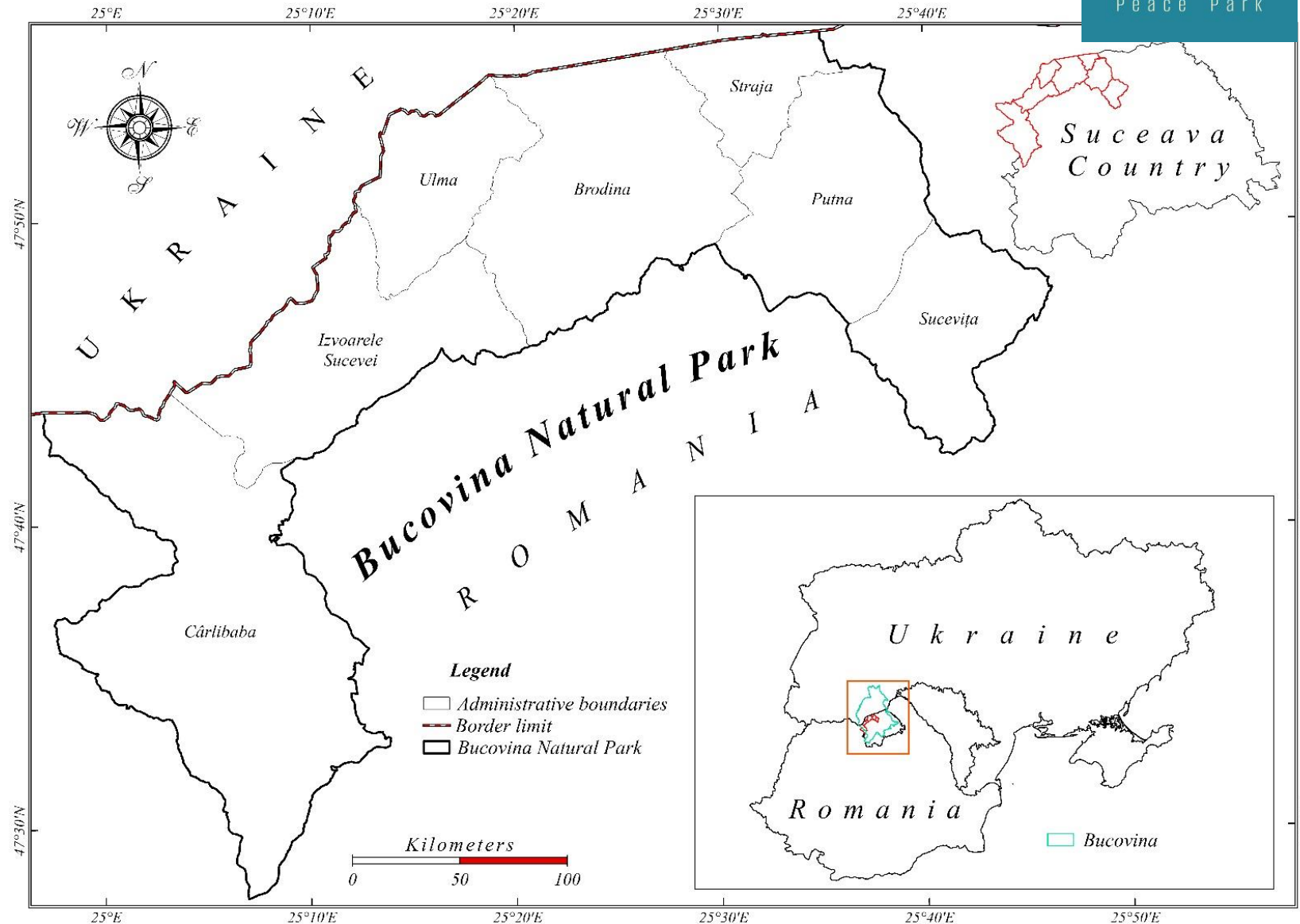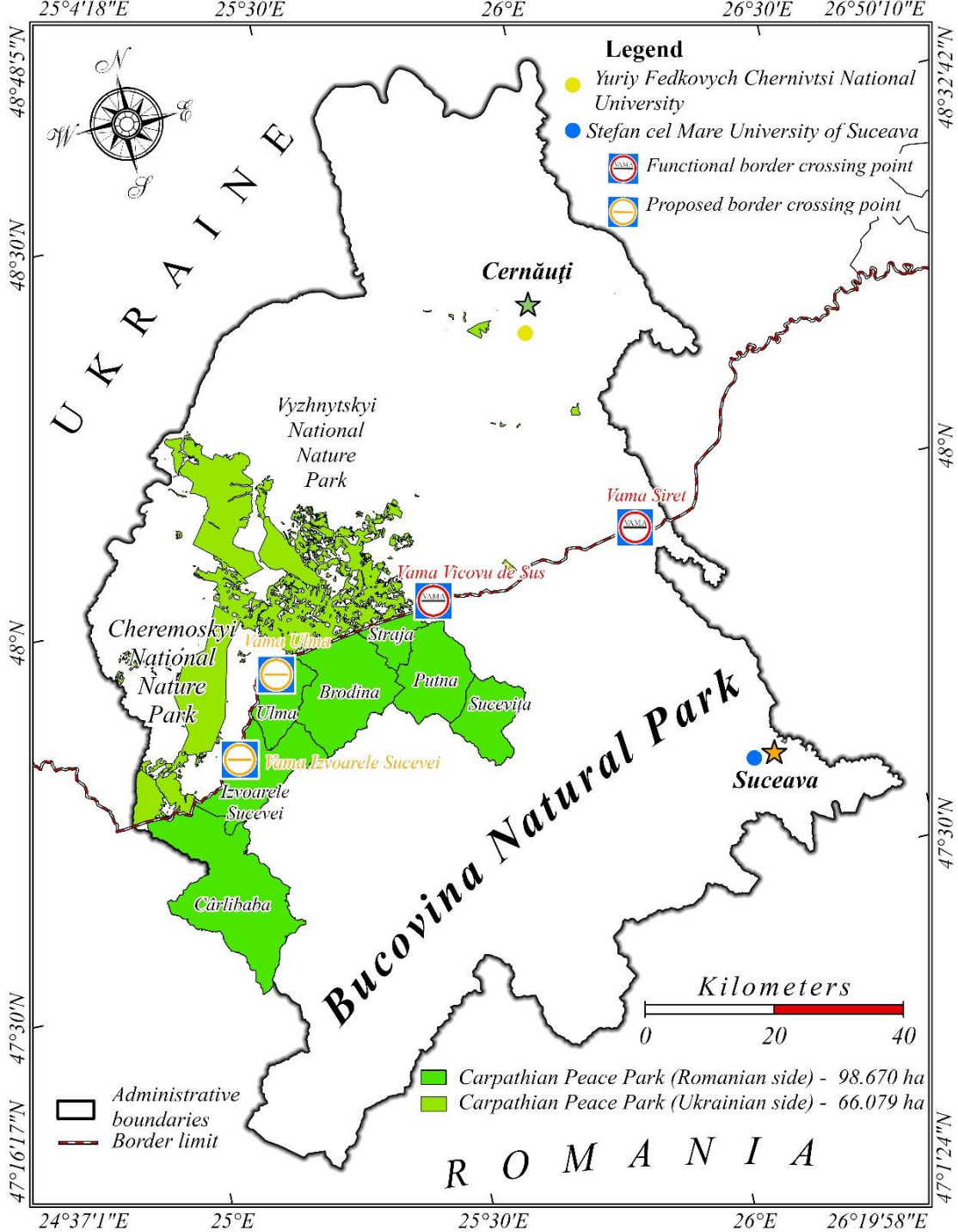
Carpathian Peace Park

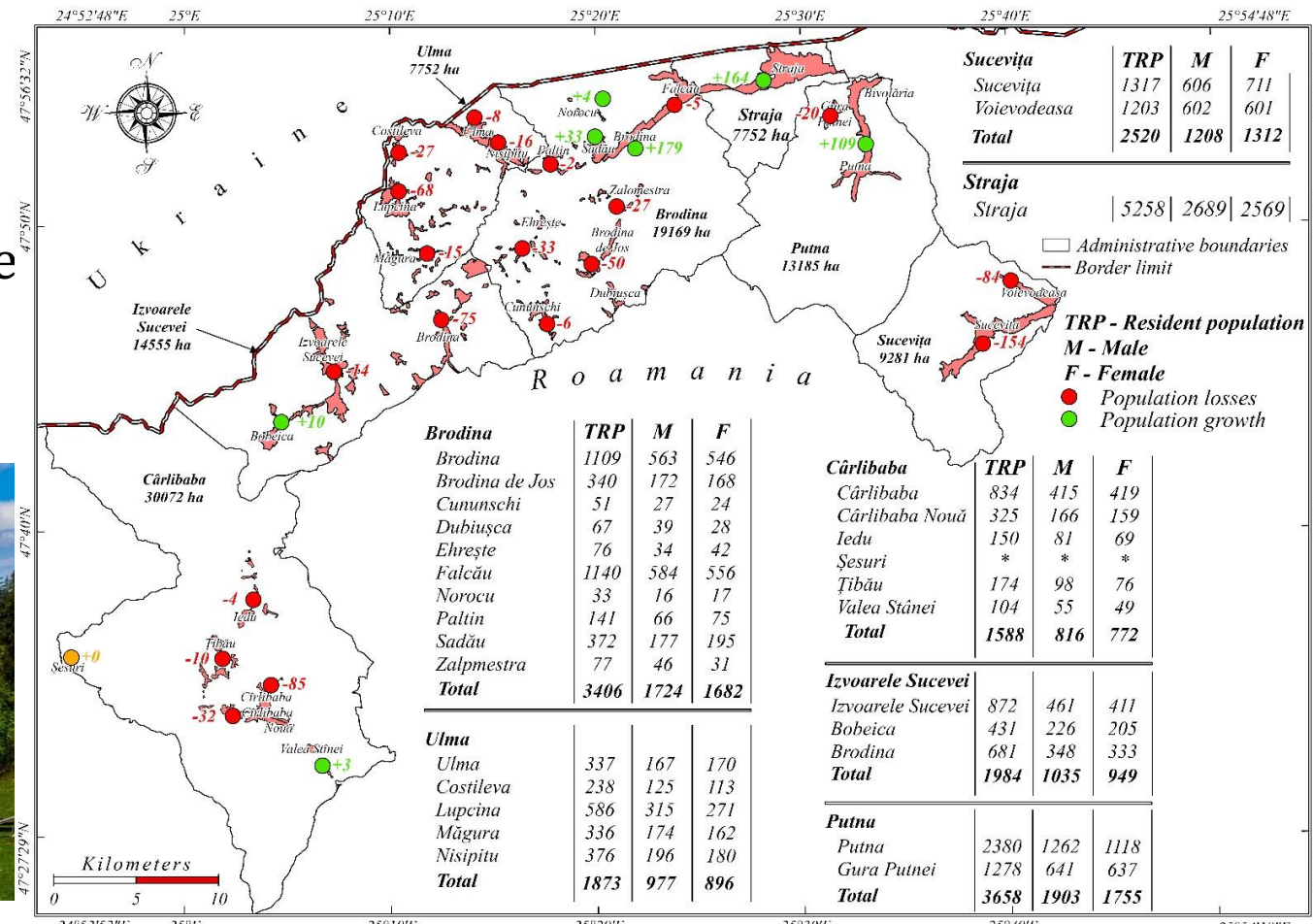Along with the **existing national parks located near the RO-UA border in Ukraine** - **Cheremosh National Nature Park** and - **National Nature Park "Vyzhnytskyi"**, Bucovina Natural Park will form the cross-border **Carpathian Peace Park**.

The RO – UA border in Suceava county (Bucovina)

Separates some of the **most deprived communities in Romania (and in the EU)**, due to spatial isolation and remoteness, the limitations imposed by the state border (still perceived as the border of the former USSR) and the lack of resources allotted for the development of this region, leading to massive **outbound migration and depopulation of mountain villages.**

Suceviţa	TRP	M	F
Suceviţa	1317	606	711
Voievodeasa	1203	602	601
Total	**2520**	**1208**	**1312**

Straja			
Straja	5258	2689	2569

☐ Administrative boundaries
— Border limit

TRP - Resident population
M - Male
F - Female
● Population losses
● Population growth

Brodina	TRP	M	F
Brodina	1109	563	546
Brodina de Jos	340	172	168
Cununschi	51	27	24
Dubiuşca	67	39	28
Ehreşte	76	34	42
Falcău	1140	584	556
Norocu	33	16	17
Paltin	141	66	75
Sadău	372	177	195
Zalpmestra	77	46	31
Total	**3406**	**1724**	**1682**

Cârlibaba	TRP	M	F
Cârlibaba	834	415	419
Cârlibaba Nouă	325	166	159
Iedu	150	81	69
Şesuri	*	*	*
Ţibău	174	98	76
Valea Stânei	104	55	49
Total	**1588**	**816**	**772**

Izvoarele Sucevei			
Izvoarele Sucevei	872	461	411
Bobeica	431	226	205
Brodina	681	348	333
Total	**1984**	**1035**	**949**

Ulma			
Ulma	337	167	170
Costileva	238	125	113
Lupcina	586	315	271
Măgura	336	174	162
Nisipitu	376	196	180
Total	**1873**	**977**	**896**

| Putna			
Putna	2380	1262	1118
Gura Putnei	1278	641	637
Total	**3658**	**1903**	**1755**

Kilometers
0   5   10

Historical and ethnic-linguistic context of Bucovina

During the time of the **Duchy of Bukovina (1775-1918)**, this region saw peaceful cohabitation between **multiple ethnic and/or linguistic groups** of people: **Romanians, Ukrainians/ Hutsuls/Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Lipovans/Russians, Slovakians Roma** etc.

However, the Soviet invasion of 1941 and WWII split Bucovina in two parts, with the northern half incorporated in the USSR and the southern half as a part of Romania, **dividing villages, communities and families for several decades.**

During the conflict and in its aftermath some ethnic and linguistic groups that were previously well represented **have nearly disappeared, such as the population of Jewish and German ethnicities, while others diminished severely.**
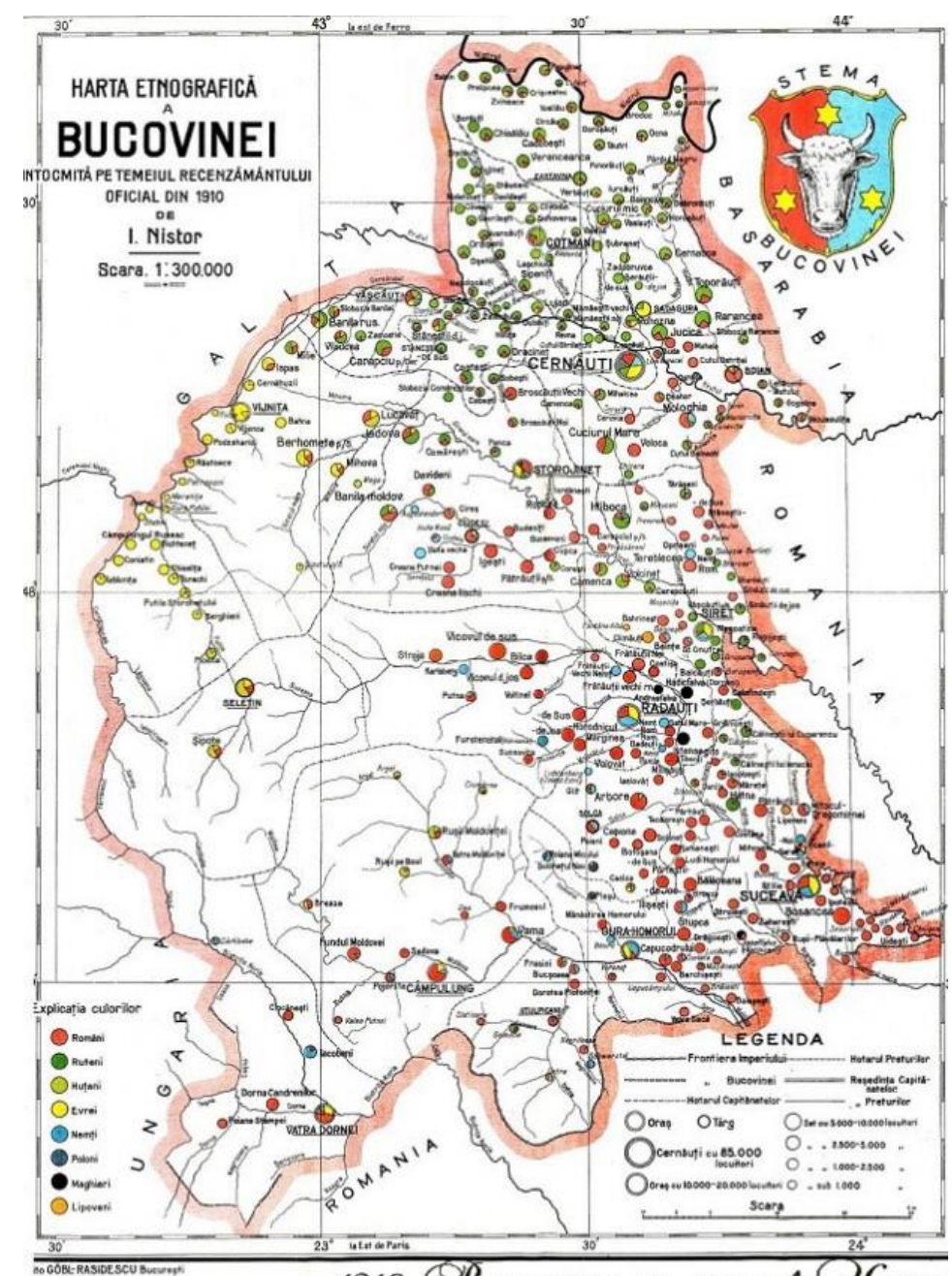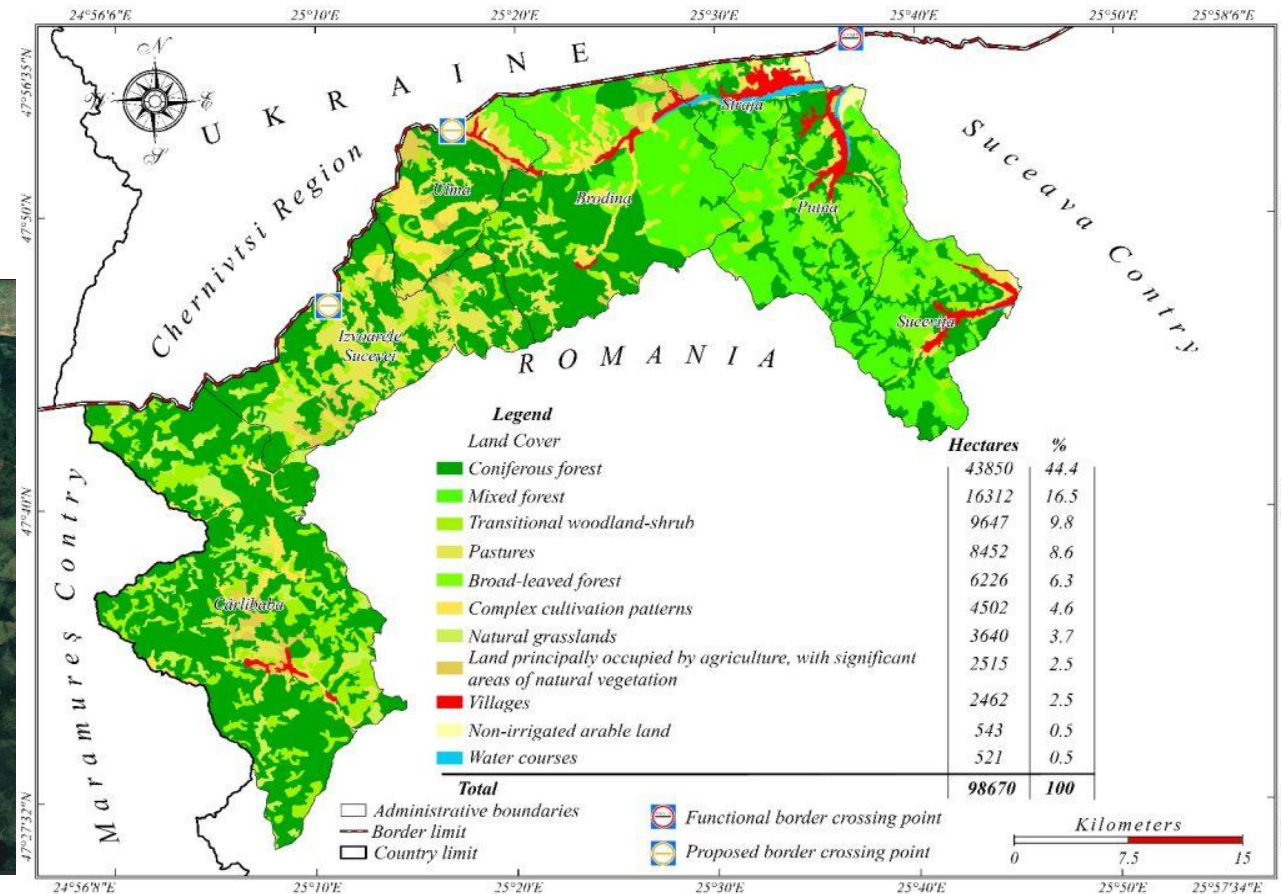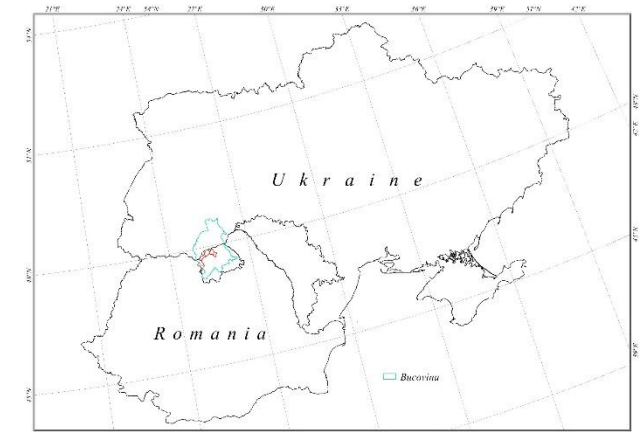

1918. Bucovina in ajunul Unirii
Basarabia-Bucovina.Info

Biogeographical potential of Bucovina

The region is covered with forest to a considerable extent and no major problems with illegal logging have been reported.

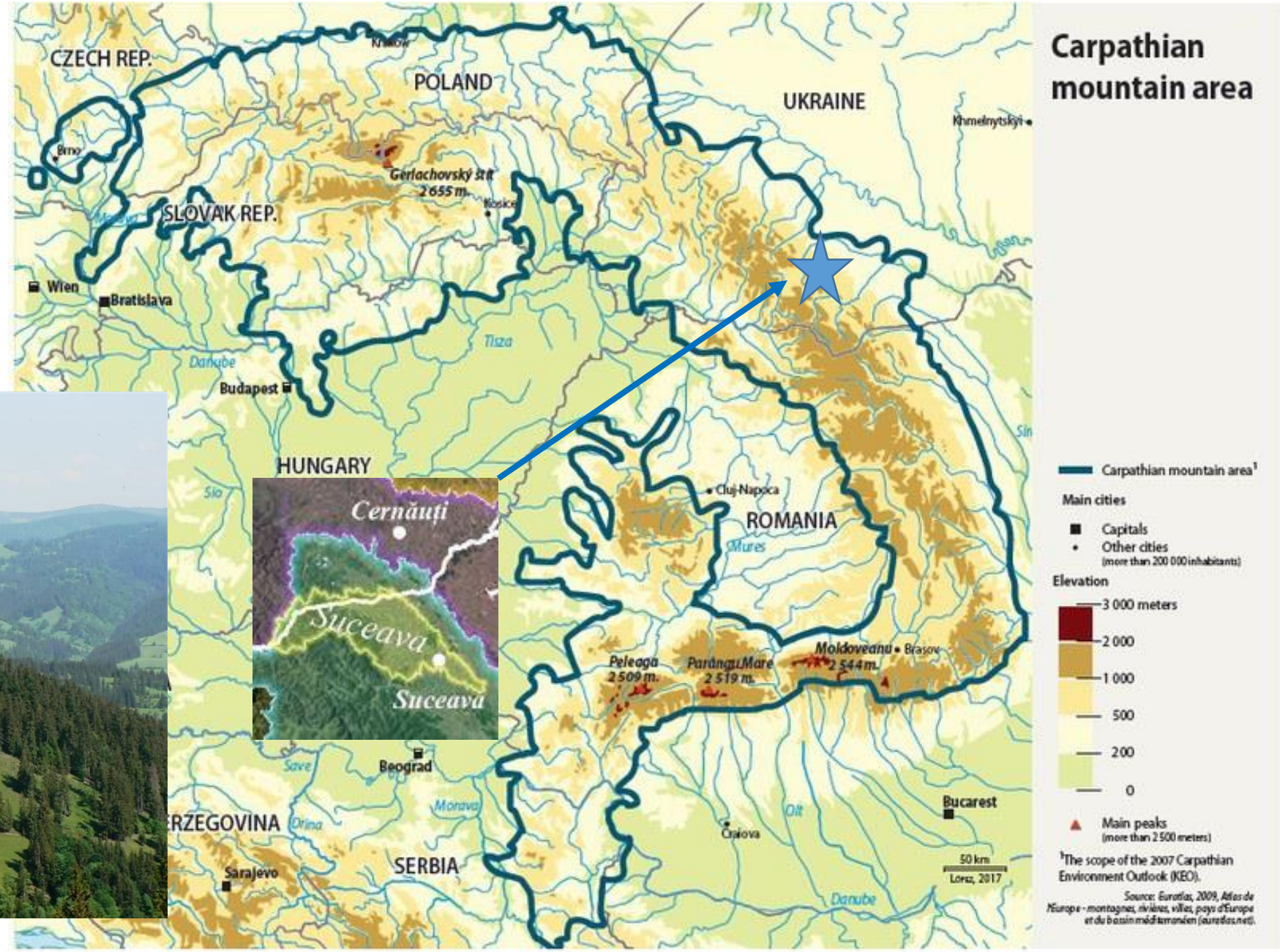Coniferous, mixed and broad-leaved forests cover **ca. 70% of the area**.

Forest management is much more effective compared to other areas along the border with Ukraine.


Legend		
Land Cover	**Hectares**	**%**
Coniferous forest	43850	44.4
Mixed forest	16312	16.5
Transitional woodland-shrub	9647	9.8
Pastures	8452	8.6
Broad-leaved forest	6226	6.3
Complex cultivation patterns	4502	4.6
Natural grasslands	3640	3.7
Land principally occupied by agriculture, with significant areas of natural vegetation	2515	2.5
Villages	2462	2.5
Non-irrigated arable land	543	0.5
Water courses	521	0.5
Total	**98670**	**100**

Administrative boundaries
Border limit
Country limit
Functional border crossing point
Proposed border crossing point

Geographical context

Location in the central area of the Carpathian Range.

Geographical context

Location near the geographical center of the European continent.

Carpathian mountain area
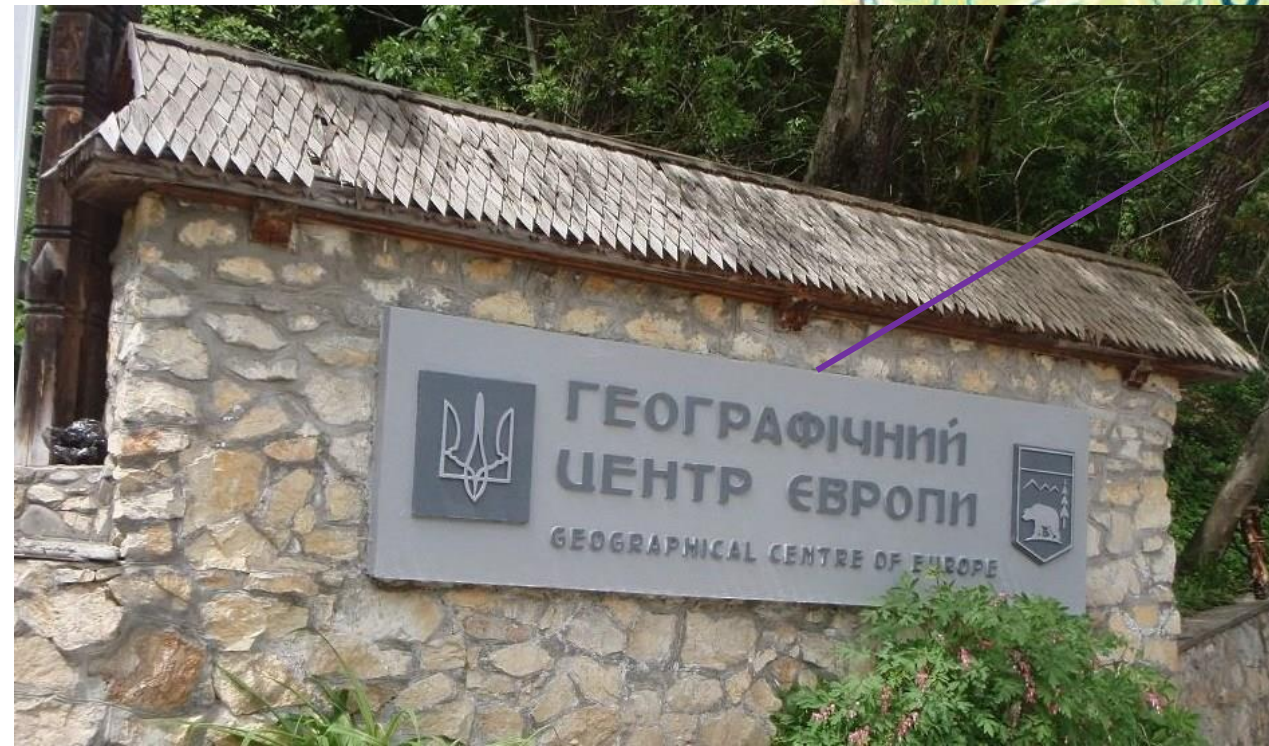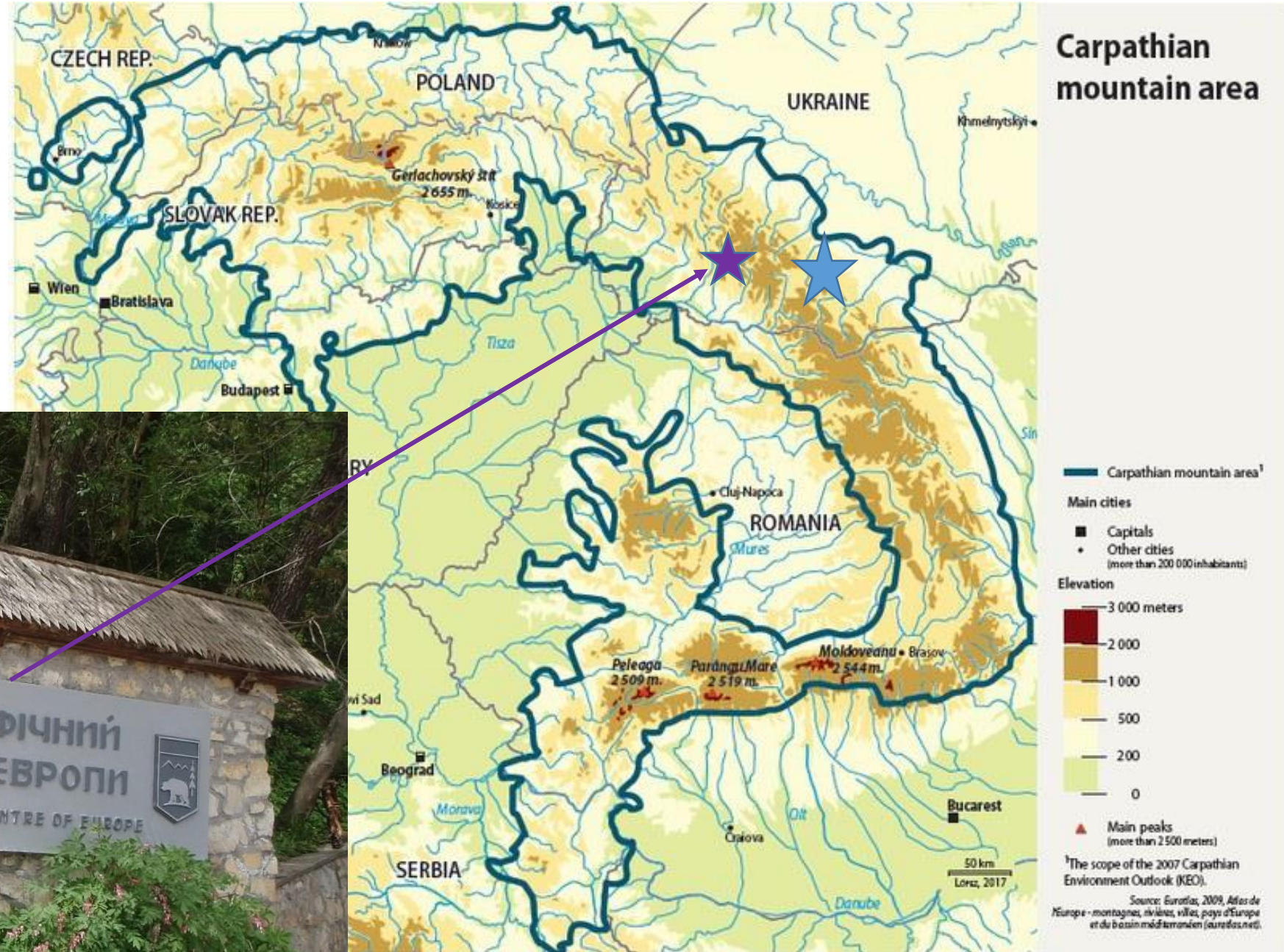
Hydrographical context

Romania and Ukraine share several major drainage basins:
- Tisa River
- Siret River (including **Suceava r.**)
- Prut River
- Danube River
- Danube Delta
- Black Sea

A history of environmental conflict between Romania and Ukraine

The management of **Bastroe Channel** sparked **tensions between Romania and Ukraine** (which share the Danube Delta) and drew criticism from the European Union and environmental groups, who believe it could harm this unique ecosystem, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1991.

A history of environmental conflict between Romania and Ukraine
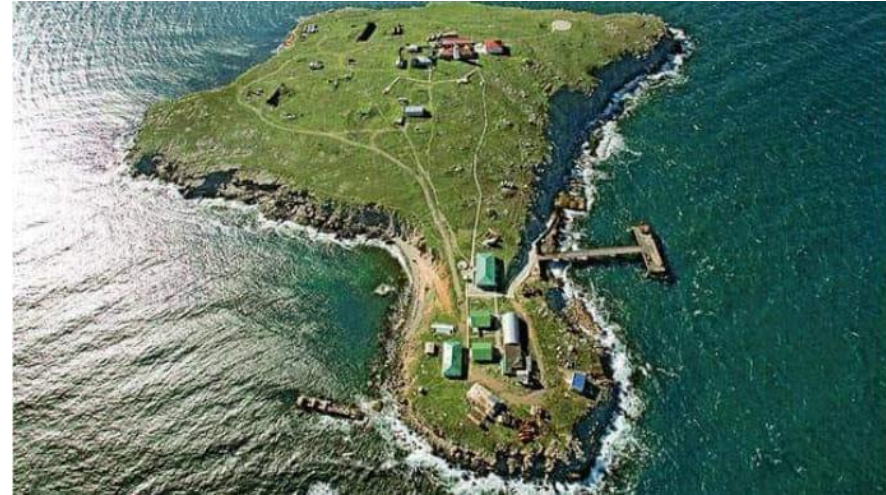
The **Snake Island dispute** was a conflict between the two countries about legitimate access to resources in the Black Sea.

Romania and Ukraine have solved a 40-year-old border dispute over a large petrol and gas-rich area of the Black Sea, at the International Court of Justice of the UN.
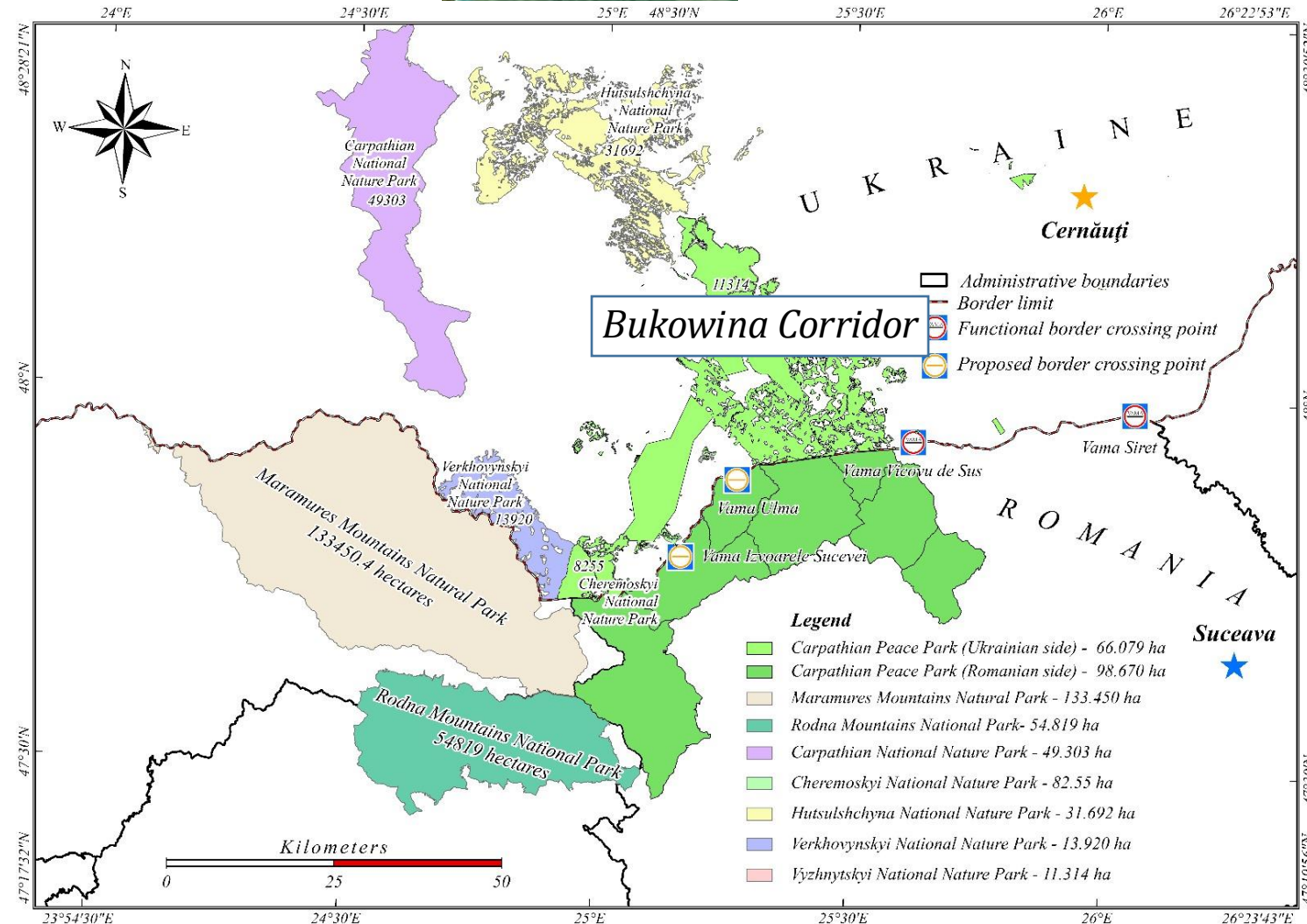
The Carpathian Peace Park

Bucovina Natural Park, the Romanian part of the **Carpathian Peace Park,** will include the **upper basin of the Suceava** river and will extend along the Eastern Carpathians over a distance of about 70 km, between Vicovu de Sus (Romania) to the east and Sarata (Ukraine) to the west.

On the **Romanian side,** we propose that Bucovina Natural Park will cover an area of ca. **100.000 ha,** including the communes of Sucevita, Putna, Straja, Brodina, Ulma, Izvoarele Sucevei and Cârlibaba.

On the **Ukrainian side** the **Carpathian Peace Park** will comprise two existing parks: **Nature Park "Vyzhnytskyi"** and Cheremosh National Nature Park, as well as the so-called **Bukowina Corridor,** which cover a total area of up to **70.000 ha,** and will connect these protected areas to **Bucovina Natural Park** in Romania.

Legend

- Carpathian Peace Park (Ukrainian side) - 66.079 ha
- Carpathian Peace Park (Romanian side) - 98.670 ha
- Maramures Mountains Natural Park - 133.450 ha
- Rodna Mountains National Park- 54.819 ha
- Carpathian National Nature Park - 49.303 ha
- Cheremoskyi National Nature Park - 82.55 ha
- Hutsulshchyna National Nature Park - 31.692 ha
- Verkhovynskyi National Nature Park - 13.920 ha
- Vyzhnytskyi National Nature Park - 11.314 ha

The Carpathian Peace Park

Will play an important role in:

i)   maintaining and improving **bilateral relations** between Ukraine and Romania;

ii)   creating a **climate of peace and cooperation for managing resources** as well as for controlling illegal activities in the cross-border area (e.g. cigarette smuggling and trafficking);

iii)   **preserving the natural heritage and biodiversity**, while increasing or maintaining the areas covered by forest ecosystems, which are critical actions in the context of current and upcoming climate and environmental changes;

iv)   **bringing out of isolation a territory** that once represented a model for successful regional development and for peaceful cohabitation between multiple ethnic groups;

v)   **protecting the unique architectural and cultural heritage of all ethnic communities**, and particularly of the **Hutsul population** living on both sides of the border.

The Carpathian Peace Park

In the period that will follow the end of the conflict in Ukraine (**the post-conflict European era**), the Carpathian Peace park initiative could be **a model of environmental diplomacy** that will lead to long-term peace and reconciliation and to better collaboration in protecting the environment and managing regional resources in a sustainable manner.

Other fields which could benefit from this initiative include **developing tourist infrastructure, economic partnerships, academic exchanges and joint scientific contributions.**

The cross-border Peace Park has the potential to set **an example of good practice for other countries in Eastern Europe that have gone through totalitarian regimes, political and military conflicts, and overall underdevelopment and environmental neglect.**

Most of all, the Carpathian Peace Park will be **a free space where respect is granted for people of all ethnicities and for biodiversity.**
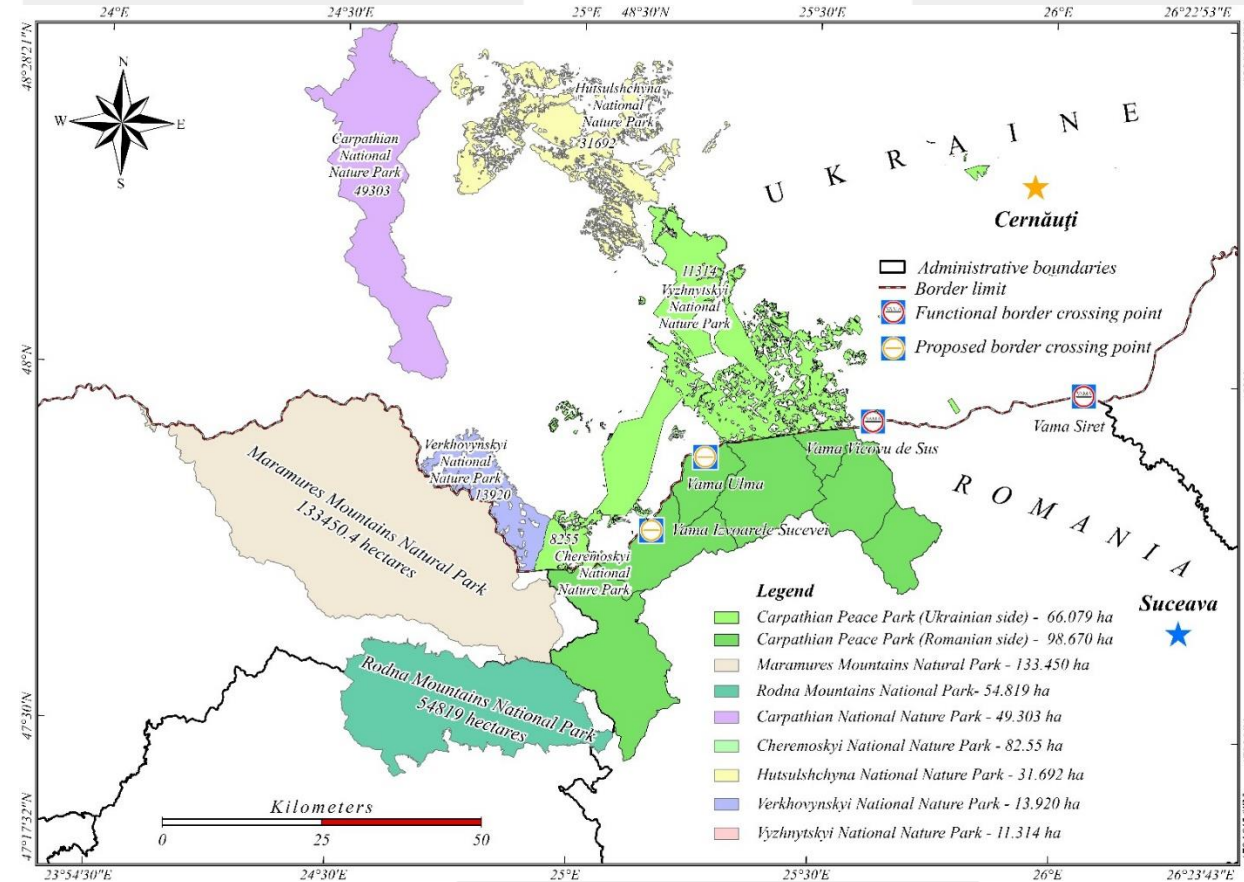
Thank you!

ROMANIA

UKRAINE

Statements supporting the **Carpathian Peace Park** proposal

Dr. William S. Keeton
Professor of Forest Ecology and Forestry
Director, UVM Carbon Dynamics Laboratory
Fellow, Gund Institute for Environment
Advisory Board, Science for the Carpathians
Fulbright Specialist (Ukraine), Fulbright Scholar (Austria)
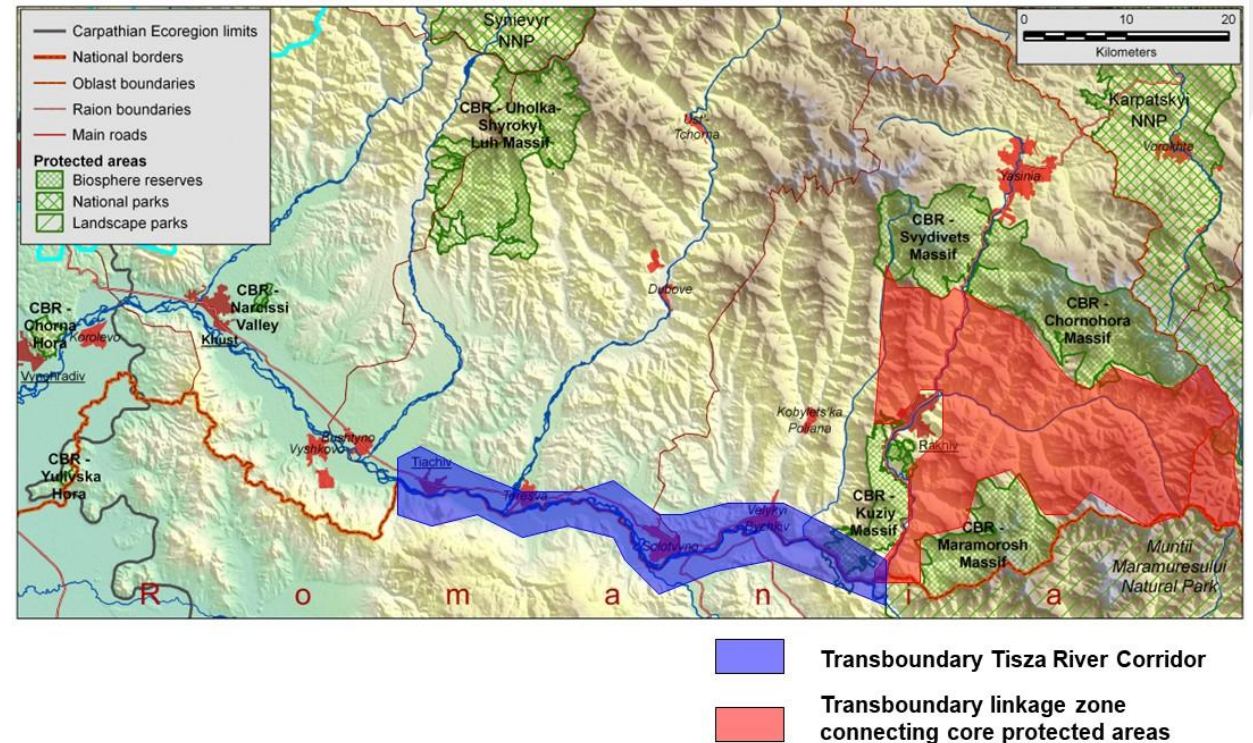
Map courtesy of Dr. Marcel Mindrescu
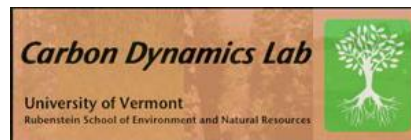
"The **Carpathian Peace Park** would build on a long history of successful trans-boundary protected areas in the Carpathians"

East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve

WWF workshop in 2015 exploring options for transboundary protected areas linking Ukraine and Romania

"The Peace Park proposal is consistent with recommendations of the recent Climate Risks and Adaptation Assessment for Carpathian Forests"

Carpathian Convention COP7

Assessment of climate change risks and adaptation options for Carpathian forest ecosystems and their services

UNEP Vienna Programme Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention: Sabine McCallum

University of Vermont: William S. Keeton

Photo: Sergey Ryzhkov / Wikimedia Commons

Carpathian Convention COP7
11-13 October 2023, Belgrade, Serbia

Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

У сусрет природи !

CARPATHIAN CONVENTION

UN environment programme

eurac research

University of Vermont

Key Recommendations:

- **Forest restoration and reforestation:**
  Diversifying landscapes to reduce disturbance risks

- **Protecting and conserving natural forests:**
  Establishing and effectively managing protected areas, national parks, and nature reserves

- **Enhancing forest landscape connectivity:**
  Allowing species to migrate and adapt to changing climate conditions

"Romanian old and primary forests are of continental and global importance

They are universally considered High Conservation Value Forests

Transboundary protected areas networks help sustain these systems"

Figure 2. Documented primary and old-growth forests in Europe according to the European Primary Forest Database (EPFD v2.0) of Sabatini et al. (2020a) and UNESCO's Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (UNEP-WCMC 2021). Note that the boundary of the polygons was highlighted for better readability.

Canary Islands

Madeira

Primary and old-growth forests
+ Point features
Polygon features

0   500
Kilometers

University of Vermont