

MEETING REPORT

15th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee 20-21 November 2024, ONLINE MEETING

SESSION I

Opening of the 15th CCIC meeting by the Secretariat and welcome remarks by the Serbian Presidency

The 15th 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. Ms. Aleksandra Došlić, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia and the representative of the Serbian Presidency, delivered short welcome remarks. Serbia requested the Secretariat to support the Serbian Presidency in chairing the meeting.

Adoption of the meeting agenda

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

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

The Secretariat gave a short overview of the status of ratifications, encouraging the Parties to take necessary actions to fulfil the ratification obligations. Slovakia informed the CCIC about how Article 12bis on climate change was nationally ratified in 2023 and will check with their Foreign Ministry about its deposit, while the Secretariat will coordinate with Ukraine as the Depository of the Carpathian Convention.

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 15th CCIC meeting. The general presentation focused on activities related to Decisions COP7/1, COP7/3 - COP7/8, COP7/14, and COP7/17.

As part of the Progress Report for Decision COP7/8, the following presentation was delivered:

- Mr. Jakub Csabay of Comenius University Bratislava presented updates and relevant information, on behalf of the Science for the Carpathians (S4C), regarding Forum Carpaticum 2025. The Forum is to be held 9-11 September 2025 in Bratislava, Slovakia. [See the full presentation.](#)

For each COP7 Decision, the relevant activities (based on the draft Progress Report) were presented, followed by the CCIC recommendations for that Decision, which were also prepared in advance of the meeting. [See the full presentation.](#)

SESSION II and III

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention: Progress reports (continued)

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 COP7 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), relevant updates from the Convention on Biological Diversity COP16 (also with regard to cooperation with CBD and the Alpine Convention), and cooperation on the LIFE Carpathian Strategic Nature Project idea for facilitating implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework. [See the full presentation.](#)

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

- Mr. Martin Duľa of Mendel University in Brno presented the activities and updates of the EU Interreg Central Europe LECA project as the LECA Project Lead Partner. Mr. Duľa presented on several key deliverables, including the successful first project review and submission of the second milestone. A notable output is the IT solution for stakeholder involvement—a mobile application for tracking large carnivore occurrences across the Carpathians, accessible on Google Play. Pilot actions are actively underway in four Carpathian regions and two reference areas, focusing on telemetry, camera trapping, preventive measures, and stakeholder engagement. Upcoming activities include finalizing and consulting on thematic guidance for monitoring, poaching investigation, and conflict prevention with the Carpathian and Alpine Conventions. Additionally, support will be provided for implementing the International Action Plan on large carnivores, informed by findings from pilot actions. [See the full presentation.](#)
- Mr. Urs Breitenmoser of IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, with the support of Mr. Jochen Krebs of the Lynx Institute, presented on the joint conservation strategy for the native lynx population in the Carpathian Mountains (Carpathian Lynx Strategy). Mr. Breitenmoser described the development of a Carpathian Lynx Strategy, which aims to strengthen transboundary conservation efforts and enhance collaboration under multiple international conventions. [See the full presentation.](#)
- Ms. Hildegard Meyer of the World Wildlife Fund - Central and Eastern Europe presented the activities and updates of the EU Horizon Europe NaturaConnect project. Ms. Meyer described how some key outcomes of the project including a review of governance and financing for protected areas and ecological corridors, the development of connectivity guidelines, and the launch of the NaturaConnect Learning Platform to enhance capacity for implementing the Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N). [See the full presentation.](#)

Report for Decision COP7/13 - Sustainable Forest Management

The WG Sustainable Forest Management Chair, Zlatica Csontos Šimoňáková of the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia, delivered a presentation on the main activities undertaken by the WG Sustainable Forest Management since the COP7 based on the draft Progress Report for Decision COP7/13. Notably, it featured preliminary plans for the next WG Forest meeting in Spring 2025 and how the climate change risk assessment for Carpathian Forest ecosystems, developed with input from Dr. William Keeton and endorsed by COP7, is being finalized for publication. [See the full presentation.](#)

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

- Mr. Cristian Remus Papp of WWF Romania presented the activities and updates of the EU Interreg Danube Region ForestConnect project, which seeks to enhance climate-smart forest connectivity for large carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. Mr. Papp described

how the project aims to develop transnational monitoring tools, GIS databases, and a digital twin model to support protected area managers and foster cross-border cooperation. [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 the Secretariat's collaborative efforts with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026) Coalition and projects and initiatives that the Secretariat is engaging in that link pastoralism with other Carpathian sectors and networks. [See the full presentation.](#)

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

- 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, presented on the inclusion of several Carpathian countries in the “Transhumance - the seasonal droving of livestock” file under the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity (ICH). [See the full presentation.](#)
- Ms. Zlatica Csontos Šimoňáková, Ministry of Environment of Slovakia, presented on Slovakia's proposal to inscribe a new file, “Safeguarding Carpathian Pastoralism” under the UNESCO ICH. [See the full presentation.](#)
- Ms. Tamara Malkova of Information Center “Green Dossier” presented the activities and updates of the Green and inclusive agricultural policy in Ukraine project, which focuses on legislative adaptation, stakeholder coordination, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Ms. Malkova highlighted the importance of information exchange, international cooperation, and preserving traditional farming practices to enhance tourism, local culture, and innovative agrarian policies in the Carpathians. [See the full presentation.](#)

During the discussion, several focal points and stakeholders referenced the importance of addressing the link between pastoralism and landscape and biodiversity conservation as well as education and awareness-raising, and its relevance for the Carpathian Convention's Programme of Work, as it intersects with multiple Working Group topics. Czech Republic provided an update that while they are struggling to identify transhumance on the national level, they are exploring the option of including pastoralism on a regional or national list first, and subsequently opening a discussion on possibly joining a broader pastoralism file. Additionally, Czech Republic and Slovakia suggested the possibility of resubmitting the “Carpathian Route Project - exploring, promoting and protecting the richness of the cultural and natural heritage of the Carpathian Region,” with one idea being to keep track of/link to the Carpathian countries' respective intangible heritage databases. The main objective of the Carpathian Route Project was to safeguard the common cultural heritage and foster the sustainable socio-economic development of the shared peripheral transboundary Carpathian Mountain region by sustainably using the cultural heritage assets perceived as drivers for local economies' development.

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 that was prepared in advance of the 15th CCIC meeting. The general presentation focused on activities related to Decision COP7/19, specifically on how the Secretariat has strengthened the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Expert Network by relaunching the network, creating digital resources, and enhancing collaboration with partners like UNESCO and UNECE. Future plans include expanding member participation, hosting the 3rd

Carpathian ESD Seminar in Serbia (2025), and integrating pastoralism education into ESD initiatives, with ongoing representation at international ESD forums. [See the full presentation.](#)

SESSION IV

Implementation of the Carpathian Convention: Progress Reports (continued)

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

The Secretariat, on behalf of the WG Sustainable Tourism Chair, delivered a presentation on the main activities undertaken by the WG Sustainable Tourism since the COP7 based on the draft Progress Report for Decisions COP7/2 and COP7/15. Notably, the Secretariat is supporting the Central Mountains project, contributing to the development of a Joint Strategy Report on participatory governance for community-led initiatives, and has begun consultations with Ukraine's State Agency for Tourism Development regarding its interest in joining the WG Tourism and becoming a Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform Center. [See the full presentation.](#)

As part of the Progress Report for Decisions COP7/2 and COP7/15, the following presentations were delivered:

- Ms. Anna Buk of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland presented the activities and updates on the Central Mountains project, including the Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians. [See the full presentation.](#)
- Ms. Mariana Oleskiv, State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine, delivered short remarks about sustainable tourism development in the Ukrainian Carpathians and interest in collaborating with the Carpathian Convention on these activities.

Establishing a Peace Park between Romania and Ukraine: Presentation

Mr. Gabriel Paun of Agent Green and Marcel Mindrescu of Geoconcept Association of Applied Geography delivered a presentation on the Carpathian Peace Park initiative, which aims to foster peace and cooperation between Romania and Ukraine by creating a cross-border protected area. This Peace Park will enhance bilateral relations, preserve biodiversity, protect cultural heritage, and serve as a model for post-conflict reconciliation, offering benefits in tourism, economic development, and scientific collaboration. [See the full presentation.](#)

The ImPossible Park Carpathians proposal to safeguard critical Carpathian forest areas: Presentation

Mr. Robert Cyglicki, Greenpeace Central & Eastern Europe / Poland, delivered a presentation on an initiative to define future park borders around high-biodiversity forests and connect areas using least-cost path analysis. The initiative aims to build a strong brand, secure EU funding for management plans, and establish an international fund to support land acquisition and compensation for private forest owners. [See the full presentation.](#)

Carpathian Convention COP8 updates and discussion

In accordance to *Decision COP7/23 - Date and venue of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention*, which states that the COP "Decides to accept the generous offer of the Government of Ukraine to convene the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP8) in the end of 2026, if this, however, is not possible, the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention shall apply, requests the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements, in consultation with the host Government and the COP Bureau."

Given the current war against Ukraine, discussions on the location of the COP8 and next Presidency of the Carpathian Convention are ongoing. The Secretariat is in close consultation with Ukraine and the COP

Bureau on these matters to explore feasible options. Czech Republic has reiterated its appreciation to the Government of Ukraine for their offer and asked that a decision be made by June 2025 to allow for proper time for preparations (as according to the Rules of Procedure, Czech Republic would be the next Party to take over the Presidency in case Ukraine was not in a position to host the COP or take over the Presidency role).

Any other business

Slovakia raised the possibility of revitalizing the WG Spatial Planning by organizing a WG meeting surrounding the Reykjavik Declaration and the European Landscape Convention. These two fora provide potential opportunities for providing Carpathian inputs and/or joining at the Carpathian level.

Conclusions and closure of the 15th CCIC meeting

Mr. Harald Egerer, on behalf of the Secretariat, thanked the meeting participants for active and constructive contribution to the meeting discussion, particularly to the negotiations of the CCIC recommendations. The Secretariat informed that the 3rd draft of the Progress Report and Recommendations for the 15th will be sent as soon as possible with further instructions for the next round of consultations. Mr. Egerer announced the meeting closed.