**RECOMMENDATIONS**

of the International Round-Table Meeting "Ecological and Legal, Scientific-Educational and Cross-Border Aspects of Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols"

(Rakhiv, Ukraine, October 3, 2024)

The Carpathian Mountains are a unique natural treasure of outstanding beauty and ecological value, an important center of biodiversity, a refuge for many species of plants and animals that are under threat of extinction, and the largest area of ​​primeval forests in Europe, an important component of the ecological, economic, cultural, recreational activities and, in general, an living space in the heart of Europe, common to many peoples and countries.

And therefore, it was expected that the Framework Convention on the Protection of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and its Protocols would become a turning point for the future development and conservation of the Carpathian nature core of Europe.

 Taking into account experience of the Alpine Convention, this important document should provide legal mechanisms for international cooperation of the Carpathian countries regarding the implementation of integrated approaches to land and water resource management, conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, territorial planning, ensuring sustainable development of agriculture and forestry, tourism and transport infrastructure, industry and energy, support and preservation of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the local population, preservation of traditional architecture and land use features, etc.

The international round-table meeting " Ecological and Legal, Scientific-Educational and Cross-Border Aspects of Implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols " was held in offline and online regimes, on October 3, 2024 in the city of Rakhiv, Zakarpattia region. The organizers of the event were the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, the Zakarpattia Regional Military Administration, the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of the NAS of Ukraine, the Kyiv University of Law of the NAS of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Research Institute of Mountain Forestry named after P. S. Pasternak. Its meeting was attended by scientists, representatives of government bodies, environmental protection institutions and the public from Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Germany, a total of more than 80 people, who presented and discussed 28 reports. The significance of the event was added by the participation of the head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Harald Egerer.

Based on the reports and discussions at the International Round-Table Meeting: 1. It was noted:

1.1. Low level of interest at the local, regional and sectoral levels in the timely and effective implementation of documents, adopted within the framework of the Carpathian Convention.

1.2. Lack of proper coordination of actions regarding the implementation of the tasks of the Carpathian Convention.

1.3. Positive experience of the State Forest Agency of Ukraine regarding compliance with the requirements of the “Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management” and the establishment of mandatory annual reporting by forestry enterprises and organizations of the Ukrainian Carpathians region

1.4. The activity and high professionalism of the administration of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and personally of Professor Fedir Hamor in organizing this important international scientific gathering.

2. It was recommended:

2.1. The Vienna Office of the Carpathian Convention should consider the possibility of:

- the formation and mandatory implementation in all countries of the Carpathian region of the Code of the Carpathian Convention;

- the development of a separate Protocol to the Carpathian Convention on the preservation of distinctive ethnic traditions and customs of the population in the countries of the Carpathian region;

- the preparation and implementation of measures to popularize and introduce into the curricula of educational institutions of the participating countries the study of the legal grounds of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols;

- the publication and distribution in the participating countries of electronic and printed periodical bulletins (newspapers) on the issues of knowledge dissemination and problems of the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols.

2.2. To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:

2.2.1.To intensify the work of responsible ministries, departments, regional state administrations and local self-government bodies of the Carpathian region on implementation of the Strategy of Implementation of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated January 16, 2007 No. 11-p).

2.2.2. To ensure improved public awareness and legal assessment of actions carried out within the framework of the Carpathian Convention.

2.2.3. To take additional measures to adopt the Law of Ukraine on the Emerald Network of Ukraine.

2.2.4. To initiate the development and approval of a new version of the State Program for the Development of the Region of Ukrainian Carpathians.

2.2.5. To instruct the relevant ministries and departments to develop a concept for spatial planning of the Carpathian region, taking into account the principles of sustainable development and requirements of the Carpathian Convention, which, in particular, should provide for:

*transborder transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure and services;*

*conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;*

*coordinated planning of urban and settlement border areas;*

*prevention of transboundary pollution impacts;*

*integrated land use planning, strategic ecological assessments and environmental impact assessments.*

2.2.6. To complete the formation of a legal regulatory framework for the implementation of compensation mechanisms and creation of an international register of damages designed to ensure compensation for environmental damage caused as a result of the military aggression of the russian federation against Ukraine.

2.2.7. To take measures to harmonize Ukrainian environmental legislation with international standards (to amend the laws of Ukraine ehich are valid, in particular in the field of land use and forest management).

2.2.8. In order to achieve the ecological integration of Ukraine into the European space and improve the opportunities for sustainable management of natural resources, to instruct the relevant departments to develop an action plan to intensify activities on implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its protocols, preserve the Emerald Network, and introduce the experience of the European Natura 2000 network.

 2.3. 2.3. To the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine:

2.3.1. To develop and introduce into the legal framework of Ukraine the categories of habitat (biotope) as a real unit for protection, with the necessary amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On the Red Book of Ukraine”.

2.3.2. To develop and submit for consideration, in accordance with the established procedure, amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Environmental Impact Assessment” in the context of specifying the requirements for assessing planned activities on biodiversity, in particular, taking into account specific data on the distribution of plant species and the state of their populations.

2.3.3. To develop a Program for the Development of the Nature Reserve Fund of the Carpathian Region, taking into account the challenges of martial law and current trends in the development of the national and regional economy.

2.3.4. To intensify the activities and state support of the national information and analytical platform on biodiversity UkrBIN (УкрБІН <https://www.ukrbin.com>) as the basis for comprehensive monitoring of biodiversity at the national and regional levels.

2.3.5. To take necessary measures to organize adequate and effective monitoring and assessment of the real efficiency of the economic activities of "green" energy and other companies.

2.3.6. To ensure the development of a detailed Cadastre of land resources of the Carpathian region based on the State Land Cadastre, with an assessment of their ecological condition.

2.3.7. To improve the general condition and viability of forests and increase the level of forestry management, forest management work should be carried out based on European practices using the plot method.

2.3.8. To make changes and supplements to the Methodology for determining the territories of primeval (virgin) forests, quasi-primeval forests and natural forests.

2.3.9. To implement a joint, agreed upon by the Parties to the Convention, Forest Monitoring Program in the Carpathians with the maintenance of an appropriate database and to develop practical mechanisms for its implementation.

2.3.10. Complete the process of creating a transboundary Ukrainian-Romanian biosphere reserve in the Maramures Mountains.

2.3.11. Together with the State Forest Agency and the State Enterprise "Forests of Ukraine", in accordance with Article 38 of the Law of Ukraine "On Environmental Protection", which guarantees citizens the right to general use of natural resources to meet their vital needs, to develop legal mechanisms to provide residents of mountain settlements with firewood and construction timber (especially those settlements, located in the zone of protected areas), as a matter of priority, at socially affordable prices.

2.3.12. Ensure the establishment of reporting on the implementation of the tasks of the Carpathian Convention.

2.3.13. To implement organizational and technical measures during 2025 regarding the establishment of a regional coordination committee, on the basis of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, for the implementation of the provisions of the Carpathian Convention.

2.4. To the Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian Railways Company) and the Transcarpathian Regional Military Administration, to deepen cross-border cooperation:

2.4.1. In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated November 21, 2018 No. 892-r “Some issues of conservation of the Ukrainian part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe” and the sustainable development of adjacent territories”, to take measures to restore the destroyed road crossing over the Tysa River and create the necessary border infrastructure on the Ukrainian-Romanian border in the village of Dilove, Rakhiv district, Transcarpathian region;

2.4.2. To ensure the implementation of the Ukrzaliznytsia Project to restore train traffic via Rakhiv to Romania and organize train traffic on the routes Kyiv–Rakhiv–Szigeti Marmaţiei, Chernivtsi–Ivano-Frankivsk–Rakhiv–Szigeti Marmaţiei–Teresva–Uzhhorod. To reach this it is necessary to urgently organize negotiations with the Romanian side regarding the repair of a 2.5 km section of the railway, which is in a neglected state on the distance Câmpulung la Tisa – Teresva.