

## The Carpathians in a Nutshell

*The Carpathians are not just one of Europe's largest mountain ranges, a unique natural treasure of great beauty and ecological value, and home of the headwaters of major rivers.*

*They also constitute a major ecological, economic, cultural, recreational and living environment in the heart of Europe, shared by numerous peoples and countries.*

*The Carpathians are an important reservoir for biodiversity, and Europe's last refuge for large mammals- brown bear, wolf, and lynx, home to populations of European bison, moose, wildcat, chamois, Alpine marmot, golden eagle, eagle owl, capercaillie, black grouse, plus many unique insect species.*

*Transition to a market economy, increasing and integrating role of the civil society, and becoming part of western Europe imply profound changes. The Carpathians are shared by seven Central and Eastern European Countries, four of which have already joined the European Union. This increases the possibilities of sustainable development based on the rich natural, environmental, cultural and human resources of the region, and for preserving its natural and cultural heritage for future generations. To see this become a reality, the Carpathian Convention provides a cooperative framework for every stakeholder contribute to and benefit from these developments.*



For further information please contact us:

Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention  
United Nations Environment Programme - Vienna  
Vienna International Centre - Room JOE 25  
P.O. Box 500  
1400 Vienna, Austria  
Telephone: (+43 1) 26060-4545  
Telefax: (+43 1) 26060-7-4545  
harald.egerer@unvienna.org

Regional Office for Europe  
United Nations Environment Programme - Geneva  
11-13, ch. des Anémones  
1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland  
Telephone: (+41 22) 917 82 79  
Telefax: (+41 22) 917 80 24  
frits.schlingemann@unep.ch

The United Nations  
Environment Programme  
Vienna

Interim Secretariat  
of the  
Carpathian Convention



UNEP Vienna - ISCC :

- provides service to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians
- is a focal point for the environmental cooperation with Central and South-Eastern European countries
- acts as liaison between UNEP and organizations based in the region.

## The Interim Secretariat

The UNEP Vienna Office - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna - ISCC) supports the implementation of the Carpathian Convention by:

- promoting **ratification** and facilitating **cooperation** between the signatory states as well as other relevant international bodies and conventions.
- encouraging and supporting **research, communication** and **information exchange** between the partners.
- coordinating the preparation and implementation of the **work programme** under the Convention.
- preparing relevant **documentation** and supporting further **institutional development**.

UNEP Vienna - ISCC furthermore acts as **liaison** with the Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, the International Partnership for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions, the Danube Protection Convention.

UNEP Vienna - ISCC also acts as **UNEP's focal point for cooperation** between/with countries of South Eastern Europe and the Danube/Carpathian region, the Regional Environment Centre in Szentendre, Hungary (REC) and other organizations and institutions based in Vienna.

UNEP Vienna - other support from, inter alia, governments of Carpa- thian countries, Austria, Italy and Switzerland.



## The Convention provides a framework of cooperation

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians is an international agreement of the seven Central and Eastern European States: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, the Slovak Republic, and Ukraine. It provides a framework of cooperation for:

- **An integrated approach to land resources management** by developing and implementing appropriate tools, such as integrated management plans.

**The conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity** by protecting species of flora and fauna which are representative of the Carpathians through the maintenance of their habitats and a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas.

**Spatial planning** through developing and implementing transboundary and/or regional policies and programmes.

**Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management** through promoting wise management of surface and groundwater resources; by providing adequate supply of good quality water for sustainable, balanced use; by protecting wetlands and wetland ecosystems, by developing and applying a coordinated system of early warning for transboundary impacts of flooding and accidental water pollution.

**Sustainable agriculture and forestry** through environmentally sound management of land traditionally cultivated in a sustainable manner, taking into account the specific conditions of mountains as less favored areas; by promoting environmental programmes and policies compatible with internationally-agreed principles of sustainable forest management.

**Sustainable transport and infrastructure** by making the Carpathians accessible while taking into account the specificities of the mountain environment and ensuring the protection of sensitive areas, and minimizing harmful effects on human health, landscapes, plants, animals and their habitats.

**Sustainable tourism** through transboundary cooperation in order to facilitate tourism, based on the exceptional nature, landscapes and cultural heritage.

**Sustainable industrial and energy practises** by introducing environmentally-sound production technologies and reducing adverse impacts of mineral exploitation as well as ensuring adequate environmental surveillance of mining practices.

**The preservation of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge** by protecting the traditional architecture and land-use patterns, local breeds of domestic animals, local crafts and by marketing of local goods.

**Enhanced environmental assessment/information systems, monitoring and early warning** through cooperative risk assessments and environmental impact assessments, in order to avoid harmful transboundary effects.

**Enhanced awareness-raising, education and public participation** by improving access of the public to information on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians.



## The history

The Convention constitutes the result of the efforts of Governments and a number of international and national, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In the year 2001, the United Nations Environment Programme - Regional Office for Europe (UNEP ROE) was requested by the Government of Ukraine to service a regional cooperation process aiming at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians.

UNEP-ROE promoted an Alpine-Carpathian Partnership and serviced the negotiations of the Carpathian Convention. In the United Nations International Year of the Mountains 2002, the Ministry of the Environment and Territory of Italy which at that time held the function of the Presidency of the Alpine Convention initiated and launched the Alpine-Carpathian partnership. Italy, in cooperation with the European Academy (EURAC) in Bolzano, sponsored and supported the first as well as the fifth, final and concluding negotiation meetings. Moreover, the process was supported by Austria, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, and the WWF International.

The Carpathian Convention was adopted at the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Kyiv, Ukraine, 2003, and consequently signed by seven Carpathian countries. UNEP ROE was requested to service the Interim Secretariat of the Convention.

### Did you know ...

*1/3 of all European plant species are found in the Carpathians.*