

International Conference

Protected Areas - Cornerstones of Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians and Beyond

28-30 September 2021

Project co-funded by European Funds (ERDF, IPA)

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AGENDA

During the entire conference, a **poster exhibition** will be set up in the hotel lobby. You are welcome to bring or send in your poster on your work related to ecological corridors, large carnivores and/or protected areas.

DAY 1 (28th September)

13:00-15:00 **Arrival, Registration & Welcome Coffee**

Moderator of the day: **Péter OLAJOS** (Delegate in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC))

15:00-16:00

Welcome session

- Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture (**Bertalan BALCZÓ**, Deputy State Secretariat for Nature Protection, Ministry of Agriculture Deputy State Secretary)
- Carpathian Convention (**Harald EGERER**, UNEP Vienna Programme Office, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention)
- Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Steering Committee (**Mircea VERGHELET**, Chair)
- WWF Central and Eastern Europe (**Irene LUCIUS**, WWF Central and Eastern Europe)

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16:30-18:00

Keynote speeches & moderated discussion

- Ecological Connectivity, the Role of Parks as Core Areas and Areas between these, Overview in Europe Including Policy
Nicola NOTARO, European Commission DG ENVIRONMENT, pre-recorded message
- The Wildlife Connect Initiative
Wendy ELLIOT, WWF International, online presentation
- IUCN Guidelines on Connectivity Conservation
Gary TABOR, Centre for Large Landscape Conservation/ IUCN Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, online presentation
- Ecological Corridors in the Danube Region, in the Context of Interrelated Sectors
Miklós MARTON, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Development and Strategy, Steering Group Member of EU Danube Region Strategy, Priority Area 6 (EUSDR PA6), Biodiversity, Landscapes and Quality of Air and Soils

18:00 – 18:15 The **ConnectGREEN Youth Video Contest Award Ceremony** & launch of the **“Voices of the Youth” video** presented by WWF Central and Eastern Europe

18:15 – 19:15 **Press Conference, Press Corner**

19:00 – 21:00 **Gala Dinner** hosted by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture.

DAY 2 (29th September)

8:30-11:00 **Parallel Workshops 1-2**

1. Identification of Ecological Corridors – the ConnectGREEN Methodology

Moderation: **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, WWF Romania

In this workshop, you will hear about the ConnectGREEN “Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large

Carnivores as Umbrella Species”, related project activities and further developments followed by a moderated discussion.

- Short introduction of the topic – **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, WWF-RO
- The Methodology – presentation by **Zuzana OKANIKOVÁ**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic & **Martin STRNAD** and **Václav Hlaváč**, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
- The ConnectGREEN Ecological Network - from Habitat Suitability Models to Definition of Core Areas & Corridors – presentation by **Kristyna VLKOVÁ & Dušan ROMPORTL**, Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening, Czech Republic
- From Gaps to Success Stories Related to Ecological Connectivity Identification and Protection, Results of the ConnectGREEN Project – presentation by **Filepné Dr. KOVÁCS Krisztina**, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (co-author Dr. István VALÁNSZKI, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences)
- Follow up Project SaveGREEN: Modelling of Ecological Corridors & GIS Application for Monitoring Structural and Functional Connectivity – presentation by **Christoph PLUTZAR**, Environment Agency Austria
- Guidelines on Reducing Conflicts in Corridor Areas – presentation by **Milan HUSÀR**, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava - SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU
- Closing Session, Main Messages - **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, WWF-RO

2. Integration of Ecological Corridors into Spatial Planning – How to Overcome Conflicts between Connectivity Conservation and Spatial Planning (tools and best practice)

Moderation: **Dr. VALÁNSZKI István**, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

In this workshop, you will learn about the technical tools that have been developed during the implementation of ConnectGREEN. These comprise the Guidelines on reducing conflicts in corridor areas, the internet based platform ‘Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System’ (CCIBIS) including the Decision Support Tool for economic project development, the e-learning platform for students and professionals alike with units on ecological connectivity and spatial planning, and best practice examples. The workshop will include a lively moderated discussion.

- Short Introduction of the Topic – **Dr. VALÁNSZKI István**

- The Hungarian Spatial Planning System, Green Infrastructure & Ecological Service & Landscape Character Mapping (Strategic Assessments supporting the long-term conservation of natural values of community interest as well as the national implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 - KEHOP-4.3.0-VEKOP-15-2016-00001)
 - **Dr. TÖRÖK Katalin**, Ökológiai Kutatóközpont
 - **SCHNELLER Krisztián**, Lechner Tudásközpont
 - **Dr. KOLLÁNYI László**, MATE
- Integration of the ConnectGREEN Results to Support Ecological Connectivity in Spatial Planning Documents in Slovakia - **Rastislav STANÍK**, Slovak Environment Agency
- Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS) including the Decision Support Tool and e-learning platform presentation by **Vladimír ONDREJČKA**, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava - SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU (co-authors: Milan HUSÀR, SPECTRA & Gabriella NAGY, CEEweb, Hungary)
- Closing Session, Main Messages - **Dr. VALÁNSZKI István**

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30-13:00 **Parallel Workshops 3-4**

3. Restoration of natural habitat connectivity: different EU projects' approaches to combine synergies and potential cooperation opportunities.

Moderation: **Isidoro DE BORTOLI** (Eurac Research, Italy)

During the workshop, we will discuss important achievements of specific European projects developed in different geographical areas but with the same aim. You will have the chance to hear about the experiences of the projects “D2C - Dare to connect”, “AlpBioNet2030”, “Dinalpconnect”, and “Centralparks”, in the light of the ConnectGREEN main results. The workshop will focus on potential synergies and connections, also analysing promising gaps and divergences, and ways to address them through strong transnational cooperation on the topic of connectivity.

Contributions:

- Interreg Danube Transnational Project “Dare 2 Connect”, **Stefan FUCHS**, University of Vienna, Austria
- Interreg Adriatic-Ionian Project DinAlpConnect: **Irena BERTONCELJ**, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
- Interreg Central Europe Project Centralparks: **Ján KADLEČÍK**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
- Interreg Alpine Space “AlpBioNET”: **Filippo FAVILLI**, Eurac Research, Italy
- EU SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme Project “BioREGIO – Carpathians”: **Mircea VERGHELEȚ**, Piatra Craiului National Park Administration, Romania

4. Mainstreaming Ecological Connectivity into Policy – National Roadmaps & Recommendations for the Improvement of the EIA/SEA Directive

Moderation: **Dr. NAGY Gabriella**, CEEweb for Biodiversity, Hungary

The workshop aims at providing input to the feasibility check of the official Fitness Check of EIA Directive from different countries’ perspectives, compiling recommendations towards decision makers mainstreaming ecological connectivity into EIA processes using the setting of a world café.

- Short introduction of the topic – **Dr. NAGY Gabriella**
- National roadmaps
 - Serbia: **Dr. Marina NENKOVIĆ-RIZNIĆ**, Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia
 - Slovakia: **Rastislav STANÍK**, Slovak Environment Agency
 - Romania: **Oana POPESCU**, National Institute for Research and Development in Constructions, Urban Planning und Sustainable Spatial Development, Romania
 - Hungary: **Dr. WEIPERTH András**, Hungarian University for Agriculture and Life Sciences
- ConnectGREEN’s Engagement in the EU EIA Feasibility Check with a Focus on Ecological Corridors - **Dr. MÉSZÁROS Szilvia**, ÖKO Zrt.
- Discussion of Future Activities (project ideas)
- Closing Session, Main Messages – **Dr. NAGY Gabriella**

13:00-14:00 **Buffet lunch**

14:00-18:30 **Carpathian Protected Areas Conference “A New Age for the Carpathian Protected Areas Network”**

co-organized by the Centralparks Project and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

Moderation: **Mircea VERGHELEȚ**, Chair of the CNPA Steering Committee

The event, launched by the Centralparks Project Partnership in strong synergy with the ConnectGREEN and the SaveGREEN projects and with fundamental support of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, will focus on the revitalization process of the CNPA network.

Protected area representatives from each Carpathian country will share with the audience the best practices in protected area management and networking in their countries, with a particular focus on achievements and experience gathered in their respective parts of the Carpathian region. The CNPA Steering Committee members will be invited to evaluate the progress of the work dedicated to the network achieved so far. The event will offer a platform for discussions in order to foster collaboration and future cooperation among the managers of the Carpathian protected areas.

Agenda of the CPA Conference:

SESSION I 14:00 -16:30

1. Short welcome – **Harald EGERER**, UNEP Vienna Programme Office - Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, and **Mircea VERGHELEȚ**, Chair of the CNPA Steering Committee
2. Presentation of the Centralparks Project Results relevant for relevant for the Carpathian Protected Areas (**Mircea VERGHELEȚ** – CNPA Steering Committee and **Hanna Öllös** – European Wilderness Society)
3. Short Interventions by the CNPA Steering Committee Members:
 - I. General overview of the state of well-being of the Carpathian Protected Areas (PAs) in your country;
 - II. Possibility of synergies with the surrounding territories, outside PAs;
 - III. Overview of PAs economic status with a view to the implementation of future strategies. (e.g. elaborated during the Centralparks Project);

- IV. Description of the major risks threatening these areas in your Country;
- V. Your opinion on a possible dialogue between PAs and external communities present in your region

Contributors:

- Martin STRNAD**, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
- Gyula TAR**, Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary
- Gabriela SZUBA**, Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland
- Mircea VERGHELEȚ**, Piatra Craiului National Park Administration
- Nenad RADAKOVIĆ**, Djerdap National Park, **Ivan SVETOZAREVIĆ**, Manifesto NGO
- Ján KADLEČÍK**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
- Eduard ARUSTAMIANT**, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine

4. Presentations by the Representatives of the PAs from the Carpathian Countries on best practices of protected areas management and networking:
 - I. Best practices of a protected area management (e.g. on zonation, monitoring, public awareness, education, forest management, wildlife management, communities, etc.)
 - II. Experiences of networking of protected areas in your country (especially in the Carpathian part of your country) - as an introduction to the topic of networking of PAs on a Carpathian scale.

Contributors:

- Marie PETRU**, Education and Information Centre of the White Carpathinas
- Zoltán BIHARI**, Aggteleki National Park
- Alin MOS**, Apuseni Nature Park
- Ján KADLEČÍK, Peter PUCHALA, Martina LUKANOVA**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
- Mykola TARASYUK**, Carpathian Biosphere Reserve
- Mykola DERBAK, Fedir MATIICHYN**, National Nature Park “Synevyr”
- Taras YAMELYNETS**, WWF Ukraine

16:30 – 17:00 **Coffee Break**

SESSION II 17:00 - 18:30

5. Presentation of the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tool – **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, WWF Romania
6. Presentation of the CNPA status quo - Need for revisiting the strategic CNPA documents and discussing the way forward of the CNPA – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
7. Interactive exercise – questions to the Conference participants about the future activities of relevant for the Carpathian PAs (see questions below)
8. Discussion
9. Recommendations and next steps
10. Wrap up of the Protected Area Conference

Session II of the Conference shall allow for undertaking open discussion on progress made by the CNPA in terms of implementing the strategic objectives of the network. In this regard, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention would like to present a brief general overview of the state of implementation of the CNPA Medium Term Strategy and the CNPA Medium Term Work Plan 2013 – 2017, which shall encourage updating of the above documents for strengthening cooperation and the future collaborative activities between the protected areas in the Carpathian region. Furthermore, the Secretariat will advise on updating the Terms of Reference of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, which shall address the issue of sound and effective governance of the CNPA.

Through an interactive tool, the Secretariat will pose open questions to the participants of the CPA conference regarding:

Which activity do you perceive as the most urgent for:

- I. The institutional development and operational capacity building of the CNPA
- II. Enhancing communication between the member areas of this PA network
- III. Undertaking at the pan-Carpathian scale under a common project, co-funded from external (e.g. EU) sources

- IV. Enhancing the exchange of information, experience, skills, knowledge and data between the CNPA member areas (e.g. through establishing common thematic working groups)
- V. Promoting PAs as model areas for sustainable local development and transboundary cooperation

Based on the results of the online questionnaire, the Secretariat will facilitate further discussion and shall propose recommendations to be considered by the CNPA Steering Committee.

The discussions of the CPA Conference should lead to a development of a project proposal supporting the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas in its endeavours.

14:00 - 16:30 **Connectivity Academy – Part I** (in parallel to the CPA Conference):

For the participants not attending the CPA Conference, a **coffee corner for networking** will be offered displaying the videos and posters on project results combined with the **Connectivity Academy** aiming at a closer cooperation of the Central-Eastern European Countries, with various topics on capacity building, policy and communication.

Workshops and discussions – moderated by **Csaba MEZEI**, CEEweb

- Protected Area Communication - LIFE Project "Piloting Natura 2000 Communication in Estonia" a Best Practice – **Silvia LOTMAN**, Estonia
- “Public Health Aspects of Biodiversity in the CEE Region” – **Anna SÁNDOR**, CEEweb for Biodiversity, Hungary
- Transfer ConnectGREEN and SaveGREEN Results Outside the Projects' Area in the Central and Eastern European Region – **Taras YAMELYNETS**, Expert, Ukraine
- Project Building Activity for a Common Approach in DEAR and IVF Fund Calls – **Thor MORANTE**, CEEweb for Biodiversity

19:00 **Dinner**

DAY 3 (30th September)

8:30-10:30 **Connectivity Academy – Part II**

Carpathian Wetland Initiative Workshop - **Ján KADLEČÍK**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

9:00-9:40 **Workshops Wrap-up**

Moderator of the day: **Csaba MEZEI**, CEEweb for Biodiversity

Workshop rapporteurs report to the plenum the main content of their discussions.

9:40-11:15 **ConnectGREEN Final Conference**

- Overall presentation of results & outputs including a moderated Q&A session – **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, Lead Partner WWF-RO
- Panel Discussion on Lessons Learnt, Experiences Made, Recommendations for Follow-up Activities and Policy Work
 - Panellists
 - Work Package 3 “Knowledge source base”: **Zuzana OKANIKOVÁ**, State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
 - Work Package 4 “Innovative pilot sites”: **Martin STRNAD**, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
 - Work Package 5 “Policy and networks”: **Dr. Gabriella NAGY**, CEEweb for Biodiversity, Hungary
 - Work Package 6 “Enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation at regional Carpathian level and beyond”: **Dr. Marina NENKOVIĆ-RIZNIĆ**, Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning, Serbia, online
 - Work Package “Communication”: **Hildegard MEYER**, WWF Central and Eastern Europe, Austria
 - Work Package “Management” (harmonisation across work packages and maximisation of results): **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, WWF Romania
- Presentation of Conference Declaration addressing higher level stakeholders & agreement with participants – **Csaba MEZEI & Cristian-Remus PAPP**

11:15-11:30

Official Closing of the Conference by **Cristian-Remus PAPP**, Project Coordinator, WWF Romania & **Harald EGERER**, UNEP Vienna Office, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

11:15-11:30 **Coffee Break & Preparation for “Walkshops”**

11:30-19:00 **“Walk shops” within SaveGREEN project – press field visit**

Walk shop 1 “River adventure on River Ipoly”

Description: Canoeing tour on the Ipoly River, discussing the topic of blue and green infrastructure impact on large carnivores’ moving habit, rivers are barriers or corridors, how to deal with them in ecological corridor system planning

Precondition: you should be able to swim.

Dress code: light clothes, swimsuit

Equipment: towel, waterproof small bag for personal belongings, sun protection

Difficulty: medium

Walk shop 1 only takes place in appropriate weather conditions.

Walk shop 2 “Walking adventure to Pilis Mountain”

Description: Walking tour up to the top of Pilis Mountain, discussing the topic of forestry and wildlife management impact on ecological corridors.

Equipment: mountain boots, sun protection

Difficulty: medium/easy

Walk shop 2 only takes place in appropriate weather conditions.

Walk shop 3 “Training adventure up to Nógrád Fortres”

Description: Traveling by train to Nógrád Fortress in the beautiful Valley of Ipoly River, with discussion on the land-use change and impact of railway infrastructure on ecological corridors.

Dress code: city

Difficulty: easy

Walk shop 3 only takes place in appropriate weather conditions.