

Declaration on the Management and Protection of Large Carnivores in the Carpathians

We, the participants of the 8th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) and the Conference “Large Carnivores` Protection in the Carpathians”, are aware that the Carpathians harbour the largest population of bears, and some of the largest populations of wolves and lynx, within Europe.

We recognize that the Carpathian Convention Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity calls for harmonization, coordination of efforts and cooperation on the conservation and sustainable use of species of flora and fauna characteristic to the Carpathians, in particular on conservation of endangered or endemic species and large carnivores¹. We underline that the coordination of the population based management of large carnivores across national boundaries is needed to maintain viable populations over the long-term in the broader context of biodiversity conservation. For the management at the Carpathian level, intense, transboundary and regional cooperation will be required, including cooperation with other regions, such as the Alps

Furthermore, we note that strengthening the cooperation on issues related to landscape conservation, ecological connectivity and green infrastructure at local, regional and international levels is one of the priorities of the Czech Republic’s Presidency to the Carpathian Convention (2014–2017).

Inspired by the Key actions for Large Carnivore populations in Europe², we call for the development of an international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores, which will implement the relevant provision of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols, as well as the relevant Recommendations of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention³.

As the Carpathian Convention provides the framework, tools and mechanisms of transboundary and regional cooperation, and cross-sector integration necessary to prepare the international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management Carpathian Large

¹ Article 1 para 2 of the Carpathian Convention Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity.

² Key actions for Large Carnivore populations in Europe
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³ Recommendation No. 74 (1999) on the conservation of large carnivores, adopted by the Standing Committee on 3 December 1999; Recommendation No. 82 (2000) on urgent measures concerning the implementation of action plans for large carnivores in Europe, adopted by the Standing Committee on 1 December 2000; Recommendation No. 100 (2003) on conservation of large carnivores in the Carpathians, adopted by the Standing Committee on 4 December 2003 ; Recommendation No. 115 (2005) on the conservation and management of transboundary populations of large carnivores, adopted by the Standing Committee on 1 December 2005

Carnivores`, we invite the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention to consider and endorse this call.

We invite the European Commission to consider providing incentives to support the process of development of such international action plan, which will put into practice the relevant EU laws and policies, and the recommended key actions for large carnivores' populations in Europe.

Since large carnivores` management and protection requires cooperation among different sectors, we emphasize the importance of involving into this process representatives from the environment, agriculture, forestry, tourism, infrastructure/transport and spatial planning sectors.

We emphasize that this international process shall be conducted in parallel with internal national processes, closely linked with and based upon national planning processes, promoting cross-border cooperation and harmonization.

We recommend the following topics as being of great importance for the international action plan for the conservation and sustainable management for the Carpathian populations of large carnivores to be considered:

- Preventing fragmentation of habitat and reducing disturbance associated with infrastructure development;
- Encouraging the identification, development and implementation of ecological network for large mammals/carnivores (safeguarding the ecological connectivity, movement corridors);
- Evaluating social and economic relationship between humans and large carnivores;
- Evaluating damages, promoting preventive and other relevant measures to minimise possible conflicts, promoting effective compensation schemes;
- Improving transboundary cooperation on large carnivores' conservation and management;
- Agreement on and harmonization of sound monitoring procedures;
- Law enforcement with respect to illegal killing of large carnivores;
- Preparation of national management plans;
- Capacity building and information exchange;
- Increase resilience to climate change;
- Public involvement, awareness and education.

We thank the Czech Presidency of the Carpathian Convention for hosting the Conference. We thank the German Federal Environment Ministry's Advisory Assistance Programme for the support, and invite the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union to promote the dissemination of its outcome at the EU level.

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The responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors.

