

Integrating the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development Expert Network into the Carpathian Convention

Brief

The purpose of this brief is to first provide an overview of the Carpathian Convention and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Second, this document describes the motivations for integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention. Lastly, this brief then details how an ESD expert network was created to institutionalize ESD into the Carpathian Convention and ultimately help implement the Convention.

Brief Background on the Carpathians and the Carpathian Convention

The Carpathian Mountains are a biodiversity hotspot in Europe, harboring some of Europe's last remaining virgin forests and the largest populations of large carnivores. In addition to being the home to the headwaters of major rivers, the region provides essential ecosystem services to millions of people who reside in the area and beyond, contributing to the health of diverse landscapes. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention), a multinational environmental agreement, unites 7 countries of Central and Eastern Europe in a unique partnership to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the area while promoting sustainable development in the Carpathian region.

The Carpathian Convention was adopted and signed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine in May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine and entered into force in January 2006. It is the only multi-level governance mechanism covering the entire Carpathian region and is the second sub-regional treaty-based regime in the world that focuses on mountain protection and sustainable development, following the Alpine Convention.

The Carpathian Convention's general objective is to pursue comprehensive policy and cooperation for protecting and sustainably developing the Carpathians: improving quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities, and conserving natural values and cultural heritage (Carpathian Convention, Article 2).

The Carpathian Convention provides a forum for stakeholders to dialogue; a framework for transnational cooperation across sectors; and a platform for developing and implementing transnational strategies, policies, and projects for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region. Its thematic sectors are outlined in Articles 3 to 13: including but not limited to spatial planning, sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable transport and infrastructure, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, climate change, and awareness raising, education and public participation.

The Carpathian Convention's **Article 13, "Awareness raising, education and public participation"**¹ is a cross-sectional article. As such, its provisions should be embedded in all the Carpathian Convention's activities to facilitate not only internal cooperation across the Convention's sectors, but also to help align with other international and EU strategies (e.g. the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development² and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework³).

One tool for facilitating these linkages internally and externally is Education for Sustainable Development.

¹ Article 13 - Awareness raising, education and public participation:

"1. The Parties shall pursue policies aiming at increasing environmental awareness and improving access of the public to information on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and promoting related education curricula and programmes.

2. The Parties shall pursue policies guaranteeing public participation in decision-making relating to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, and the implementation of this Convention."

² Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)

³ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/COP/15/L.25, 18 December 2022)

Brief Background on Education for Sustainable Development

Meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet and its ecosystems is a complex issue that the field of sustainable development faces, which the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to address. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emerged not only within SDG 4.7,⁴ but also as an enabler of implementing all 17 SDGs.

ESD is a broad and comprehensive process that brings knowledge and practice together for implementing the 17 SDGs by incorporating key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning to shift behaviors and institutions toward sustainable development actions.

ESD is a lifelong learning process, meaning that it applies to all settings for all people: including policy makers, scientists, students, researchers, educators, businesses and all other stakeholders.⁵ ESD holistically transforms what, where, how, and why we learn by integrating key sustainable development issues into learning content (what), learning environments (where), pedagogy (how) and learning outcomes to train individuals and communities for finding environmental, economic and social solutions for sustainable living (why).

Because sustainable development issues are interrelated, encompassing environmental, economic and social factors, ESD holistically addresses themes like rural development, environmental protection, poverty alleviation, energy security, biodiversity, cultural diversity and more. It broadens the concept of environmental education, which can be complemented with other environmental fields to approach ESD.

As a critical implementer of the SDGs, ESD is lauded by several international institutions globally and regionally:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the lead UN agency in implementing ESD. UNESCO led the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and launched the global framework, “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs” in 2019.
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) developed a regional ESD strategy and established a Steering Committee on ESD to support countries in implementing the strategy and integrating ESD into all forms and levels of their education systems, including vocational and adult learning.

Because of ESD’s acceptance by the EU and other UN entities and its broad application to environmental protection and sustainable development, it is relevant for the Carpathian Convention to integrate into its implementation activities.

Relevance for Integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention

The Carpathian Convention, with its comprehensive focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development, naturally intersects with the principles of ESD. In addition to the dedicated Article 13, awareness-raising and education are highlighted in all the Convention’s existing Protocols, several strategic documents and Memoranda of Cooperation (see Annex I for a complete list of education-related references in the Convention’s documents). These education-related references form a solid foundation for incorporating ESD more closely into the Carpathian Convention. These references also span various

⁴ SDG 4.7 states that “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”

⁵ https://unece.org/DAM/env/esd/01_Typo3site/ESDBackgroundENGcep.ac.13.2004.8.add.1.e.pdf

sectors, including forestry, tourism, climate change and more, highlighting the applicability of ESD to build capacity, disseminate information and generate public support in these sectors.

Closer Alignment with Regional and Global Environmental Initiatives

The Carpathian Convention is a regional mechanism for implementing European and other international frameworks and agreements of which the Carpathian countries are signatory members. The Carpathian Convention plays a critical role in meeting the SDGs for the region and in contributing to carrying out the following strategies related to ESD:

- UNESCO's "Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs" framework for 2020-2030. It mandates that:
 - ESD be integrated in global, regional and national policies for education and sustainable development so that pedagogies empower individuals and provide skills for socio-political engagement (paragraph 5.14).
 - UNESCO strengthen partnerships with the ESD community and the wider sustainable development community, including United Nations entities responsible for implementing SDGs (paragraph 5.25).
- UNECE Strategy for ESD 2021-2030
- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Integrating considerations from the Carpathian Convention into existing European and global ESD reporting mechanisms and strategies of Carpathian countries increases the potential for preventing isolated approaches and optimizing limited resources. This ensures a more impactful sustainable development strategy that mainstreams the Carpathian Convention into global reporting mechanisms and national strategies in ESD.

However, while ESD is referenced across various sectors in the Convention's protocols and strategic documents, its application was somewhat intermittent in Convention-supported projects and activities until 2017.

The Need for Integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention

In 2007, the Carpathian Sustainable Learning Network (CASALEN) was established as an independent regional network by educational experts from several Carpathian countries. It aimed to exchange information and best practices and create joint projects related to education and learning in the Carpathians; however, it ceased in 2010 due to a lack of financial and human capacity.

The Carpathian Convention Secretariat has supported ESD-related initiatives in the Carpathians since 2008, with the initiation of the Move4Nature project, which sought to integrate local cultural and natural heritage into school curriculum in rural Romania. Although the Secretariat has initiated other ESD-related projects and official Convention documents have included education as a priority area, ESD did not become a priority for the Carpathian Convention until 2017 when Hungary prioritized ESD during its Presidency of the Carpathian Convention from 2017 to 2020 (for a full history of ESD activities in the Carpathian Convention, see Annex II).

However, some of the challenges in realizing the implementation of ESD in the Carpathian Convention include fostering efficient cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration and strengthening public understanding of the Carpathian Convention's objectives. ESD offers valuable opportunities for helping to overcome these challenges by (1) fostering better collaboration among various actors within the Carpathians by creating common ground and understanding, and (2) enhancing public understanding and support for the Carpathian Convention by making complex environmental issues more accessible and relatable.

Foster Consistent Collaboration

Transboundary and cross-sectoral collaboration are vital for tackling interconnected environmental and sustainable development issues, as identified by the Carpathian Convention ([Decisions COP7/2, COP7/19](#)). While many approaches can strengthen such collaboration—like policy reform, legitimizing local institutions, building communities adaptive to change, or cultivating trust in governing authorities⁶—ESD can be part of a larger national and regional strategy to promoting more inclusivity in collaborative environmental governance.

ESD enhances collaboration by connecting ESD practitioners, educators, and other stakeholders across different sectors and regions to bridge gaps in knowledge and perspectives. Involving members from industry, the private sector, and public sector in educational processes and knowledge exchange will lead to more practical learning experiences and better-adapted individuals and communities to changing technologies, climate impacts and working conditions.⁷

BOX 1

Case Study of How ESD Enhances Collaboration

The Czech Association of Sustainability Managers (AMMUR) is building a community of professionals who are building more sustainable organisations. They create and implement educational programmes aimed at competencies required for the sustainability transitions of organisations and offer a platform where sustainability managers can meet, network and collaborate on joint projects. They have designed three hybrid programs (online and in-person) for different stakeholder groups, namely companies, universities and municipalities. Thanks to these programs, they are bridging sustainability education with adult professional and management education.

However, many Carpathian ESD practitioners and educators have voiced that networking and sharing resources across boundaries and sectors has been a challenge in the Carpathian region, leading to feelings of isolation in their work and disconnect from other actors.

Carpathian experts have identified a need for network building, sustainable rebuilding of Ukraine, and exchange among Carpathian ESD stakeholders. These recommendations not only aim to combat isolationism among Carpathian ESD practitioners, but also to combat gaps in public knowledge or perspectives within the Carpathian region. These gaps include the need for life-long teacher education, applying ESD research findings and applied knowledge to school and university curricula, integrating transdisciplinary approaches into university education, fostering a Carpathian identity in environmental education and ESD, and reconciling national differences and similarities in ESD approaches.⁸

Incorporating ESD into the Carpathian Convention alongside other political, economic and social strategies can help overcome these challenges. One pathway towards encouraging more consistent collaboration with external actors involves building public understanding and support for the Carpathian Convention and its objectives.

⁶ Neil Dawson, Brendan Coolsaet, Eleanor Sterling, Robin Loveridge, Nicole D. Gross-Camp, et al.. The role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation. *Ecology and Society*, 2021, 26 (3).

⁷ <https://unece.org/DAM/env/documents/2005/cep/ac.13/cep.ac.13.2005.3.rev.1.e.pdf>

⁸ S4C Research Agenda 2022–2030

Enhance Public Environmental Support

ESD focuses not only on educating *about* sustainable development, but educating *for* sustainable development. It serves as a medium for building public appreciation and support for sustainable practices in the Carpathian region, which are critical prerequisites for creating and implementing environmentally-friendly policies.

ESD can achieve this by making complex environmental issues more accessible and relatable to the general public. In the Carpathian region, this can be done by sharing best practices among ESD experts, co-developing and implementing educational programs that promote a Carpathian identity, involving communication experts and leading press organisations, and ensuring that resource materials and national-level communication happens in the local languages.

BOX 2

Case Study of How ESD Enhances Public Support

The Bratislava region has officially presented the building of its new regional ecocentre in Čunovo. The Čunovo ecocentre is located at a triple border of Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. In the second half of 2024, it will begin offering ESD programs and guided nature tours and will feature an interactive exhibition that focuses on nature protection. It should also serve as a venue for the development of cross-border nature protection activities. It will be led by a consortium of the Bratislava region, State Nature Conservancy and DAPHNE - Institute of Applied Ecology (NGO).

As described above, ESD is a tool for enabling the comprehensive implementation of the Carpathian Convention across sectors. To better overcome the challenges of fostering collaboration, enhancing public support and aligning with European and global ESD initiatives, the Carpathian Convention seeks to institutionalize ESD into its activities through the creation of a Carpathian ESD Expert Network.

Overcoming Challenges by Integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention through a Regional Expert Network

To ensure that the Carpathian Convention's activities are cross-sectoral, increase public participation, and align with other global and European initiatives, a Carpathian ESD Expert Network (ESD Network) is being integrated within the Carpathian Convention's mechanisms.

Creation of the ESD Network

In 2019, the first Carpathian Convention Seminar on ESD was conducted in Budapest, Hungary. Participants of the seminar recommended creating an ESD expert network for the Carpathian region to facilitate collaboration among ESD practitioners and educators, bridge siloed conservation and development policies, and strengthen engagement from key stakeholders.

Since then, the Secretariat gathered inputs from a wide range of stakeholders on how the field of ESD could help realize the objectives of the Carpathian Convention, and what role a regional Carpathian ESD Expert Network could play.

In October 2023, the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP7) of the Carpathian Convention officially welcomed the Carpathian ESD Expert Network. The Parties adopted Decision COP7/19 on Awareness raising, education and public participation,⁹ which expressed that the Conference of the Parties:

⁹ Carpathian Convention COP7 DECISION COP7/19:

- Welcomes the Carpathian ESD Expert Network as a cross-sectoral network of diverse actors...thus facilitating cross-thematic linkages, expanding and strengthening Convention networks, and communication within the Convention and awareness-raising about the Convention.
- Encourages the Parties...to nominate Carpathian ESD experts to the network.
- Invites the Serbian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention to continue supporting ESD activities as a necessary tool to enable long-term sustainable development in the Carpathians.

Objectives of the ESD Network

The Carpathian ESD Expert Network (ESD Network) aims to strengthen the Convention's networks, communication efforts and awareness-raising by strengthening cooperation across the Convention's topics. The ESD Network supports the Carpathian Convention as a mechanism for implementing the SDGs and other international, European and regional instruments related to ESD in the Carpathian region.

The ESD Network's vision is a thriving and interconnected Carpathian region, where ESD advances respect for its diverse natural and cultural heritage, fosters a Carpathian identity and builds sustainable relationships between people and nature.

To realize this, the ESD Network has a mission to promote ESD-focused networking and collaborations that aim to improve the quality of life, strengthen local economies and communities, and protect natural and cultural heritage in the Carpathians. Its main objectives include:

- Supporting implementation of the Carpathian Convention Article 13 to increase environmental awareness, sustainable development knowledge and public participation in the Convention;
- Facilitating collaboration and learning between all sectors, all stakeholder levels and all Carpathian countries within the Carpathian Convention activities, strengthening cross-sectoral relationships within the Carpathian Convention;
- Shaping ESD for the Carpathian environmental, social and economic context, fostering effective SDG implementation for the Carpathian region.
- Promoting sustainability and a Carpathian identity through ESD by co-developing and implementing educational programs that promote a whole Carpathian view: natural and cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and innovation, socio-economic aspects, and sustainable practices.

The ESD Network is an open multi-actor network, bringing together all interested and active practitioners at the intersection of learning, education and sustainable development: informal and formal educators, governmental experts nominated by the Parties, communicators, public or environmental authorities, NGO practitioners, students, scientists and academic experts.

The Carpathian Convention requested that each Party nominate a representative from their respective Ministries of Education and/or Environment or other experts in the country's ESD networks. These representatives are tasked with participating and coordinating their country's ESD networks. Collaboration with the nominated ESD experts will help raise awareness about the Carpathian Convention's work, highlight and strengthen learning aspects already present in the Convention's activities, and strengthen communication between Convention partners and actors involved in learning initiatives in the region.

Mechanism of Transformation through the ESD Network

The ESD Network seeks to empower greater public environmental awareness, policy engagement, and cross-sectoral cooperation within the Carpathian Convention. These different areas ultimately contribute

to better implementation of the Carpathian Convention itself, complementing other mainstreaming strategies of the Convention.

Firstly, the ESD Network will collaborate in outreach and educational efforts and projects to effectively raise awareness of the Carpathian Convention and sustainable development issues in the region. This is externally focused and encompasses a wide swath of activities; for example, the ESD Network promotes organizing a Carpathian Day in each country as a yearly celebration of diverse and common Carpathian identities, landscapes, heritage and love for the Carpathian region.

Secondly, the ESD Network will facilitate ESD policy integration. It is necessary to understand how ESD policy manifests locally in Carpathian countries and advocate for integrating ESD principles at regional, national and international levels. These ESD policies should align with UN, EU and other global ESD frameworks. Not only can the ESD Network help the Carpathian countries fulfill their agreements to these frameworks, but these international entities can also be platforms for promoting the Carpathian Convention as a model mountain region for environmental protection and sustainable development. One method for ensuring ESD policy cohesion and relevance is by integrating the Carpathian ESD experts into existing Carpathian Convention mechanisms.

Thirdly, the ESD Network will share knowledge and resources relevant to ESD. The ESD Network will seek partnerships with other organizations, networks and stakeholders within and beyond the Carpathians who share similar goals. It is critical to establish and maintain platforms for communication, sharing best practices, hosting workshops and promoting existing ESD initiatives among the Carpathian ESD experts.

Fourthly, ESD experts should collaborate on research and jointly publish results on ESD best practices. This activity should encourage the ESD Network to partner closely with the Science for the Carpathians Network: a network of Carpathian scientists that fosters dialogue between science, policy and practice, and helps inform scientific decision-making for the Carpathian Convention.

Lastly, the ESD Network needs to secure resources for network administration and management to build a sustainable network infrastructure.

Conclusion

Education, awareness and access to information are key determinants of how meaningfully the public is involved in decision making processes, ultimately influencing the direction of development and environmental protection. Public participation is integral to sustainable development and conservation, which the ESD Network will help ensure.

Because Article 13 is a cross-sectional article and a direct mechanism for integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention, it inherently applies to all sectors and all actors. ESD offers valuable opportunities for enhancing collaboration, understanding and support for the Carpathian Convention's objectives. Thus, the ESD Network serves to foster collaboration between topics and stakeholders for achieving protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region.

The aim of integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention is to encourage the Carpathian countries to develop and incorporate ESD into their formal education systems, in all relevant subjects, and in nonformal and informal education. This will equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development specific to the Carpathians, increasing the potential for creating a thriving Carpathian region in harmony with nature, social values and cultural diversity.

Annex I: ESD-related references in Carpathian Convention COP decisions and documents

Document	ESD-Related References
COP Decisions	
COP1 11 – 13 December 2006 Kyiv, Ukraine	<p>Decision COP1/12: Cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation – Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>2. takes note of information submitted in the Annexes, as contained in the Secretariat note on cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation UNEP/CC/COP1/13...;</p> <p>5. supports and recommends to establish and develop national mechanisms to foster the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including information, involvement and capacity building of all relevant stakeholders and civil society, related to the progress and the further development of the Carpathian Convention;</p> <p>8. requests the interim Secretariat to work with ANPED and other interested partners to establish a communication system to provide for distribution of information on the progress of the Convention to the wider civil society;</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP/CC/COP1/13 Secretariat note on cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation: (Mentions the REC Green Pack, developing similar educational packages, and suggests trainings for teachers and staff of protected areas in charge of educational activities)
COP2 17 – 19 June 2008 Bucharest, Romania	<p>Decision COP2/10: Cross-cutting issues, including awareness raising, education and public participation – Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>2. welcomes the important contributions by ANPED, REC, ENSI and EURAC to awareness raising, education and public participation in the Carpathian Convention implementation process...</p> <p>3. supports and appreciates the Carpathian Sustainable Education Network (CASALEN) initiative and requests the interim Secretariat to assist its further development and implementation, and appreciates the related financial support provided by the private sector;</p> <p>5. reiterates its recommendation to establish and develop national mechanisms to foster the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including information, involvement and capacity building of relevant stakeholders and civil society related to the process and the future development of the Carpathian Convention;</p> <p>6. invites Parties and other stakeholders to carry out regional consultations and to continue to raise public awareness in order to promote the Carpathian Convention implementation process;</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Report - Workshop "The possibilities of Carpathian cooperation in the field of ESD"- Carpathian Sustainability Education Network (CASELEN) • Handbook on the Carpathian Convention - by REC (discusses implementation of Article 13) • A Heightened Perspective: Regional Assessment of the Policy, Legislative and Institutional Frameworks Implementing the Carpathian Convention - by REC (assessment of educational initiatives, measures and capacities in the Carpathian Countries, recommendations outlined)
COP3 25 – 27 May 2011 Bratislava, Slovakia	<p>DECISION COP3/9: Awareness raising, education and public participation - Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>1. Welcomes the progress by Move 4 Nature, thanks the private sector for the contribution, and invites further support to the initiative;</p> <p>2. Decides to actively support the expansion of the Tool Kit to other countries, and supports cooperation with other partners and other mountain regions in Education for Sustainable Development, such as the Alps, the Balkans and the Caucasus;</p>
COP4 23 -26 September 2014	<p>DECISION COP4/9: Awareness raising, education and public participation - Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>1. Welcomes the outcomes of the EU Lifelong Learning project "Big Foot. Crossing Generations, Crossing Mountains", aimed at sustainable development of rural mountains regions through intergenerational learning, and invites support to the use of the Big Foot Transferability Tool Kit to transfer the project results to the Carpathian countries;</p> <p>2. Welcomes the new Lifelong Learning project Innovation in Rural Tourism (InRuTou), which includes Carpathian Convention partners from Poland, Romania and Ukraine and has a vocational learning</p>

<p>Mikulov, Czech Republic</p>	<p>component for sustainable rural tourism development;</p> <p>3. Welcomes the continuous use of innovative Information and Communication Technologies approaches in Education and Public Participation, such as the Communities Livelihood Platform, developed by the Big Foot project, or the E-learning platform of the InRuTou project, and invites the Parties to support their active use by the Carpathian communities, organizations and individuals;</p> <p>5. Recalls the progress by Move 4 Nature Programme, and invites further support to the adaptation of the Tool Kit to other countries and translation to other Carpathian languages, and supports cooperation with other partners and other mountain regions in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), such as the Regional Center of Expertise in ESD and other partners in the Alps, the Balkans and the Caucasus;</p> <p>6. Requests the Secretariat, in consultation with Parties and relevant partners, to facilitate cooperation of the Carpathian Convention with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Committee on ESD, and to investigate options for establishing a Carpathian Regional Network within this process, in order to strengthen Carpathian countries in implementation and follow-up of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;</p> <p>7. Invites the Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention to coordinate with the Focal Points of the UNECE steering committee on ESD, in order to inform each other about the respective activities and developments on the national level, and to share the results of this coordination with the CCIC,</p> <p>10. Welcomes the cooperation of the Secretariat with UNIDO on training of young entrepreneurs in the Carpathian region in sustainable and green entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Know your Carpathians - BÍlé Karpaty Education and Information Centre • Presentation: Carpathians and Carpathian science addressing the global challenges - S4C (mentions education among the main challenges: education for Sustainable Development in the Carpathian countries, Carpathian Curriculum for universities - virtual network of universities, research institutions, and NGOs joined by common training courses)
<p>COP5</p> <p>10 – 12 October 2017</p> <p>Lillafüred, Hungary</p>	<p>DECISION COP5/3: Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies</p> <p>5. Welcomes the cooperation between the Secretariats of the Carpathian and Alpine Conventions and the Regional Academy on the United Nations (RAUN) in mentoring a group of researchers for the development of a study on women’s access to natural resources, ...;</p> <p>6. Appreciates invitation and support of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas to members of the CNPA for organization of the Youth at the Top events in 2016 and 2017 within the collective project of ALPARC and Eduç Alps, and <i>encourages the Parties and the CNPA members to join the initiative in the future</i>;</p> <p>DECISION COP5/4: Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity - Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>8. Welcomes the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the CNPA, ALPARC and DANUBEPARKS on 12 October 2016; and encourages further cooperation on ecological connectivity, exchanges on protected areas matters, education and other specific topics common to the three networks;</p> <p>9. Recognizing that Carpathian wetlands provide a wide range of ecosystem services that are important... invites the Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) to enhance cooperation and to mobilize resources in support of appropriate action on the effective conservation, restoration, management and sustainable use of Carpathian wetlands, as well as on development of education and training in these topics;</p> <p>DECISION COP5/13: Climate Change - Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>1b. The Parties ..., shall: ...pursue policies aiming at climate change adaptation by promoting research and scientific cooperation, cross-sectoral integration, transnational cooperation, awareness raising, public participation and cooperation of all stakeholders...</p> <p>DECISION COP5/14: Awareness raising, education and public participation - Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>1. Welcomes the outcomes of the Side Event held during the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity ... launching of the Mountain Biodiversity for our Wellbeing online platform and strengthening awareness of the need for integrated approaches for ecosystem management in mountain regions based on examples of solutions shared by the stakeholders from the Carpathians ...</p> <p>2. Welcomes the proposal of the Hungarian Presidency to organize a seminar in 2018/2019 on the issues on environmental and sustainable development education and awareness raising in kindergartens and schools with the aim of exchanging best practices in the Carpathian region and exploring of further cooperation, and requests the Secretariat to support the process;</p>

	<p>3. Reiterating interest in further cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (hereinafter UNECE) Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), requests the Parties, the Secretariat and relevant partners, among others the UNECE and S4C, to consider common activities on awareness raising, for instance, establishing contest for school students and/or young scientists with reference to the Carpathian matters;</p> <p>4. Welcomes the outcomes of the Lifelong Learning project Innovation in Rural Tourism (InRuTou), which included Carpathian Convention partners from Poland, Romania and Ukraine and had a vocational learning component for sustainable rural tourism development, notes organization of the Networking Event of a project that took place on 15 July 2015 in Vienna, Austria, and invites the relevant stakeholders and the Secretariat to develop a follow up project;</p> <p>5. Welcomes and appreciates the activities on awareness raising undertaken by the Secretariat, such as involvement in organization of the Model United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (MUNESD) arranged for students on 18 – 22 April 2016 in Vienna, Austria, which took the Carpathian Convention and its COP as an example of negotiation process of an environmental agreement, as well as of the students visits, especially of the Carpathian countries, and invites the Secretariat to continue these activities.</p> <p>Decision COP5/19: Presidency of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>The Conference of the Parties ... welcomes the new Presidency of Hungary and its priorities as presented at the presidential statement with particular attention to climate change, awareness raising and education, environmental safety, cultural heritage, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and encourages close cooperation of the Carpathian Troika consisting of the previous, current and future Presidencies in order to maximise the results of common efforts.</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Education for Sustainable Development in the Carpathians and discussion (WWF DCP and CC Secretariat, outlined progress to-date and recommendations) • Presentation: Seminar on environmental and sustainable development education and awareness raising in kindergartens and schools (Attila Varga on behalf of the Hungarian Presidency, proposal for the seminar and outline of potential cooperation topics)
<p>COP6</p> <p>25 November 2020</p> <p>Online, hosted by Poland</p>	<p>DECISION COP6/19: Awareness raising, education and public participation - Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>1. Acknowledges the leadership of the Hungarian Presidency in advancing Education for Sustainable Development (hereinafter ESD) as one of its priority topics for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention;</p> <p>2. Welcomes the session “Education on the Sustainable Carpathians” and the workshop “Education for Science and Society in the Carpathians” co-organized by the Secretariat and the S4C during the 5th Forum Carpathicum “Adaption to Environmental and Social Risk in the Carpathian Mountain Region”, acknowledges the recommendations elaborated as a result of the workshop, and requests the Secretariat and the Parties to act upon these recommendations in cooperation with relevant stakeholders;</p> <p>3. Welcomes the outcomes of the first Carpathian ESD Seminar, held in Budapest, Hungary, on 16-18 of April 2019, acknowledges the important role of the Ministry of Human Capacities and the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, as well as the Secretariat, in co-organizing the workshop, recognizes the support provided by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP), the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and by the German Environment Agency, and requests the Secretariat and the Parties to act upon the recommendations elaborated at the Seminar, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders;</p> <p>4. Takes note of the elaboration of the project “Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention in cooperation with Leuphana University Lüneburg via science-policy-practice interface” and its submission for consideration of the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP);</p> <p>5. Welcomes follow-up activities on ESD, planned by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Parties and stakeholders, including a respective session and workshop at the 6th Forum Carpathicum, initiating of cooperation with the ESD experts from Leuphana University Lüneburg, as well as involving ESD experts in an inter-sectoral project meeting planned by UNEP GRID/Warsaw, acknowledges facilitation by UNEP GRID/Warsaw in this respect, and requests the Secretariat to follow-up on further planning and implementing these activities;</p> <p>6. Reiterating interest in further cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (hereinafter UNECE) Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), requests the Parties, the Secretariat and relevant partners, among others the UNECE and S4C, to consider common activities on awareness raising, for instance, establishing contest for school students and/or young scientists with reference to the Carpathian matters, as well as promoting the Carpathian achievement</p>

	<p>in the field of ESD at the international level including at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, in Cyprus on 5 – 7 October 2022;</p> <p>7. Takes note of the application for a workshop “Emerging collaboration: ESD in the Carpathian Convention Network” at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (postponed due to the COVID- 19 pandemic), jointly elaborated by the Ministry of Human Capacities and Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, the Secretariat and the S4C, aimed at presenting the Carpathian ESD activities and raising awareness about the Carpathian Convention, encourages the relevant actors and the Secretariat to continue facilitating such activities in the future;</p> <p>8. Encourages the Secretariat and the Parties to present ESD-related activities of the Carpathian Convention at the 11th World Environmental Education Congress, planned to take place on 4-8 Oct 2021 in Prague, Czech Republic, via organization of a side-event or a Conference session, in order to enhance the visibility of ESD-related work of the Convention and to encourage networking of the Carpathian ESD experts at the international level;</p> <p>9. Invites the Polish Presidency of the Carpathian Convention to continue supporting ESD activities as a necessary tool to enable long-term sustainable development in the Carpathians</p>
<p>COP7</p> <p>11 – 13 October 2023</p> <p>Belgrade, Serbia</p>	<p>DECISION COP7/5: Cooperation with other conventions and international bodies</p> <p>3. Welcomes the proclamation and the results of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022, which recognized the need for conserving mountains and provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the role of mountains and mountain people for the planet and sustainable development, including for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and appreciates the efforts made by the Parties, relevant actors and the Secretariat to contribute to the process.</p> <p>5. Welcomes the close cooperation with the Alpine Convention on various topics, particularly in respect to the organization of series of events promoting mountain biodiversity...and invites them to further strengthen the cooperation in fields of common interest, including institutional cooperation, the exchange of information and experience, the development and implementation of common projects, and raising awareness of the significance of sustainable development of mountain areas in Europe and other mountain regions of the world.</p> <p>DECISION COP7/9: Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity - Article 4 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>15. Welcomes and appreciates the organization of the training course on wetlands restoration in cooperation by the Carpathian Wetland Initiative and the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic and the Czech Ramsar Committee</p> <p>18. Takes note of the implementation of the project SWIPE (EU LIFE Programme) led by WWF Bulgaria on successful wildlife crime prosecution in Europe, and invites the Secretariat to facilitate dissemination of the project results, specifically the training materials on wildlife crime prosecution and investigation, the national wildlife crime reports that feature policy recommendations, best practices in prosecution of wildlife crime cases and pilot cases concerning aspects of tackling wildlife crime and the European report on wildlife crime.</p> <p>DECISION COP7/13: Sustainable forest management - Article 7 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>10. Commends the documentary film about close-to-nature forest management in the Carpathians produced by the Forest Management Institute of the Czech Republic in cooperation with other partners, which intends to support the implementation of the Forest Protocol in frame of the Carpathian Convention by raising awareness and sharing knowledge on close-to-nature forest management.</p> <p>DECISION COP7/18: Climate Change - Article 12bis of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>4. Encourages the Parties, WG Climate Change and relevant stakeholders to promote Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in the Carpathians with a special focus on Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and disaster risk reduction, and undertake relevant activities, possibly including: integrating provisions for NbS/EbA into policy, strategy and planning frameworks; developing an assessment on NbS/EbA in the Carpathians with a collection of best practices; developing a joint project on NbS/EbA...; considering inclusive approaches of NbS/EbA to promote diversified livelihoods with climate and biodiversity benefits, ecosystem restoration and climate-smart agriculture and forestry; organizing outreach and awareness-raising campaigns for communities, civil servants, students; and requests the Secretariat to support the process.</p> <p>DECISION COP7/19: Awareness raising, education and public participation - Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention</p> <p>2. Welcomes the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Expert Network as a cross-sectoral network of diverse actors...thus facilitating cross-thematic linkages, expanding and strengthening</p>

	<p>Convention networks, and communication within the Convention and awareness-raising about the Convention, encourages the Parties, who have not done so yet, to nominate Carpathian ESD experts to the network, and requests the Secretariat to support the process, furthermore invites the Carpathian Troika to continue collaborating on supporting the Carpathian ESD Expert Network and its activities.</p> <p>3. Encourages the cooperation among the Focal Points and the ESD Experts, as relevant, including within Convention Working Groups, on strengthening cross-sectoral linkages in the Convention Programme of Work and strengthening communication within the Convention, its stakeholders and to the outside.</p> <p>4. Invites the Parties to explore the possibility of establishing "Carpathians Convention Youth Focal Point" in order to increase the engagement of young people in this process.</p> <p>5. Welcomes the "Recommendations for the Establishment of the Carpathian ESD Expert Network," developed by the S4C Carpathian Convention Network Expert, Ms. Marta...</p> <p>6. Welcomes the outcomes of the second Carpathian ESD Seminar...and requests the Secretariat and invites the Parties to consider the recommendations elaborated at the Seminar, including providing support to the Carpathian ESD Experts in following up on the outputs and recommendations received at the Seminar, particularly on organization of a Carpathian Day.</p> <p>8. Welcomes the fruitful implementation of the project "Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface,"...and requests the Secretariat to support development of follow-up activities and projects, building on the progress to-date.</p> <p>9. Welcomes the process of developing the Vision and Strategy for Carpathian ESD by the Carpathian ESD Experts in collaboration with the Secretariat and invites the Parties to provide inputs and support this process, as relevant.</p> <p>10. Acknowledges the relevance of highlighting cross-sectoral linkages during Working Group meetings, such as including "Reflections from the Carpathian ESD Experts – relevant links between ESD and SARD activities" into the Agenda of the 6th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development...and invites the Secretariat and the Parties to continue efforts in this respect, in collaboration with the Carpathian ESD Expert Network.</p> <p>11. Welcomes collaboration among the Carpathian ESD Experts on the development of joint activities, including the workshop on Learning Landscapes at the Interpret Europe Conference ...and the "Carpathian Scan" project, following up on ESD priorities and recommendations co-developed by the Carpathian ESD Expert Network at the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar and other events and requests the Secretariat and the Parties to further support such collaborative efforts.</p> <p>12. Welcomes the Carpathian ESD Session and Workshop...during the 7th Forum Carpaticum "Carpathian Futures – Critical Transitions" ...and requests the Secretariat and invites the Parties to consider these recommendations in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>13. Requests the Secretariat to continue its liaison with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Steering Committee on ESD and UNESCO as relevant, and to explore collaboration with the Global Education Network Europe (GENE).</p> <p>14. Invites the Serbian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention to continue supporting ESD activities as a necessary tool to enable long-term sustainable development in the Carpathians.</p>
Protocols	
<p>Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</p>	<p>Article 1 - General objective and principles</p> <p>3. The Parties shall, therefore, cooperate especially on: ... l) Strengthening of formal and informal education, advanced training and qualification including intergenerational learning, access to local public services and advisory service;</p> <p>Article 16 - Promotion of formal and informal education</p> <p>1. Each Party shall take measures to create an enabling environment for the promotion of education and intergenerational learning.</p> <p>2. The Parties shall strengthen cooperation of local and national educational institutions and bodies to extend and to improve education, advanced training and qualification of people from different working areas ("lifelong learning").</p> <p>3. Parties shall promote education and communication to raise public awareness on local varieties of cultivated plants and animals and on the advantages of local short food supply systems and raise awareness to improve risk management.</p>
<p>Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management</p>	<p>Article 21 - Education, information and public awareness</p> <p>1. The Parties shall promote the education, information and awareness rising of the public regarding the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.</p> <p>2. The Parties shall ensure access of the public to the information on the implementation of the Protocol.</p>
<p>Protocol on Sustainable Tourism</p>	<p>Article 28 - Education, information and public awareness</p> <p>1. The Parties shall promote the education, information and awareness rising of the public regarding the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.</p>

	2. The Parties shall ensure access of the public to the information related to the implementation of this Protocol.
Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Carpathian Convention	<p>Article 18 - Education, information and public awareness</p> <p>1. The Parties shall promote education, information and awareness raising of the public regarding the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.</p> <p>2. The Parties shall ensure access of the public to the information related to the implementation of this Protocol.</p>
Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity	<p>Article 24 - Education, information and public awareness</p> <p>1. The Parties shall promote the education, information and awareness rising of the public regarding the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.</p> <p>2. The Parties shall ensure access of the public to the information related to the implementation of this Protocol.</p>
Strategic Documents	
Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians	Objective 3: Establish a continuous process of awareness raising, capacity building, education and training on sustainable tourism development and management at all levels, and outlines respective activities
Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Forest Protocol	<p>Objective 17: Education, information and public awareness:</p> <p>Results expected</p> <p>a) Education and training courses on sustainable forest management integrated into educational national systems, as appropriate;</p> <p>b) Informational campaigns aimed at promoting society ecological education, raising public awareness on Carpathian forests, including related cultural heritage and traditional knowledge practices, and measures on strengthening of sustainable forest management in the Carpathian region implemented.</p>
Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region	<p>Paragraph 15: New Partnerships</p> <p>To succeed, new partnerships will be required. Of course, the involvement not just of government but also civil society, the research and education institutions, and international organisations will be key. So will the involvement of the private sector...According to UNFCCC the specific expertise of the private sector, its capacity to innovate and produce new technologies for adaptation, and its financial leverage can form an important part in the multi-sectoral partnership that is required for planning and implementation of adaptation.</p> <p>Paragraph 33: Institutional and organisational responses</p> <p>...a designated pan-Convention policy-, funding-, coordination and communication context for climate change adaptation would be very valuable. Hence the designation of a Carpathian Space is recommended. The uniqueness and diversity of the Carpathians, together with the fact that when seen in isolation in each national context, they are normally a relatively small proportion of any given country, lend themselves to joint actions. Many measures, especially „preventative” and „preparatory” ones relating to information gaps, research, and monitoring together with broad capacity-building and awareness raising, make sense if carried out a broad ecoregional scale. Policies and funding frameworks which reflect this geography would therefore be very useful.</p>

Other Documents	
Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention	Refers to training in paragraph 1. IV. Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity, and makes a reference to the decisions of CBD COP 7 (VII/27. Mountain biological diversity), which includes Goal 3.5. <i>“To increase public education, participation and awareness in relation to mountain biological diversity.”</i> ¹⁰
Memorandum with the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention	Mentions collaboration on information exchange, knowledge transfer, capacity building, project development and implementation, and the science-policy interface.

¹⁰ e.g. Action 3.5.1. Promote educational and capacity-building systems tailored to the specific conditions of mountain ecosystems, such as workshops, courses, study tours, community exchanges, communications from the Convention on Biological Diversity, education and publications efforts, in line with the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (decision VI/19 of the Conference of the Parties). CBD VII/27. Mountain biological diversity. Decision Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its Seventh Meeting. UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VII/27

Annex II: Timeline of ESD activities in the Carpathian Convention¹¹

2003

- **MAY: The Carpathian Convention was adopted and signed, including Article 13 “Awareness raising, education, and public participation”**

2006

- **JANUARY: The Carpathian Convention and its Protocols entered into force**

2007

- **NOVEMBER: The Carpathian Sustainable Learning Network (CASALEN) was established and active until 2010**

This regional network aimed to exchange information and practices for creating joint projects on Carpathian ESD.

2008

- **JUNE: „Move4Nature” project started and active until 2009**

CASALEN with project partners implemented this joint project on integrating local and natural heritage into school curriculum in rural Romania. Teacher training workshops were conducted for rural teachers in Romania to raise awareness about the Convention and create partnerships among schools, protected areas and environmental NGOs. The first Carpathian teaching materials were produced and distributed in Romanian to local schools and in English to the wider Carpathian region.

2011

- **MAY: ESD-related side events at the Carpathian Convention COP3**
- **„Big foot: Crossing generations, crossing mountains” project started and active until 2013**
This project focused on intergenerational learning for sustainable development and produced policy recommendations and raised awareness of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas’ work in local educational activities.

2012

- **„InRuTou: Innovation in Rural Tourism” project started and active until 2015**

This project developed and implemented vocational educational training on community-based sustainable tourism in rural mountain regions in Poland, Romania and Ukraine. Online training materials, a transferability manual, networking events and ESD policy recommendations were also produced.

2014

- **SEPTEMBER: ESD-related side events at the Carpathian Convention COP4**

2017

- **Hungary assumes the Presidency of the Carpathian Convention from 2017 to 2020, and declares ESD one of its priorities**
- **OCTOBER: ESD consultation during Carpathian Convention COP5**

2019

- **APRIL: First Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development**
Conducted in Budapest, Hungary. The creation of an ESD expert network for the Carpathian Network was first initiated here, in addition to participants exchanging knowledge and best practices at the meeting.
- **APRIL: Participatory exercise during the Carpathian Convention by the Working Group on Biodiversity**
Working Group members and members of the Science for the Carpathians Network (S4C)

¹¹ Mitrofanenko, T., Varga, A. & Zawiejska, J. (2020). Toward strong integration of education for sustainable development into the Carpathian Convention activities: Reflection on the process and outlook. *Mountain Research and Development*, 40(4) A1-A14.

exchanged and coproduced knowledge for a stronger science-policy-practice interface.

2021

- **[„Carpathian ESD: Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface” project started and active until 2024](#)**

- **JUNE: ESD session and workshop at the 6th Forum Carpaticum**

Produced scientific and policy-related recommendations on integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention. The Forum Carpaticum is the main scientific conference in the Carpathian region. It is coordinated by the Science for the Carpathians (S4C) network, established in 2008, which aims to define research priorities for the Carpathian region and link research, policy and practice together. S4C closely collaborates with the Carpathian Convention Secretariat to provide scientific inputs at the Conference of the Parties meetings.

- **OCTOBER: Carpathian Convention conducts research on the Convention’s networks**

The Convention researched the operation of its networks, resulting in expert recommendations. These were considered when establishing the ESD Network. The Carpathian Convention is unique to have a research-based approach on networking for ESD.

2022

- **APRIL: Workshop „Towards a transdisciplinary approach in the Carpathian region, implementing the Carpathian Convention and UNECE Strategy for ESD 2021-2030” at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region**

This ESD workshop was conducted as a side-event to the Forum in collaboration with the Secretariat, the Ministry of Interior of Hungary and the Science for the Carpathians Network. The suggested activities, linked with the four strands of the UNECE Strategy, are available in Annex III.

- **SEPTEMBER: Second Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development**

The Convention Secretariat and the Polish Presidency co-organized the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar in Zakopane, Poland. The Seminar brought together educators, researchers and practitioners in the field of ESD from all seven Carpathian countries.

2023

- **SEPTEMBER: ESD session and workshop at the 7th Forum Carpaticum**
- **OCTOBER: ESD consultation at the Carpathian Convention COP7**