

Carpathian Day Concept Brief

BACKGROUND

Experts in education for sustainable development (ESD) throughout the Carpathian region gathered for the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar in 2022 and provided recommendations for incorporating collaborative ESD activities into the Carpathian Convention. Seminar participants proposed establishing a Carpathian Day to help promote the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians and the objectives of the Carpathian Convention.

The idea received positive feedback at the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP7), where they welcomed “the idea of establishing the Carpathian Day to further promote the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians and the Carpathian Convention activities at various levels; invites the Parties, relevant stakeholders, and the Secretariat to contribute to the process, as appropriate” (COP7/1 paragraph 14).

Romanian communities have been celebrating Carpathian Mountain Day on 26 September for several years, during which various actors organize activities for their local celebration, including at schools, universities, protected areas and more. To build upon this current foundation, Romanian experts and the Carpathian Convention Secretariat encourage Carpathian actors to host their own local Carpathian Day event on or around 26 September.

CARPATHIAN DAY DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Carpathian region holds a wealth of traditions, cultural sites, biodiversity, and unique habitats and species. Carpathian Day is a yearly celebration of our diverse and common identities, landscapes, heritage and love for the Carpathian region that takes places on or around 26 September.

Celebrating Carpathian Day aims to help cultivate a Carpathian identity, raise environmental and cultural awareness of mountain landscapes, and inspire further protection and sustainable development of local communities. Having an annual celebration will create ongoing momentum for highlighting these great cultural and natural landscapes and foster a sense of pride and belonging across the region.

Each year, a focus topic for Carpathian Day will be selected to encourage actors to raise awareness of the related Carpathian socio-ecological issues and the Carpathian Convention. Activities for local Carpathian Day events are decided upon and organized by the interested hosts; thus, they may vary according to the specific locale and target audience. Potential hosts could include:

- **Carpathian Protected Areas:** organizing Carpathian Day activities could be a suitable common activity for the CNPA.
- **Schools:** Their participation in Carpathian Day could be a way to integrate informational resources of the Carpathian Convention into formal education.
- **Universities and other Higher Educational Institutions:** Carpathian Day could raise awareness and interest among students in Carpathian issues via dedicated excursions, trainings, summer-schools, presentations and discussions. Organizers might consider how excursions or other events on this day could contribute to more networking among young / early career researchers and result in joint projects focused on sustainable development in the Carpathian region.

- **NGOs:** Such organizations with an active role in educational, capacity building, and awareness-raising activities can be key actors.
- **Carpathian Community Organizations and Administrations:** Local communities can use Carpathian Day to promote their values and be promoted by the Carpathian Convention on a larger scale, potentially gaining recognition for tourism purposes.
- **Mountain hiking groups, Via Transilvanica, young entrepreneurs and youth resettling rural areas:** These and other existing networks are important to capitalize on for building a coalition around Carpathian Day, sharing their knowledge and resources, and raising awareness of the Carpathian Convention.

Carpathian Day event hosts may [register their event on the Carpathian Convention's website](#) to have it promoted on the webpage and social media channels.

CARPATHIAN DAY 2024

Carpathian Day 2024 will be an experimental/test period to (1) take stock of existing Carpathian Day events throughout the region and (2) identify interest among stakeholders in hosting events and among Carpathian Convention networks in promoting it.

To accommodate Carpathian Day events that are already being planned, the theme for Carpathian Day 2024 was decided by ESD experts from Romania to be broad and flexible. Themes for following years can be more intentionally decided.

The theme for Carpathian Day 2024 is “our identity lies in our heritage.” The Carpathians are characterized by longstanding human-nature interactions. This Carpathian Day aims to integrate both natural and cultural heritage to celebrate the voices, connections and traditional knowledge of all who live in the Carpathian region.

CARPATHIAN DAY ORGANIZATION

As mentioned above, Carpathian Day 2024 will be a stocktake period to better assess whether and how to operationalize Carpathian Day efforts across the region under the framework of the Carpathian Convention. The current responsibilities for organizing Carpathian Day 2024 include:

- The **Carpathian ESD Expert Network** as the main entity coordinating the organization and promotion of Carpathian Day with support from the Carpathian Convention Secretariat, and in coordination with the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) and the Science for the Carpathians Network (S4C).
 - The ESD experts from Romania are leading efforts with the support of the Carpathian Convention Secretariat.
 - The **Nominated ESD Experts** will take lead on organizing and promoting activities on Carpathian Day at the national level in their respective countries, in coordination with the respective Convention Focal Points.
- The **Carpathian Convention Secretariat** [hosts the Carpathian Day webpage](#), the [form for event submissions](#), and shares critical updates and dissemination materials with Carpathian Convention National Focal Points and networks.

SUGGESTED ROADMAP FOR FUTURE CARPATHIAN DAY OPERATIONALIZATION:

These suggestions are to be considered for future Carpathian Day celebrations and also integrate recommendations from Carpathian ESD Experts.

1. Branding & Promotion

- a. **Theme:** Each year, a focus topic for the Carpathian Day will be selected by the Carpathian ESD Expert Network, the Convention Focal Points and the Carpathian Convention Secretariat.
 - b. **Promotional Materials:**
 - i. Carpathian Day Website
 - ii. Carpathian Day Poster & template (template will allow for editing in local languages and local event details)
 1. Receive submissions from young people in the Carpathians to determine a design for Carpathian Day
 2. Submission materials include name, age, country, art. To be submitted by mid-October allowing for revision and approval by the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.
 - iii. Carpathian Day social media photo file(s) & #CarpathianDay
 - iv. Carpathian Day logo (this can be created/determined by the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee or have a one-time art contest)
 1. Receive submissions from young people in the Carpathians to determine a design for Carpathian Day
 2. Submission materials include name, age, country, art. To be submitted by mid-October 2025 allowing for revision and approval by the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.
 - v. Carpathian Day theme and slogan.
 - c. **Educational Kit:** This kit provides suggested Carpathian Day activities/ideas for various actors to implement at their events for highlighting the year's thematic focus. This provides a starting base for hosts to work from and generate additional ideas. It would also create continuity between the events and a feeling of belonging between all participants, so a Carpathian Day community could be slowly established.
 - d. **Giveaway Materials:** A Carpathian Day bag, water bottle, or some other giveaway to give to national Carpathian Day coordinators to then disseminate to/at local events, depending on resource availability
 - e. **Media:** Involvement of media to promote local events is important, but also to organize press conferences in the Carpathian countries may appeal to national ministries.
2. **Coalition Organizing:** A voluntary Carpathian Day committee that (1) coordinates efforts across the region for inspiring and promoting events and (2) liaisons between local event hosts and the Carpathian Convention.
- a. **Makeup:** informal, voluntary roles made up 14-24 members from the Carpathian ESD Expert Network, CNPA, national agencies or other interested participants, with 2 contacts from each country
 - b. **Tasks:**



- i. Recruit local Carpathian Day hosts and share relevant updates with their contacts, and asking local hosts to register their event on the Carpathian Day website
 - ii. Gather input from local hosts to connect with and inform the Carpathian Convention Secretariat (and state ministerial representatives) about these events/efforts. This involves reporting about all the local Carpathian Day events that took place in their respective country.
 1. Information about the Carpathian Day events will be collected and reported during meetings of the Carpathian ESD Expert Network and CNPA to exchange experience, best practices and lessons learned, as well as at the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meetings.
 2. Such information to collect from Carpathian Day hosts includes data on participants, completed activities and other outcomes.
 - iii. Create (translate) and distribute promotional materials with their contacts, including the Carpathian Day theme and slogan
 - iv. Create (translate) and distribute the educational kit
 - c. **Chair:** The chair of the committee has the following responsibilities:
 - i. Planning committee meetings as necessary
 - ii. Coordinating communications and deadlines among the committee
3. **Funding:**
- a. Finding sponsoring partners would be very helpful. Local sponsors/organizing partners can contribute some giveaways.

For local hosts to have a successful Carpathian Day event, some suggested steps include:

1. **Find local partners:** partner with local schools, protected areas, NGOs, public authorities, libraries or others to organize an event or activity to promote Carpathian natural and cultural heritage.
2. **Set a date and time:** find a time on or around 26 September for holding the event.
3. **Plan and promote the event:** utilize suggested activities from the Carpathian Day Educational Kit and use the templates and other promotional materials for their communications and marketing. Some suggested activities from Carpathian ESD experts include:
 - a. Involving activities related to mountain hikes and involving hikers and mountaineers in the Carpathians, collaborating with those contributing to Via Transilvanica in Romania and involve some segments of the way in hikes during the Carpathian Day.
 - b. Involving GIS activities, such as a contest or some other shared activities. For example, teams organizing hikes in the Carpathians could share their experience and information in a visualized way in the form of story maps. This could also be used to promote the Carpathians.
4. **Register the event:** submit your event on the Carpathian Day website for further promotion and connection with other hosts across the region.