

## Annual report for the year 2020

State: Ukraine

Name of the area: Carpathian Biosphere Reserve

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

2012, 8 years

### Central authority concerned:

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### Authority responsible for its management:

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**1. Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No conditions were attached to the award of the European Diploma

**2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

***1. continue efforts to provide the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve with more appropriate funding and to raise more additional funds from external sources;***

Funding of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (CBR) is accomplished by means of the State Budget of Ukraine according to the current Legislation. At the same time, costs from local budgets, charity funds, institutions, organizations and from individual citizens or other sources are not forbidden by the Law, and can also be involved. There's an annual growth of budget. In 2020 it was 76 million UAH from the state budget. A significant increase in funding during last years was caused by the allocation of special funds for the land tax payment which were to be made by the Reserve into the budgets of the territorial communities in the area of CBR's activity. A total of 39 million UAH has been allocated in 2020 for 15 communities. Part of this money, as agreed earlier, will be returned to the budget of the institution and used for implementation of the projects that are important for both the CBR and local communities. In particular, by the end of 2020, about 20 km of roads that go through the territory of the CBR and lead to the traditional cattle grazing sites are planned be repaired using the above-mentioned funds.

In 2016, the implementation of the Ukrainian-German project "Support for Protected Areas in Ukraine" (2016-2022) with a total budget of 14 million euro was launched. The main objective of the project is to improve the management and effectiveness of the selected protected areas in Ukraine (the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is one of them), as well as to increase or maintain a high level of perception of such territories by local communities. In particular, in 2020 a radio communication system, which had been installed earlier, was improved by installing amplifiers that increase the range of radio stations. Also, the Project allocated funds for the professional capacity-building courses for the representatives of the institution. New website development has started for the reserve, as well as the preparation of a communication strategy; funds have been allocated for the tourist and recreational infrastructure development.

In 2020, the institution was granted charitable funds to improve its logistics. In particular, hardware worth EUR 3,000 was purchased.

In the reporting year, the team of the reserve prepared three project applications in the call of proposals funded by the European Union (HU-SK-RO-UA ENI CBC Programme and LIFE Programme). The results of the proposals evaluation are expected to be known in December 2020.

***2. accelerate liaison with the authorities of Romania so as to complete the process of establishing a transfrontier Biosphere Reserve within the next two to three years;***

An important objective for the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is to establish a transboundary biosphere reserve (TBR) in the Maramures Mountains together with the Romanian partner – the Maramures Mountains Nature Park. This activity is envisaged by "The strategy of the Carpathian Convention implementation" adopted by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 11-p on January 16, 2007.

Intense activities on establishing a TBR were planned for 2020. In particular, it was expected to conduct several exchange meetings between the administrations of the CBR and other protected areas of the Ukrainian-Romanian border region. Due to the pandemic, which had made it impossible to organize those visits, the activities were postponed to 2021.

***3. pay more attention to the elaboration and implementation of clear strategies and actions plans for the development of co-ordinated green activities around the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, working in close co-operation with the local stakeholders and in line with the presidential guidance;***

The Coordination council operates at the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve. According to the Regulations about the Coordination council, it meets for discussing major interaction aspects of the protected area with communities, cooperation possibilities and mitigation of the conflicts of interests. The council, in addition to a wide representation of the reserve's employees, includes representatives of the local authorities, mayors of towns and villages, directors of the state forestry enterprises, major entrepreneurs, and representatives of wide public, NGOs, educators and activists. In 2020, 1 meeting of the Coordination Council took place. At this meeting, important issues of socio-economic development of the region were considered, as well as the ecological situation in the context of development programs, plans for the future and the mechanisms for improving cooperation between the CBR administration and stakeholders.

As informed previously, a great role in the context of environmental measures was played by the completion of works on establishment of the transition zone to ensure connectivity of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve's massifs. It was approved by a decision of the Bureau of the MAB Program's International Coordinating Council in March 2017. The CBR administration has finished signing a number of relevant agreements with local communities. 17 towns and villages of Rakhiv and Tiachiv districts, as well as the territories of 5 state-owned forestry companies, have become part of the transition zone with a total area of more than 130,000 hectares. In 2020, the CBR administration continued cooperation with some of the communities within the transition zone to support the traditional high-mountain farming. In particular, the CBR has launched a program to support local farmers by demonstrating the experience of using electric fences, which serve as an effective tool to prevent conflicts between people and large carnivores. The reserve facilitated the purchase and installation of 2 electric fences for the apiary and sheepfold in the transition zone.

In parallel to this activity, the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve's representatives regularly visit community meetings of the towns and villages within the reserve's scope of activity, and also meet the initiative groups and NGOs. As well a great number of ecoeducation activities were organized at schools and kindergartens within the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve's scope of activity. The reserve actively disseminates ecological knowledge and information about green economy, sustainable development, balanced nature resource use and alternative energy sources.

In previous years, on the initiative of the reserve's administration, several important documents of the national level were adopted (Decree of the President of Ukraine (2013), the Resolutions and the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014, 2016, 2018) aimed at ensuring sustainable development and improvement of mountain settlements in the scope of CBR's activity. These documents, in particular, envisage restoration of the railway connection between the town of Rakhiv and Kyiv, solving problems of collecting, storing and utilizing of domestic waste, financial support for construction of the International Capacity Building and Research Center for Primeval Beech Forests and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, the restoration of motorways and some elements of tourist and recreation infrastructure, development and implementation of pilot projects for heating systems' refurbishing, restoration of the damaged automobile border-crossing point on the Ukrainian-Romanian border and so on. Some of the measures have already been implemented, the other part of them have remained without funding, and, accordingly, will be postponed for future. In particular, new railway connections with the largest cities of Ukraine were opened, which had significantly intensified tourism in this territory, and, accordingly, revenue in local budgets and the growth of the local population's welfare. Another example of implementation of the above-mentioned documents, which really improves the economic situation, is the program of major repairs and construction of roads leading directly to the reserve's territory.

In 2020, the implementation of the State Program for the Development of the Ukrainian Carpathian Region for the period 2020-2022 approved by the Government of Ukraine in 2019 went on. It contained a number of measures that were supposed to be implemented in the territory of the CBR and the adjacent settlements. In particular, it envisages the construction of the International Capacity-Building Centre for Primeval Beech Forests Protection, Ecoeducation and Sustainable Development at the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

***4. provide the Council of Europe with adequate and detailed figures, information and data on the legislation concerning the wolf (Canis lupus) in Ukraine and the enforcement of that legislation in the country, especially with regards to Article 6 of the Bern Convention; the State Party should be urged to report on this issue to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention at its next meeting, and encouraged to strengthen its efforts on reducing the poaching activities in and around the Diploma-holding area;***

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Protection of wildlife" and "On Environmental Protection" wolf as wild forest animal are an integral part of forest ecosystems and the State property. Fact that wolf lives in more than one region of Ukraine, commits to apply the status of a natural resource of the national importance. In 1994, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention implies that the wolf should be protected as an animal that exists here in in-situ conditions, i.e. in its native wild. In 1996, the Parliament ratified the Berne Convention with reservations, one of which relates to the wolf: "Ukraine is allowed in limited quantities, in terms of the appropriate control on such species listed in Annex II to the Convention: selective regulation of wolf (*Canis lupus*) number ...".

According to the Law of Ukraine "On game management and hunting" (2000, No. 1478-III (as amended)), wolf shooting in Ukraine is carried out based on a hunting license in the period from October to February inclusive. The price for obtaining a license on wolf is set by the user of the hunting grounds. The shooting licenses are issued to hunters, indicating dates and place of hunting, taking into account hunting limits. The wolf hunting is also allowed if a hunter has a license for other game fauna representatives (that is, along with hunting other animals).

For a comprehensive solution the problem of preservation and regulation of the wolf population in Ukraine a state program that provides comprehensive research and adequate funding is needed. The scientists of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve developed the Action Plan for Wolf Conservation in the scope of CBR's activity (covering an area of about 300 000 hectares), which contains specific recommendations aimed at preserving the wolf population in this part of the Ukrainian Carpathians. According to this Action Plan, the reserve's administration has launched an information campaign among the locals on wolves' conservation in the region. Field inspections are organized by the rangers of the reserve to detect poaching in the places where such cases are the most likely to happen.

Wolf population number in the territory of the biosphere reserve is determined by an inventory (census), which is conducted in the beginning of winter by tracking the animals simultaneously throughout the reserve. The number of wolves ranged from 35 to 44 individuals in the reserve's area during last 5 years (min. in 2015, max. in 2018), which corresponds to a population density of 0.9-1.2 individuals per 1000 hectares. It is likely that these data are somewhat higher due to the large mobility of this predator (there is a possibility that one and the same specimens are captured few times in different parts of the reserve). In addition, during a year all visual observations of the wolves or their tracks are recorded. During the last 5 years, the annual number of registered observations of the wolves ranged from 172 to 269. The obtained data are analyzed and mapped. Recommendations on number regulation for the wolves and opposing poaching in the area of the reserve are also developed.

***5. devote priority efforts to the monitoring and conservation of the European mink and to the control of the population of the American mink within the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve;***

In the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve only European mink has been noticed. The state of its population is monitored. Last five years annually 4-9 observations are registered in the Chornohora and Keveliv field divisions of CBR (min. in 2017 and 2020, max. in 2016). This year the administration of the reserve are going to purchase photo traps for special observations and census of European Mink. During the reporting year, the European mink was observed 4 times in the territory of the reserve.

American mink is never registered on the territory of the reserve.

***6. follow up the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations made in the reports on inventory and monitoring, and on the challenges and solutions for the management of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, published in 2008 and 2011, giving the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve the capacity to undertake these;***

The territory of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve has a distinct cluster character. CBR's functional zoning comprises the core zone (strict protection) and three zones where extensive land use practices such as selective logging, grazing, picking berries and mushrooms and hay-making are allowed in a restricted manner. In 2019, preparation and approval by the Ministry of the new Management Plan for the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve for the next 10-year period was accomplished. In 2020, the active phase of the implementation the 10-year development strategy and the 5-year action plan has begun.

Also in 2020, a new forest management project for the territory of the reserve was approved, the materials of which contains some qualitative and quantitative characteristics of each of the forest sites.

In 2019, the reserve's research team finished preparation of the materials for the CBR's territory expansion by adding the primeval and oldgrowth forest sites in the Tiachiv district (over 8,000 hectares). In addition, as part of this expansion process, it is planned to transmit over 9,000 hectares of natural beech and spruce forests within its territory under the direct management of the CBR administration - the ones which were previously subordinated to state-owned forestry companies. This year, the territory expansion project was approved by the relevant Ministries and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, as a result, it was submitted to the Administration of the President of Ukraine for preparation of the relevant Decree of the President of Ukraine.

Much efforts and resources have been directed at the conservation status monitoring and studying the impact of human activities. The monitoring is carried out by the scientific departments and laboratories of the reserve. Annually a volume of Chronicles of Nature is issued by the institution based on the results of the research and monitoring conducted by researchers in field conditions and the information provided by rangers. The data are analyzed and presented in this main report. As for the monitoring, the system of data collection is based on day-to-day field visits of the rangers responsible for the given area, as well as scheduled field trips of the scientists working in the scientific departments and laboratories of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

It is important, that within the framework of the already mentioned Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine", a special environmental component is foreseen, which deals with developing special management plans aimed at preserving the most vulnerable habitats in the territory of the reserve. These management plans will include alpine meadows, forest glades and flood meadows, wetland ecosystems, natural forests, and primeval forests in particular.

***7. strengthen co-operation with the local socio-economic stakeholders, including the forest and the tourism sectors, and develop specific awareness pilot activities targeted on them; these activities should address the issue of climate change, and promote local adaptation measures to global warming, including alternative socio-economic measures, such as schemes for green tourism, carbon sequestration and payment for ecosystem services.***

Around the massifs of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, which have significant legislative limitations as for the use of natural resources, a transition zone that is deprived of these restrictions has been formed. This is the territory that serves as a pilot area for the implementation of various socio-economic projects that are consistent with the concept of sustainable development. The administration of the reserve, in close cooperation with local communities and key stakeholders, develops and implements a strategy for implementing this concept. It is important that the above-mentioned Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine" deals with the development of local communities as one of the key directions. This subprogram is a key one, and considerable funds will be allocated for its implementation. Although the pandemic has brought significant changes into the project implementation process, by the end of 2020 it is planned to launch a program of small grants for the local communities, which aims to address a number of crucial socio-economic issues.

In 2020, cooperation between the CBR with and the local communities had reached a new, better level. It was agreed that part of the costs to be received by the communities from the CBR as a land tax, will be used to address the issues that are relevant to both local population and the reserve. These are mostly infrastructural projects (repair of mountain roads, construction of new bridges, etc.) and the projects aimed at improving the awareness of the local population on the CBR's activities.

In the staff structure of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve the Department of Recreation and Sustainable Development is functioning, the main objective of which, along with the development of tourism and the corresponding infrastructure, is to ensure coordination of the interaction process with all territorial communities located within the transition zone of the biosphere reserve, as well as other key stakeholders. Among them: state forestry enterprises, farms, small and medium-sized businesses, NGOs, etc.

For the full implementation of the strategy, the Coordinating Council of the Reserve, which unites both local authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as key business stakeholders of the region, is a very important instrument. (See also the information on the Recommendation No. 3 attached)

An important role was played by the adoption of the national documents by the initiative of the administration of the biosphere reserve, such as the Decree of the President of Ukraine (2013), the Resolutions and the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014, 2016, 2018, 2019) aimed at ensuring sustainable development and improvement of mountain settlements located in the scope of CBR's activity (see also the information on the Recommendation No. 3 attached).

The CBR is contributing significant efforts to preserve the diversity of domestic animals and plants in the region, in particular by promoting them. An example of such activity is the start of buffalo grazing in one of the CBR's field divisions - the Narcissi Valley. Carpathian subspecies of buffaloes is a traditional domestic animal in this region, which in recent years has been on the verge of extinction. The Carpathian buffaloes greatly increase the attractiveness of this area and more tourists visit the area during the warm season, thus making the income from tourism higher. In addition, they help to effectively combat the overgrowth of the area with willows, which substantially reduces costs spent for maintaining local meadow ecosystems.

**3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes in the management of the institution neither in recent years nor in 2020 in particular.

The logistical support of the ranger service is of the key priorities of the reserve's management, which is more crucial due to its clustered structure, and due to the fact that those clusters are located at a considerable distance from settlements in inaccessible mountainous sites. The rangers require special all-terrain transport, special field gear, communication equipment, weapons, etc. The administration of the institution is not able to provide all the requirements because of the budget constraints. The Ukrainian-German project "Support of the Protected Areas in Ukraine", mentioned above, partially solves this problem by the allocating significant funds for strengthening the material and technical assets, in particular giving funds for the needs of the Rangers Service.

Management problems are also observed in certain types of ecosystems. The most threatened ones are meadow ecosystems, as well as wetlands. One of such problems is the forest succession in the territory of the Narcissi Valley, where semi-natural flood plains, which can also be treated as wetlands, are present. During last year, the traditional nature management measures (haymaking and willows cutting) have been carried out in "The Narcissi Valley" massif to maintain meadow plants communities and conservation of *Narcissus angustifolius* population. Activities aimed for the hydrological balance restoration have been held in this protected massif. The situation had been disturbed here before the area became protected. 7 hydrological constructions (flood-gates) were maintained on drainage channels (1 new was built in 2020).

**4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes since 2019

**5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

CBR actively disseminates information about the European Diploma during all meetings in its presentations, at all reports and information booklets about the reserve. The European Diploma logo is used in presentations and in information materials, on the reserve's website. You can check the illustrations by the link <http://cbr.nature.org.ua/doc/CBR.pdf>

The pandemic situation has made serious adjustments to the implementation of working plans for 2020. In particular, a number of activities within the framework of the project "Cooperation in Forest Research Ukraine-Switzerland", and the one conducted jointly with the University of Sustainable Development (Eberswalde, Germany), and higher education institutions of Ukraine, etc. were cancelled or postponed to next years.

Despite this, in 2020 the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve has done the following:

1. The CBR was the first among the protected areas belonging to the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine to successfully pass the state certification as a scientific institution and has received a relevant Certificate.
2. On May 25 - 30, the CBR organized a virtual study tour for the students of the University of Sustainable Development (Eberswalde, Germany). It was attended by about 50 students from different countries. The topic of this event was related to the biosphere reserves management in the Carpathian region of Ukraine on the example of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.
3. In April and October, by the order of the Ministry of Environment, the CBR represented Ukraine at 2 meetings of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) of the UNESCO World Heritage Property "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe", conducted via Zoom, and also during the year the reserve participated in several international seminars dedicated to the management of the UNESCO World Heritage Property and its buffer zone.
4. In 2019, three wetlands from the territory of CBR were granted the status of Wetlands of International Importance and got included into the List of the Ramsar Sites. This year, the passports have been prepared for these sites, which are currently being approved by the Ministry of Environment. Elaboration of relevant management plans is underway.