COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres

Annual report for the year 2019

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, 7 years

Central authority concerned:

Name: Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection of Ukraine

Address: 35, Mytropolyta V. Lypkivskoho str., Kyiv, Ukraine 03035

Tel: +380 44 2063164

Fax: +380 44 2063107

e-mail: secretar@menr.gov.ua

www: http://menr.gov.ua

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Carpathian Biosphere Reserve

Address: 77, Krasne Pleso str., Rakhiv, Zakarpatska oblast, 90600

Tel: +380 3132 22193

Fax: +380 3132 22659

e-mail: cbr-rakhiv@ukr.net

www: http://cbr.nature.org.ua

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 2019 it was 64 million UAH from the state budget. A significant increase in funding during the reporting year 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 29 million UAH has been allocated for 15 communities. About 50% of the annual budget goes for scientific research, conservation activities, and ecotourism facilities development.

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 2019 a radio communication system was installed at the expense of the project. Also, the project allocated funds for the professional capacity-building courses for the representatives of the institution.

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 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.

The first version of the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) and Maramures Mountains Nature Park (Romania) in 2009. The MoU envisages establishment of the transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures mountain range, and it clearly regulates the interaction of the parties, and provides a roadmap for future steps to be undertaken to reach this goal. In 2014 the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve together with the Romanian partners ended their participation in the international project BIOREGIO-Carpathians. One of the important issues for us was to establish TBR in the Maramures Mts. Also a renewed Memorandum of Understanding containing more items specifically for TBR's establishment signed in 2014. In 2014, the Romanian partners prepared a nomination dossier for obtaining the status of the UNESCO biosphere reserve. This status is a prerequisite for establishing the transboundary biosphere reserve in the Maramures Mountains. However, the process of preparing the nomination dossier is currently incomplete, since not all the communities located in the territory of the Maramures Mountains Nature Park (Romania) have agreed on the above-mentioned document. Currently, the active work is being carried out jointly with the administration of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve to convince the Romanian territorial communities in signing the nomination dossier. In particular, in December 2014 the Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council of Maramures (Romania) and the Rakhiv District State Administration and the Rakhiv District Council of Zakarpattia region (Ukraine) was signed, directed at solving environmental and socio-economic problems for the settlements located in the upper Tisza basin on the Ukrainian-Romanian border - the communities, which were planned for the agreed international Ukrainian-Romanian Maramures Mountains Biosphere Reserve.

In March 2019, a meeting of the representatives of the administrations of 4 protected areas of Ukraine located in the border area was held to coordinate their efforts in establishing a transboundary biosphere reserve with the involvement of several reserves and national nature parks of Ukraine and Romania. As a result, a working group was set up to work out a draft memorandum and organize a meeting with the Romanian partners to discuss a new concept of a transboundary biosphere reserve.

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 2019, 2 meetings of the Coordination Council took place. At these meetings, 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.

In 2019, the process of signing a new version of the Memorandum on Cooperation in Preservation and Sustainable Use of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve's Natural Complexes as Part of the Transnational UNESCO World Heritage Property "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe" and the issues of sustainable development within adjacent territories" as prepared by the administration of the biosphere reserve was accomplished. The Memorandum was signed by municipalities and authorities of Rakhiv and Tiachiv districts.

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 2019, the CBR administration continued cooperation with some of the communities within the transition zone to support the traditional high-mountain farming.

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 2019, the Government of Ukraine approved the State Program for the Development of the Ukrainian Carpathian Region for the period of 2020-2022, which contained a number of measures that were supposed to be implemented in the territory of the CBR and adjacent settlements. In particular, it envisages the construction of the International Capacity-Building Center 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 46 individuals in the reserve's area during last 5 years, 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 150 to 245. The obtained data are analyzed and marked on maps (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. Every year there 1-2 individuals are met in the Chornohora and Keveliv field divisions of CBR. Special measures to restore its population number in the reserve are not carried out due to lack of special funding. The administration of the biosphere reserve prepares project proposals to relevant donors in order to get enough funding for in-depth studies of the European mink. During the reporting year, the European mink was observed 5 times in the territory of the reserve.

As for the American mink, it is important to note that neither in the territory of the reserve nor in its vicinity this species has ever been observed in the entire history of observations. There are no farms in the region that breed American minks, which might be a source of penetration of this introduced species into the wild.

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 the light of this document, the functional zoning of the territory is reviewed and the differentiated regime of the territory protection and reproduction and use of its natural complexes was established. The territory of the UNESCO World Heritage Property is fully included into the core area, and thus it is withdrawn from any economic management. This is also applied to other primeval forest sites that are not part of the World Heritage Property, for example, spruce primeval forests. Also, the Management Plan defines the strategy for the CBR's development of the period of next ten years, as well as the list of effective measures for the development of the reserve and protection, restoration and use of its natural complexes for five years is provided.

Also in 2019, a new forest management project for the territory of the reserve was prepared, 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. The project is currently going through the process of agreement by the Government 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. In 2019, a new team of experts have been identified within the project, who will be involved in the implementation of activities on social and economic development of the communities.

In the stuff 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)

One of the first joined pilot activities with the local authorities is launching of the demonstrative alpine sheep farm, which would combine modern approaches in energy efficiency and principles of sustainability with the traditional practices of sheep keeping. In recent years, special agreements have been elaborated aimed at the development of highland farming in the territory of the reserve. During the reporting year, these agreements were practically implemented in the territories that were under the joint management of the biosphere reserve together with two local communities - the villages of Lazeshchyna and Dilove. The experience gained will be used as the basis for the dissemination of this cooperation to the rest of the communities in the scope of CBR's activity.

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) 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).

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 2019 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. Also, the issue of improving the protected area's ranger service was reflected (as suggested by the propositions of the administration of the reserve) in the Presidential Decree "On additional measures for the development of forest management, rational nature use and protected areas preservation" (No. 381, 2017).

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. 6 hydrological constructions (flood-gates) were maintained on drainage channels (1 new was built in 2019).

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 2018

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.

In 2019, in addition to the mentioned above, the following important events took place at the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve:

1. The scientists of the reserve took an active part in implementation of the international scientific projects "Cooperation in Forest Research Ukraine-Switzerland" and "Transboundary Cooperation in Teaching and Practice".

2. For 14 years there exists a fruitful cooperation between the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and the University of Sustainable Development (Eberswalde, Germany). In June 2019 an exciting study tour for students of this International University was organized and held. It was attended by about 50 students from different countries from Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. The topic issue of this study tour was the issues related to biosphere reserves management in the Carpathian region of Ukraine on the example of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

3. 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 Ramsar Sites.

4. CBR was a co-organizer of the international scientific conference "Temperate and boreal primeval forests in the face of global change" (September 2-7, 2019, Lviv). Over 120 scientists from 18 countries participated in it.