



The Carpathian
natural and cultural
heritage:

A wealth to be
protected on an
international level



CARPATHIAN
NETWORK
OF PROTECTED
AREAS



Carpathian range

C

An area of an extreme richness

Carpathian mountain range covers about 209.000 km² of the Central and Eastern Europe, extending from Austria to Serbia, covering most of Slovakia and Romania as well as parts of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine.

Ecologically varying areas...

From the small hills to the summits exceeding 2500 m



a. s. l., the countryside of the Carpathians is extremely various. This extraordinary natural and ecological diversity makes them of the main natural habitats in Europe, sheltering almost 4.000 plant species, of which one third are



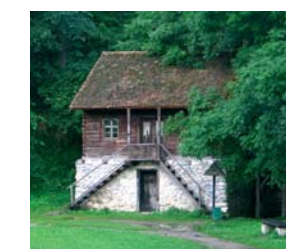
endemic, to the largest European population of large carnivores (bear, wolf, lynx) as well as one of largest European forest regions. The variety of conservation policies and different cultures makes the Carpathians a very diverse area even though the whole range is situated in the same biogeographical region.



... under human influence

Besides this natural diversity, this mountain range possesses also an extremely rich cultural heritage with traditional economic activities. Seven different nations with seven diverse languages and a heterogeneous history have influenced the evolution of the countryside for hundreds of years.

The Carpathian landscape has been formed by far-



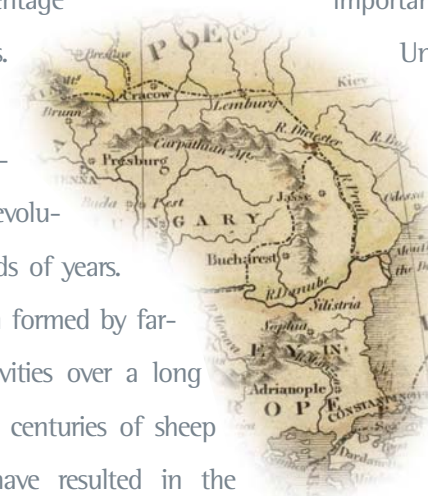
ming activities over a long time. The centuries of sheep grazing have resulted in the creation of numerous semi-natural habitats and many extensive small-

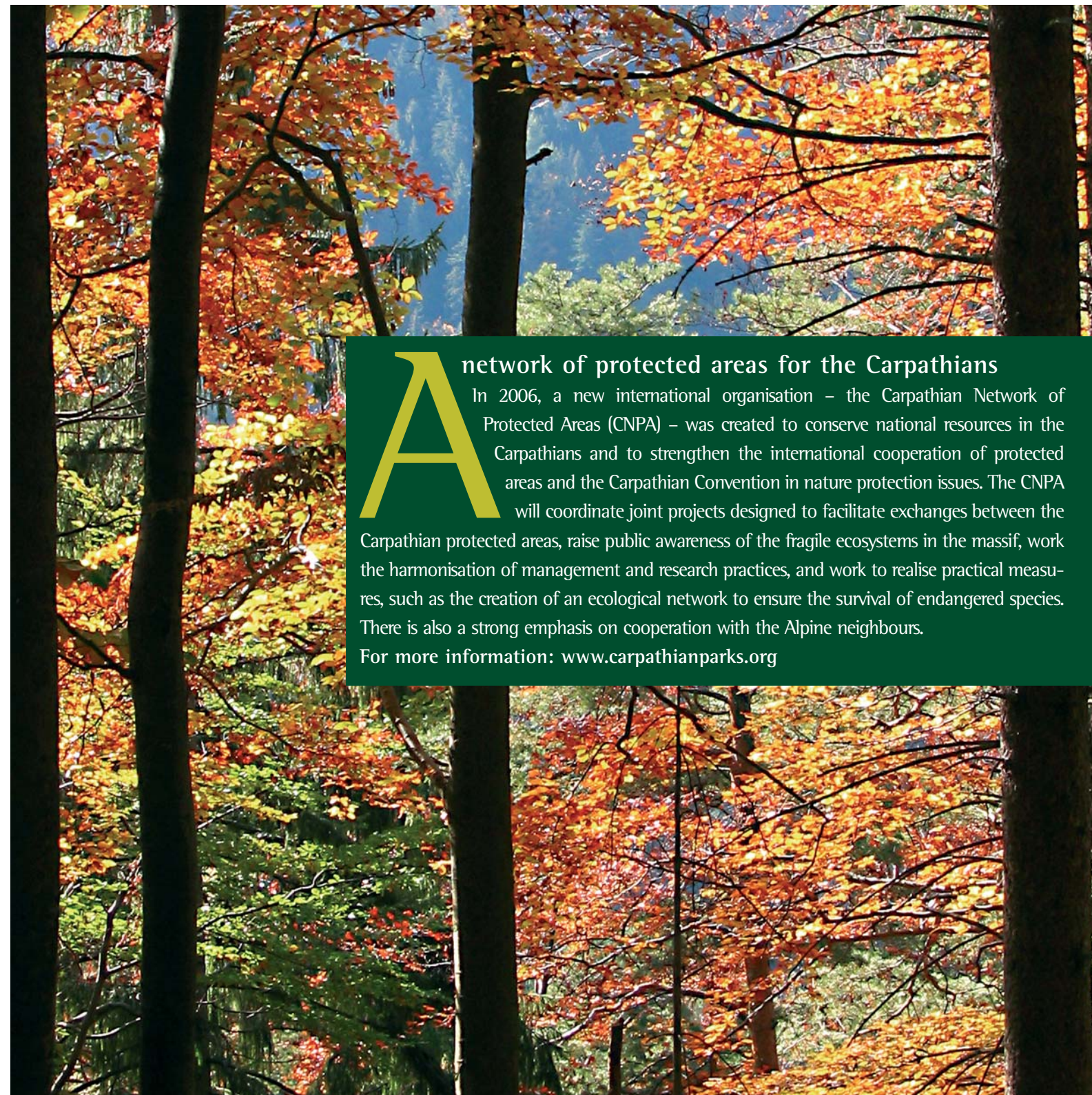
scale farms were saved from land collectivisation and represent today important landscape elements.

Unfortunately, for several

decades human activi-

ties have had a negative influence on the countryside and the biodiversity rather in the negative way. Some areas are over-industrialized, big ski resorts have been developed, often very near or inside a protected area, and intensive farming makes excessive use of chemical fertilizers. Moreover, the landscape fragmentation by the roads and highways makes more difficult the genetic exchanges of many animal species.





A network of protected areas for the Carpathians

In 2006, a new international organisation – the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) – was created to conserve national resources in the Carpathians and to strengthen the international cooperation of protected areas and the Carpathian Convention in nature protection issues. The CNPA will coordinate joint projects designed to facilitate exchanges between the Carpathian protected areas, raise public awareness of the fragile ecosystems in the massif, work the harmonisation of management and research practices, and work to realise practical measures, such as the creation of an ecological network to ensure the survival of endangered species. There is also a strong emphasis on cooperation with the Alpine neighbours. For more information: www.carpathianparks.org

◆ The CNPA – contributing to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention

Conservation and sustainable development in the Carpathians are the CNPA's main priorities. The CNPA is a tool for implementing the Carpathian Convention, and represents the interests and needs of the Carpathian protected areas with national and international authorities and organisations. By implemen-

ting the decisions and recommendations of different Carpathian Convention bodies and other relevant international programs or European directives (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, NATURA 2000 network, Water Framework Directive, etc), and by working to promote sustainable livelihood, the CNPA is directly involved in guaranteeing conservation and sustainable use of the Carpathians' natural and cultural resources.



◆ The CNPA – working on practical issues

Nature knows no borders and since environmental policies vary from one country to another, it is useful to coordinate conservation activities within a biogeographical region. A number of topics have been already identified for closer cooperation between the Carpathian protected areas, including monitoring large carnivores, forest management, developing sustainable tourism and habitat conservation. The Carpathians contain a wealth of biodiversity but centuries of human activities have resulted in widespread

fragmentation of the natural habitat. Animal and plant migrations, which are vital for their long-term survival, are under threat. An ecological continuum needs to be created to allow these migrations to work. This will link up the protected areas and other sites of great ecological importance so as to develop a more dynamic form of conservation. The protected areas can also assess the impact of climate change on natural habitats and species. Special monitoring activities will be organised within the protected areas to learn more about this threat.

European mountain cooperation: Alpine-Carpathian partnership

In 1999 the first cooperation projects started between the protected areas of both mountain ranges, with the participation of the Carpathian protected areas managers within the Alpine events. Since its beginning in 2003, the process of the CNPA establishment has been supported by the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, with the help of several Alpine countries, especially Germany, France and the Principality of Monaco.

The CNPA was created in the frame of the Carpathian Convention. The process of establishment of the Carpathian Convention is supported by UNEP, Italy, Principality of Liechtenstein and Austria.



In 2003 the CNPA Partnership Steering Committee explored in collaboration with ALPARC the expectations of the Carpathian protected areas towards the future network, the challenges they face and their interests on various topics. A series of meetings, on topics defined as the key themes, have been organized since 2004: "NATURA 2000" colloquium, "Integrated management in protected areas" workshop and "Tourism management and sustainable development" workshop in several Alpine and Carpathian countries.

The Kiev Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Carpathian Convention officially founded the CNPA in 2006 as a practical instrument of implementing the Convention's provisions on conservation. A coordination unit will be responsible for managing the projects involving protected areas in the massif.

Which ways of cooperation for the protected areas?

Active cooperation is the key for effective nature protection and restoration as well as for the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. The principal function of the CNPA is to provide networks to facilitate the different activities and exchanges between protected area managers:

◆ Thematic network

An important role of the CNPA is to organize the exchanges between the protected areas, within the Carpathian range as well as with other mountain ranges for better management. But the thematic network building is not limited only to the exchanges. It means also the establishment of tools for international cooperation, preparation and leading of international projects, publication of handbooks, guidelines, issues, newsletters and virtual tools like an Internet website and an information database platform.

◆ Ecological network

The centuries of human activities have fragmented the landscape into divided parcels of natural habitats. Roads, open fields and other human constructions obstruct the genetic exchange of many animal species. An important issue of international cooperation within the mountain range is the ecological continuum through the whole Carpathians, to facilitate migration of animals. A connection to the Alpine ecological continuum in the region around Vienna (Austria) and Bratislava (Slovakia) would allow the natural migration between both mountain ranges.

◆ Climate change

Global climate change is recognized as one of the most important threats of our times. Areas first influenced by these changes, are the cold areas – Arctic and mountain regions. Many fauna and flora species risk to disappearing because of changing ecological conditions. The functions of protected areas, supported by the CNPA, within this complex issue are especially in the monitoring and conservation of threatened species and habitats as well as in ecological and environmental education.

◆ Awareness raising activities

A part of nature protection is also the education of the large public. Considering that every year the parks are frequented by numerous visitors, the impact of their educational and environmental awareness raising activities may be very important, aimed at changing the way people think about the environment. Therefore, the role of the CNPA and the parks is not only nature conservation, but also to give the example of a sustainable land management for the non-protected areas.

A framework convention for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians

Recently, there have been many changes in Central and Eastern Europe. In this time of change, a new international agreement will provide a framework for conservation and sustainable development in the Carpathians. The Carpathian Convention, adopted in 2003 by seven Carpathian countries, is a framework agreement establishing cooperation and a comprehensive policy on conservation and sustainable development in the Carpathians. It is designed to protect the Carpathian region and ensure sustainable human, social, cultural and economic development. Now that it has entered into

force, the challenge is to translate the framework Convention into practical commitments and actions on the ground – such as the creation of the CNPA.

Already almost 300 CNPA members

Exchange within the CNPA occurs among active protected areas over 100 ha, i.e. those which have their own staff, or a responsible administrative body which can represent them. The level of protection within each category varies considerably, ranging from very strictly protected areas to areas that focus mainly on rural development. Since 1990, the number of protected areas has been constantly growing. For example, in 2003, 29 national parks were registered, and 38 in 2007.

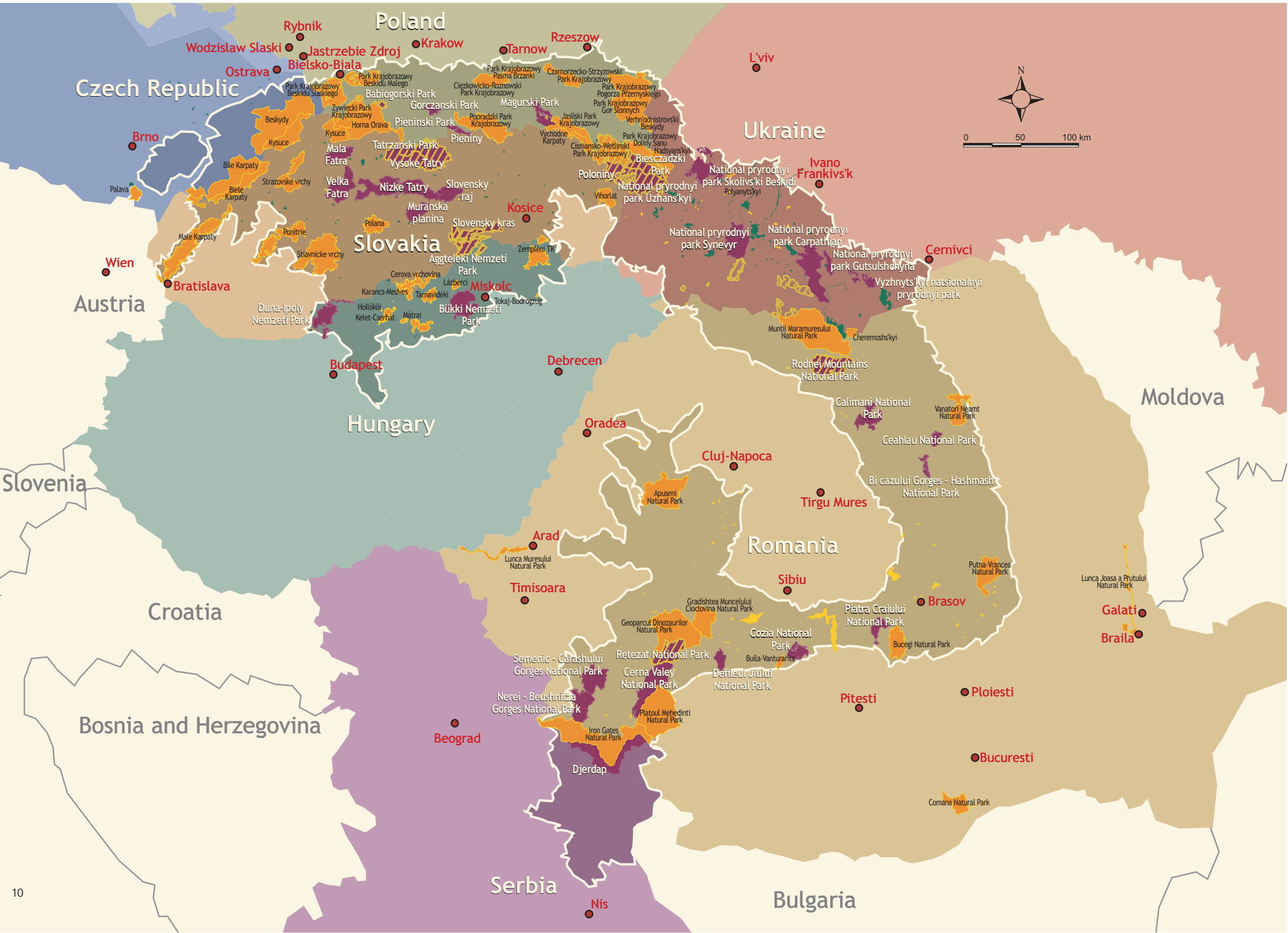
| | National park | | Protected landscape area | | Nature reserve | | Other type of protection | | Biosphere reserve | | Total* | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | Number | Area (ha) | Number | Area (ha) | Number | Area (ha) | Number | Area (ha) | Number | Area (ha) | Number | Area (ha) |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 203029 | 1 | 156 | 1 | 74660 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 277845 |
| Hungary | 3 | 95211 | 9 | 80394 | 10 | 2363 | 2 | 233 | 1 | 20231 | 25 | 198432 |
| Poland | 6 | 82365 | 12 | 453256 | 3 | 874 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 104507 | 25 | 641002 |
| Romania | 11 | 294418 | 10 | 689357 | 0 | 0 | 67 | 53324 | 2 | 83451 | 90 | 1120550 |
| Slovakia | 9 | 317890 | 11 | 483907 | 41 | 9627 | 3 | 621 | 4 | 154009 | 68 | 966054 |
| Ukraine | 8 | 227701 | 7 | 79816 | 39 | 63912 | 19 | 6492 | 9 | 86585 | 82 | 464506 |
| Serbia | 1 | 62943 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 62943 |
| Total | 38 | 1080528 | 52 | 1989759 | 94 | 76932 | 92 | 135330 | 20 | 448783 | 296 | 3731332 |

* "Total area" is the sum of all protected areas superficies. However the real extent of area under protection is smaller as some parks overlap
Note: "Other type of protection" category includes National Nature Monuments, Nature Monuments and Nature Conservation Areas



The CNPA – what next?

"New challenges in a constantly changing world" would be a fitting strapline for the CNPA network. The protected areas have a vital role to play in conservation within the Carpathians and in working to establish sustainable European environmental policies. The ongoing cooperation between the CNPA and its Alpine counterpart ALPARC is an ideal way of realising this vision. With its foundations in the Carpathian Convention, the CNPA will be the largest international organisation for cooperation between Carpathian protected areas and will improve cooperation with all other major stakeholders in the fields of nature conservation and sustainable development at a local, regional, national and international level. Nature will be confronted with numerous challenges in the near future: from the loss of biodiversity over the climate change up to social-economic impacts. The protected areas have the possibility and the obligation, to face up these challenges by developing the example of a wise nature management. Only the active cooperation between them can increase the probability of being able to counter these threats.



CARPATHIAN NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS



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