

## Press release

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### **New project to boost biodiversity protection and socio-economic development in the Carpathians – International project kick-off meeting in Bolzano**

16.04.2019, Bolzano, Italy

The Carpathians belong to the most important European eco-regions. They are a bastion of wildlife as well as the greatest remaining stands of old growth forest. At the same time, some of Europe's richest cultural landscapes are located in the Carpathians. Biodiversity loss and increasing pressures threaten its outstanding natural values. It calls for the development of transnational approaches to ensure that environmental concerns are fully taken into account in each Carpathian country.

The Centralparks project, co-funded by the European Commission through the INTERREG CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, has the overall budget of 1.6 Mio. EUR. The project unites 8 project partners and 8 associated partners from 9 European countries, aiming to harmonise management capacities in Carpathian Protected Areas. The project will support nature protection and local sustainable development, improve integrated environmental management capacities and policies, and will focus on mitigating current threats and pressures to biodiversity.

The official Kick-off meeting took place on 16-17<sup>th</sup> April in Bolzano, Italy. The meeting welcomed 8 project partners as well as representatives of national Ministries and the Carpathian Convention. The expert meeting provided a platform for intense knowledge exchange through action plans, strategies and cooperation strategies that will provide guidance for the project.

“The Centralparks project is building bridges between the Carpathian countries and creates a big opportunity to improve management capacities for the Carpathian Protected Areas.”

Isidoro De Bortoli – EURAC Research

“The Carpathians are an important reservoir for biodiversity. The Carpathian Convention welcomes the Centralparks project and supports the initiatives that contribute significantly to nature protection and local sustainable development in the Carpathians, as well as to the long-term anchoring of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas.”

Harald Egerer – Head UNEP Vienna  
Secretariat of Carpathian Convention

Centralparks intends to take cooperation in the Carpathians forward!

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Word count: words: 313, characters with spaces: 2,263

**For press queries:**

Hanna Öllös

Centralparks Communication Manager

European Wilderness Society

E: [hanna.ollos@wilderness-society.org](mailto:hanna.ollos@wilderness-society.org)

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