

**REPORT ON THE JOINT WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE/IUCN REACTIVE MONITORING
MISSION TO THE ALBANIAN AND ROMANIAN COMPONENTS OF THE
TRANSNATIONAL WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY “ANCIENT AND PRIMEVAL BEECH
FORESTS OF THE CARPATHIANS AND OTHER REGIONS OF EUROPE”**

**(ALBANIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CROATIA, ITALY, GERMANY, ROMANIA,
SLOVENIA, SLOVAKIA, SPAIN, UKRAINE)**

FROM 13 TO 22 NOVEMBER 2019



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FMP	Forest Management Plan
HA	Hectare
IMP	Integrated Management Plan
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KM	Kilometre
M3	Cubic meter
NAPA	National Agency for Protected Areas
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
RAPA	Regional Agency for Protected Areas
Romsilva	National Forest Administration
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SOUV	Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHC	World Heritage Centre

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A special thank you also goes to the interpreters.

All people consulted during the mission are listed in the Annex 6.3, possible omissions are unintentional and exclusively the authors' responsibility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Albanian and Romanian components of the transnational property took place from 13 to 22 November 2019.

The mission has met many stakeholders representing the public services, municipalities, experts and scientists, the private sector, the civil society as well as NGOs ([Annex 7.4](#)).

The mission has also visited ([Annex 7.5](#)):

- four components and their buffer zones in Romania, in two national parks: Cheile Nerei-Beuşniţa, a strict nature reserve, located in the strict protected zone of the eponymous National park, and Domogled-Coronini-Bedina, Iauna Craiovei and Ciucevele Cernei, also strict nature reserves, all located in Valea Cernei, within the Domogled Valea Cernei National Park;
- two components and their buffer zones in Albania: Lumi i Gashit located within the Valbona Valley National Park and Rrajca situated within the Shebenik-Jablanicë National Park.

With regard to:

- **Albania**, the mission concludes that there is no sign of significant degradation of either of the two components. Neither legal nor illegal logging appears to be conducted inside the component parts and their buffer zones, that may potentially impact the components' integrity and the property's OUV. Both component parts benefit from a high level of integrity although a few issues should be addressed in the future, that are developed here below within the recommendations;
- **Romania**, the mission concludes that the current management of the component parts' buffer zones does not meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines (OG) in a satisfactory way and may have negative effects on the integrity of the transboundary property. The current forest management should seek to better support the natural processes and be based on strengthening and expanding ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems over time. Further potential conservation issues include the envisaged upgrade of the national road 66A and hydropower facilities. These are also discussed in the recommendations hereafter;
- both **States Parties**, the mission noted a significant heterogeneity of management regimes across the transnational serial property that include regimes of conventional forestry such as clear-cuts, shelterwood cuttings and other types of interventions that are likely to disturb natural processes and to undermine the protective functions of buffer zones, which is not in line with the requirements of the OG.

Prior to the mission, the mission team was provided with the information submitted to the World Heritage Centre by all States Parties regarding the buffer zone management in their components, as was requested by the World Heritage Committee. The mission was also made aware during its visit to Romania that joint guidelines for the design and management of buffer zones across the whole property would be under consideration by the States Parties through their Coordination Office, and that Romania is supporting this process.

With regard to buffer zone management of this transnational property in general, the mission noted a significant heterogeneity of management regimes across the transnational property that include regimes of conventional forestry such as clear-cuts, shelterwood cuttings and other types of interventions that are likely to disturb natural processes and to undermine the protective functions of buffer zones, which is not considered to be in accordance with the requirements of the OG.

These conclusions lead to the following recommendations.

II LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

II-1 Recommendations for the Albanian and Romanian components

The mission recommends the State Party of **Albania** to:

1. *continue to ensure the strict protection of the two Albanian components and their buffer zones through rigorous enforcement of the relevant forest laws and regulations in both national parks and to ensure the prevention of illegal logging in their whole territories;*
2. *develop a specific monitoring program on the potential ecological effects of the existing hydropower facility in the buffer zone of the Lumi i Gashit component part and to report the results of such programme to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) through the state of conservation reporting process and, if concluded necessary, develop appropriate measures to minimize and manage those effects;*
3. *strengthen the operational fire-fighting capacities and equipment of the local public services, in order to best prevent and combat fire in the beech forest ecosystems, especially in the two components;*
4. *physically close the entrance of the roads in the buffer zones of both components and limit access exclusively to the public services and property owners and users;*
5. *improve marking of the components and buffer zone boundaries on the ground;*
6. *enhance technical, human and financial resources of the park management to strengthen significantly the management capacities for the two Albanian components of the property;*
7. *work further on a potential extension of the existing Lumi I Gashit component, with a view to strengthening the whole property's OUV and improving the long-term preservation and integrity of the component;*
8. *consult the WHC and IUCN on potential future modifications of the legal regime for the protection of species and/or hunting regulation and management, that may have deleterious effects on the property's components in Albania, prior to taking any decision on this matter.*

The mission recommends the State party of **Romania** to:

9. *define a forest management regime specific to the buffer zones that would be in keeping with the aim to ensure consistency and coordination across all buffer zones within the property, and that would promote the natural and unimpeded, progressive aging of the beech forest ecosystems present in the buffer zones. This regime should ensure an ecological transition between the component parts and the surrounding forest ecosystems of high ecological value, including those located in the buffer zones and, in case of Romania, the virgin and quasi-virgin forests listed in the "National Catalogue of Virgin Forests"¹.*

*This regime should prioritize natural processes and be based on "pro-forestation" efforts and clear guidelines on [appropriate intervention](#) activities and limits, in the sense of Decision **43 COM 7B.13** of the World Heritage Committee. It could include the establishment of a functional network of "aging" and "senescence" patches of forest, in the buffer zones, aiming to contribute to strengthening and extending the ancient and*

¹ <http://apepaduri.gov.ro/paduri-virgine/>. On the subject, also http://awsassets.panda.org/img/original/catalogul_padurilor_virgine.pdf and I.A.,Biriş (2017) - Situația pădurilor virgine din România, Bucharest, Greenpeace, 65 p ; <http://www.centreforeconomics.org/news-and-events/press-release-downloads/map-of-romanian-potential-primary-forests/>.

primeval beech forest ecosystems, and supporting the natural processes leading to their conservation and naturalness over time:

- *“pro-forestation” efforts should be interpreted as all forest management activities seeking to promote natural tree reproduction and development;*
 - *“aging patches” should be interpreted as forest areas managed in such a way as leaving the trees growing beyond their usual rotation age, up to twice this duration (200-240 years in case of Romania);*
 - *“senescence patches” should be interpreted as forest areas deliberately abandoned to a spontaneous evolution of natural processes, until the complete collapse of the trees and resumption of the silvigenetic cycle (forest cycle);*
10. *combat and prosecute any illegal logging activities in the two national parks in which the components of the property are located, as they may negatively impact on natural processes in beech forest ecosystems and thus on the property’s OUV;*
 11. *abandon plans to upgrade the national road 66A, due to the potential impact of this project on the property’s integrity and its OUV;*
 12. *In order to resolve the discrepancies between the reported and actual size of the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița component part, submit to the WHC an official letter, including a map, specifying the exact area of this component as inscribed in 2017 and as covered by the boundary polygons regardless of different land uses;*
 13. *inform the WHC, in line with Paragraph 172 of the OG, of any proposal to extend or upgrade hydropower facilities within the property’s components and their buffer zones, before any decision is taken;*
 14. *strictly protect all ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems that have not been included in the property, in order to foster the long-term preservation of those exceptional ecosystems; priority should be given to those located in proximity of the components visited by the mission, to enhance connectivity.*

II-2 Recommendations for the transnational property as a whole

The mission recommends that the States Parties of the transnational property:

15. *conduct on-the-ground assessments in the buffer zones and component parts where impactful forestry interventions such as clear-cuts and shelterwood cutting have been permitted, to ascertain the extent to which the effective protection of the respective components might be compromised and the OUV negatively affected;*
16. *enhance the connective and protective functions of the buffer zones and strengthen the integrity of the property by minimizing the use of forestry interventions;*
17. *ensure that any interventions avoid interference with the natural processes of the beech forest ecosystem taking into account the natural expansion of their surface and to strengthen their resilience;*
18. *support undisturbed natural processes in all components and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages, and to not take any decision that may affect the dynamics of such processes after external natural or anthropogenic events, such as fire, within or near the property’s components.*

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription history of the property

The transnational World Heritage property “*Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe*” was first inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2007, and subsequently extended in 2011 and 2017. The two extensions were applied to complement the property with important stages of beech forest development and to add significant beech forest types not yet covered by the existing property.

This transboundary property currently spans 12 countries and contains 78 components. It encompasses the most prominent and best-protected examples of the evolutionary and ecological development of the nemoral deciduous forest, which has evolved since the last ice age.

The components visited during the Reactive Monitoring mission were all part of the 2017 extension, under criterion (ix):

- four components in Romania in two different national parks, selected on the basis of forest management units and benefiting from strong legal protection regimes. Their buffer zones are set to encompass the components and they are subject to the conventional forest management regime: Cheile Nerei-Beuşniţa is a strict nature reserve, located in the strict protected zone of the eponymous National park; its buffer zone is located within the park limits. Domogled-Coronini-Bedina, Launa Craiovei and Ciucevele Cernei are also strict nature reserves; all are located in Valei Cernei, within the Domogled Valea Cernei National Park; their buffer zones coincide with the National Park itself;
- two components in Albania, Lumi i Gashit located within the Valbona Valley National Park and Rrajca situated within the Shebenik-Jablanicë National Park; both are strict nature reserves, surrounded by buffer zones.

1.2 Previous Decisions on the State of Conservation of the property

Three decisions were adopted by the World Heritage Committee since the designation of these components in 2017, specifically related to the Romanian and Albanian components², among other items:

In its **Decision 41 COM 8B.7**, the Committee requested the States Parties “*to strengthen the protection level within buffer zones and the improvement of ecological connectivity especially between component parts*” and to give “*special emphasis to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes with special emphasis on dead and decaying wood, including ongoing monitoring of threats and risks, making effective use of the expertise and institutional capacity in management of the property*”.

Decision 42 COM 7B.71 requested the State Party of Romania “*to ensure that logging is, and remains, strictly prohibited within the property, and that no logging operations are allowed in the buffer zones of the property, if they could have negative impact on natural processes and the property’s OUV*”.

In its latest **Decision 43 COM 7B.13**, the Committee reiterated its request, “*extending it to all States Parties, to ensure that logging is, and remains, strictly prohibited within the property,*

² The fourth decision (Decision 41 COM 7B.4) dealing specifically with the Slovakia components.

and that no logging operations are allowed in the buffer zones of the property if they could negatively impact natural processes and the property's OUV". The Committee also "reiterated the importance of good buffer zone design and effectiveness as the only feasible way to protect the integrity of the small forest remnants included in this property" and "urged the States Parties to define a clear and strict approach to buffer zone design and management which will allow for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to seek further guidance from the World Heritage Centre (WHC) and IUCN on this issue". With regard to Albania, the Committee regretted that "the State Party did not provide any update regarding the state of conservation of its components through the joint report submitted by the States Parties, and also requests it to provide a response to the letters from the WHC, especially regarding third party information about illegal logging in the buffer zone of one of the Albanian components". Regarding the Romanian components, the Committee noted with concern "the information provided by the State Party of Romania, which shows that logging operations undertaken in the buffer zones of the Romanian components of the property took place in areas close or adjacent to the boundaries of the components".

1.3 Justification of the current Reactive Monitoring mission

At its 43rd session, the Committee requested the States Parties of Albania and Romania to invite a joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Albanian and Romanian components of the transnational World Heritage property "*Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe*" (**Decision 43 COM 7B.13**, see also Annex 1).

The main objective of the mission is to assess whether activities in the buffer zones of the property might have negative impacts on its OUV.

The Committee also requested all States Parties of this transnational property to provide, prior to the mission "*an overview about the management of their respective buffer zones and the management operations regime, which took place since inscription*" (Decision hereabove).

According to its terms of reference, the mission should:

- in light of the concerns expressed by the Committee regarding "*logging operations undertaken in the buffer zones of the property in areas close or adjacent to the boundaries of the components*", assess whether these operations have had, or continue to have, any negative impacts on the property's OUV or might represent a potential threat in the future;
- in light of the missing update regarding the state of conservation of the Albanian components, and third party information about illegal logging in Shebenik-Jablanice National Park where one of the Albanian components of the property is located, and for which the Committee requested the State Party of Albania to provide a response, assess whether illegal logging in the Albanian components of the property, or their vicinity, represents a past, present or future threat to the property's OUV;
- in line with the above-mentioned Committee's requests to all States Parties of the property and noting the Committee's concern that "*no progress has been made on clear guidelines regarding acceptable logging activities within the established buffer zones*", evaluate:
 - whether the management regimes in the buffer zones of all components of this transnational property are compatible with the protection of the property's OUV;
 - the progress achieved by all States Parties of the property in addressing the Committee's request that "*special emphasis shall be given to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes with special emphasis on dead and decaying wood, including ongoing monitoring of*

threats and risks, making effective use of the expertise and institutional capacity in management of the property” (Decision 41 COM 8B.7);

- review any other relevant issues that may negatively affect the property’s OUV, including its conditions of integrity and protection and management.

The mission was also requested to hold consultations with the relevant authorities in Albania and Romania, including the Ministry of Water and Forests of Romania, Romania’s National Forest Management Corporation (Romsilva), the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Albania, the National Agency of Protected Areas of Albania, as well as relevant regional authorities in both countries and other relevant stakeholders.

Finally, based on the results of the above reviews, assessments and discussions, the mission was requested to prepare a concise report on the findings and recommendations following the site visit.

2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1 Legal and institutional framework

General information that follows is based on a technical report prepared by E.C.O. Institute of Ecology, Lakeside B07 b, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria, acting as the Coordination Office of the Joint Committee of the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe³.

A “*Joint Declaration of Intent*” for cooperation on the protection and management of the Joint World Heritage property “*Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe*” was signed by all 12 States Parties in August 2019, including Albania and Romania.

This agreement aims to develop mutual support and cooperation between the States Parties, for protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of this transboundary property to future generations; a “*Joint Management Committee*” (JMC) was established to ensure this overall management and coordination, at the site level, between the 12 States Parties.

2.1.1 Albania

The following specific information is based on a technical note prepared by the State Party, upon request of the World Heritage Committee, on “*the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Primeval Beech Forest of Albania*”⁴; this note was provided to the mission prior to its field visit.

2.1.1.1 General arrangements

³ Anon. (2019) – “*Overview about the current management regime and the management operations in the buffer zones of the UNESCO WH site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”*”, 05th of November 2019, Coordination Office, E.C.O. Institute of Ecology, Lakeside B07 b, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria ; coordination@beechforests.eu.

⁴ Anon. (2019 b) – “*Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe*” (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine). Overview about the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Primeval Beech Forests of Albania – Joint WH Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, 20 – 22 November 2019, 5 p.

The main applicable law is the Law no. 81/2017 on protected areas; among other important laws, Law no. 9587/2006 on nature protection amended in 2008 must also be mentioned.

Law no. 9385/2005 on forest and forestry services, Law no. 9693/2007 on pastures and, more recently, Law no.7/2014 on prohibition of hunting in the Republic of Albania for at least five years are likewise relevant.

2.1.1.2 Management structures

The mission visited the two Albanian components of the property:

- “*Lumi i Gashit*”, covering 1 261,52 hectares (ha) surrounded by a buffer zone of 8 977,48 ha;
- “*Rrajca*”, covering 2 129,45 ha surrounded by a buffer zone of 2 569,75 ha.

At national level, both components are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Environment (MTE) and of the National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA).

At regional level, they are placed under the operational management of two regional agencies for protected areas (RAPA), each composed of 2 units (the management unit and the monitoring unit) and responsible for all protected areas from the relevant regions respectively:

- the Kukës RAPA: 15 employees (6 managing and monitoring the Tropoja Protected Areas Network where the component is located), one staff member devoted to Lumi i Gashit;
- the Elbasan Regional Agency for Protected Areas (RAPA): 23 employees; Rrajca is monitored on part-time by one specialist and two rangers who cover all areas of the region.

2.1.2 Romania

The following specific information is based on a technical note delivered by the State Party upon request of the World Heritage Committee on “*Overview of the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe - Report of Romania*”⁵; this note was provided to the mission, prior to its field visit.

2.1.2.1 General arrangements

Romania became a State Party to the World Heritage Convention in 1990 (Decree no. 187/1990). Two main institutions have responsibilities regarding the implementation of the Convention at national level:

- the Ministry of Culture; this Ministry is the “*national focal point*” to UNESCO and it is responsible for the overall coordination of all dossiers related to the World Heritage List;
- the Ministry of Waters and Forests (MWF); this ministry is in charge of water management, forestry and hunting; it develops, updates and coordinates the strategic and political aspects and all specific regulations in the field of environment. The MWF

⁵ Anon. (2019 a) – *Overview of the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe - Report of Romania*, Joint WH Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, 13.11.-18.11.2019 - Report approved by: Mr. Daniel Constantin COROAMĂ, Secretary of State, Mr. Ilie MIHALACHE, General Director, Directorate General for Forests and Mr. Dan ACHIM, Director, Directorate of Forests and Forestry Development, 18 p.

is the focal point of Romania for ensuring the overall coordination of the “*Ancient and Primeval Beech Forest of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe*”. The MWF is in charge of implementing the OG of the World Heritage Convention with reference to the beech forest, in collaboration with the National Forest Administration Romsilva (“*Romsilva*” hereafter in the report), which leads the operational management for both forest units and national parks. The MWF ensures also the protection and monitoring of the natural World Heritage sites, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment (ME) and all the forestry management units, protected areas administrations or other relevant institutions at the local level.

2.1.2.2 Management structure

A “*Joint Memorandum*” including a “*Protocol of collaboration*” was signed at the national level, between the MWF, the ME and the Ministry of Culture of Romania, to develop and coordinate necessary measures for proper management and administration of the property’s Romanian components. A “*Joint Property Management Committee*” was set up in order to ensure the coordination of the management activities in the various components.

These arrangements offer technical support to all stakeholders contributing in the natural protected area protection and management, the conservation of natural habitats, flora and fauna and aim to organize and foster coordination between those stakeholders. They seek to facilitate the identification of financial resources in order to undertake all activities needed in the various components that are linked to research and monitoring of biodiversity, education and public awareness, improvement of facilities and accommodation as well as utilization and promotion of the World Heritage status.

They aim also to facilitate the elaboration of regular reports on the state of conservation of the property, meeting World Heritage standards and the representation of the State Party at the site level and for all international activities related to the property.

Romsilva is in charge of the management of the State forests in Romania under the authority of the MWF. Among its main tasks, this institution also manages most of the protected areas in Romania (national and nature parks, nature and scientific reserves, natural monuments, Natura 2000 sites), under a contract of service with the ME, and leads 22 park administrations.

It ensures the operational protection and management of the components visited by the mission, all of them being parts of the eponymous National parks, namely:

- “*Cheili Nerei*” component, covering 4 292.27 ha and surrounded by a buffer zone of 5 959.87 ha;
- “*Domogled Valea Cernei*” is congruent to the 51 461.28 ha buffer zone of three components covering 9 732.26 ha in total, which were visited by the mission as well as Launa Craiovei, Domogled Coronini Bedina and Ciucevele Cernei.

2.2 Protection regime of the property in the relevant countries

2.2.1 Albania

Both components are Strict Nature Reserve (IUCN category 1A), so they benefit from a high level of protection.

In both components, logging is strictly forbidden, as well as grazing and all other uses and activities that may have detrimental effects on the area. The mission did not observe any signs of legal or illegal logging activity inside the component parts and their buffer zones. Localised fires have occurred since its inscription on the World Heritage List, but without any impact on old-growth forest stands.

A few specific issues and matters of concern will be addressed further in the report, related to the protection of the components and to the management of their buffer zones.

2.2.2 Romania

Both components are located within core zones of National Parks and benefit from a high level of protection:

- “*Cheili Nerei*” is part of the core zone of the eponymous National Park and covers also a Natura 2000 area. Logging is strictly prohibited within the property. In the buffer zone, Forest exploitation is certified under FSC and managed according to a 10-year “forest management plan”, harmonized with an “integrated management plan” adopted in 2016 for the whole park. Cheili Nerei includes a few seasonal settlements, which already existed when the property was inscribed; the context has not changed since then;
- “*Domogled Valea Cernei*” comprises three separated clusters, all located within the core zone of the eponymous national park. Logging is also strictly forbidden inside the property, while forestry is managed in the buffer zone.

Hunting and fishing are strictly prohibited in both component clusters, agriculture is limited to small-scale farming activities. Hiking is strictly limited to 3 and 35 trails respectively.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THREATS

3.1 Forest management

3.1.1 Albania

Both components visited by the mission benefit from a very high level of integrity. Logging is strictly forbidden in both components and, based on the information provided to the mission, there has been no illegal logging since the property’s inscription in either of the components:

- the mission saw only a few local signs of tree removal but well outside the Lumi i Gashit’s buffer zone, nearby a forest road, but without significance on the property’s OUV and component’s integrity. In general, the very rugged and difficult terrain as well as the long distance from the main roads, make this component and most of its buffer zone very difficult to access and to use for timber transportation;
- the situation is similar in Rrajca, located in the core zone of the Shebenik-Jablanice National Park. The legal regime of the park provides this component and its buffer also with a good level of protection and the mission did not observe any signs of recent or past logging during its visit, neither in the core zone, nor in the buffer zone. Thus, the illegal logging activities reported recently in the press⁶, if confirmed, might concern sectors of the park outside the component and its buffer zone.

In conclusion, the mission did not observe any significant degradation within the two Albanian components that would stem from legal or illegal logging and that may potentially impact on the components’ integrity and the property’s OUV. The mission recommends the State Party to continue ensuring the strict protection of the two Albanian components and their buffer zones through rigorous enforcement of the forest laws and regulations in both National Parks and to ensure the prevention of illegal logging in their whole territories.

⁶ <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/11/29/chainsaw-gangs-the-plunder-of-albania-s-ancient-forests-11-27-2018/>.

3.1.2 Romania

3.1.2.1 Generalities

On 12 November 2018, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party of Romania regarding third party information about logging operations in old-growth forests located in the buffer zones of the Romanian components of the property.

On 8 January 2019, the State Party responded and noted that logging was undertaken in the buffer zones of the respective components without any negative impact on the property's OUV. The forest interventions were undertaken in accordance with the national legislation⁷ and the relevant forest management plans.

On 24 January 2019, the Centre sent a follow-up letter asking for additional information regarding the exact location of the implemented logging operations. The State Party provided detailed information on 12 March 2019, including the location, the amount of harvested wood and the size of the forest area affected by the operations in the buffer zones of the two component clusters visited by the mission.

These buffer zones are located partly within the core zone of the parks where logging is strictly prohibited or limited, and partly in areas where logging is regulated according to the forest and park management plans:

- in sectors of the buffer zone adjacent to the protection zones, in stands that reached the rotation age (100-120 years), the harvesting of trees, during the period of validity of the forest management plan (10 years), is limited to a maximum volume of 10% of the standing volume. In addition, logging is generally not implemented within a distance of 20 m from the component borders in order to preserve its integrity respectively: in the rest of the buffer zone where forestry interventions are allowed, logging is carried out in accordance with the general exploitation rules applicable throughout the country, with some restrictions: only treatments with long regeneration periods can be applied, the clear-cuts being prohibited;
- in the rest of the buffer zones where forestry interventions are allowed, logging is carried out in accordance with the general exploitation rules applicable throughout the country, with some restrictions: only treatments with long regeneration periods can be applied, the clear-cuts being prohibited.

In light of discussions with stakeholders during the field visits and as stated above, it became clear that forest exploitation is allowed and implemented within the buffer zones of the two components visited – and in all Romanian listed components in general – in accordance with national legislation and on the basis of 10-year forest management plans, as well as the integrated national management plans of the National Parks where they are located.

The question arises as to whether this management regime, albeit FSC certified, is compatible with the preservation of the property which is inscribed on the World Heritage List under criterion (ix) referring to natural processes. The State Party considers that the current forest management regime does not affect the property's OUV, and likely preserves those processes, biotic and abiotic, characterizing the functioning of the forest ecosystems of ancient and

⁷ In particular: Ordin Nr. 1652 din 31.10.2000 privind aprobarea "*Normelor si indrumarile tehnice privind protectia padurilor*"; Normele tehnice privind elaborarea amenajamentelor silvice, modificarea prevederilor acestora și schimbarea categoriei de folosință a terenurilor din fondul forestier, din 23.07.2018; Ordinul nr. 766/2018 pentru aprobarea Normelor tehnice privind elaborarea amenajamentelor silvice, modificarea prevederilor acestora și schimbarea categoriei de folosință a terenurilor din fondul forestier și a Metodologiei privind aprobarea depășirii posibilității/posibilității anuale în vederea recoltării produselor accidentale I.

primeval beech forests. However, in its evaluation report on the nominated property⁸, IUCN emphasized that “*several management practices in the surrounding protected areas (of the nominated property) (...) could impact on values within the components*” and further concluded that the management of the nominated property for a number of reasons did not meet the requirements of the OG. The World Heritage Committee requested that “*special emphasis shall be given to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes*” (Decision 41 COM 8B.7).

Furthermore, according to Paragraph 104 of the OG, a buffer zone should “*give an added layer of protection to the property*” and it should contribute to the maintenance of the property’s OUV.

The mission was made aware during its visit that joint guidelines for the design and management of buffer zones across the whole property would be under consideration by the States Parties through their Coordination Office, and that Romania is supporting this process.

According to the technical documentation provided to the mission, Romania more specifically supports the idea of establishing two subzones within the buffer zones:

- the first zone would be a “*protective*” buffer zone with a minimum width of 50 m enveloping the respective components. In this zone, only sanitary cuts would be allowed;
- the second zone would be a “*landscape conservation and sustainable use buffer zone*”, supposedly ensuring ecological connectivity. Only sustainable uses of natural resources preventing all future impacts on the property’s OUV would be allowed in this zone. The mission could not obtain, however, more detailed information on the proposed buffer zone management for the transnational property.

Although the legal and management context has not changed since the extension of the property in 2017, the mission considers that the current forest management within the buffer zones visited is not fully satisfactory for various reasons, including:

- the forest cannot develop a structure that would support the component’s ecological characteristics on the basis of which the site was extended in 2017 under criterion (ix). Trees are logged and exploited in the buffer zones according to their economic viability preventing forest ecosystems from reaching stages where they could be considered as primeval or ancient beech forest ecosystems; this management cannot be seen as supporting the long-term preservation of the main attributes of the components, in particular with regard to the existing natural processes;
- this management neither supports the forest’s resilience (and can even weaken it), nor facilitates the ecological functionalities between the component parts and their buffer zones and/or other virgin or quasi-virgin forests outside the property.

The mission re-confirms the conclusions of the IUCN evaluation carried out in 2017 according to which this management regime does not meet the requirements of the OG; the current management regime of the buffer zones visited by the mission cannot be seen as a functional “*added layer of protection*” for the components in accordance with the OG, and it does not meet the requirements reflected in the decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property.

This position is also consistent with a recent, yet not final, decision of the Romanian judiciary authorities, suspending several forest exploitation permits granted by Romsilva, inside the

⁸ <https://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/1133/documents/>.

Domogled Valea Cernei National Park. Some of these permits happen to be located almost adjacent to the components visited, in relation to the ecological value of those forest areas⁹.

Therefore, the mission recommends that a forest management regime specific to the buffer zones is defined that would be in keeping with the aim to ensure consistency and coordination across all buffer zones within the property, and that would promote the natural and unimpeded, progressive aging of the beech forest ecosystems present in the buffer zones. This regime should ensure an ecological transition between the component parts and the surrounding forest ecosystems of high ecological value, including those located in the buffer zones and, in case of Romania, the virgin and quasi-virgin forests listed in the “National Catalogue of Virgin Forests”¹⁰.

This regime should prioritize natural processes and be based on “pro-forestation” efforts and clear guidelines on appropriate intervention activities and limits, in the sense of Decision 43 COM 7B.13 of the World Heritage Committee. It could include the establishment of a functional network of “aging” and “senescence” patches of forest, in the buffer zones, aiming to contribute to strengthening and extending the ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems, and supporting the natural processes leading to their conservation and naturalness over time:

- “pro-forestation” efforts should be interpreted as all forest management activities seeking to promote natural tree reproduction and development;
- “aging patches” should be interpreted as forest areas managed in such a way as leaving the trees growing beyond their usual rotation age, up to twice this duration (200-240 years in case of Romania);
- “senescence patches” should be interpreted as forest areas deliberately abandoned to a spontaneous evolution of natural processes, until the complete collapse of the trees and resumption of the silvigenetic cycle (forest cycle).

The mission recommends also that the State Party strictly protects all ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems that have not been included in the property, in order to foster the long-term preservation of those exceptional ecosystems; priority should be given to those located in proximity of the components visited by the mission, to enhance connectivity. Ultimately, the forest management regime should strengthen the protection of OUV and the integrity of the property.

3.1.2.2 Illegal logging

The mission was also informed that recent illegal logging activities have been observed by Romsilva in the components’ buffer zone; these offenses were prosecuted and led to penalties.

The State Party should be urged to combat and prosecute any illegal logging activities in the two National Parks in which the components of the property are located, as they may negatively impact on natural processes in beech forest ecosystems and thus on the property’s OUV¹¹.

3.2 Fire management

⁹ http://portal.just.ro/3/SitePages/Dosar.aspx?id_dosar=300000000867246&id_inst=3.

¹⁰ <http://apepaduri.gov.ro/paduri-virgine/>. On the subject, also http://awsassets.panda.org/img/original/catalogul_padirilor_virgine.pdf and I.A., Biriş (2017) - Situația pădurilor virgine din România, Bucharest, Greenpeace, 65 p; <http://www.centreforeconomics.org/news-and-events/press-release-downloads/map-of-romanian-potential-primary-forests/>.

¹¹ On the subject, see <https://www.romania-insider.com/minister-confirms-illegal-logging-report>.

3.2.1 Albania

During its visit of the Rrajca component, the mission was informed of a fire in late 2018¹², which affected 97.07 ha of beech forest, of which 70 ha are located in the property and its buffer zone. This fire also affected a pasture area of 10.05 ha in the buffer zone.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, but it was likely due to natural meteorological events resulting from atmospheric factors (lightning, strong wind and storms). 494 beech trees totalling a volume of 480 m³ of timber, were affected. As stated by the forest service in 2019, the forest is slowly recovering, and the pasture affected was overgrown again in spring and summer 2019. The mission did not visit the area affected by this fire, however, based on information provided to the mission during the discussions, this fire did not seem to have had significant effects on the property's OUV.

The mission also observed that an area in the buffer zone of Lumi I Gashit and in proximity of the components was affected by a fire in summer 2019, but without significance to the component's features. However, the case demonstrates that there is a fire risk in proximity of the component that may also affect the component's integrity in future.

The mission considers that, currently both visited components benefit from a very high level of integrity in general.

The mission discussed further with the officials met and local stakeholders on the available firefighting resources dedicated to both components and to the forest in general; it is obvious that these means are currently very insufficient and inadequate; they would need to be significantly increased. Fire currently remains one of the main threats to both components.

The mission recommends that the State Party be strongly encouraged to strengthen the operational fire-fighting capacities and equipment of the local public services, in order to best prevent and combat fire in the beech forest ecosystems, especially in the two components.

3.2.2 Romania

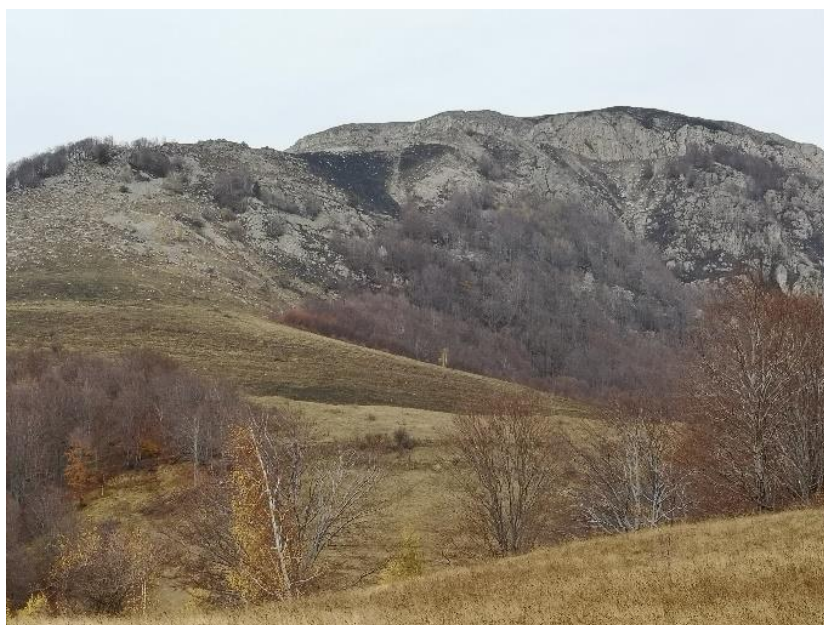
The month preceding the mission, the press reported on a major fire near the property at the western border of the Domogled National Park. The mission visited the affected area and observed signs of recent burning in the buffer zone of the component, affecting around 40 ha, of which 28 ha under forest cover.

The origin of the fire was not yet determined at the time of the mission but was suspected to have accidentally originated from the mountain pastures in the area. The fire burnt for 10 days until it was contained. As shown on **Map 1**, this fire did not affect the component and it had minor impacts on its buffer zone (**Pictures 1 and 2**).

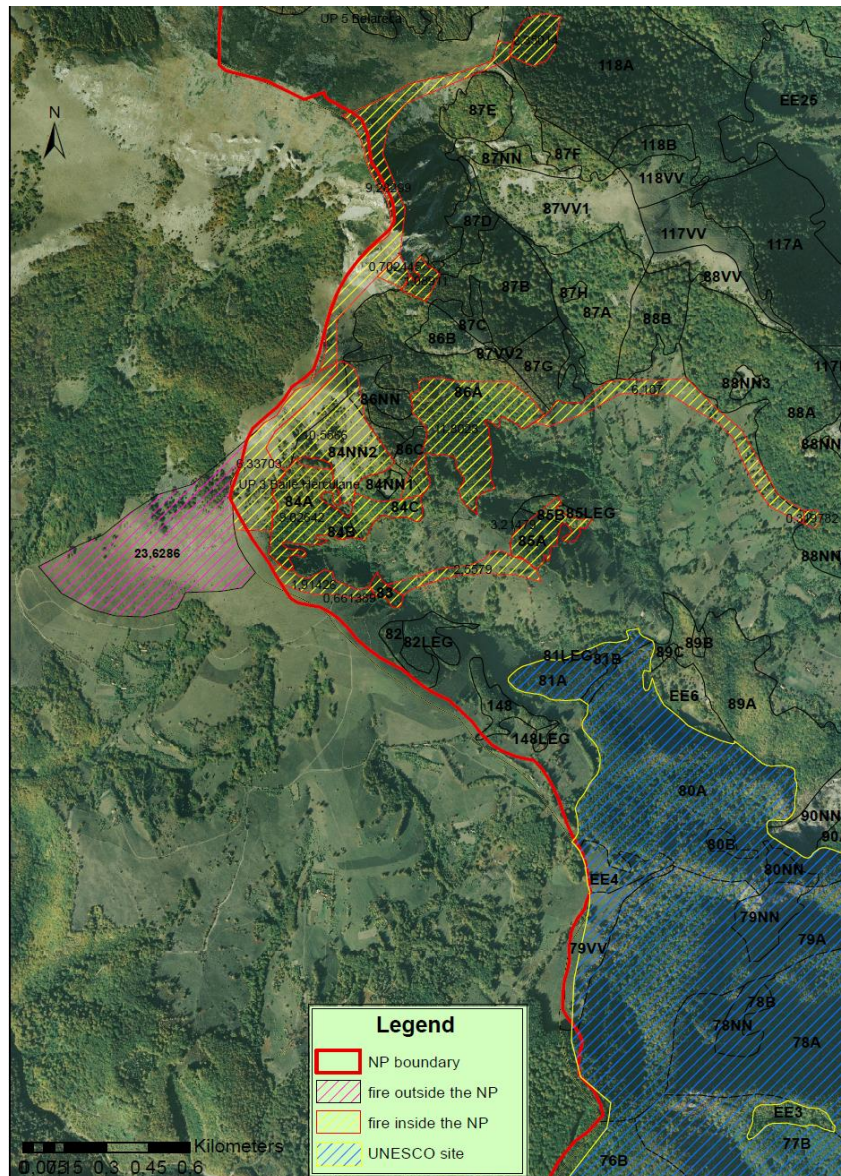
¹² As also reported in the Note of overview of the management regime of the buffer zones and management operations in the Albanian components, prepared by the State Party upon request of the World Heritage Centre, November 2019.



Picture 1 – Domogled Valea Cernei, fire area area/buffer zone (Source: EMC2I).



Picture 2 – Domogled Valea Cernei, fire area/buffer (Source: EMC2I).



Map 1 – Area affected by the fire (Source: Romsilva).

During its field visit, the mission also observed other recent signs of very local burning along the national road 66A, when crossing through the Ciucevele Cernei cluster. On this occasion, the mission exchanged with the forest administration officials on the issue of fire management in all components of the property.

The mission expressed its concerns over forest restoration works that can, and have been, undertaken in the property's buffer zones following fire events and/or after any other natural or anthropogenic events. As the property was listed based on criterion (ix), in order to preserve natural processes, the mission considers that natural regeneration should be favored over plantations.

According to several past Committee decisions (see above), no activity should be undertaken that may significantly interfere with natural processes, including reforestation of degraded areas after external events. The mission encourages the State Party authorities to allow for natural forest regeneration in such cases and to monitor the forest evolution and tendencies over time.

In accordance with the Committee's decisions, forest management, both in the components of the property and their buffer zones, should contribute to the preservation of the natural value of the property based on the presence of ancient and primeval beech forests, allow for their development and extension in the future and ensure the ecological connections between the various site components and clusters to strengthen their resilience and to enable uninterrupted natural processes between them. This is also in line with the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution on protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes¹³.

In conclusion, the mission is of the view that the fire observed did not have significant impact on the property's OUV, nor on this particular component. **The mission, however, recommends that the State Party – and all States Parties of the property in general – support undisturbed natural processes in all components and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages, and to not take any decisions that may affect the dynamics of such processes after external natural or anthropogenic events, such as fire, within or near the property's components.**

3.3 Roads and infrastructure

3.3.1 Albania

There are no road infrastructure projects in either of the two Albanian components. The existing roads situated in the core and buffer zones are non-asphalted roads, and they are in poor conditions and accessible only with four-wheel drive cars and trucks.

However, during the field visit, the mission observed that some roads, which cross the buffer zones, could facilitate access to the components and several seem to be frequently used. They could facilitate not only tourist access, but also illegal activities (logging, poaching, etc.), especially in Lumi i Gashit, where several gravel roads enable access of vehicles to ancient and abandoned barns and sheep husbandries in the buffer zone, on the edge of the component.

The access by car and other motor vehicles to the buffer zone should be strictly restricted to public services as well as to property owners and users. Those roads should be blocked physically at their entrance, in order to minimize human pressure in the buffer zone and indirectly on the components.

Furthermore, it is currently difficult to identify the boundaries of the two components on the ground. Signage and information on both components are lacking and the components' boundaries are difficult to discern as they do not always follow topographical features (valley, mountain ridge, etc.).

The mission recommends to urge the State Party (1) to physically close the entrance of the roads in the buffer zones of both components, and restrict the access only to the public services and property owners and users, and (2) to improve marking of the components and buffer zones' boundaries on the ground.

3.3.2 Romania

The national road (NR) 66A crosses the Ciucevele Cernei component of the Domogled Valea Cernei National Park by about 1 km and its buffer zone by about 15 km (**Map 2**). This gravel

¹³ WCC-2016-Res-045-EN Protection of primary forests, including intact forest landscapes. https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/primary_forests_resolution_wcc_2016_res_045_en.pdf.

road is currently managed by Romsilva as a forest road and, according to the Romsilva officials, it was included in the component by mistake.

It is intended to widen and upgrade this road in the near future¹⁴. As stated by Romsilva, this project will have a direct physical impact on the property's component. Besides impacts on the forest stands adjacent to the road, significant earthworks and major visual impacts on the landscape, it may also have negative indirect effects on the property, due to an expected car traffic increase and an easier access to the component. According to Romsilva, the State Party might request a modification of the component's boundaries in future in order to undertake this project.¹⁵ In this respect, the mission recalls that a modification of the boundaries of the property needs to result in better protection of the property's OUV and the new delineation should include all important areas for the expression of this OUV (**Decision 42 COM 7B.71**).

The mission is of the view that such modification would have a negative impact on the property's integrity, potentially affecting its OUV, keeping in mind the small size of this component and thus its weak resilience to any disturbance and/or degradation.



Map 2 – National Road 66A crossing the Ciucevele Cernei component (Source: Romsilva).

In view of the likely significant impacts, the mission expresses its serious concern about the project to upgrade the national road 66A, crossing the property and its buffer zone, **and strongly recommends that the State Party abandon the proposed plans and consider an appropriate alternative, and if any alternative proposal is considered, to submit to the WHC, for review by IUCN, further information and details on the proposal and its potential impacts, including any relevant environmental impact assessment reports, before any decision is taken that would be difficult to reverse.**

¹⁴ On the subject: <https://www.facebook.com/euronatur/videos/spectacular-protest-against-destruction-of-unesco-world-heritage-site-by-road-co/429485777659544/>.

¹⁵ CF. Anon. (2019 a) cited above, p. 18.

If a significant impact on the component's boundaries, and/or potential or ascertained danger for the property, in the sense of Paragraph 180 of the OG, is confirmed, the construction of the road could constitute a case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

3.4 Hydropower

3.4.1 Albania

There is no hydropower facility inside any of the two Albanian components. In the buffer zone of the Lumi i Gashit component, there is a small dam preceding inscription of the property and located downstream. This facility was not changed since the component was visited by the field evaluators during the nomination process. It would be useful, however, to obtain a better understanding of the effects of this facility on the ecosystem, as well as on the natural processes relevant to this component.

No further project in proximity of the Albanian components was reported to the mission.

The mission recommends that the State Party be encouraged to develop a specific monitoring program on the potential ecological effects of the existing hydropower facility built in the buffer zone of the Lumi i Gashit component part and to report the results of such programme to the World Heritage Centre through the state of conservation reporting process and, if concluded necessary, develop appropriate measures to minimize and manage those effects.

3.4.2 Romania

Several dams and hydropower infrastructures are located in the Domogled Valea Cernei National Park, built before the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List. The mission did not observe any significant change and evolution in the management of the hydropower infrastructures since the property's inscription.

The mission met several managers of the hydropower company and was informed that some maintenance works, but no extension of the existing capacities, would be planned in the near future. The mission also raised the attention of all local stakeholders to the fact that any new dam project and/or upgrading works on the existing hydropower facilities would require appropriate strategic and environmental impact assessments in line with the IUCN Advice Note on Environmental Assessment. The State party should also consult with the WHC and IUCN before a decision to develop such projects is taken.

The mission considers that the construction of new hydropower facilities and/or the extension of existing facilities in the context of the Domogled Valea Cernei component, may have severe deleterious effects on the natural processes as well as on the beauty and scientific value of the components' buffer zone, and could become a potential or ascertained danger for the property, as per Paragraph 180 of the OG. The potential effects of such works would need to be appropriately assessed and be reported to the Committee in due time.

The mission therefore recommends that the State Party informs the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the OG, of any proposal to extend or upgrade hydropower facilities within the property's components and their buffer zones, before any decision is taken.

3.5 Other conservation issues

3.5.1 Albania

Three additional conservation issues will be addressed:

- *the extension of Lumi I Gashit component:* as designed, the boundaries of this component do not follow natural topographic features and they exclude important natural habitats in the Gashit river watershed contributing to the natural processes and to the ecological functioning of the component.

The mission recommends that the State Party be invited to work further on a potential extension of the existing Lumi I Gashit component, with a view to strengthening the whole property's OUV and improving the long-term preservation and integrity of the component.

- *the hunting regulation:* according to the existing law and a decision from the Constitutional Court, a general hunting ban covers all of Albania until 2021. Based on information provided to the mission, this ban seems to have significant positive effects on wildlife, including species relevant for beech forest ecosystems, several of them assessed as threatened on the IUCN Red List. Any future considerations to amend this ban, and associated potential modification of the legal status of protection of beech forest species, which would apply in the components, should be submitted to the WHC for review by IUCN, prior to any decision being taken.

The mission recommends that the State Party be invited to consult the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on potential future modifications of the legal regime for the protection of species and/or hunting regulation and management, that may have deleterious effects on the property's components in Albania, prior to taking any decision in this matter.

- *management plan/regime:* according to the Paragraph 78 of the OG a property “*must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure its safeguarding*”. In its technical evaluation report on the extension of the existing property to Albania, among other countries, IUCN expressed concerns about the level of management capacities in various components and clusters, based on the information provided in the nomination dossier. In the case of Albania, those capacities are particularly weak and insufficient. The two National Parks in which the components are located do not benefit from an appropriate management plan or system, meeting the requirements of the OG.

The mission recommends that the State Party be urged to enhance technical, human and financial resources of the park management to strengthen significantly the management capacities for the two Albanian components of the property.

3.5.2 Romania

Regarding the component Cheile Nerei, it was reported to the mission that there are small discrepancies between the area values in the nomination file and the real area encompassed by the boundaries, the reason being that only the areas covered by the Forest Management Plans have been taken into account. However, small plots of agricultural lands that are encompassed by the boundaries have not been counted.

In order to resolve the discrepancies between the reported and actual size of the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița component part, the mission recommends that the State Party be urged to submit an official letter to the WHC, including a map, specifying the exact area of this component as inscribed in 2017 and as covered by the boundary polygons regardless of different land uses.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

This mission had the broad objective to assess whether activities in the buffer zones of the property might have negative impacts on its OUV.

Based on chapter 3, the following main factors currently and potentially affecting the state of conservation have been identified by this mission. Currently, the property is affected by:

- logging activities in proximity of the visited Romanian components whose buffer zones do not fulfil their function as an added layer of protection to the property and to connect different component parts;
- limited capacities for management, fire prevention and response in the case of the Albanian components, whilst the approach to protection and management is convincing;
- in Romania, the property's state of conservation may in future potentially be also affected by (1) a project to widen and upgrade the national road 66A that would cross the property and its buffer zone and (2) upgrades, replacement works or additions to the existing hydropower facilities in the buffer zone of one component located in the Domogled Valea Cernei National Park.

Besides the detailed assessment of the visited Albanian and Romanian components of the transnational property, the World Heritage Committee requested that all States Parties of this transnational property provide, prior to this mission, an overview about the management regime of their respective buffer zones and the management operations, which took place since inscription (**Decision 43 COM 7B.13**). This information was received from the vast majority of the 12 States Parties of this property as well as an "*Overview about the current management regime and the management operations in the buffer zones of the UNESCO WH site*" (henceforth "overview"). The mission highly appreciated the detailed information provided and considers that this material may inform harmonisation of buffer zone management across the transnational property and feed into the Reactive Monitoring process.

Against the background of the observations made in Albania and Romania, and following review of the material provided, the mission generally notes a considerable heterogeneity of management regimes and operations across the transnational property. Buffer zone management regimes range from strictly protected areas with a non-intervention or nearly non-intervention regimes to buffer zones where conventional forestry including logging activities appear to be the norm. The latter would require scrutiny and on-the-ground assessments to ascertain to what extent the effective protection of the respective components might be compromised and the OUV negatively affected.

According to the nomenclature used in the overview, some of these buffer zones seem to be subject to even less stringent protection regimes compared to the components visited by the mission in Romania. For example, clear-cuts are not allowed in the buffer zones of any of the Romanian components visited by the mission, whereas they are possible in the buffer zones of other components that are managed by three "*site managements*" (i.e. site management entities that are in charge of one or more components and their buffer zone(s)). Examples of such components where clear-cuts are generally allowed in the buffer zones are "Grosii Tiblesului", "Strambu Baiut" (Romania) and "Hayedos de Navarra" (Spain). There are some

other components where clear-cuts are allowed in the buffer zones with a special permission or in specific areas. Shelterwood cuttings are possible in the buffer zones of more than one third of the site managements assessed in the overview. About half of the site management permit selective logging in buffer zones.

The mission is of the view that these numbers should be treated with caution, due to varying definitions and practices of forest management across the 12 countries. Nevertheless, the fact that significant interventions do appear to be possible, *de jure*, in a significant portion of the property's buffer zones, is of serious concern.

At the same time, the mission notes that numerous site managements apply very strict intervention regimes in buffer zones, which should be welcomed and guide the harmonisation of buffer zone management across the property. For example, the site managements of "Dürrenstein" (Austria), "Sonian Forests" (Belgium), "Central Balkan" (Bulgaria), "Hainich", "Jasmund" (Germany), "Hajducki I Rozanski kukovi", "Paklenica National Park" (Croatia), "Codrul Secular Slatioara" (Romania), "Krokar" (Slovenia), "Gorgany" and "Zacharovanyi Krai" (Ukraine) essentially exclude any impactful forestry interventions and limit interventions to e.g. security management along trails. Whilst the mission remains cautious regarding the commensurability of the data provided in the overview, there will likely be several site managements involved in the transnational property, including those from Albania discussed further above, which could inform the process of strengthening and harmonizing protection regimes of buffer zones that do not meet the standards of the OG with their knowledge and experience.

Finally, the mission recalls that the property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List under criterion (ix) recognising significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial ecosystems and communities of plants and animals. To sustain these ecological processes and to enable them to evolve, a minimum of disturbance in a maximum of space is pivotal for the effective preservation of OUV. Strict non-intervention regimes within the components are essential for the preservation of OUV. As the property is characterised by rather small components, buffer zones play an ever more important role in ensuring connectivity between components and in adding a layer of protection to the property, requiring a minimum level of intervention. However, many buffer zones as currently designed and/or managed do not ensure the transnational property's integrity. **Decision 43 COM 7B.13**, in which the Committee reiterated the importance of good buffer zone design and effectiveness management, as the only feasible way to protect the integrity of the small forest remnants – very small in several cases like Belgium – included in this property. To ensure that the buffer zones viably fulfil their connective and protective functions and strengthen the integrity of the property in line with the OG, the use of forestry interventions should be minimised.

In the buffer zones of the property, interventions should be minimized, avoiding any interference with the natural processes of the beech forest ecosystem and foster their natural expansion of their surface in order to strengthen their resilience overtime. **Decision 41 COM 8B.7** of the World Heritage Committee already emphasized buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes. This support of undisturbed natural processes should, in the mission's view, take shape through pro-forestation efforts allowing for the aging of forest stands in the buffer zones beyond the conventional rotation ages and enabling natural regeneration in stands shaped by human interference.

In conclusion, the mission recommends that the States Parties of the transnational property:

- **conduct on-the-ground assessments in the buffer zones and components where impactful forestry interventions, such as clear-cuts and shelterwood cutting have been permitted, to ascertain the extent to which the effective protection of**

the respective components might be compromised and the OUV negatively affected;

- enhance the connective and protective functions of the buffer zones and strengthen the integrity of the property by minimizing the use of forestry interventions;
- ensure that any interventions avoid interference with the natural processes of the beech forest ecosystems, taking into account the natural expansion of their surface and to strengthen their resilience, including through the potential extension of buffer zones;
- support undisturbed natural processes in all components and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages, and to not take any decision that may affect the dynamics of such processes after external natural or anthropogenic events, such as fire, within or near the property's components.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Albanian and Romanian components of the transnational property has assessed the state of conservation of the visited components and buffer zone management of the property to the extent possible.

With regard to **Albania**, the mission concluded that there are no signs of significant degradation of either of the two component parts that may potentially impact the components' integrity and the property's OUV. In the mission's view, the State Party should be commended for having ensured a satisfactory state of conservation of the components and the strict protection regime applicable in the components and their buffer zones, which appear to be a functional additional layer of protection for the Albanian components, in line with the OG. Especially the buffer zone of the Rrajca component may serve as a good-practice example, which could potentially inform the revision of buffer zone management in some other components of this transnational property. However, the mission noted a clear need to strengthen management capacities for both components. In terms of fire risks, it will be important to implement precautionary measures and to strengthen the operational fire-fighting capacities and equipment of the local public services.

With regard to **Romania**, the mission concluded that the current management of the components' buffer zones does not provide the property with an added layer of protection. The requirements of the OG are not met in a satisfactory way and *status quo* continuation of forestry management, especially in direct proximity of the component parts of the property may have negative effects on the integrity of the property. The current forest management regime should be revised to allow for forest management in the Romanian components that would support natural processes, based on pro-forestation efforts and clear guidelines on appropriate intervention activities and limits guided by the primary objective to strengthen and to expand ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems over time, and fundamentally ensure the preservation of the OUV and integrity of the property. Further concerns of the mission relate to the potential widening and upgrading of the national road 66A crossing the property and its buffer zone and to potential negative impacts of any potential upgrades, replacements or additional hydropower facilities in future. In terms of fires, the mission noted that there is currently no significant impact from fire events on the components and on the property's OUV. In general, the mission highly valued the transparency and level of details and quality of the spatial and numerical data provided to the mission, which significantly facilitated the mission's assessments.

Finally, with regard to buffer zone management of this transnational property in general, the mission noted a significant heterogeneity of management regimes across the transnational property that include regimes of conventional forestry such as clear-cuts, shelterwood cuttings and other types of interventions that are likely to disturb natural processes and to undermine the protective functions of buffer zones, which is not in line with the requirements of the OG.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

II-1 Recommendations for the Albanian and Romanian components

*The mission recommends the State Party of **Albania** to:*

1. *continue to ensure the strict protection of the two Albanian components and their buffer zones through rigorous enforcement of the relevant forest laws and regulations in both National Parks and to ensure the prevention of illegal logging in their whole territories;*
2. *develop a specific monitoring program on the potential ecological effects of the existing hydropower facility in the buffer zone of the Lumi i Gashit component part and to report the results of such programme to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) through the state*

of conservation reporting process and, if concluded necessary, develop appropriate measures to minimize and manage those effects;

3. strengthen the operational fire-fighting capacities and equipment of the local public services, in order to best prevent and combat fire in the beech forest ecosystems, especially in the two components;
4. physically close the entrance of the roads in the buffer zones of both components and limit access exclusively to the public services and property owners and users;
5. improve marking of the components and buffer zone boundaries on the ground;
6. enhance technical, human and financial resources of the park management to strengthen significantly the management capacities for the two Albanian components of the property;
7. work further on a potential extension of the existing Lumi I Gashit component, with a view to strengthening the whole property's OUV and improving the long-term preservation and integrity of the component;
8. consult the WHC and IUCN on potential future modifications of the legal regime for the protection of species and/or hunting regulation and management, that may have deleterious effects on the property's components in Albania, prior to taking any decision on this matter.

The mission recommends the State Party of **Romania** to:

9. define a forest management regime specific to the buffer zones that would be in keeping with the aim to ensure consistency and coordination across all buffer zones within the property, and that would promote the natural and unimpeded, progressive aging of the beech forest ecosystems present in the buffer zones. This regime should ensure an ecological transition between the component parts and the surrounding forest ecosystems of high ecological value, including those located in the buffer zones and, in case of Romania, the virgin and quasi-virgin forests listed in the "National Catalogue of Virgin Forests"¹⁶;

This regime should prioritize natural processes and be based on "pro-forestation" efforts and clear guidelines on *appropriate intervention activities* and limits, in the sense of Decision **43 COM 7B.13** of the World Heritage Committee. It could include the establishment of a functional network of "aging" and "senescence" patches of forest, in the buffer zones, aiming to contribute to strengthening and extending the ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems, and supporting the natural processes leading to their conservation and naturalness over time:

- "pro-forestation" efforts should be interpreted as all forest management activities seeking to promote natural tree reproduction and development;
 - "aging patches" should be interpreted as forest areas managed in such a way as leaving the trees growing beyond their usual rotation age, up to twice this duration (200-240 years in case of Romania);
 - "senescence patches" should be interpreted as forest areas deliberately abandoned to a spontaneous evolution of natural processes, until the complete collapse of the trees and resumption of the silvigenetic cycle (forest cycle).
10. combat and prosecute any illegal logging activities in the two National Parks in which the components of the property are located, as they may negatively impact on natural processes in beech forest ecosystems and thus on the property's OUV;
 11. abandon plans to upgrade the national road 66A, due to the potential impact of this project on the property's integrity and its OUV;

¹⁶ <http://apepaduri.gov.ro/paduri-virgine/>. On the subject, also http://awsassets.panda.org/img/original/catalogul_padurilor_virgine.pdf and I.A., Biriş (2017) – Situația pădurilor virgine din România, Bucharest, Greenpeace, 65 p; <http://www.centreforeconomics.org/news-and-events/press-release-downloads/map-of-romanian-potential-primary-forests/>.

12. *in order to resolve the discrepancies between the reported and actual size of the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița component part, submit to the WHC an official letter, including a map, specifying the exact area of this component as inscribed in 2017 and as covered by the boundary polygons regardless of different land uses;*
13. *inform the WHC, in line with Paragraph 172 of the OG, of any proposal to extend or upgrade hydropower facilities within the property's components and their buffer zones, before any decision is taken;*
14. *strictly protect all ancient and primeval beech forest ecosystems that have not been included in the property, in order to foster the long-term preservation of those exceptional ecosystems; priority should be given to those located in proximity of the components visited by the mission, to enhance connectivity.*

II-2 Recommendations for the transnational property as a whole

The mission recommends that the States Parties of the transnational property:

15. *conduct on-the-ground assessments in the buffer zones and component parts where impactful forestry interventions such as clear-cuts and shelterwood cutting have been permitted, to ascertain the extent to which the effective protection of the respective components might be compromised and the OUV negatively affected;*
16. *enhance the connective and protective functions of the buffer zones and strengthen the integrity of the property by minimizing the use of forestry interventions;*
17. *ensure that any interventions avoid interference with the natural processes of the beech forest ecosystem taking into account the natural expansion of their surface and to strengthen their resilience;*
18. *support undisturbed natural processes in all components and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages, and to not take any decision that may affect the dynamics of such processes after external natural or anthropogenic events, such as fire, within or near the property's components.*

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anon. (2019) – “*Overview about the current management regime and the management operations in the buffer zones of the UNESCO WH site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”*”, 05th of November 2019, Coordination Office, E.C.O. Institute of Ecology, Lakeside B07 b, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria; coordination@beechforests.eu.

Anon. (2019 a) – “*Overview of the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe - Report of Romania*”, Joint WH Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, 13.11.-18.11.2019 – Report approved by: Mr. Daniel Constantin COROAMĂ, Secretary of State, Mr. Ilie MIHALACHE, General Director, Directorate General for Forests and Mr. Dan ACHIM, Director, Directorate of Forests and Forestry Development, 18 p.

Anon. (2019 b) – “*Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe*” (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine). Overview about the management regime of the buffer zones and the management operations in the Primeval Beech Forests of Albania - Joint WH Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, 20-22 November 2019, 5 p.

7. Annexes

Annex 7.1 Terms of Reference of the mission

Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe
(Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,
Spain, Ukraine)

(*mission requested to visit only the States Parties of Albania and Romania)

13-22 November 2019

At its 43rd session, the World Heritage Committee requested the States Parties of Albania and Romania to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Albanian and Romanian components of the “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe” World Heritage property (**Decision 43 COM 7B.13**, Annex I). The main objective of the Reactive Monitoring mission is to assess whether activities in the buffer zones of the property might have negative impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). In this regard it should be noted that the Committee also requested all States Parties of this transnational property to provide, prior to the mission, “an overview about the management regime of their respective buffer zones and the management operations, which took place since inscription” (**Decision 43 COM 7B.13**).

In particular, the mission should undertake the following:

1. In light of the concerns expressed by the World Heritage Committee regarding “logging operations undertaken in the buffer zones of the Romanian components of the property in areas close or adjacent to the boundaries of the components”, assess whether these operations have had, or continue to have, any negative impacts on the OUV of the property or might represent a potential threat in the future;
2. In light of the missing update regarding the state of conservation of the Albanian components, and third party information about alleged illegal logging in Shebenik-Jabllanice National Park where one of the Albanian components of the property is located, and for which the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Albania to provide a response, assess whether illegal logging in the Albanian components of the property, or their vicinity, represents a past, present or future threat to the OUV of the property;
3. In line with the abovementioned Committee’s request to all States Parties of the property and noting the Committee’s expressed concern that “no progress has been made on clear guidelines regarding acceptable logging activities within the established buffer zones” (**Decision 43 COM 7B.13**), evaluate:
 - whether the management regimes in the buffer zones of all components of this transnational property are compatible with the protection of the property’s OUV;
 - the progress achieved by all States Parties of the property in addressing the Committee’s request that “special emphasis shall be given to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes with special emphasis on dead and decaying wood, including ongoing monitoring of threats and risks, making effective use of the expertise and institutional capacity in management of the property” (**Decision 41COM 8B.7**);
4. Review any other relevant issues that may negatively affect the OUV of the property, including its conditions of integrity and protection and management.

The States Parties of Albania and Romania should facilitate necessary field visits to key locations, including those in the buffer zones of Luna Craiovei, Ciucevele Cernei and Domogled-Coronini-Bedina components located within Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park

and Cheile Nerei component in the Cheile Nerei-Beusnita National Park in Romania where logging operations had been undertaken, as well as Shebenik-Jabllanice National Park in Albania.

To enable the mission's preparation and in line with the World Heritage Committee's request, all States Parties of this transnational property should, as soon as possible, provide the World Heritage Centre and IUCN with:

- a. A concise overview of the management regime of buffer zones of their respective components and the management operations, which took place since inscription of those components;

To facilitate discussions during the mission, the States Parties of Albania and Romania should also provide the World Heritage Centre and IUCN with:

- b. The most recent versions of relevant management plans of their respective components of the property, as well as of the national parks within which the components are located.
- c. Updated maps showing locations of logging operations undertaken in Romania, including since March 2019, as well as any relevant maps of the Shebenik-Jabllanice National Park in Albania.

The mission should hold consultations with the relevant authorities of Albania and Romania, including the Ministry of Waters and Forests of Romania, Romania's National Forest Management Corporation Romsilva, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Albania, National Agency of Protected Areas of Albania, as well as relevant regional authorities in both countries, and other relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientists, and experts.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned reviews, assessments and discussions with the States Parties representatives, authorities and stakeholders, the mission should prepare a concise report on the findings and recommendations following the site visit. The mission's recommendations to the Governments of Albania and Romania, all other States Parties of this transnational property, and the World Heritage Committee should have the objective of providing guidance to the States Parties that should ensure the ongoing conservation of the property's OUV. It should be noted that recommendations will be provided within the mission report and not during the mission implementation.

Annex 7.2 WH Committee decision

Decision 43 COM 7B.13

Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine) (N 1133ter)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decisions [41 COM 8B.7](#) and [42 COM 7B.71](#), adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017) and 42nd (Manama, 2018) sessions respectively,
3. Welcomes the discussions currently underway to ensure funding availability for coordination activities and to improve connectivity within and between component clusters and across the property;
4. Also welcomes the decision of the State Party of Slovenia to designate the two forest reserves containing its components of the property as nature reserves in order to strengthen their legal protection regime;
5. Noting the measures developed by the State Party of Belgium to address the Committee's request to consider the future enlargement of components to at least the established minimum size of 50 ha, requests it to continue its efforts in this regard to fully address the Committee's request;
6. Notes with appreciation the willingness of the States Parties to develop joint guidelines for buffer zone design and management and the progress achieved to date, but expresses concern that no progress has been made on clear guidelines regarding acceptable logging activities within the established buffer zones and reiterates the importance of good buffer zone design and effectiveness as the only feasible way to protect the integrity of the small forest remnants included in this property;
7. Considering that Decision [41 COM 8B.7](#) requested all States Parties of this property to give special emphasis to appropriate buffer zone management in order to support undisturbed natural processes, urges the States Parties to define a clear and strict approach to buffer zone design and management which will allow for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to seek further guidance from the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on this issue;
8. Regrets that the State Party of Albania did not provide any update regarding the state of conservation of its components through the joint report submitted by the States Parties, and also requests it to provide a response to the letters from the World Heritage Centre, especially regarding third party information about illegal logging in the buffer zone of one of the Albanian components;
9. Also notes with concern the information provided by the State Party of Romania, which shows that logging operations undertaken in the buffer zones of the Romanian components of the property took place in areas close or adjacent to the boundaries of the components and reiterates its request, extending it to all States Parties, to ensure that logging is, and remains, strictly prohibited within the property, and that no logging operations are allowed in the buffer zones of the property if they could negatively impact natural processes and the property's OUV;
10. Further requests the States Parties of Albania and Romania to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Albanian and Romanian components of the property, respectively, and all States Parties of this transnational property to provide, prior to this mission, an overview about the management regime of their respective buffer zones and the management operations, which took place since inscription, in order to assess whether activities in the buffer zones of the property might have negative impacts on its OUV;

11. Also noting the intention of the State Party of Slovakia to submit a proposal for significant boundary modification of its components by February 2020, also urges it to ensure that the recommendations of the 2018 Advisory mission are fully taken into account in the preparation of the final proposal and reiterates its position that, due to the continued lack of adequate legal protection of the Slovak components of the property, their protection from logging and other potential threats cannot be guaranteed in the long term, which would clearly constitute a potential danger to the OUV of this serial transnational property as a whole, in line with Paragraphs 137 and 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*;
12. Further noting the proposed corrections of the boundaries of two Croatian components and their buffer zone, requests furthermore the State Party of Croatia to provide more detailed information on this potential boundary modification to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for future follow-up through the appropriate procedures;
13. Finally requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2020**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020.

Annex 7.3 Statement of significance from the nomination dossier

Brief synthesis

The “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe” are a serial property comprising 77 component parts in total. They represent an outstanding example of anthropogenically undisturbed, complex temperate forests and exhibit the most complete and comprehensive ecological patterns and processes of pure and mixed stands of European beech across a variety of environmental conditions. They contain an invaluable genetic reservoir of beech and many species associated and dependent on these forest habitats.

Criterion (ix): The “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other Regions of Europe” are indispensable to understand the history and evolution of the genus *Fagus* which, given its wide distribution in the Northern Hemisphere and its ecological importance, is globally significant. These undisturbed, complex temperate forests exhibit the most complete and comprehensive ecological patterns and processes of pure and mixed stands of European beech across a variety of environmental conditions, such as climatic and geological conditions, throughout all relevant European Beech Forest Regions. They comprise all altitudinal zones from the coast up to the forest line in the mountains and, furthermore, include the best remaining examples of the outer boundaries of the European beech forest range. Beech is one of the most important elements of forests in the Temperate Broadleaf Forest Biome and represents an outstanding example of the re-colonization and development of terrestrial ecosystems and communities since the last Ice Age. The continuing northern and westward expansion of beech from its original glacial refuge areas in the eastern and southern parts of Europe can be tracked along natural corridors and stepping stones spanning the continent. More recent changes in the distribution pattern of this species relate to direct influences of human disturbance and the more complex effects of anthropogenically induced climate change. Both historic and present serial patterns of distribution represent natural evolutionary strategies for adapting and surviving environmental change. The dominance of beech across extensive areas of Europe is a living testimony of the tree’s genetic adaptability.

Integrity

The selected beech forest sites not only represent the full serial diversity found across Europe, they are also of sufficient size to maintain natural processes necessary for the long-term ecological viability of the wider ecosystem. Buffer zones including surrounding protected areas (nature parks, biosphere reserves) are managed sympathetically to ensure the long-term conservation of the particular character of the designated beech forests together with its inherent attributes. Next to criteria such as the extent of the forest area and the presence of an effective buffer zone, key characteristics, which were also used in the site selecting process included the average age of the forest stand and the period since it was last managed or actively disturbed. The evaluation criteria used in the selection process helped to describe the degree of naturalness of a forest, but also provide some indication of the inherent functional capacity of the ecosystem. Finally, where appropriate, special emphasis was given to connectivity between beech forests and the surrounding complementary habitats as a perceived prerequisite for ecosystem functioning and adaptation to environmental change.

Protection and management requirements

Long-term protection and management is ensured through national legal protection as national parks, core areas of a biosphere reserve or other types of protected areas. Effective implementation of an integrated management plan and a multilateral integrated management system is required to guide the planning and management of this serial property. Key

management issues include forest fire control and conservation of monumental old trees, conservation and management of mountain meadows, river corridors and freshwater ecosystems, tourism management, research and monitoring. Cooperative management agreements with local groups and tourism agencies can enhance the achievement of management goals and ensure local community engagement in the component parts.

Annex 7.4 Lists of people met

ROMANIA
FIELD VISIT PARTICIPANTS
14.11.2019

National level

- Sebastian CONSTANTIN, senior counselor, Directorate General for Forests, Ministry of Waters and Forests – National Focal Point
- Mihaela STEFANESCU, senior counselor, Directorate for European Affairs and International Relations, Ministry of Waters and Forests
- Robert PACHE, forestry engineer, Unit for Protected Areas and Forestry Education, Romsilva – National Forest Administration
- Dragos MIHAI, forestry engineer, Unit for Protected Areas and Forestry Education, Romsilva – National Forest Administration
- John Samad Smaranda, senior counselor, Biodiversity Directorate, Ministry of Environment

Cheile Nerei-Beusnita National park Administration

- Vasile Constantin – Park Director
- Cipu Gheorghe-Iancu – Chief of rangers
- Galcan Mile Slavişa – Ecological Education Specialist
- Lazăr Marinel – Park Ranger
- Țunea Ilia – Park Ranger
- Bolvanescu Gheorghe - Park Ranger

Caraş-Severin Forest Directorate

- Rotariu Gheorghe – Technical Director
- Guțu Mihai – Head of Forestry Operations Office

Sasca Montană Forest District

- Iovanovici Bogdan – Head of Forest District
- Stamatoiu Alexandru – Forestry Operations Office
- Roşianul Ion – Chief of forest rangers
- Disagă Ramin – forest ranger
- Dobromir Păun – forest ranger
- Cornea Marco – forest ranger
- Milos Toma – forest ranger

FIELD VISIT PARTICIPANTS

16 -17.11.2019

National level

- Sebastian Jean CONSTANTIN, senior counselor, Directorate General for Forests, Ministry of Waters and Forests – National Focal Point
- Mihaela STEFANESCU, senior counselor, Directorate for European Affairs and International Relations, Ministry of Waters and Forests
- Robert PACHE, forestry engineer, Unit for Protected Areas and Forestry Education, Romsilva – National Forest Administration
- Dragos MIHAI, forestry engineer, Unit for Protected Areas and Forestry Education, Romsilva – National Forest Administration
- John Samad Smaranda, senior counselor, Biodiversity Directorate, Ministry of Environment

Domogled – Valea Cernei National park Administration

- Gaşpar Ioan – Park Director
- Lungu Gheorghe – Ecological Education Specialist

Caraş-Severin Forest Directorate

- Rotariu Gheorghe – Technical Director
- Guţu Mihai – Head of Forestry Operations Office

Băile Herculane Forest District

- Bardac Grigore – Head of Forest District
- Moater Gheorghe – Forestry Operations Office
- Ion Dorin – Chief of forest rangers
- Radoslavescu Ilie – forest ranger
- Velescu Marius - forest ranger
- Delfiol Giovanni – forest ranger

Mehedinţi Forest Directorate

- Nicolicioiu Sorin – Director

Baia de Aramă Forest District

- Vîlceanu Ion – Head of Forest District
- Tăriţă Gheorghe - Forestry Operations Office
- Ancuţa Victor - Chief of forest rangers

ALBANIA PART

- Pellumb Abeshi, General Director for Environmental Policies,
- Klodiana Marika, Director of the Department of Biodiversity and Protected Areas,
- Ermal Halimi, Head of the Department of Development Programmes on Environment
- Zamir Dedej, General Director of the National Agency of Protected Areas/NAPA.
- Abdulla Diku, consultant

Annex 7.5 Itinerary and agenda of the mission

ROMANIA**Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

Time	Activity	Responsible/place
13:45	Arrival of UNESCO/IUCN representatives. Pick-up of UNESCO/IUCN representatives.	Timisoara Airport, - Dragos MIHAI – RNP Romsilva - Sebastian CONSTANTIN – Ministry of Waters and Forests (MWF)
14:30	Departure by car to Pension “Patru Anotimpuri” (Four Seasons) in Sasca Romana	
17:30	Accommodation to Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”	
18:30	Short discussions for establishing the next day's program / route	UNESCO/IUCN representatives and Romanian representatives (MWF, RNP, park administration)
19:30	Dinner	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”

Thursday, November 14, 2019

8:00-9:00	Breakfast	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”
9:00	Departure by cars to field visit of Cheile Nerei – Beusnita UNESCO Site	Romsilva and parc administration
16:00	Arrival to Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”	
19:30	Dinner	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”

Friday, November 15, 2019

8:00-9:00	Breakfast	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”
10:00 -12:30	Meeting with stakeholders	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”
12:30 -14:00	Lunch	Pension “Patru Anotimpuri”
14:00	Departure by cars to Baile Herculane	RNP
18:00	Arrival to Hotel Versay in Baile Herculane	
18:30	Short discussions for establishing the next day's program / route	UNESCO/IUCN representatives and Romanian representatives (MWF, RNP, park administration)
19:30	Dinner	Hotel Versay

Saturday, November 16, 2019

8:00-9:00	Breakfast	Hotel Versay
9:00	Departure by cars to field visit of Iana Craiovei component part of Domogled – Valea Cernei UNESCO Site	Romsilva and parc administration
18:00	Arrival to Hotel Versay	
19:30	Dinner	Hotel Versay

Sunday, November 17, 2019

8:00-9:00	Breakfast	Hotel Versay
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9:00	Departure by cars to field visit of Ciucevele Cernei component part of Domogled – Valea Cernei UNESCO Site	Romsilva and parc administration
18:00	Arrival to Hotel Versay	
19:30	Dinner	Hotel Versay

Monday, November 18, 2019

8:00-9:30	Breakfast	Hotel Versay
11:00 -12:30	Meeting with stakeholders	Visitor Centre of Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park
12:30 -14:00	Lunch	<i>to be established</i>
14:00 – 16:00	Meeting with authorities and debriefing meeting	Visitor Centre of Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park
16:00	Departure by car to Bucharest	RNP
24:00	Arrival to Bucharest, accommodation to hotel	

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

	Check-out and departure of UNESCO/IUCN representatives	Mr. Clemens Küpper, Mr. Hervé Lethier
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ALBANIA

20.11.2019

- 9:00 – 10:00 Meeting in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment with representatives of nature protection, pastures and the protected areas
- 10:30 – 17:00 Departure to Rrajca property and field trip to the site
- 17:30 – 18:30 Meeting in the Rrajca location with representatives of relevant NGOs and local communities, scientists and experts (accommodation in Rrajca/Librazhd

21.11.2019

- 8:00 – 17:00 Departure to Gashi River property and field trip to the site
- 17:30 – 18:30 Meeting in the Gashi River location with representatives of relevant NGOs and local communities, scientists and experts (accommodation in Tropoja

22.11.2019

- 8:00 – 13:00 Return from Gashi River property/Tropoja to Tirana
- 13:00 – 14:00 Meeting in the Ministry of Tourism and Environment with representatives of relevant bodies – Debriefing meeting at the end of the Mission