

**Memorandum of Cooperation**  
between  
**the Global International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026**  
**Coalition**  
and  
**the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection and**  
**Sustainable Development of the Carpathians**

*Recalling* the Resolution 76/253 of 17 March 2022, by which the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026, which reflects the important role that healthy rangelands/grasslands and pastoralism play in creating a sustainable environment, economic growth and resilient livelihoods for communities across the world;

*Noting* that the Global International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 Coalition (Global IYRP 2026 Coalition), a collaboration of pastoralist and supporting organizations/communities, spearheads global efforts to realize the objectives and goals of this International Year;

*Recalling* that the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) Carpathian Convention, which was adopted and signed by the seven Parties (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine) and entered into force in January 2006, unites parties with a shared vision of ensuring the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians;

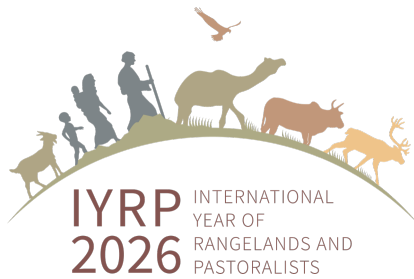
*Acknowledging* the 20th anniversary of the Convention's enforcement in 2026;

*Aware* of the importance of grasslands in the Carpathians, which could be said to be emblematic of the ecoregion and among the richest grassland biotopes in Europe. Their high biodiversity value is a direct result of hundreds of years of traditional management and animal husbandry. Yet arable agricultural intensification and abandonment of traditional grazing practices are an immediate threat. Therefore, maintaining appropriate, usually traditional management methods is vital;

*Recognizing* that grasslands and pastoralism are linked to diverse ecosystems, cultures, identities, traditional knowledge and historical experience coexisting with nature. These ecosystems support the livelihoods and food security of millions of people around the world and have many benefits, not only to pastoralists, but also to other communities through biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and delivery of clean water. Pastoralists make the most of a variable environment by using strategic mobility seasonally;

*Concerned* that agricultural intensification and expansion, droughts, floods, ecosystem degradation, animal diseases, pressure on land and increasingly erratic climate are compromising the economic productivity of grasslands and pastoralism, which risks exacerbating rural poverty due to the loss of pastoralists' productive assets;

*Aware* of the fact that productive grasslands and sustainable pastoralism are important for climate change mitigation and have great potential to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the IYRP 2026 represents an opportunity to raise international awareness of these issues of global concern;



*Noting* that the UN Resolution calls upon the Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system including UNEP:

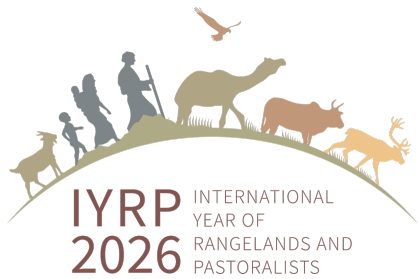
- to further build the capacity of and continue or increase responsible investment in the pastoral livestock sector, including for sustainable land management practices, improved and/or restored ecosystems, balanced access to markets, livestock health and breeding, and enhanced livestock extension services, in order to improve productivity, contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increase adaptive capacity, and maintain and enhance biodiversity;
- to fill knowledge gaps relating to rangelands and pastoralism and to promote innovative solutions for the sustainable management and ecological restoration of rangelands, taking into account the traditional knowledge of pastoralists;
- to observe the IYRP 2026, as appropriate, through activities aimed at raising awareness and the visibility of and directing attention to the relevance of the sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism and its contribution to achieving sustainable development;

*Noting* the most relevant articles of the Convention as:

- Article 4 of the Convention requires the Parties to take specific measures regarding the conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity;
- Article 7 of the Convention requires the Parties to take appropriate measures in designing and implementing their agricultural policies and pursue policies aiming at developing and designing appropriate instruments, while taking into account the high ecological importance of Carpathian mountain ecosystems, such as natural and semi-natural grasslands, as part of the ecological networks, landscapes and traditional land-use.
- Article 11 of the Convention requires Parties to pursue policies to preserve and protect cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. This includes cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, including architecture, land use, animal husbandry, horticulture and botany;

*Noting* the relevant Decisions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP7/12 para 2-4) as:

- Welcoming the UNGA Resolution (RES/76/253) declaring 2026 as the IYRP and recognizing the importance of Carpathian pastoralism, invites the Parties, Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD) and relevant stakeholders, with support of the Secretariat, to use the building momentum of the IYRP 2026 to undertake relevant actions for supporting, promoting and protecting the traditional pastoral practices in the Carpathians and to highlight the relevance and contribution of the Carpathian region to this important practice at the international level.
- Further to the DECISION COP7/12 paragraph 2, welcomes the prioritization of Carpathian pastoralism as a leading topic for the WG SARD activities, and further requests the WG SARD and involved stakeholders to build on the results and recommendations of the 6th WG SARD meeting, and to continue the process of identifying and implementing relevant activities for cooperation within the framework of the IYRP 2026, including but not limited to conducting a regional assessment and report on the status, challenges and needs of pastoralism in the Carpathian region, supporting development of pastoralism law in the Carpathians at the regional level, maintaining the traditional knowledge and heritage management, facilitating capacity building, as well as networking at the regional and international level, in this respect invites the Secretariat and relevant partners, particularly the National Agency of the



Mountain Areas Romania, the Centre for Ecological Research and Euromontana, to support the process.

- Invites the Parties, relevant Working Groups and stakeholders to explore possibilities to inscribe Carpathian pastoralism in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity and requests the Secretariat to support the process.

The Signatories will promote and enhance their cooperation as follows:

## **I – PURPOSE OF COOPERATION**

This Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) is aimed at providing a durable basis for the collaboration between the Signatories towards observing the IYRP 2026 through regional, sub-regional and national level actions for achieving the objectives and goals of the International Year as stated in the UN Resolution and relevant objectives of the Carpathian Convention.

## **II – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Global IYRP 2026 Coalition agrees:

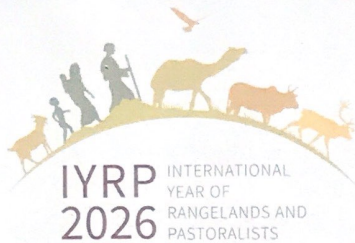
- to place the Convention's name and logo on its website as among the Friends of IYRP 2026,
- to feature the full text of the Convention in the 'Policy and Conventions' section of the webpage dedicated to the European Region,
- to endorse representation of the Convention as a member in the Regional IYRP 2026 Support Group in Europe,
- to communicate the actions led and implemented by the Convention in the framework of the UN IYRP 2026 on its social media platforms.

The Convention agrees:

- to observe the IYRP 2026, as appropriate, through activities aimed at raising awareness and the visibility of and directing attention to the relevance of the sustainable management of grasslands and pastoralism and its contribution to achieving sustainable development in the Carpathian Mountains and beyond,
- to name the IYRP 2026 through the use of its name and logo in any public communication pertaining to activities implemented in the framework of the IYRP 2026,
- to advocate policies for preserving and protecting cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of pastoralists, taking appropriate measures to maintain the traditional management of grasslands by pastoralists on the Carpathian Mountains,
- to become a member of the Regional IYRP 2026 Support Group in Europe by appointing a representative,
- to support the identification, recognition and mobilization of grassroots pastoralist organizations/communities in the Carpathian region and to facilitate collaboration between them and the Global IYRP 2026 Coalition.

The Signatories agree jointly:

- to identify and implement, if possible, relevant activities for cooperation within the framework of the IYRP 2026,
- to promote exchange of data and information relevant for sustainable pastoralism with a particular focus on best practices from other global regions that can be adapted and applied in the Carpathian region,



- to promote exchange of data and information relevant for sustainable pastoralism with a particular focus on best practices from other global regions that can be adapted and applied in the Carpathian region,
- to promote networks of professional experts in fields related to sustainable pastoralism,
- to improve the dialogue with and between the pastoralists in the Carpathian Mountains and elsewhere in Europe such as via supporting/organising/hosting regional and international level experience- and knowledge-sharing events

Except the above points, the Signatories shall not use in any press release, memo, report, website or other published disclosure related to this MoC any of the other Signatories' name and logo without prior written consent by the Signatory concerned.

### III – TERM AND TERMINATION

The term of this MoC will commence from the date of the signature and will remain in effect until 31 December 2026. This MoC can be revised at any point through mutual written agreement. Either party may terminate the MoC by providing a written notice six months in advance.

### IV – Non-Binding Memorandum of Cooperation

Nothing in this MoC will legally bind any of the Signatories. Any dispute about the interpretation or application of this Memorandum will be resolved by consultations between the Signatories and will not be referred to any national or international tribunal or third party for settlement.

Signed in duplicate on 12.10.23 in English.

For the Global International Year of  
Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026  
Coalition

Igshaan Samuels  
Co-chair *on behalf*  
Date *12 October 2023*

For the Secretariat of the Framework  
Convention on the Protection and  
Sustainable Development of the  
Carpathians

Harald Egerer  
Head of the Secretariat  
Date *12 October 2023*