

### Transnational exchange platform for the management of large carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region

27-28 March, Skopje, North Macedonia

#### Conference Statement

#### Background

The Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos regions is one of the most biologically diverse regions in Europe. In this biodiversity hotspot, the large carnivore species, brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), including the subspecies Balkan lynx (*Lynx lynx balcanicus*), thrive. Given the extensive ranges of these species, transnational coordination for their management is needed to enable a long-term basis for conservation.

In 2018, regional authorities and stakeholders agreed a [statement](#) expressing their desire for a more formalised structure for collaboration on management. Since then, a range of actors have been working together establishing the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos platform. To maintain the platform longer-term and give a more formalised basis for collaboration between participating countries, the platform members agreed at their [first conference](#) in November 2021 to establish a transnational agreement for collaboration on coexistence with large carnivores in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region.

#### The Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform agreement

At the third platform conference in Skopje, the managing authorities in charge of large carnivore management present and other [participants](#) from all participating [countries involved](#) agreed the following:

In the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework, the European Green Deal and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, biodiversity protection including conservation and management of large carnivores, remains a high-level priority for the platform members.

In addition, to meet the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and of the Bern Convention, transboundary population management is essential. Regional cooperation also remains a necessary part of the accession process to the EU.

In this context, the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Platform will continue as strategic exchange body consisting of science, experts and policy members. It will focus on regional cooperation, information exchange, coordination of monitoring, coordination of management, support of compliance with international and EU law requirements and support of implementation of transboundary 'population level management'.

To support the members in these aims, the [platform advisory board](#) from all participating countries, provides accompaniment on these topics as well as information on the latest relevant policy developments in the participating countries. An [information portal](#), launched at the Skopje conference, facilitates sharing information on good practice.

At their third conference in Skopje, the platform members agreed their ambition to:

- Establish a legally binding treaty on large carnivore conservation and management in the Dinaric-Pindos-Balkan region which provides a framework for long-term collaboration on the above topics
- As a first step towards this objective a MoU would be signed by sectoral ministers committing the countries involved to work towards the treaty
- The framework should include the ability to make adjustments through an action plan
- Members will contribute within the means available to the agreement's success by, at the minimum, providing expert governmental input to platform discussions, attending conferences and meetings with appropriate expert representatives, co-chairing / chairing the platform on a rotational basis, and exchanging information on best practice through the platform [information portal](#).

To move towards formalising the agreement by the next platform conference, members requested the secretariat to:

- Advocate for a long-term cooperation agreement in the Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos region in discussions with international organisations or potential funders
- Coordinate online meetings of the managing authority representatives “agreement group” to discuss the text of an agreement
- Provide expert legal input to formulate and refine the text according to the members needs and establish a signing-off process for the agreement
- Fundraise for continued cooperation on the management and conservation of large carnivore species in the Dinaric Balkan Pindos region

Agreed by the participants, 27 March 2023, Skopje