



Institutul de Biologie  
București



CARPATIA®  
European Wilderness Reserve



ULBS  
Universitatea "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu



WCPA  
WORLD COMMISSION  
ON PROTECTED AREAS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## Făgăraș Mountains

An inventory towards a new National Park  
10-11 December 2018

Romania is blessed with all landforms and an undoubtedly valuable natural wealth. We have a unique natural heritage in Europe and the time has come, 100 years after the unification of the Romanian historical regions, and more than 10 years after the land restitutions began, to unite and to choose the easiest path forward, regarding a future development strategy: the conservation and sustainable use of our natural heritage, biodiversity and of our authentic local culture.

We are the greenest country in Europe and we are just a few intelligent steps away from creating the largest national park on the continent and with it, the necessary infrastructure, which would attract tens of millions of visitors. The Romanian state has the power to create it and the people of Romania have the power to support it. In order for future generations to inherit an "Untamed Romania", as we would wish it to be, our generation has to take action and demand the proper, long term conservation of the Făgăraș Mountains.

The scientific community, environmental organisations and the Romanian civil society are increasingly preoccupied by forest conservation, education and awareness concerning the value of the natural environment.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 2018, the Bucharest Biology Institute of the Romanian Academy dedicated its annual conference to the most important mountains from the point of view of Romania's biodiversity – the Făgăraș Mountains. The conference, entitled "*The Făgăraș Mountains – scientific arguments for creating a National Park*", was organised in collaboration with Foundation Conservation Carpathia, The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Food Industry and Environmental Protection of the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu and with the support of the National Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN WCAP).

The event brought together 250 participants interested in the area of the Făgăraș Mountains or in similar mountain areas, from diverse fields: researchers, university professors, conservationists, local community, local and national government and European representatives. During the 2 days we covered aspects of science, economy and conservation, the involvement of local communities and the impact and advantages of a National Park on these aspects.

71 scientific papers were presented, covering the results of complex research in the area of the Făgăraș Mountains (biodiversity, geography, geomorphology, sociology studies, etc.). Open discussion sessions with representatives from different fields also took place: economy, local sustainable development, conservation and local communities. Speakers came from Romania, but also from other countries: Austria, Canada, Switzerland, France, Germany, UK, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine.

The creation of the Făgăraș National Park is a long process and encompassed a lot of team work involving not only conservationists, but also local communities, scientists and lawyers. If this vision is to become reality, the Făgăraș National Park would become a park of global importance, especially from the perspective of sustainable development and the relationship between humans and nature.

The scientific community supports the research and the studies, which will be the basis for the creation of the National Park. The idea of establishing an advisory board, which would support the necessary administrative and technical procedures needed for the long consultative process of declaring the Făgăraș Mountains a National Park, has already been discussed at the conference.

### Conclusions summary from December 10<sup>th</sup>:

1. Writing the scientific substantiation study and also an economical study in order to kick start the process of recognising the Făgăraș Mountains as a National Park. In the generous context provided by the Romanian Academy, the present scientific community has decided, on the spot, to be part of the scientific group that will support the proceedings.



2. Organising a consultative board, in charge with the technical and legal side, consisting of representatives of the present organisations which will support the implementation of necessary procedures.
3. Developing a strategy for the two working groups.
4. Involvement in the communication to all participants in the local community: locals, land owners, media, the business sector and the authorities.

### **Conclusions summary of the discussion on December 11<sup>th</sup>:**

#### **A future Făgăraş National Park means:**

##### **1. active collaboration and involvement of public and private social actors**

An emblematic National Park has an impact on the whole society, and its future depends on us all. The population of 130 000 living around the Făgăraş Mountains has to be given the opportunity to decide, alongside administrators, on how the development of their communities will proceed through nature conservation. As a result, a legal framework is needed which would allow a participatory administration and would encourage efficient management for the benefit of all involved.

##### **2. local communities**

In order for the National Park to generate economic benefits through the use of the natural wealth for which it was created in the first place, investment in local businesses needs to be encouraged, by introducing enterprise supporting programmes (such as “conservation enterprise development”). Encouraging projects developing the green economy in and around protected areas is possible through an investment fund, also called “conservation enterprise trust”. We hope for the establishment of such a fund, through the common effort of local authorities and the private sector, which would have available funds for the local communities around Făgăraş Mountains.

##### **3. biodiversity conservation**

The 71 scientific papers presented at the conference, including results of complex research done in the Făgăraş Mountains area, attest to the fact that the Făgăraş Mountains are extremely valuable, a benchmark for biodiversity conservation for the number of species and habitats, not only for Romania, but also for Europe. The Făgăraş Mountains could potentially become the biggest and most important forest national park on the continent! As virgin wilderness areas disappear from Europe, Romania is a country that still has much of its natural wealth intact and the Făgăraş Mountains could potentially become the biggest and wildest forest covered National Park in Europe.

Protected natural areas can bring more benefits to people than the current extractive economy, which is consuming resources. The development of green businesses means improving conservation, creating jobs and the opportunity to increase income for local communities, generating financial contributions to the administration of the protected area and compensatory payment to land owners.

Together, we are at the beginning of a long journey to make sure that the Făgăraş Mountains become Nature’s sanctuary and the source of the local communities’ wellbeing, a place sought out and craved by Romanians and our European neighbours alike. At the end of this journey we hope to all be in support of the Făgăraş National Park.