

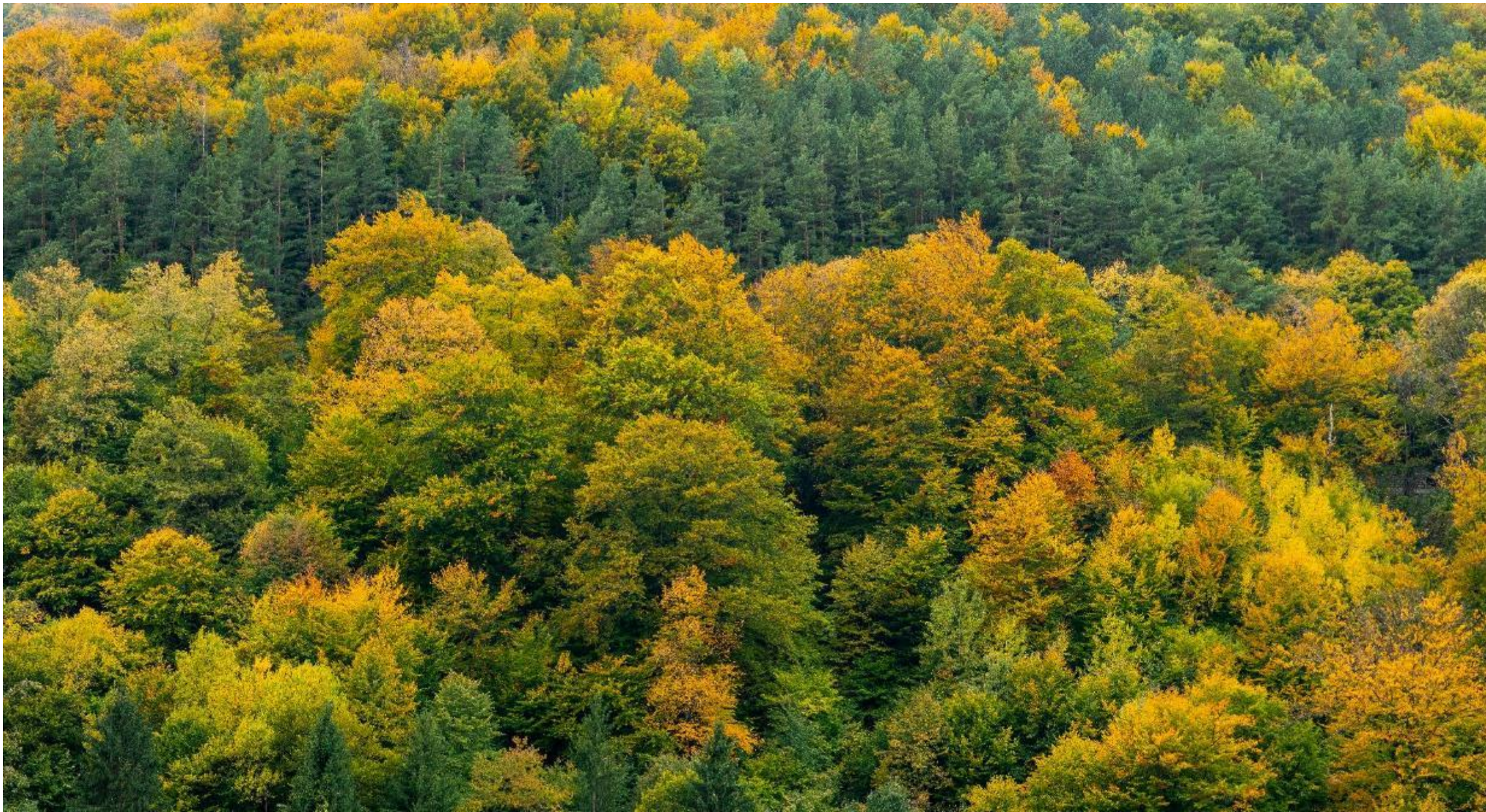


Field report

October 2023

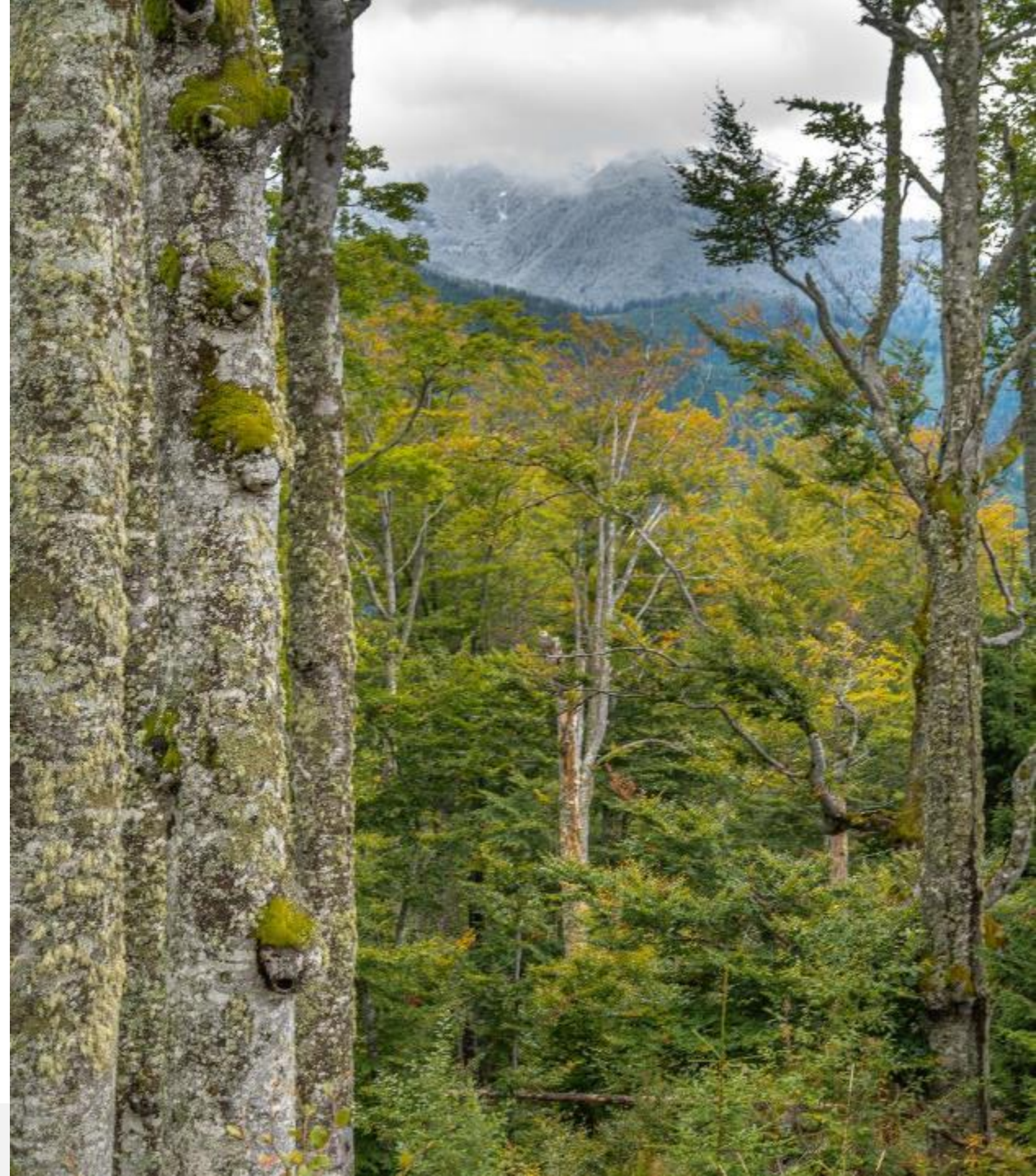


Creating the largest forested National Park in Europe



Main activities summary

- 01 Forest conservation and management
- 02 Ecological restoration
- 03 Wildlife conservation
- 04 Conservation enterprise programme
- 05 Communication & community outreach



01

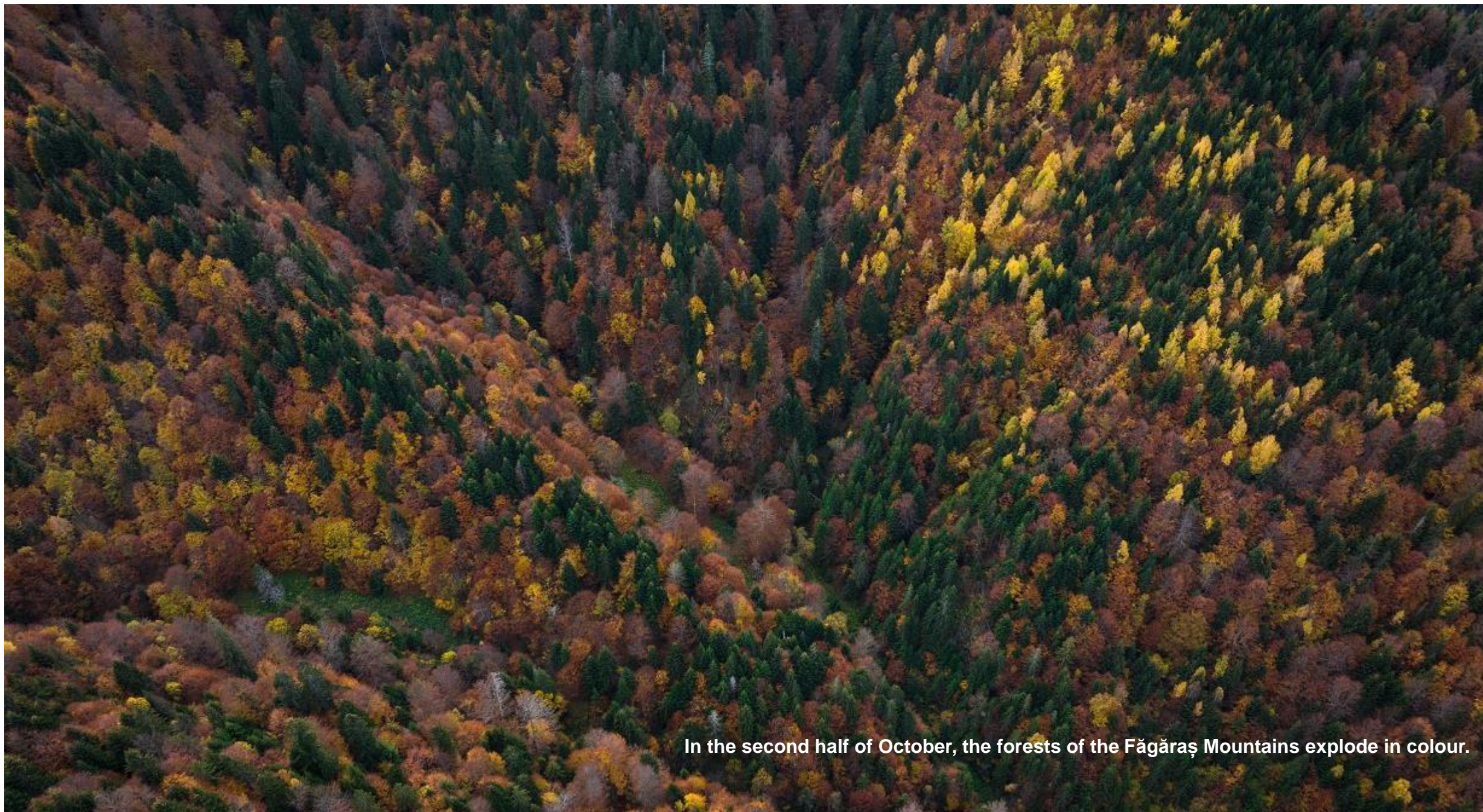
Forest conservation and
management



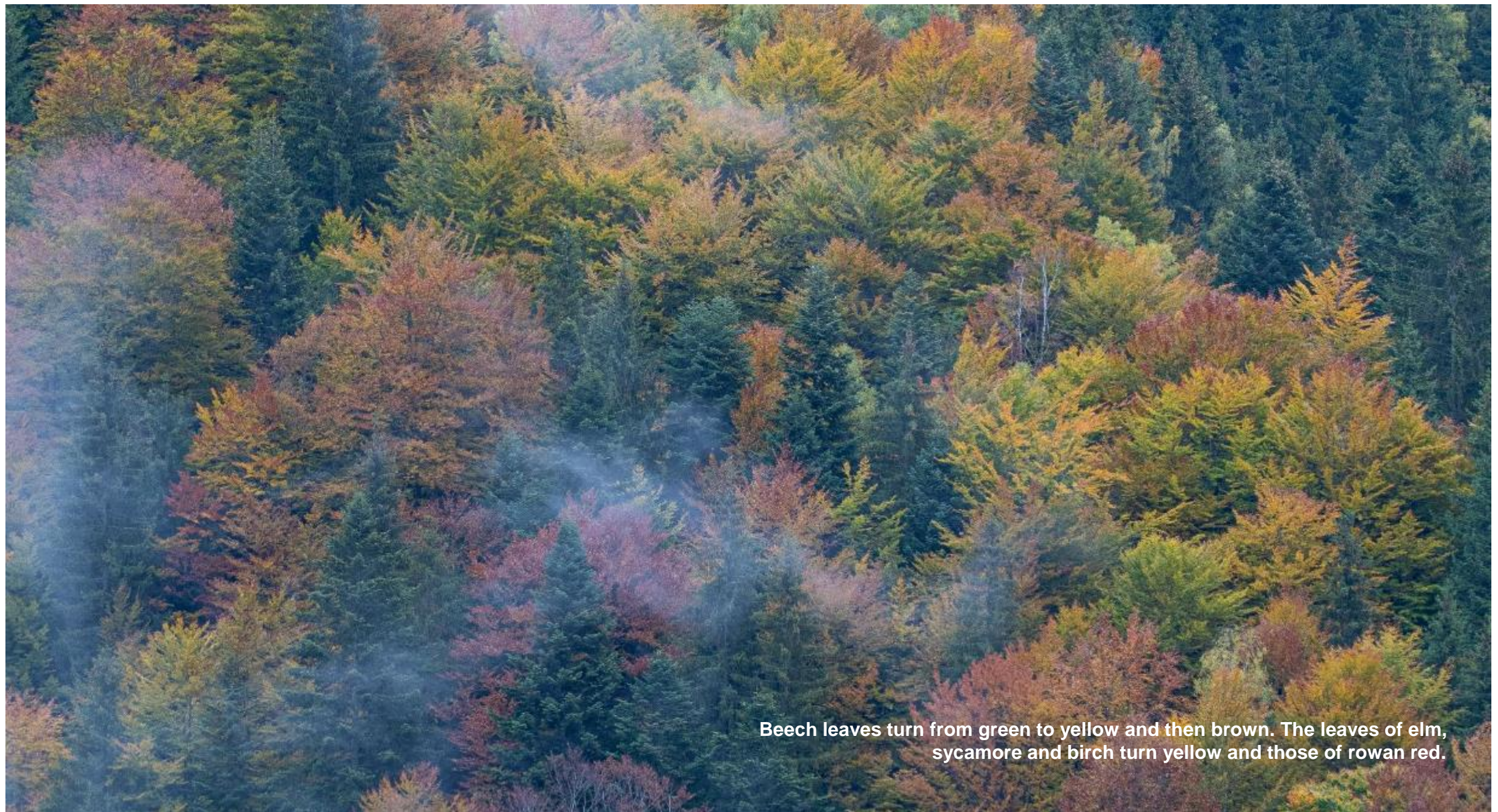
October may be considered the most beautiful month of the year if we turn our eyes to the deciduous and mixed forests. Summer says goodbye, chlorophyll production drops and the yellow and orange colours start to come into their own.

In October we purchased 35.7 hectares of forest for full protection.





In the second half of October, the forests of the Făgăraș Mountains explode in colour.

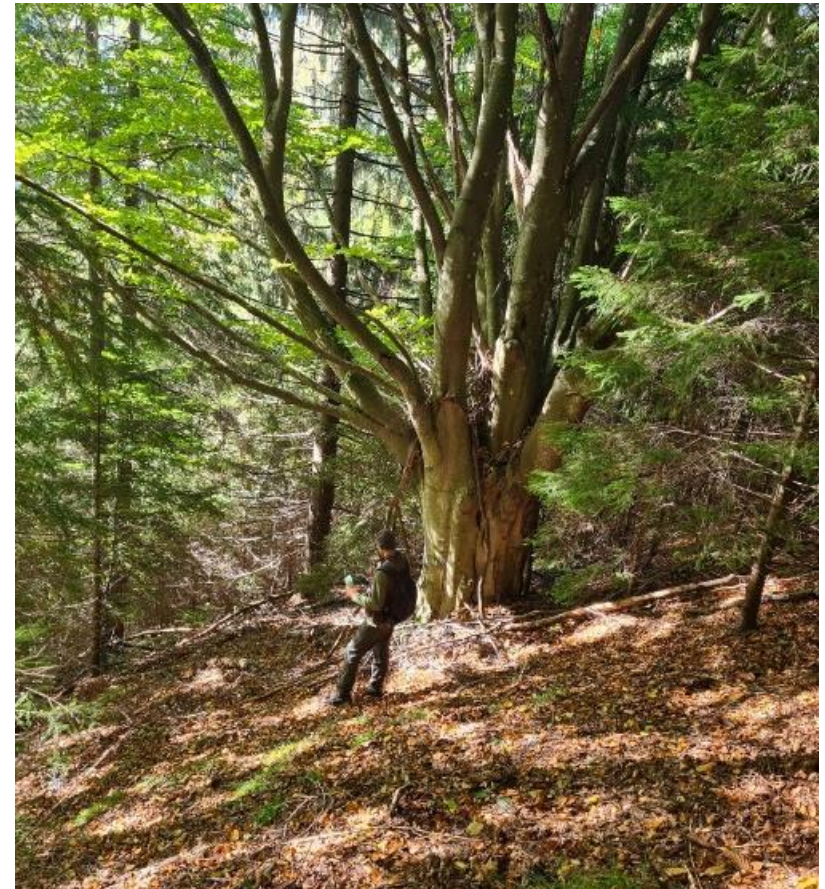


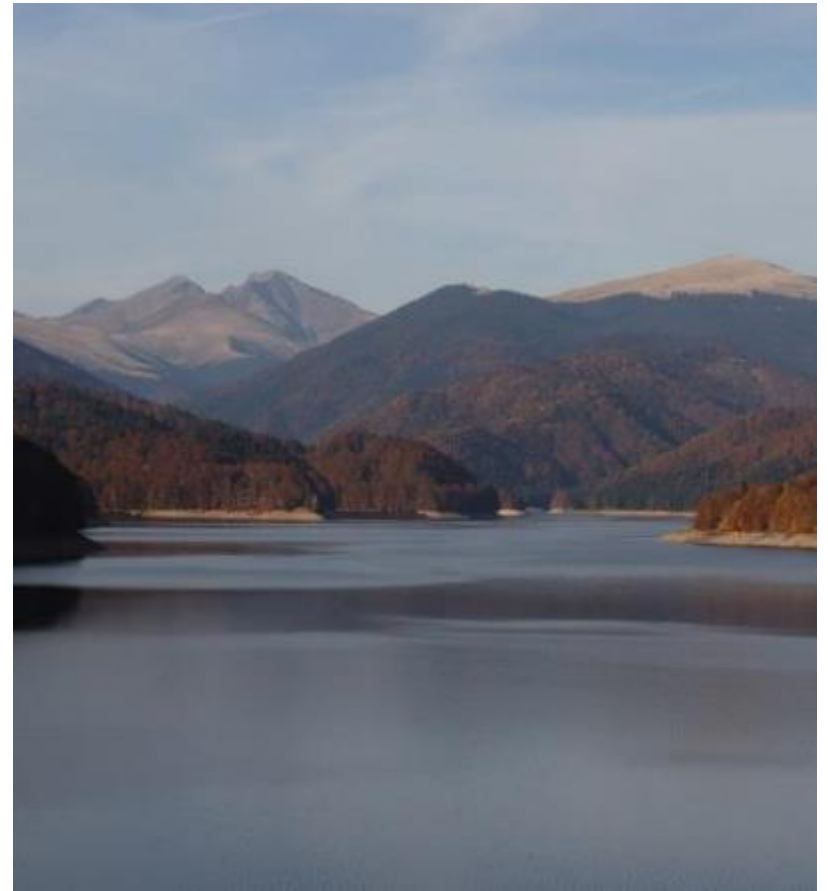
Beech leaves turn from green to yellow and then brown. The leaves of elm, sycamore and birch turn yellow and those of rowan red.



The larch (*Larix decidua*) is the only conifer that loses its leaves in winter (is deciduous). In autumn they turn yellow and fall.

Images from the project area







02

Ecological restoration



- We have started working on the ecological restoration sites.
- We are currently working throughout three restoration sites.
- We estimate that we will plant around 70,000 seedlings.
- Access to and conditions within these areas are extremely difficult, with steep slopes and poor, stony soil. Our staff and day workers have walked long and hard distances to get the saplings here.
- We are planting beech, fir, spruce, mountain elm and swiss pine seedlings to restore the natural forests of the Făgăraș Mountains, as well as juniper and dwarf pine on the edges of the mountain pastures.



Berivoiu restoration site

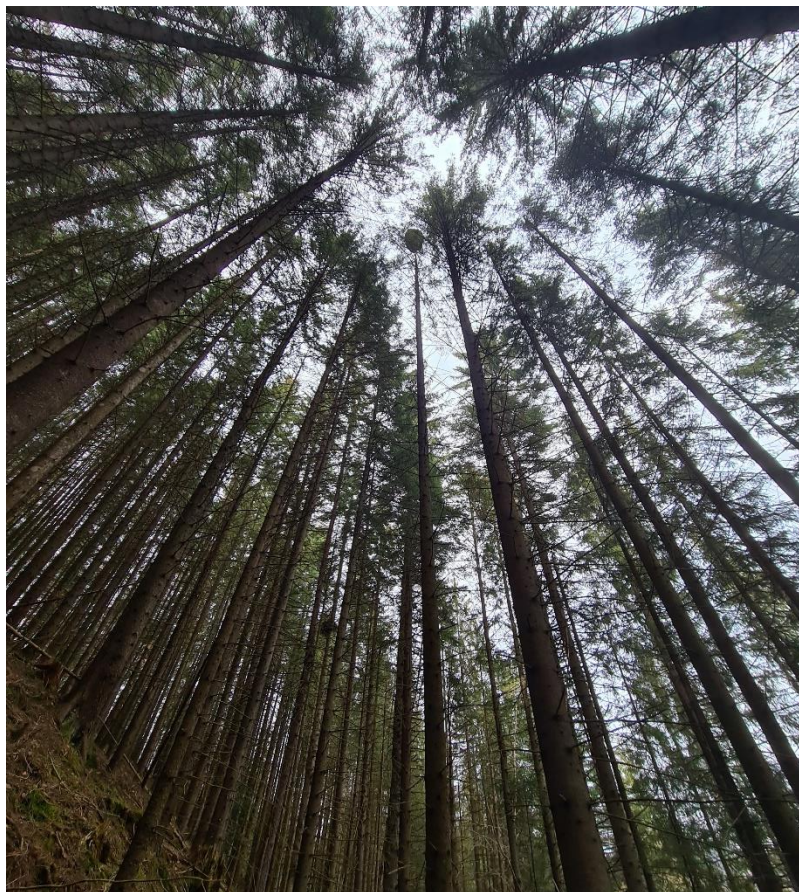


Zârna restoration site

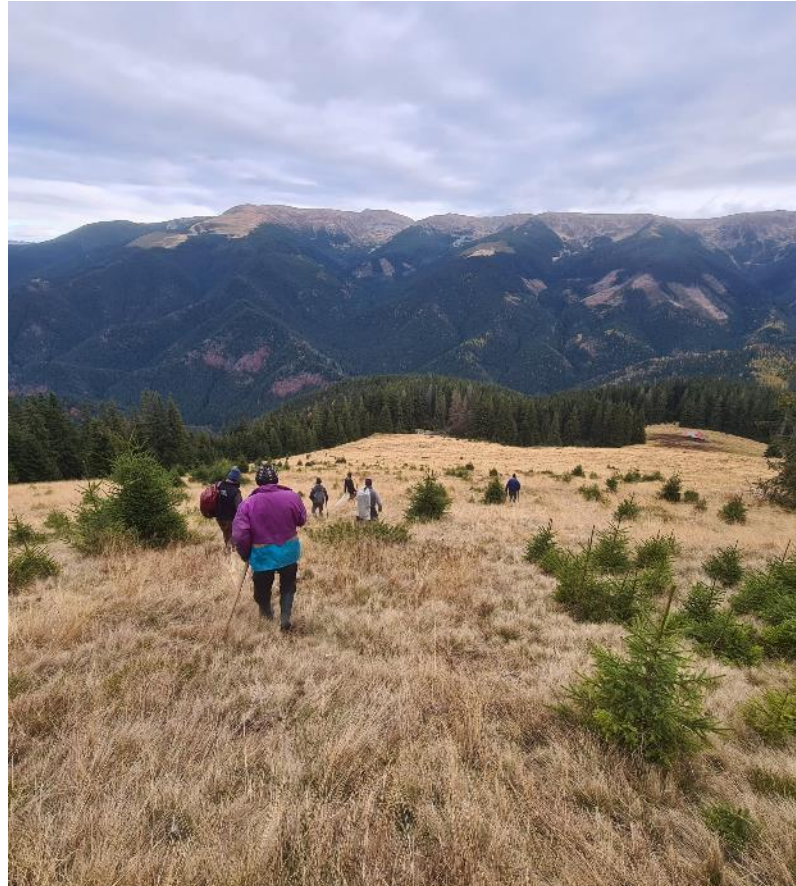


Pojarna restoration site

- We continue in our activities to convert artificial spruce monocultures back to a mixed and healthy mountain forest in Tămaș Valley through the SUPERB and LIFE projects.



- Planting swiss pine seedlings, juniper and dwarf pine at the Berivoiu restoration site was the hardest work this autumn. Our workers and colleagues walked almost three hours to the planting site and the donkeys were a great help.
- The ecological restoration work on this site is supported by the SUPERB project (Systemic solutions for upscaling urgent ecosystem restoration for forest-related biodiversity and ecosystem services), the largest cross-border forested landscape restoration project in Europe.



Green houses and tree nurseries

- The good weather in October kept us hard at work in the tree nurseries and greenhouses where we have been transferring seedlings for planting in the mountains this autumn.
- Watering, weeding, tending the seedlings and sowing the seeds for the new trees were the main activities.



Weeding the mountain ash saplings



Swiss pine saplings ready for planting at the Zărna restoration site



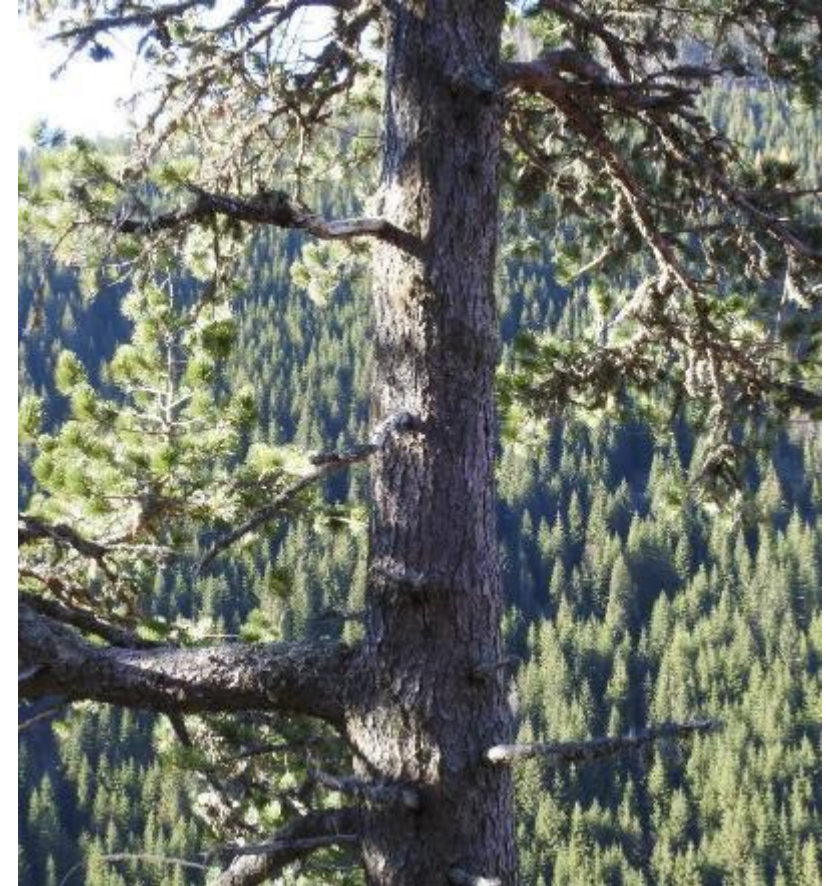
Silver fir seeding



We are taking spruce seedlings to be planted in the mountains.

Did you know that...

- The Swiss pine is an impressive tree?
- This autumn, for the first time, we're reintroducing the Swiss pine to the high mountains, at altitudes where no other tree could survive.
- A great lover of heights, it lives at the top of spruce forests, in alpine meadows, among junipers and on steep slopes.
- It thrives between rocks and can live for up to three centuries.
- The Swiss pine (*Pinus cembra*) is the only conifer in Europe that retains its shape at high altitudes.
- It protects the soil from erosion and contributes to the formation of soil on rocky slopes and rocks.



Removing the invasive alien (IAS) plant species

- We continued our efforts to eradicate invasive alien species along a 3 km length of the Dâmboviței Valley and began to transfer the information collected in the field into the database.
- Our colleague, biologist Dr Oliviu Pop, attended a working meeting with policy experts – negotiators within the Technical Support Group – Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in Brussels on 2nd-3rd October, for one of the issues covered by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): plant conservation.



03

Wildlife conservation



Wildlife reintroductions

- Eight bison have started their long journey from Poland and Italy to the wilderness of the Făgăraș Mountains.
- They will spend at least 21 days in quarantine before being released into the acclimatisation enclosure, where they will spend the winter. Their journey to the freedom of the Făgăraș Mountains will begin in the spring, when they will have ideal conditions to explore their new home.
- We are preparing intensively for new arrivals of bison from Poland, Hungary, Switzerland and Germany. The selection of individuals and their diversity is extremely important to ensure genetic diversity and their chances of surviving in the wild.



Wildlife reintroductions

- From the 13th to the 15th of October, our colleague Adrian Aldea, biologist and wildlife management coordinator, attended the conference '*Conoscere per proteggere*' (Knowledge for Protecting), organised by Parco Natura Viva, in Italy, where he presented the speech '*The Făgăraș Mountains become a home for bison*', an opportunity to promote our initiative and create new long-term partnerships for the protection of this species at **the** European level.



Wildlife reintroductions

- We continue the process of beaver reintroduction in the southern part of the Făgăraș Mountains, with four new beavers captured on the northern side of the massif.
- We are grateful to our colleague Liviu Ungureanu, beaver reintroduction specialist, who is in a race against the clock in autumn and spring to identify and capture the beavers we relocate.



Wildlife monitoring

- On the 28th and 29th of October, we attended the scientific conference *Tușnad Eco Bear* to present the evolution of the bear population in Făgăraș Mountains through a discussion based on genetic research data.
- Our colleague Ruben Iosif, coordinator of the Wildlife monitoring department, presented the data from six years of DNA monitoring of brown bears in the Făgăraș Mountains.
- The conference brought together experts from across Europe to discuss the problem of human-bear coexistence in Romania.
- Bears remain a sensitive issue in Romania and require a complex and comprehensive approach.



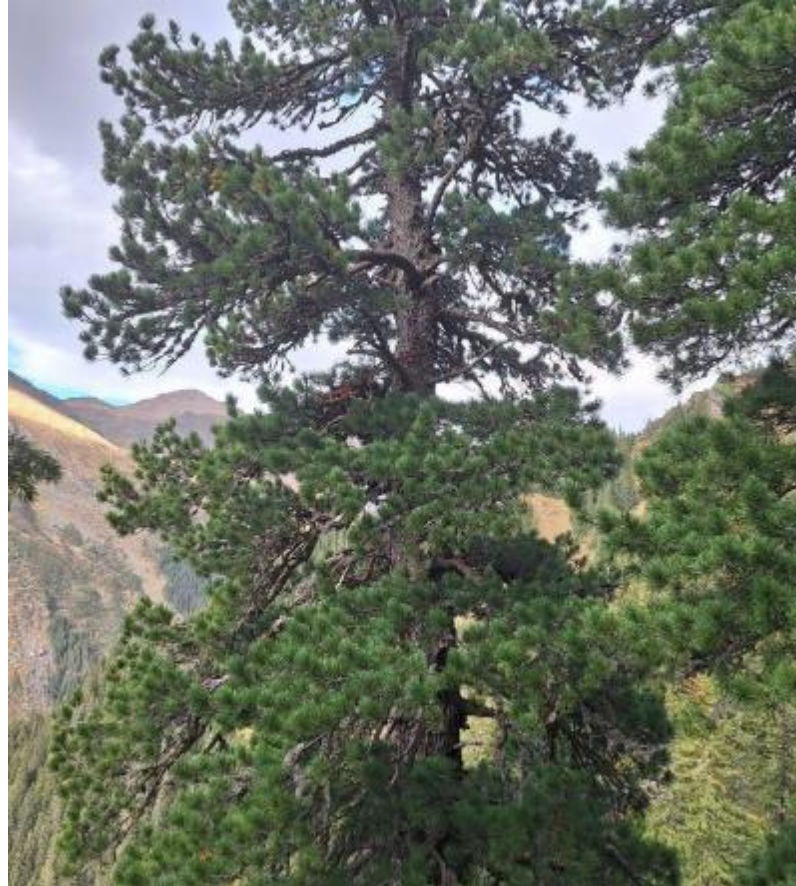
Wildlife monitoring

- In October we monitored the chamois population in the wildlife management units we manage.
- Despite challenges such as intensive hunting in the wider Făgăraș Mountains since 2004, the presence of unleashed sheep dogs and competition with sheep flocks, we are seeing slow but steady growth from very low levels in population in and around the alpine area.



Wildlife monitoring

- Our collaborators from the MILVUS Group Association, our partners in the golden eagle monitoring programme within the LIFE project, have successfully restored the first golden eagle nest in the Făgăraș Mountains.
- This nest, located on a Swiss pine (*Pinus cembra*), required considerable effort due to the tree's height, location and difficult accessibility.
- We are optimistic that the nest will be used next year and contribute to a successful nesting outcome.



Wildlife management

- We donated nine cows to eight farmers in the Rucăr, Sătic, Stoenеști and Nămăești areas as part of the CARPATHIA voluntary compensation programme for damage caused by wildlife.
- Our intervention teams continue to patrol and monitor hot spots to minimise conflict and increase security around villages.
- Coexistence with wildlife is possible, as it has been in the past in the Carpathians, and our priority is to avoid conflicts in the first place through effective wildlife management.



Wildlife video images

Bison

Eurasian lynx

Brown bear

European wild cat

Wolf

A hidden place to relax in the
Făgăraș Mountains





04

Conservation Enterprise
Programme



Food HUB

- In the Făgăraș Mountains, stories taste like honey.
- Part of the Roadele Munților family, Stupina din Muscel is a small local honey producer, well known for its Mățău wonderful honey.
- This honey rivals the most prestigious varieties, such as Manuka, because of the altitude and clean area where the bees collect their pollen.
- We support more than 30 local producers through the Roadele Munților food hub, promoting their work and stories.



Cobor Biodiversity Farm

- At [Cobor Biodiversity Farm](#), we work with the people of Cobor village and the surrounding villages.
- We are committed to conserving the biodiversity here, but we are also committed to revitalising the local community, providing jobs and local support.
- We welcome you to Cobor, surrounded by majestic beech forests, pastures dotted with ancient oak trees and the tranquility of a 13th century village.



Cobor Biodiversity Farm

- On the 14th of October we organised the 'Întrecerea gulașurilor' (goulash competition) at the farm, an event for the general public, but also for cooking enthusiasts.
- Seven teams competed to prepare the tastiest goulash, the star ingredient being Transylvanian Grey cattle meat.
- The 400 participants enjoyed the flavours and aromas, voted for the best goulash in the 'public vote' section and danced to old Carpathian music performed by the band 'Trei parale'.



Travel Carpathia

At the end of October, we hosted the unique experience offered by [Bloom the World](#) and [Podu' Stricat](#) in Poiana Tămaș.

The experience started down at the foot of the mountains with stories about restoration work and how a forest grows, continued through an area that had suffered from clear-cutting and was being restored by the Foundation's team, then we talked about the wildlife reintroduction project and went to the beaver dam.

The guides were our colleagues from the Communication, Conservation Enterprise and Ecological Restoration teams, who made a great trio: Victoria Donos, Cosmin Vorovenci and Flavius Răuță.

The food was excellently prepared by the team of [Travel Carpathia](#) and Roadele Munților.



Wildlife hides

- As we close the season at [the wildlife hides](#), we can't wait to see you again in 2024!
- We have had a season full of amazing experiences and guests who have deeply enjoyed the fantastic journey into the wilderness of the Făgăraș Mountains.
- It's not too early to book your adventure in the Făgăraș Mountains! We already have 35 nights booked for 2024.



05

Communication &
community outreach



Carpathia Scholarship Programme

- 15 students have the chance to benefit from an annual grant of 2,500 lei through the [Carpathia Scholarship Programme](#), part of the Carpathia Fund.
- The aim of the Carpathia Scholarship Programme is to increase students' interest in fields such as biodiversity conservation and ecology, but also to improve the quality of life in the Făgăraş area by supporting children with outstanding academic achievements and it is implemented in partnership with the Făgăraş Landscape Community Foundation.



BURSELE CARPATHIA

**Așteptăm
aplicațiile până la
31 octombrie**

Elevi din: Șinca Nouă, Șinca Veche, Drăguș, Viștea, Sâmbăta de Sus, Lisa, Ucea, Hârseni, Recea, Arpașu de Jos, Porumbacu de Jos, Avrig, Cârțișoara, Turnu Roșu, Racoviță, Cârța, Tâlmaci



Local community support

Table tennis becomes accessible to students from the communes of Rucăr, Lerești, Stoenesti, Valea Mare Pravăț and Nucșoara through the free course 'Învăț să joc cu clasă TENIS DE MASĂ' (learn to play table tennis class).

We want to provide children with a suitable environment for physical activity and harmonious development.

Step by step, we will be able to train future table tennis champions, a sport with a long tradition in Argeș County.

Funded by the Carpathia Fund and implemented by Foundation Conservation Carpathia, this programme is part of a long-term partnership with six schools in the municipalities of Argeș County.



Mountain refuges

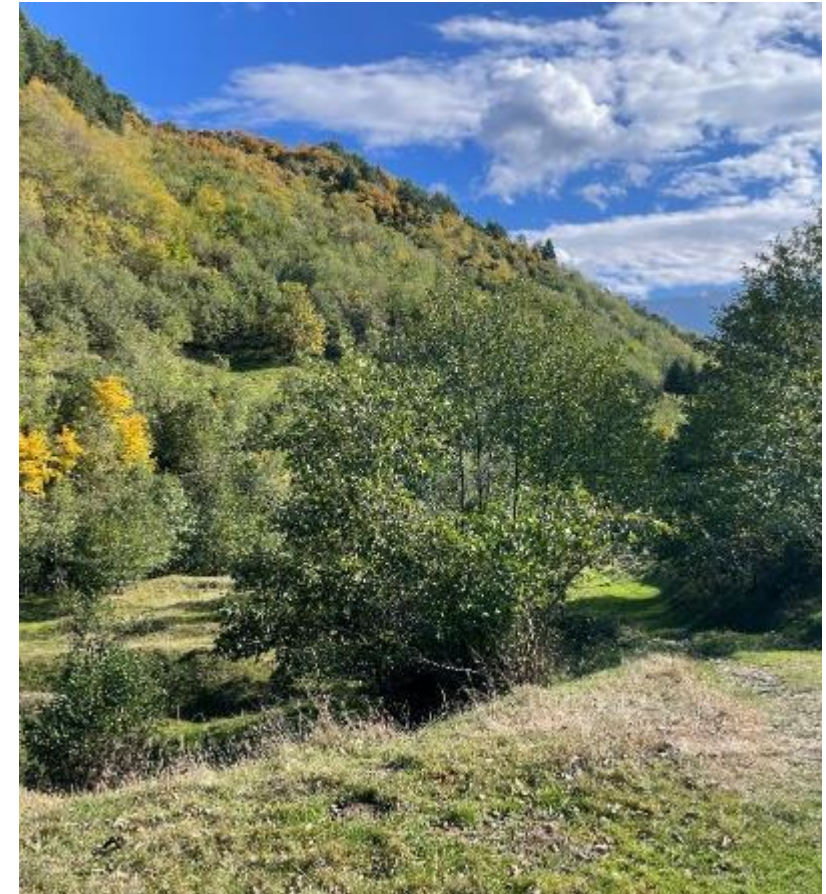
- We supported the Carpathian Mountain Association in clearing the Scara shelter area of the remains of the old shelter and paid for the cost of the air transport.
- In addition to clearing the remains, the lightning protection system – so important in a structure with sheet metal and solar panels in one place (and) at an altitude of over 2,000 metres – was completed.



Făgăraș Fest 2024

Făgăraș Fest, the travelling festival of the Făgăraș Mountains, is looking for a place for the 2024 edition at the foot of the Făgăraș Mountains.

A joyful occasion for our team to reach new, less known or visited places, which we will invite you to discover in 2024 in the greatest nature festival in Romania, organized in partnership with a local community.



CARPATHIA Nature Education Programme

- Ten of the Junior Rangers ventured into the heart of Retezat National Park, the oldest national park in the country and a sanctuary of Romanian natural values.
- They visited the headquarters of the Retezat National Park Administration, walked in the footsteps of history at the Mălăiești Fortress and enjoyed the pampering of nature at the Gențiana Hut.
- Our juniors have now got down to business and are looking forward to future adventures. And let's not forget, the future of nature is in their hands.



CARPATHIA Nature Education Programme

- We organised a training course for nature educators and staff from the Richita Centre for Activities and Nature Exploration.
- Together we created new learning experiences and we hope that new models of education will help new educators sow the seeds of knowledge and compassion for nature in their communities.
- Thank you Banca Comercială Română (BCR) for supporting educational activities in the Făgăraș Mountains.

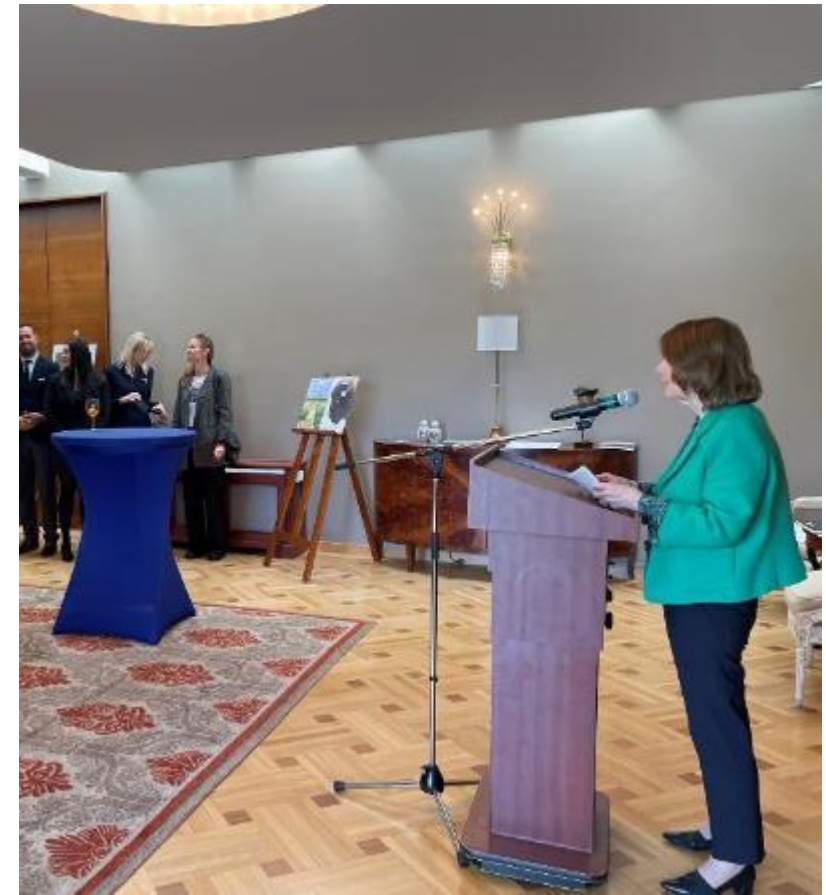


Awards

- We received a special mention in the 'Environment' category at the Performance Gala organised by Radio România Actualități.
- Our bison reintroduction project in the Făgăraș Mountains brought us this nomination, as well as the joy of having our efforts recognised at national level.



- In October, a reception hosted by US Ambassador to Romania Kathleen Kavalec, focused on nature and the actions being taken to restore ecosystems, conserve forests and create economic opportunities for local communities in areas of special natural value in Romania and the United States.
- The event was organised on the occasion of the visit of the American Prairie Reserve delegation, one of the largest private conservation projects in the United States of America.
- Foundation Conservation Carpathia highlighted Romanian conservation efforts in the Southern Făgăraș Mountains.
- The event was addressed by Mrs. Kathleen Kavalec, Ambassador of the United States of America to Romania, Mr. Christoph Promberger, Executive Director of Foundation Conservation Carpathia, Mr. Pete Geddes, Vice President of the American Prairie Reserve and Mr. Mircea Fechet, Minister of Environment.



Mentions in international media

- When we talk about an emblematic national park in Romania with the fame of Yellowstone National Park, we are talking about a future where everyone feels involved.
- With a vision that goes beyond conservation, creating a national park in the Făgăraș Mountains also means creating a place where local communities feel protected and empowered in their development.
- This is what [The Guardian writes in an article](#) that makes us proud to have such beautiful nature in our country!



Results

27,027 ha

of forest under permanent protection and safeguarded for future generations

78,000 ha

protected for wildlife, with no sport or trophy hunting

1,991 ha

bought and restored (clear-cuts, alpine pastures, spruce monocultures)

4,056,554

trees planted in clear-cuts, riparian galleries and restoration areas of spruce monocultures

250

locals who earn a living from the CARPATHIA project

2,200

students and teachers involved in environmental education projects

20+

local producers are part of the Roadele Munților Food Hub





Join us in:

- Creating the largest forested National Park in Europe.
- Annual restoration of the original ecosystem of over 100 ha of clear-cuts.
- Protecting wildlife across a total of 78,000 ha.
- Sustainable development of local communities.
- Environmental education projects.



FOUNDATION
CONSERVATION
CARPATHIA

Calea Feldioarei 27A, Brasov – Romania
info@carpathia.org



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