

4.061 The Great Ecological Connectivity Corridor: Cantabrian Range - Pyrenees - Massif Central - Western Alps

CONSIDERING the extraordinary natural and cultural values of the Cantabrian Range, the Pyrenees, the Massif Central, the Western Alps and their transitional areas, which jointly host the greatest number of natural ecosystems in Southwest Europe and constitute one of its major biodiversity areas;

RECOGNIZING that these mountains are the catchment area of most of the rivers of Southwest Europe and that they support people as well as a great number of species in the region;

MINDFUL of the obligations contained in the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979), the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), and Chapter 13 *Sustainable Mountain Development of Agenda 21* (Rio de Janeiro, 1992);

CONSIDERING the commitments established under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979) and the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000);

FURTHER CONSIDERING the provisions of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995) and the proposal for a Pan-European Ecological Network, promoted by the Council of Europe;

BEARING IN MIND the commitments of the European Union 'Birds Directive' (79/409/EEC, 1979) and the 'Habitats Directive' (92/43/EEC, 1992), which should be incorporated into the national legislation of EU Member States through effective tools to conform to the 'Natura 2000' Network;

RECALLING Resolution 3.039 *The Mediterranean mountain partnership* and Recommendation 3.105 *Conservation of the Cantábrico-Burgalesa mountain range* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004);

AWARE OF the opportunities that the network of Natura 2000 sites, which constitute 40% of the geographical area covered by this initiative, will provide for the conservation of a physically interconnected and geographically functional ecological network;

CONCERNED by the fragmentation trends that have begun to impact these mountain ranges and aware of the threats implied by such trends in terms of biodiversity conservation, as well as conservation of transitional areas, particularly if the synergy between the potential impacts of fragmentation and those of global climate change is taken into account;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to promote prevention strategies in order to avoid further fragmentation, enhance resilience of ecosystems and human communities in the face of global change, promote the restoration of severely damaged key areas, and the incorporation of climate change adaptation measures into resource management and conservation;

ENCOURAGED by progress achieved in recent years by government bodies of territories covered by this initiative (Autonomous Communities, Historic Territories, Regions, etc.) as well as by NGOs, including research, development of plans, programmes and strategies at various levels; and by the fact that there are already significant examples of integration of permeability and connectivity criteria in land and infrastructure planning;

APPRECIATING the Mountain Connectivity Initiative proposed by IUCN during the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress (Durban, 2003), as well as the proceedings of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) in Montreal (1997) and Colombia (1999), and work during the International Mountain Corridors Conference meetings, held in Banff (Canada, 2004), Les Planes de Son (Spain, 2005) and Papallacta (Ecuador, 2006);

FURTHER APPRECIATING similar cooperation initiatives in other mountain areas of Europe and worldwide, particularly the Alpine Network of Natural Protected Areas, considered as the starting point from which this initiative extended south-westward; and

BEARING IN MIND the *Planes de Son Declaration*, resulting from the International Mountain Corridors Conference, held in Barcelona and Les Planes de Son, October 24-27, and in Vitoria-

Gasteiz and Somiedo, October 27-31, 2005, hosted by the Fundació Territori i Paisatge of Caixa Catalunya, with the support of the Council of Europe, Eurosite, Europarc and WCPA's Theme on Mountain Protected Areas;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. URGES the Governments of Spain, Portugal, France, Andorra and Italy, European environmental institutions and NGOs to strengthen the Great Ecological Connectivity Corridor: Cantabrian Range - Pyrenees - Massif Central - Western Alps;

In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009-2012:

2. REQUESTS the Director General to strengthen work on Mediterranean mountains, including the concept of the Great Ecological Connectivity Corridor: Cantabrian Range - Pyrenees - Massif Central - Western Alps and other similar initiatives.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.