

# Nature Conservation in Romania: Fairy tales, Real State, and Future Prospects

**Erika Stanciu** (Romania)

April 14<sup>th</sup> 2022



Local and Regional Forest  
Administration Romania



Retezat National Park  
Administration



WWF Danube Carpathian  
Programme



Propark Foundation for Protected  
Areas Romania



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI,  
APELOR ȘI PĂDURILOR

Ministry of Environment, Waters  
and Forests



# Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in Romania

**Fairy Tales - Real State**



**The wildest unfragmented  
mountain range in Europe,  
with rich alpine meadows**



## Large tracks of natural, unfragmented forests

About 78% of the Romanian forests have a high degree of naturalness



## The last region in Europe with viable populations of large carnivores

about 8.000 brown bears (*Ursus arctos*)

4.000 wolves (*Canis lupus*)

3.000 Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)



## Over half of Europe's virgin forests

840 km<sup>2</sup> (1.5%) pristine or quasi-pristine forests (National Forest Inventory of Romania 2013–2018). <http://roifn.ro/site/rezultate-ifn-2/>



## The largest HNV grasslands and wood pastures of central Europe

170 km<sup>2</sup> of wooded pastures (the largest national area of this biodiverse habitat in central eastern Europe, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in Europe)





## Species rich meadows

36% (52 000 km<sup>2</sup>) of Romania's agricultural area still consisted of HNV farmland (2012 estimate, ?).



**One-third of European  
vascular plant species  
(3.988 species)  
481 endemic species**

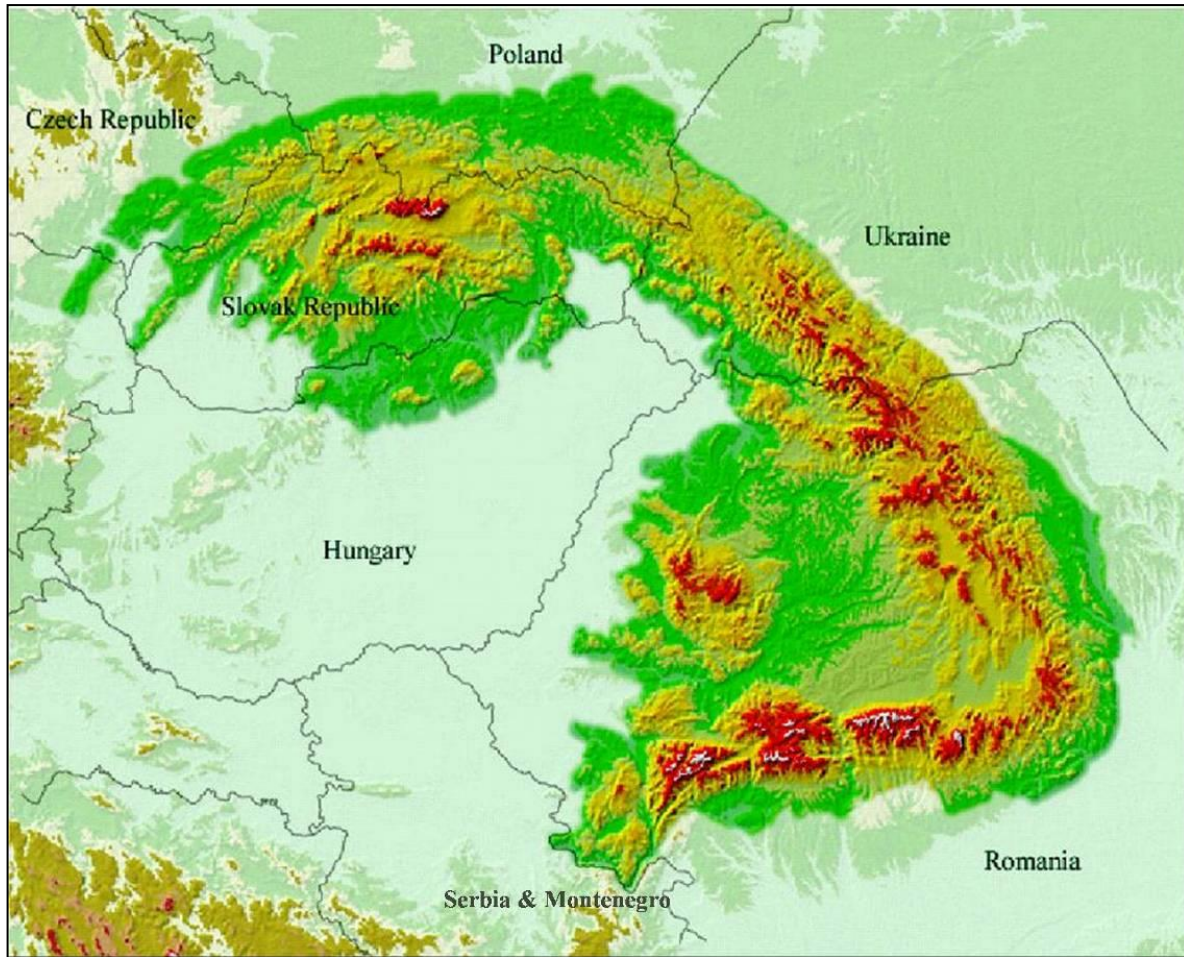
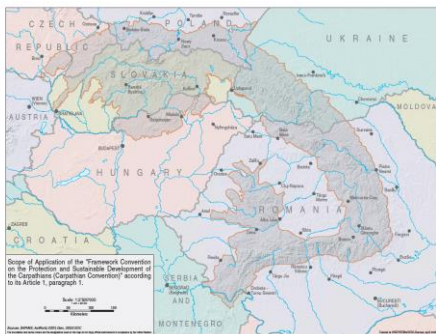


Free roaming European  
bison (*Bison bonasus*)

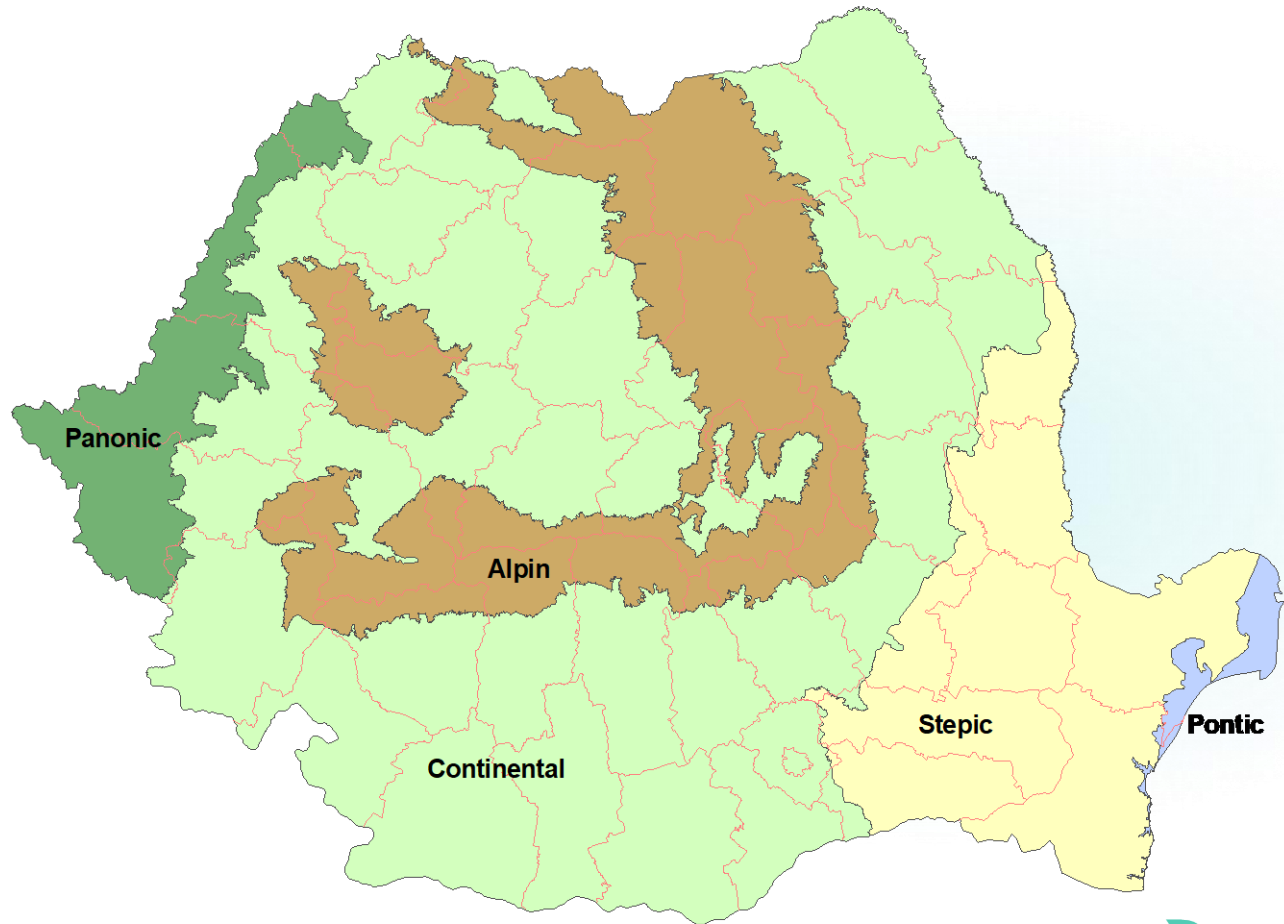


## Romania - incorporates a significant part of the Carpathian Ecoregion

Carpathian Ecoregion:  
7 Countries, over 200.000 km<sup>2</sup>



# 5 Biogeographical Regions

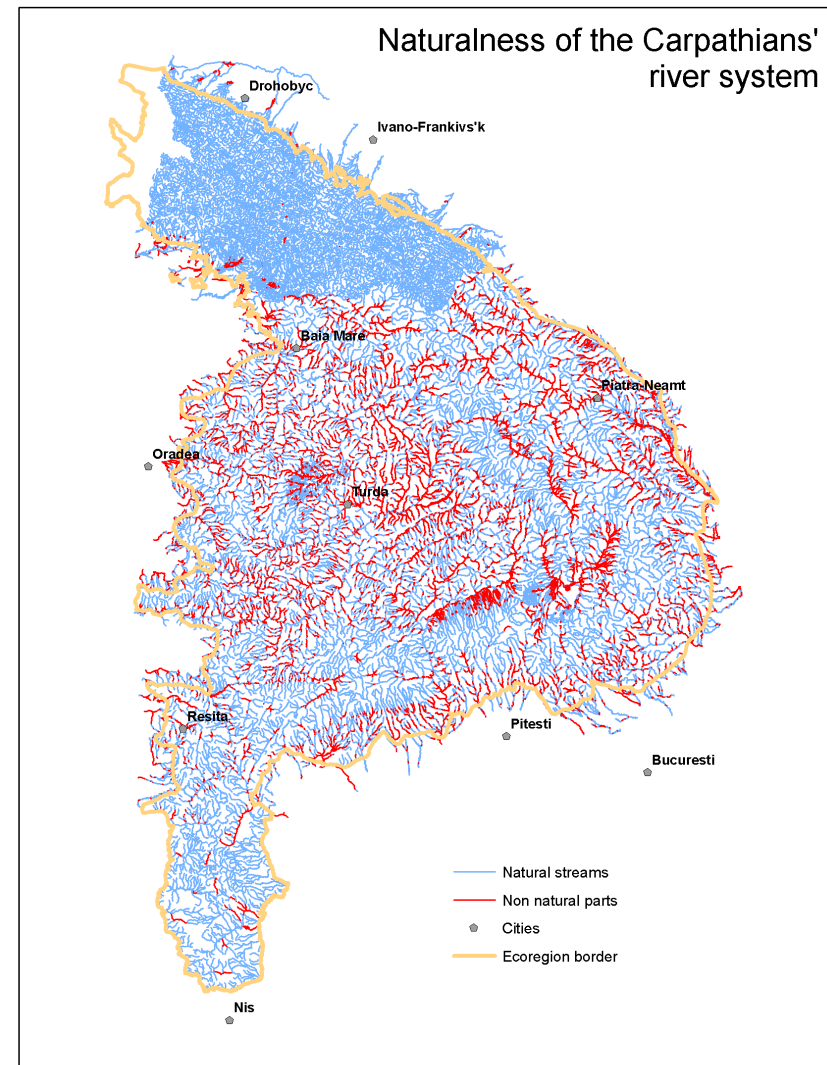


Continental - 53% of the county)  
Alpine (23%)  
Pannonian (6%)  
Steppic (17%)  
Black Sea (1%)

Danube River (38% of its length is in Romania, including most of the Danube Delta),  
Black Sea (5% of its total shoreline)

# Important Water Reservoir

- Exceptional water reservoir for the Danube, Tisa and Dnister rivers
- Some of the most intact, wild river systems remaining in Europe.
- Some of the last floodplain forests – the most endangered habitat in Europe –in the valleys of the Carpathians.

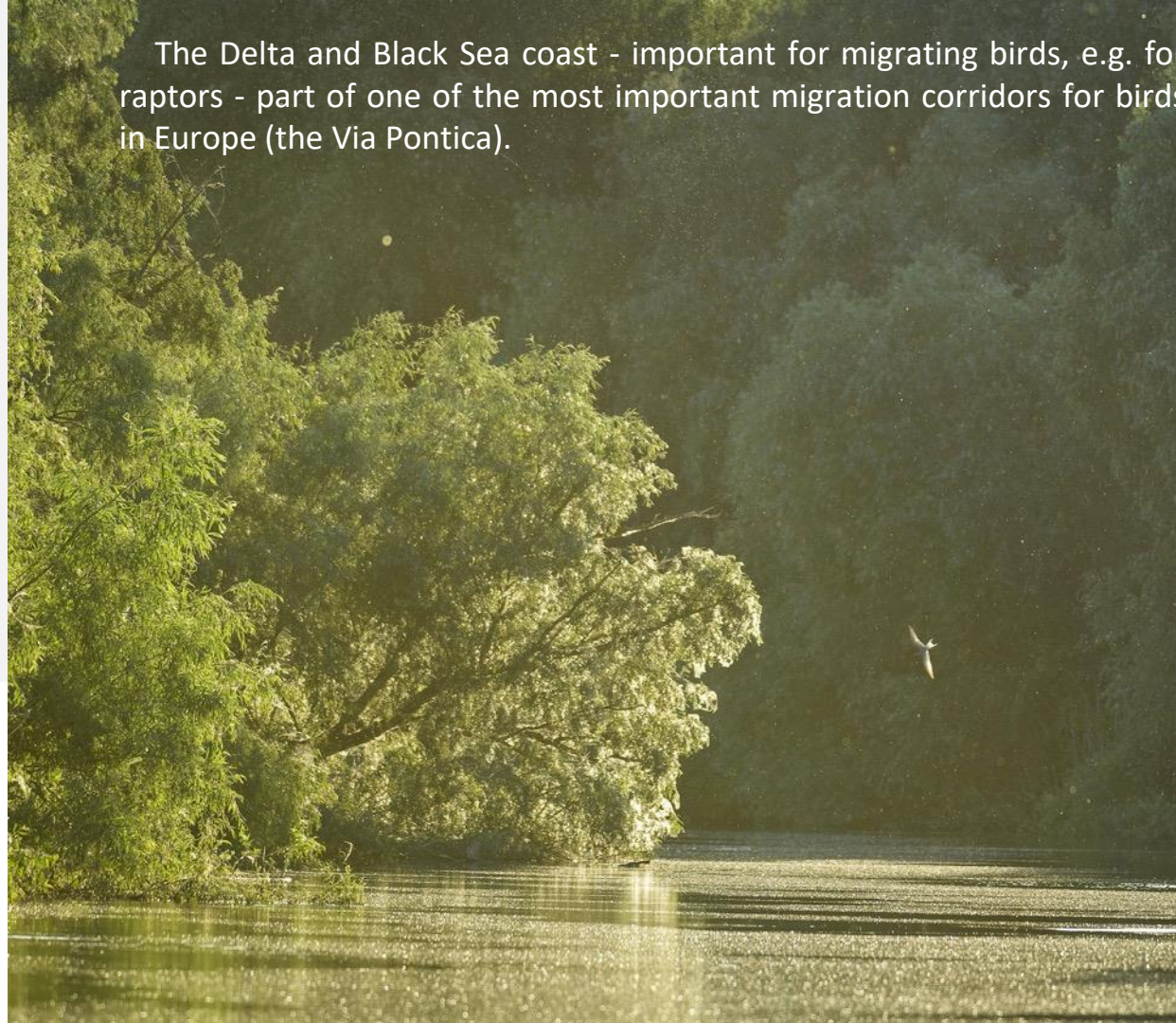


## The Danube Delta - One of the largest wetlands in Europe

- the globally Endangered Danube Salmon (*Hucho hucho*),
- sturgeons (*Acipenser* spp)
- breeding, passage and wintering waterbirds, e.g. two-thirds of the European breeding population of the Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and about 10% of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)



The Delta and Black Sea coast - important for migrating birds, e.g. for raptors - part of one of the most important migration corridors for birds in Europe (the Via Pontica).



# CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The last 30 years brought significant changes for our biodiversity



# The "old" times Before 1989



*Committees for  
Nature  
Protection*

*Institutes for  
Nature  
Protection*

The "new era"  
From 1990



Rapidly increasing  
threats to biodiversity /  
natural resources



**Legal  
logging in a  
new context**



Illegal logging



## Infrastructure development





## Poaching



## Illegal constructions





## Unsustainable resource exploataction





# Awakening (1990 – 2000)



Forester colleagues in Hunedoara County stop major intrusions in the Retezat NP and stop practicing "sanitary cuts" voluntarily!



Romanian Grassroots



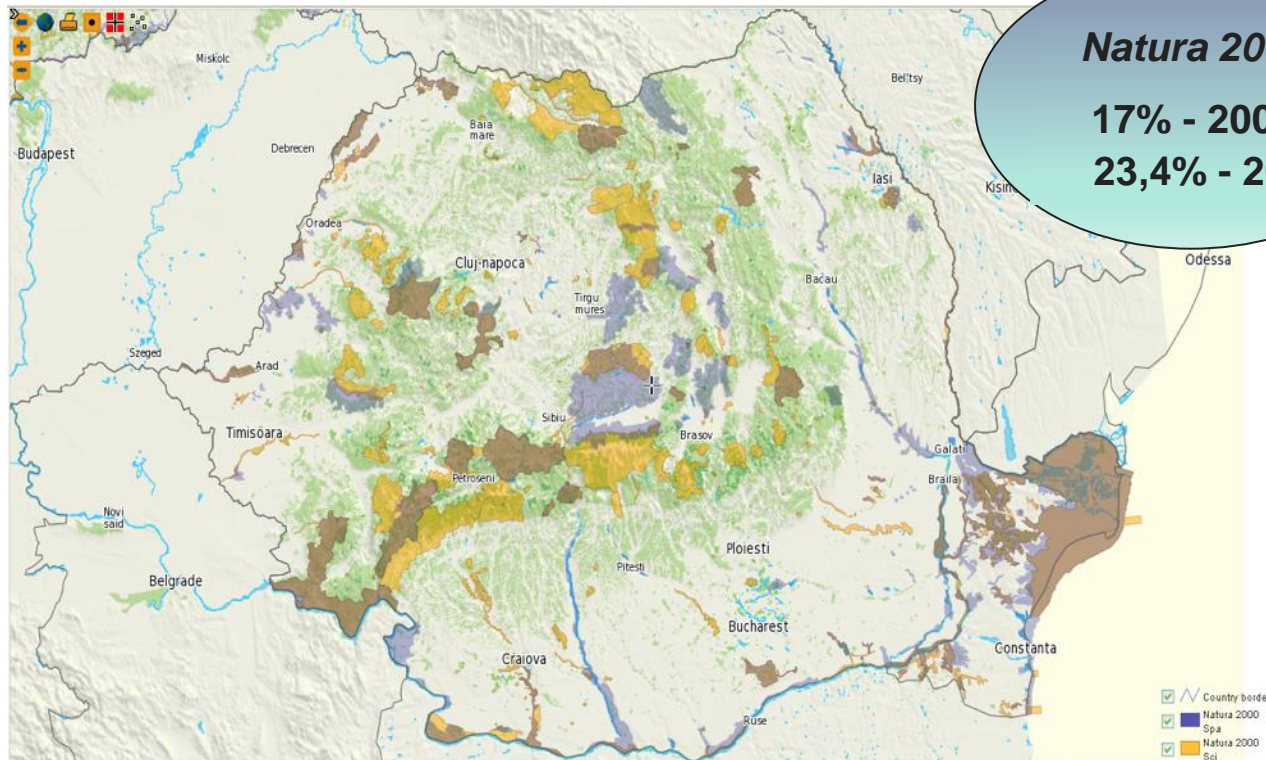
# Enthusiasm and first results 2000 – to EU Accession



**First  
Protected Area  
Law**

# EU Members - 2007

## SPAs and SCIs - 2008



**Natura 2000**  
**17% - 2008**  
**23,4% - 2011**

**National  
 PAs 8%**

13 national parks (II IUCN)  
 15 nature parks (V IUCN)  
 > 900 other types of PAs



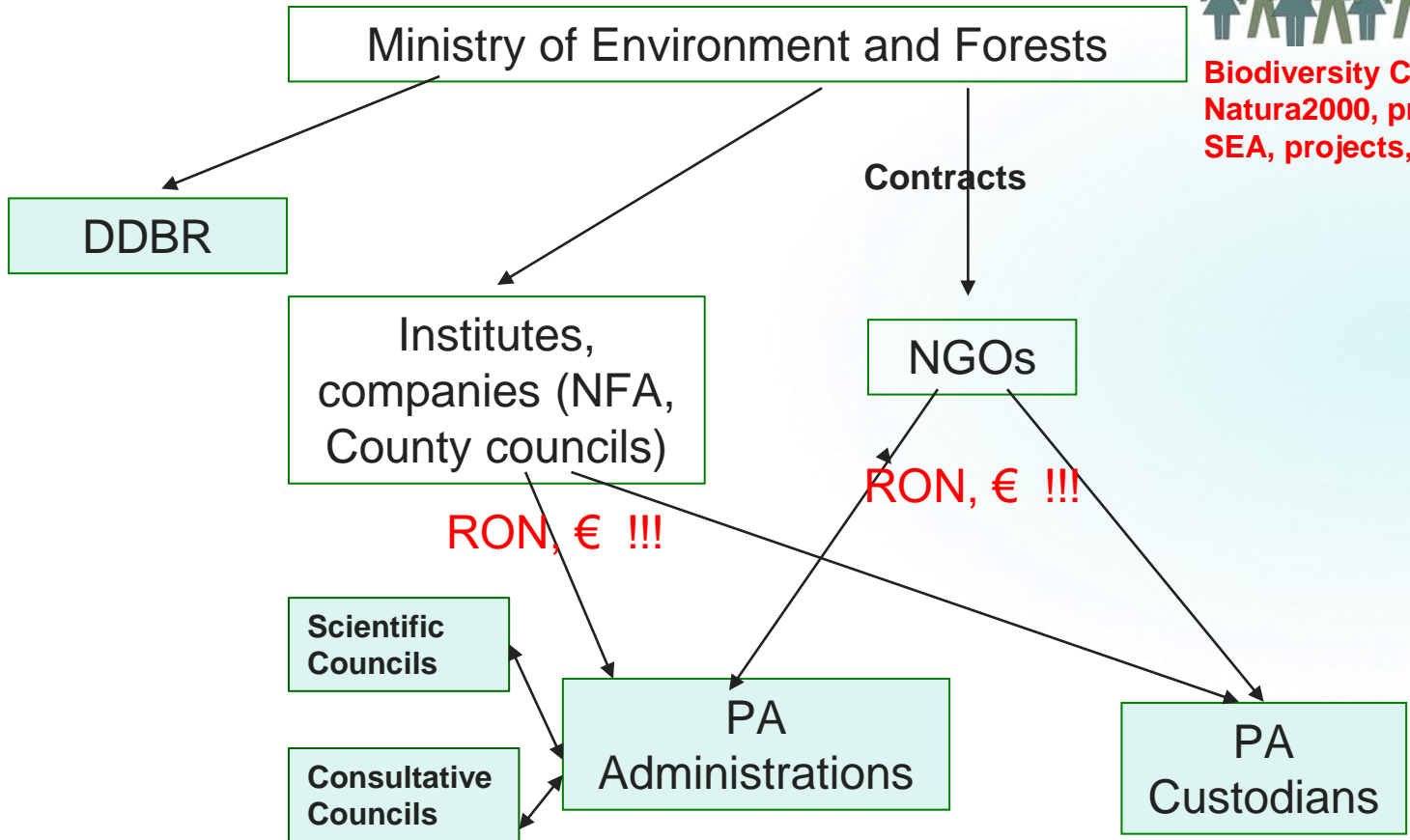
27 NGO Coalition contributing to: designation process, management planning, capacity building for PA managers and stakeholders



# Responsibilities and management agreements for PAs in RO 2001 - 2018



Biodiversity CITES, biosecurity, Natura2000, protected areas, EIA / SEA, projects, .....

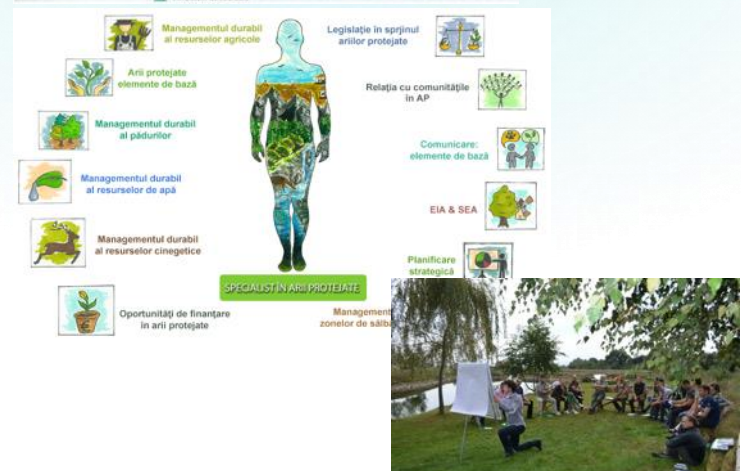
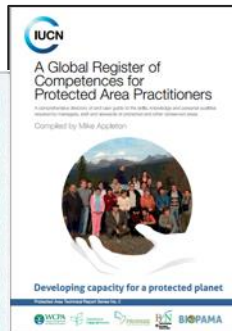


# Awakening and changing Social Actors 1990 ...

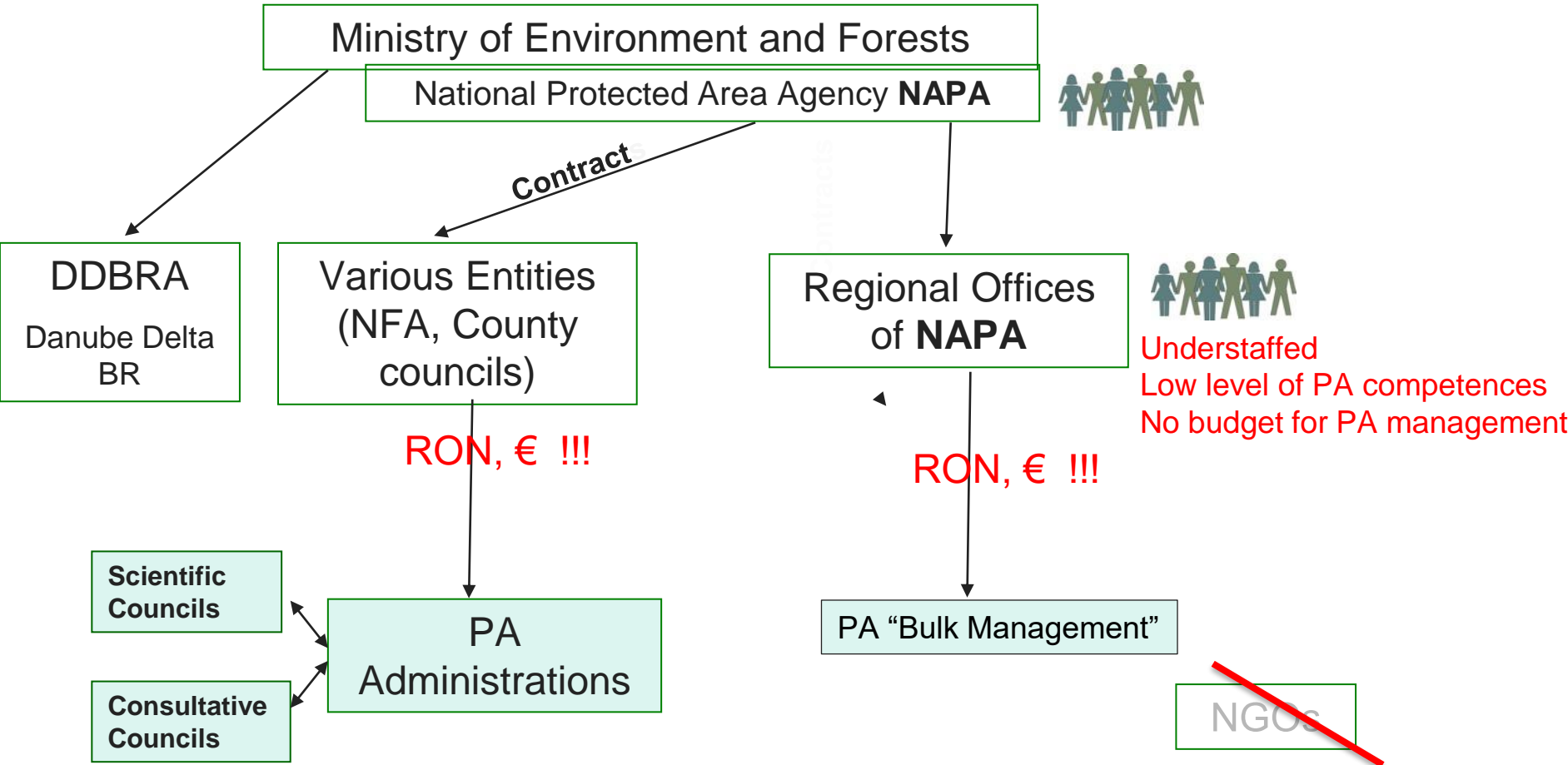


# Capacity Building

- **Competence** based approach, trainers with practical experience
- **Occupation** and **Occupational Standard** developed
- **Certified Training** sessions: Protected Area Specialist, Ranger, Community facilitators
- **Blended learning** (PAS): online introductory modules + face-to-face training sessions + practical projects



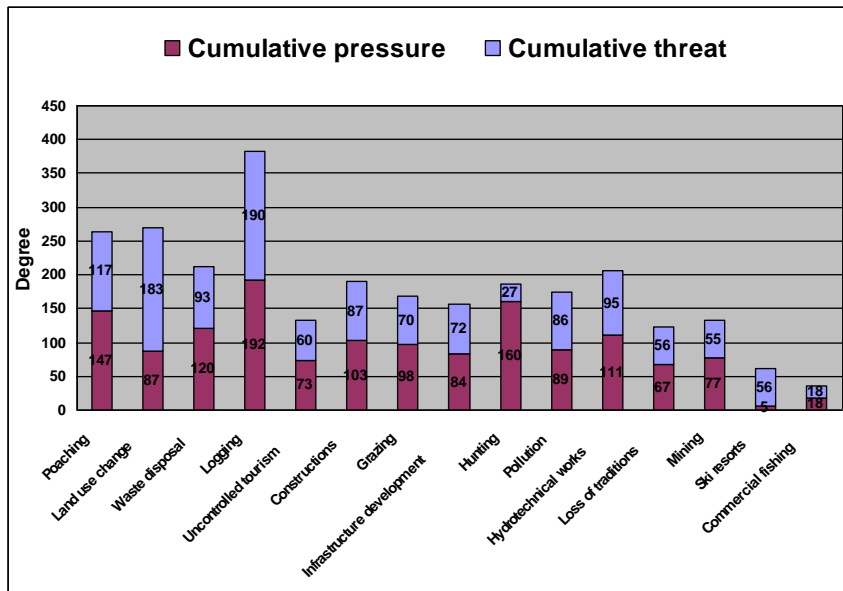
# Responsibilities and management agreements for PAs in RO 2018 .....





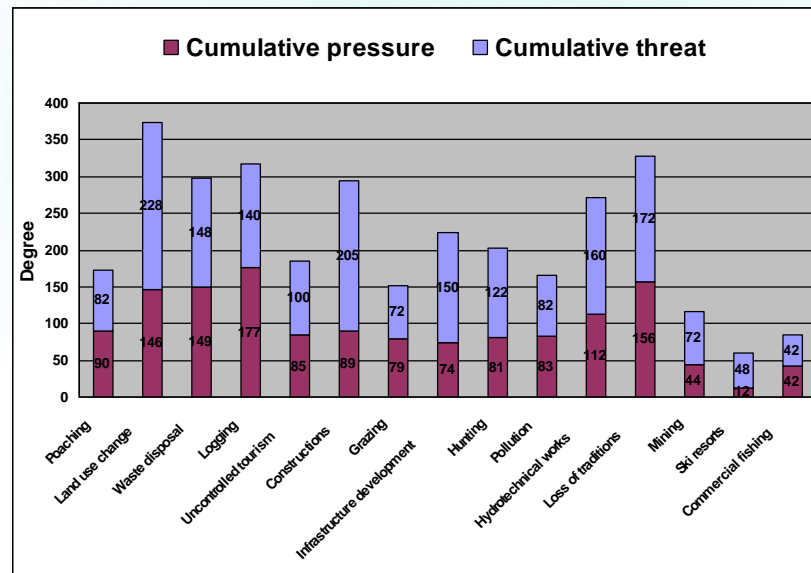


# Challenges are continuing



Romanian National Parks

## Romanian Nature Parks



# Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in Romania

**Future Prospects**





# Protected Area Vision for Romania

# Protected Area Vision for Romania

Pylon 1  
Representative network of  
protected areas

Pylon 2  
Efficient protected area  
management system

Pylon 3  
Securing financial and  
technical resources

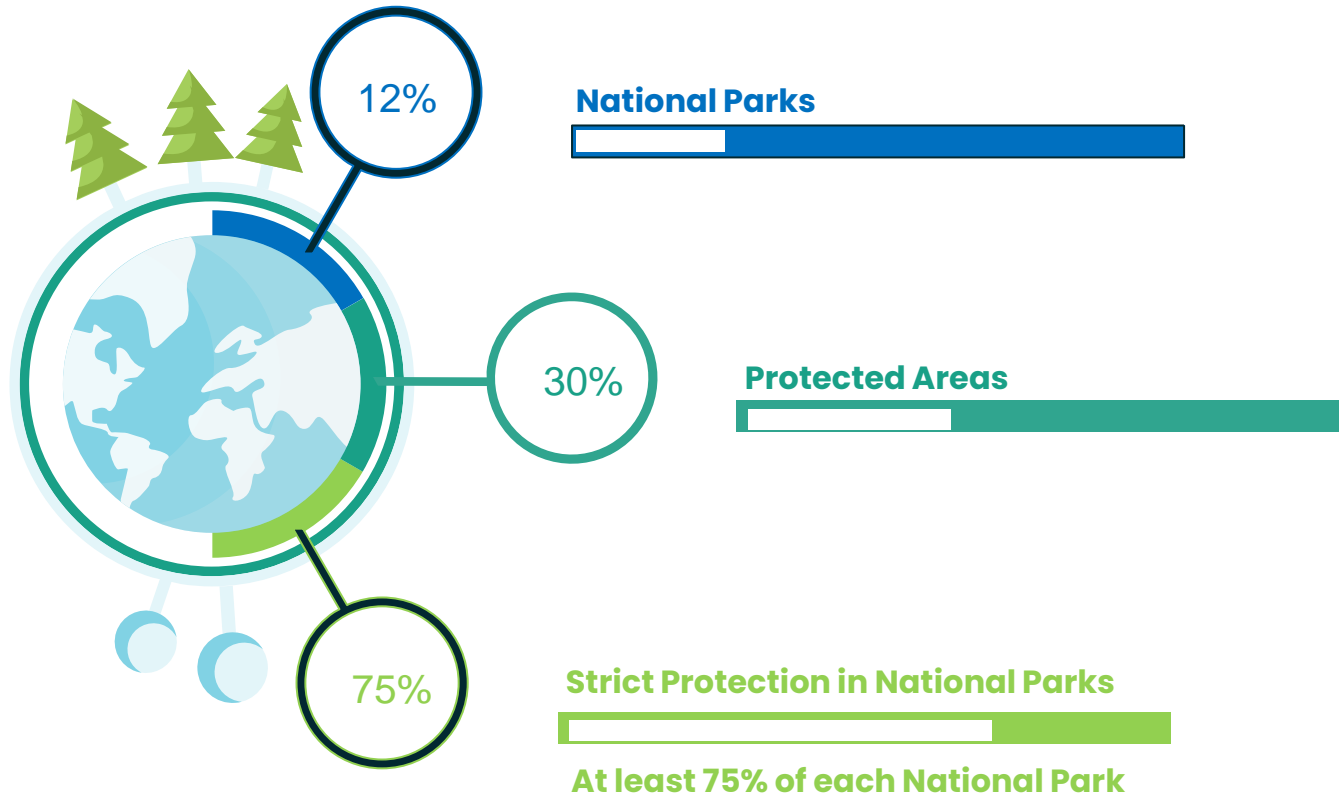
Pylon 4  
Development of  
professional and institutional  
capacity

Pylon 5  
Public awareness and social  
acceptance of protected  
areas

Pylon 6  
Contribution of protected  
areas to rural development



# PA Vision RO - Main Targets



# From civil efforts to government - influencing policies

- Hunting Associations
- Farmers Association
- Local Public Authorities

RO Parliament

- Universities
- Research Institutes



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI,  
APELOR ȘI PĂDURILOR



- Primeval / Ancient Forests - Strict Protection
- Protected Area Law
- 2021 - working on a New Protected Area Law
- PA Management Plans
- PA Management Plans
- National Action Plans for Species Protection (e.g. Bears, Wolves)
- Capacity Building PROGRAMMES
- Capacity Building

## Unfragmented mountain range with rich alpine meadows

- Core areas of National Parks well protected (very few exceptions)

National Park Administration  
Teams

*National Forest Administration, County Council*

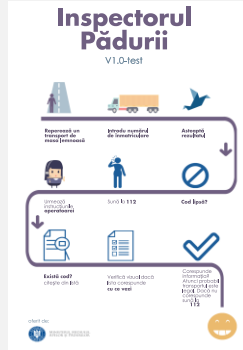
- New NP Initiative (>100.000 ha)  
*NGO - FCC, political will*

- **New infrastructure**  
*Regional / local authorities*



# Large tracks of natural, unfragmented forests

- Wood Tracking System (SUMAL) - improved 2022
- Forest Inspector - public tool



Ministry of Environment,  
Waters and Forests

- Strategic Planning Process for Forests - *Universities, Ministry*





## Viable populations of large carnivores:

- Hunting ban - 2016

*Ministry of Environment*

- **Inventory / monitoring**

*Ministry of Environment (MoE)*

- **Preventing / managing human - wildlife conflicts**

- **Lack / un-applicable legal framework**

*MoE*

- **Lack of capacity and resources**

*MoE, Hunting Associations*

- **Compensation system - not fully functional**

*MoE*



## Viable populations of large carnivores:

- Model Projects:
  - Corridor designation and management,
  - Human / Wildlife Conflict Management (intervention, electric fences, shephard dogs, education)

*NGOs - FCC, FFI - , Universities and Research Institutes*

- National Action Plans
- NGOs - ACDB, Research Institute*

- Recent: National Level Inventory Project - *MoE*



- Ministerial Order for Protecting VFs - 2012, *WWF, MoE*

- National Catalogue of Virgin Forests - 2016

*MoE with specialist working group*

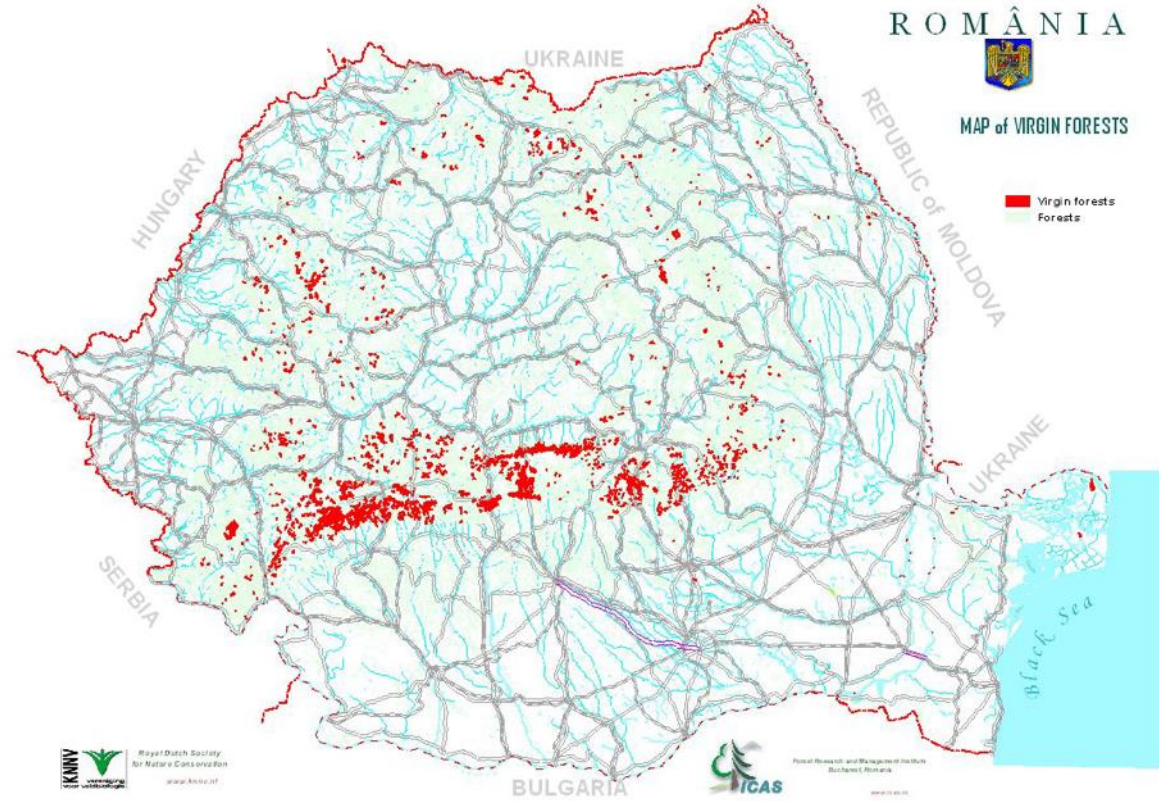
- 70.000 ha (1,1% of forests) strictly protected in Dec 2021, *NGOs and Universities / Research Inst (national and international), NFA*

- Compensation Payments for strict protection - 2016 - 2021, *MoE*

- Models for protecting privately owned VFs, educational programmes, *NGOs - WWF, Propark*



## Virgin & natural forests in Romania



## Free roaming European bison (*Bison bonasus*)

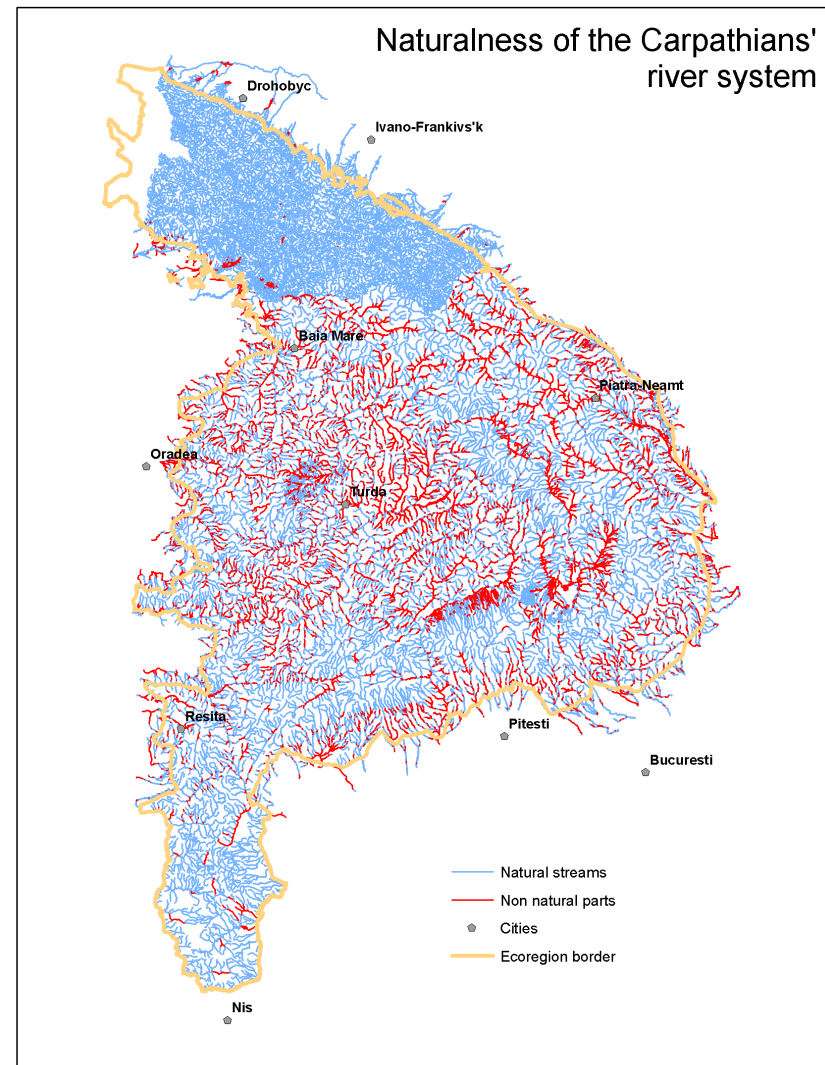
Bison reintroduction projects  
(3 places, over 100 individuals now)

National Forest Administration -  
*Vanatori Neamt Nature Park Administration*  
*WWF and Rewilding Europe*  
*Foundation Conservation Carpathia*



# Important Water Reservoir

- Some of the most intact, wild river systems remaining in Europe.
- **Chaning legislation to allow hydropower investments in National Parks and Natura 2000 sites - 2022**  
*Parliament, Government*



## The Danube Delta - One of the largest wetlands in Europe

The only PA with state budget allocation - 1 mio Euro / year





- Universities
- Research Institutes



- Hunting Associations
- Farmers Association
- Local Public Authorities

RO Parliament

MINISTERUL MEDIULUI,  
APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



Thank you!





