



LIFE ARCPROM



ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ
ΥΣΜΟ
HUMAN

ΑΡΚΟΥΔΑ
ORSO
BEAR

1/4

LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768

Improving human-bear coexistence in 4 National Parks of South Europe

Action E4.

Minutes of the International Conference



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LIFE ARCRPOM Final Conference Report

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SUMMARY

This deliverable outlines the objectives and outcomes of the International Conference. Specifically, it includes the Conference Program, the list of participants, and the conference minutes as reflected in the speakers' presentations. Additional tables with useful conference material can be found in the annexes.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το παρόν παραδοτέο παρουσιάζει τους στόχους και τα αποτελέσματα της διοργάνωσης του Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου. Περιλαμβάνει το αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα της εκδήλωσης, τον κατάλογο συμμετεχόντων, καθώς και τα πρακτικά του συνεδρίου, όπως αυτά αποτυπώνονται μέσα από τις παρουσιάσεις των ομιλητών. Επιπλέον, στο παράρτημα παρατίθενται συμπληρωματικοί πίνακες με χρήσιμο υλικό που διανεμήθηκε ή παρουσιάστηκε κατά την προετοιμασία ή/και τη διάρκεια του συνεδρίου.

RIASSUNTO

Il presente documento descrive gli obiettivi e i risultati della Conferenza Internazionale. Nello specifico, include il programma della conferenza, l'elenco dei partecipanti e i verbali della conferenza che riassumono le presentazioni dei relatori. Ulteriori tabelle con materiale utile della conferenza sono disponibili negli allegati.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Action E4.3: International Conference

Action E4.3 of the project foresees the organization of an International Conference aiming to disseminate the knowledge gained and the results achieved through the implementation of project activities in the 4 national parks, all related to human-bear coexistence. The Conference, organized by the University of Thessaly (UTH), was designed as an open event to encourage broad participation from all relevant stakeholders, including project partners, international experts, representatives of public authorities, NGOs, students, local communities and journalists.

During the Conference, the applied methodologies, project outcomes, implementation challenges, and prospects for future sustainability were presented and discussed. A particular emphasis was placed on the potential for replicability and transferability of best practices and successful management techniques to other regions and contexts. The event also included targeted efforts to enhance transboundary cooperation, with the participation of experts and organizations from neighboring countries (Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, and Bulgaria), whose travel and accommodation costs were covered by the project.

This action played a pivotal role in ensuring the wide dissemination of project results at national and international levels, while also strengthening networking with other initiatives focused on brown bear conservation and conflict mitigation. Additionally, the Conference served as a platform for dialogue on post-project (After-LIFE) strategies and for exchanging knowledge and ideas that support the long-term sustainability of conservation efforts.

RESULTS

The International Conference of the European project LIFE ARCPROM was successfully held in February 25-27 in the city of Larissa. A total of 185 scientists, representatives of environmental organizations, universities, and institutions from Greece, Italy, Spain, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria participated in the Conference. The sessions were also attended by students from the Department of Veterinary Medicine and the Department of Public & Unified Health of the University of Thessaly, as well as a broader audience interested in environmental issues, wildlife, and biodiversity.

During the Conference, the results of the LIFE ARCPROM project were presented in detail, and a productive dialogue took place, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences from various European regions. The discussions focused on best practices that promote human-bear coexistence.

The official opening ceremony of the International Conference took place on the evening of Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at the Hippocrates Auditorium at the premises of the School of Health Sciences of the University of Thessaly, in the city of Larissa. The welcome speech was delivered by the Rector of the University of Thessaly, Professor Charalambos Billinis, who is the Head of the Conference organizing team (UTH). Further, brief addresses shared by important guests, i.e. the Head of the Management Unit for Protected Areas of Thessaly at NECCA, Dimitris Michalakis, and the Head of the Forest Policy Implementation Inspection for Thessaly and Central Greece at the Ministry of Environment and Energy (YPEN), Zoi Ftika. The Director of the Environmental Organization Callisto and project manager of LIFE ARCPROM, Spyros Psaroudas, provided a precise overview of the project's objectives, scope, and results, while viewing the documentary produced as part of the LIFE ARCPROM initiative was the highlight of the event.

Earlier that day, as part of the Conference, a special tribute was held in honor of Emeritus Professor of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki K. Triantaphyllidis for his contributions to the field of Genetics. During the event, Professor Triantaphyllidis delivered an acceptance speech titled "Genetic Editing of Animal Genomes for Agriculture and Biomedical Applications." The award was presented to Professor Triantaphyllidis by Vaios Koutis, Chairman of the Board of the environmental organization Callisto.

In the framework of the International Conference, a special workshop was organized for participants from neighboring countries on the second day, Wednesday February 26, aiming at the transfer of best practices and lessons learned during implementation of the project. Invited speakers from Albania, Republic of Northern Macedonia & Bulgaria participated in a Round Table titled "Brief Overview of Ongoing Initiatives for the Conservation of Bear Populations in Southern Europe", with the contribution of participants from Italy and Spain. Main objective of the workshop was to transfer best practices & lessons learned during implementation of the project in Greece & Italy, as well as the strengthening of transboundary cooperation between public authorities, institutions & NGOs on issues related with the bear-human coexistence in trans-border areas. The workshop concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the "Establishment of a Network of organizations and experts working on Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe" between Callisto & associates, and LIFE projects beneficiaries. The full text of the MoU is available in the Annexes section of the Deliverable.

Further, two side events took place during the Conference in the foyer of the JOIST Innovation Park. The "Bear-Friendly Products Exhibition" showcased bear-friendly products and services that have received the

RESPECT-label certification. The label “Respect for wild life and biodiversity” is granted to products and services that successfully go through the evaluation process developed by the UTH team in the context of action C.10. Also, the Maiella Park “Bear-Friendly” logo was presented in this side event.

The second side event was the “Human-Bear Coexistence Exhibition”, curated by UOWM Creative Team. It was an impressive exhibition of visual works and installations created by the staff and students of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Fine Arts, exploring the theme of human–bear coexistence.

On the third day of the Conference, a field visit was conducted in the Meteora-Kalampaka region. Conference participants had the opportunity to observe the Special Unit for the Detection of Poisoned Baits, operated by NECCA in the Rhodope Mountain Range National Park, as well as the Karelians Bear Deterrence Dog Unit, which operates under OFYPEKA in the Northern Pindos National Park. They also visited the facilities of the “Kivotos tou Dimou” initiative, which breeds indigenous livestock breeds, and finally, Lake Loggas in the Municipality of Meteora, which constitutes a “Bear-Smart Community” under the European LIFE Bear-Smart Corridors project.

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ANNEX II – CONFERENCE POSTER



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY 25-26-27, 2025
LARISSA, GREECE**

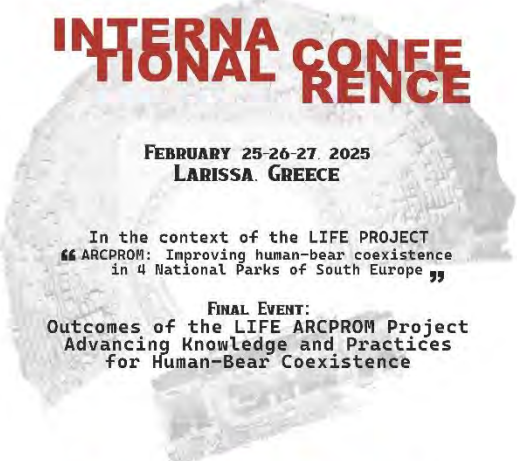
In the context of the LIFE PROJECT
“ARCPROM: Improving human-bear coexistence
in 4 National Parks of South Europe”

FINAL EVENT:
Outcomes of the LIFE ARCPROM Project
Advancing Knowledge and Practices
for Human-Bear Coexistence









INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY 25-26-27, 2025
LARISSA, GREECE**

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ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΗ ΔΙΕΞΑΓΩΓΗΣ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟΥ

Το έργο **“LIFE ARCPROM: Improving the human-bear coexistence in 4 national parks of South Europe”**, το οποίο υλοποιείται με τη συμμετοχή της Καλλιστώ, του Ο.Φ.Υ.Π.Ε.Κ.Α., του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας, του Πανεπιστημίου Δυτικής Μακεδονίας, καθώς και των Maiella National Park και W.W.F. Ιταλίας, ολοκληρώνεται μετά από πέντε (5) χρόνια δράσεων. Μέσα από τις δραστηριότητές του, το έργο στόχευσε στην ενίσχυση της συνύπαρξης ανθρώπου και αρκούδας σε τρία Εθνικά Πάρκα της Ελλάδας (Βόρειας Πίνδου, Πρεσπών και Οροσειράς Ροδόπης) και σε ένα της Ιταλίας (Maiella).

Ως επιστέγασμα των πρωτοβουλιών που έχουμε αναλάβει, έχουμε τη χαρά να ανακοινώσουμε τη διεξαγωγή του διεθνούς τελικού συνεδρίου του έργου, που θα λάβει χώρα στη Λάρισα από τις 25 έως τις 27 Φεβρουαρίου 2025.

Το συνέδριο στοχεύει:

- Στην παρουσίαση των αποτελεσμάτων του έργου LIFE ARCPROM.
- Στη δημιουργία διαλόγου μεταξύ επιστημόνων, φορέων διαχείρισης και εμπλεκόμενων κοινοτήτων για τη συνύπαρξη ανθρώπου και αρκούδας.
- Στη δικτύωση με επιστήμονες και ειδικούς από άλλες χώρες και προγράμματα.

Προσκαλούμε όλους τους ενδιαφερόμενους φορείς να παρακολουθήσουν και να συμμετάσχουν στις συζητήσεις και τις δράσεις του συνεδρίου.

Περισσότερες πληροφορίες για το **πρόγραμμα** και την **εγγραφή** είναι διαθέσιμες στην ιστοσελίδα του έργου **<https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr>**.





LIFE ARCPROM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

February 25-26-27, 2025

Larissa, Greece

In the context of LIFE PROJECT ARCPROM

“Improving human-bear coexistence in 4 National Parks of South Europe”

Final Conference:

Outcomes of the LIFE ARCPROM Project

Advancing Knowledge and Practices for Human-Bear Coexistence



LIFE ARCPROM International Conference

Title

Outcomes of the LIFE ARCPROM Project - Advancing Knowledge and Practices for Human-Bear Coexistence

When / Where

FEBRUARY 25-26-27, 2025
Larissa, Thessaly, GREECE

Venues

1) Faculty of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly

The Conference will commence from the premises of the University of Thessaly in the city of Larissa. In particular, the Auditorium Hippocrates of the Faculty of Medicine will be used on the first day of the conference, where the welcome speeches and other formal events will take place.

The Faculty of Medicine is located at the new buildings of the University Campus, in Viopolis, Mezourlo, Larissa.

ADDRESS

3, Panepistimiou Str.
Viopolis, 41500, Larissa
tel. 0030 2410 685745
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/RGp2vwxGP7QMvxtv9>

2) JOIST Innovation Park

The main events of the conference will take place in the biggest Innovation Park in Southeast Europe. JOIST Innovation Park, located in Larissa, Greece, is a large-scale, inclusive innovation hub designed to promote entrepreneurship, technology, science, art, and design. Within its 1,800 square meters, it provides spaces for co-working, exhibitions, networking, and training, making it a versatile environment for learning and innovation.

Official Website: <https://joistpark.eu/>

ADDRESS

Valtetsiou & Tripoleos Str.
41336, Larissa
tel. 0030 2410 234422
email: info@joistpark.eu
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/oVrzgJtY8aRdAPrb9>

3) Field visit

Trikala-Meteora area, Thessaly, Greece.

Thematic Areas

The Conference will provide a comprehensive overview of the status of Brown Bear population in Italy and Greece, presented by leading experts in the field.

In addition, the achievements of the LIFE ARCPROM project will be highlighted, showcasing its success in conservation and monitoring initiatives.

Furthermore, the event aims to serve as a platform for scientists, public institutions, and non-profit organizations actively engaged in the conservation of large carnivores and the promotion of their coexistence with humans in Southern Europe. By fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, the conference seeks to strengthen collective efforts in addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with wildlife conservation in the region.

Key thematic areas to be addressed include:

- ❖ Human-Bear Coexistence
- ❖ Wildlife Conservation and Biodiversity
- ❖ Genetics in Wildlife Conservation
- ❖ Sustainable Development through wildlife-friendly products and services
- ❖ Emerging Wildlife Threats

The event will feature parallel sessions, facilitating engagement among specialized scientific groups to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and explore potential collaborations.

These sessions aim to strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation and foster synergies across various fields of expertise.

Invited Speakers

- 1 **Robert Fletcher**, Environmental anthropologist, Professor, Wageningen University, The Netherlands// Convivial Conservation, environmental policy, non-state forms of governance
- 2 **Svetoslava Toncheva**, Associate Professor, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum//Human-wildlife conflicts/coexistence, multispecies ethnography, convivial conservation, large carnivores
- 3 **Claudio Groff**, Coordinator of the Large Carnivores Division, Wildlife Department of the Autonomous Province of Trento, Italy - LCIE (Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe)/ European Brown Bear Expert Team, Bear Specialist Group of the IUCN/ Human-Bear Conflicts Expert Team, Bear Specialist Group of the IUCN
- 4 **Aleksandar Dutsov**, Biologist, Researcher, WWF Bulgaria, Bulgaria// Large Carnivores-Bear Specialist
- 5 **Aleksander Trajce**, Dr, Biologist, Director, PPNEA (Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania), Member of the LCIE – CG, Albania// Ecology - conservation of European large carnivores
- 6 **Aleksandar Pavlov**, Biologist, Researcher, Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), North Macedonia // Wildlife conservation and protection

Provisional Agenda – Synopsis

****PLEASE SEE THE FILE “PROVISIONAL PROGRAM” FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION****

Tuesday, Feb 25, 2025

MORNING SESSIONS

JOIST INNOVATION PARK

- Genetics in Wildlife Conservation
- Sustainable Development through wildlife-friendly products and services

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

JOIST INNOVATION PARK

- Veterinary Forensics & Necropsy Procedures
- Workshop: Marketing Strategies for Bear-Friendly Products

FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UTH

- **Opening Ceremony**
- WELCOME DINNER

Wednesday, Feb 26, 2025

MORNING SESSIONS

JOIST INNOVATION PARK

- LIFE ARCPROM PROJECT OUTCOMES
- Brief Overview of Ongoing Initiatives for the Conservation of Bear Populations in Southern Europe

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

JOIST INNOVATION PARK

- Workshop: Human Dimensions of Environmental Management
- Environmental Education and Wildlife Protection and Conservation
- Deployment of Working Dogs in the Detection and Deterrence of Environmental Crimes
- Traditional and Innovative Practices to Mitigate Large Predator Presence in Areas of Human Activity

Thursday, Feb 27, 2025

FIELD VISIT

Trikala – Meteora Area

In case of inclement weather conditions, alternative visits will be scheduled

Parallel Events

“Human-Bear Coexistence” installation

by the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Fine Arts, University of Western Macedonia (EETF)

“Bear-Friendly Products” Exhibition

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



**LIFE
ARCPROM**



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY 25-26-27, 2025
LARISSA, GREECE**

In the context of the LIFE PROJECT
“ARCPROM: Improving human-bear coexistence
in 4 National Parks of South Europe”

FINAL EVENT:
Outcomes of the LIFE ARCPROM Project
Advancing Knowledge and Practices
for Human-Bear Coexistence



WELCOME TO OUR CONFERENCE

LIFE ARCPROM project

***“Improving human-bear coexistence in 4
national parks of South Europe”***

is implemented by Callisto, Maiella National Park,
Natural Environment & Climate Change Agency,
University of Thessaly, University of Western
Macedonia, and WWF Italy.

Project LIFE18 NAT/GR/000768 - LIFE ARCPROM is
co-financed by the LIFE Programme of the European
Union, the Green Fund, and the Project Beneficiaries.



**LIFE
ARCPROM**



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY 25-26-27, 2025
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Advancing Knowledge and Practices
for Human-Bear Coexistence



INVITED SPEAKERS

Aleksandar Dutsov

Biologist, Researcher, WWF Bulgaria
Bulgaria



Robert Fletcher

Environmental anthropologist,
Professor,
Department of Social Sciences,
Wageningen University and Research
The Netherlands



Claudio Groff

Coordinator of the Large Carnivores
Division, Wildlife Department of the
Autonomous Province of Trento
Italy
Member of LCIE, IUCN Bear Specialist
Group (European Brown Bear Expert Team
& Human-Bear Conflicts Expert Team)



Aleksandar Pavlov

Biologist, Researcher, Macedonian
Ecological Society (MES)
North Macedonia



Svetoslava Toncheva

Associate Professor, Bulgarian
Academy of Sciences (BAS), Institute
for Ethnology and Folklore Studies
with Ethnographic Museum
Bulgaria



Alexander Trajce

Anthropologist, Director, PPNEA
(Protection and Preservation of
Natural Environment in Albania)
Albania

Member of LCIE, IUCN Bear Specialist
Group and Human-Wildlife Conflict and
Coexistence Specialist Group





DAY 1

08:30-09:30 JOIST FOYER
REGISTRATIONS/ WELCOME COFFEE

TUESDAY, 25-02-2025

SESSION 1 10:00-12:00

Bear Friendly Scheme Beneficiaries; Member Networking, Collaboration Opportunities & Label Implementation Challenges, Coordination: Dimitris Chatzopoulos, UTH/Giovanna Di Domenico, MNP

**12:00-12:15 JOIST FOYER
COFFEE BREAK**

SESSION 3 12:15-13:15

The Bear Friendly labelling strategy within the Project and the entrepreneur's challenges

12:15-12:35 *The establishment and implementation of the "RESPECT" label for wildlife and biodiversity conservation in Greece,* Mary Spentzou, UTH

12:35-12:55 *The Bear Friendly label in the Maiella National Park: a tool to promote coexistence and preserve the ecosystem,* Giovanna Di Domenico, MNP

12:55-13:15 *Experience of the Bear Friendly label implementation, Label Beneficiaries*

SESSION 2 10:00-12:00

Monitoring Population Structure and Conservation Management of Brown Bears in Europe, Coordination: Maria Satra, UTH

10:00-10:15 *Evaluation of Brown Bear population status in the three national parks in Greece using IR cameras,* Yorgos Mertzanis/Stefanos Kyriakidis, Callisto

10:15-10:45 *Genetic Analysis of Brown Bears in three national parks of Greece: Insights from the LIFE ARCPROM Project,* Tzoulia Tsalazidou, UTH

10:45-11:00: *Bear presence monitoring in the Maiella National Park, Central Italy,* Antonio Antonucci, MNP

11:00-11:15 *Genetic analysis of Apennine Brown Bear,* Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)

11:15-11:45 *Identification of sectors with high risk of Bear-Human conflicts,* Yorgos Mertzanis, Callisto and Hein Van Gils, MNP

11:45-12:00 *Discussion*

SESSION 4 12:15-13:15

Genetic Tools for Biodiversity Conservation: From DNA Barcoding to Wildlife Studies

12:15-12:45 *Building GrBOL, the Greek Barcoding Node for the conservation of our biodiversity,* Alexandros Triantafyllidis, AUTH

12:45-13:15 *Non-invasive genetic studies of large carnivores in Greece,* Nikoleta Karaiskou, AUTH

JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA

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DAY 1 TUESDAY, 25-02-2025

13:15-14:00 Tribute Ceremony
*Honoring the Contributions of Emeritus
Professor K. Triantafyllidis to Genetics*

Charalambos Billinis, DVM, Dipl.
ECZM (Wildlife Population Health) -
Rector UTH

Acceptance Speech, Konstantinos
Triantafyllidis, Emeritus Prof. AUTH

*“Genetic Editing of Animal
Genomes for Agriculture and
Biomedicine”*

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Konstantinos Triantafyllidis

Emeritus Professor of Genetics

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Greece

JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA

14:00-14:30 JOIST FOYER
NETWORKING LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 3 (continued)

14:30-14:45: *The promotion of the Bear Friendly label in the Maiella National Park. Present and future perspectives*, Giovanna Di Domenico, MNP

WORKSHOP 14:45-16:30

Marketing and Communication Strategies for promoting wildlife-friendly products and services, Evi Chatzopoulou, Maria Argyropoulou, UoP

ROUND TABLE 14:30-16:30

Veterinary Forensics & Necropsy Procedures for Identifying Attacks by Large Carnivores, Coordination: Elpida Grigoriadou, NECCA

14:30-14:50 *Necropsy findings on domestic prey of large carnivores. From insight into predator/prey interaction to addressing for coexistence*, Simone Angelucci, MNP

15:00-15:20 *Investigating wildlife crimes: The fundamentals of forensic necropsy and the legislative challenges in Greece*, Dimitrios Doukas, UTH

15:30-15:50 *Investigating wildlife crimes: Confirmation of poisoning in wildlife through analytical toxicological analyses/ most common active substances detected in Greece*, Panagiota Michalopoulou, Ministry of Rural Development and Food of Greece

JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA

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DAY 1
TUESDAY, 25-02-2025

OPENING
CEREMONY
18:30-20:00

WELCOME
DINNER
20:00-20:30

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

AMFITHEATRE HIPPOCRATES



CONFERENCE OPENING CEREMONY

18:30-18:40 **Welcome Speech**, Charalambos Billinis, Rector of the University of Thessaly

18:40-19:00 **Welcome-Opening** remarks, Official Representatives

19:00-19:20 **Presentation** of the objectives, efforts to achieve them and achievements of the LIFE ARCPROM Project, Spyros Psaroudas/CALLISTO, Project Manager

19:30-20:00 **Screening** of the LIFE ARCPROM Documentary, VIDEO



DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, 26-02-2025

JOIST FOYER

08:30-09:15 REGISTRATIONS/WELCOME COFFEE

11:30-11:45 COFFEE BREAK

SESSION 5 09:15-11:30

Mitigating bear-human interference: Project activities, issues encountered, and solutions given

09:15-09:30	<i>Staff Training for National Parks and Other Conservation Stakeholders in the Project Areas,</i> Dimitris Chatzopoulos, UTH
09:30-10:00	<i>Operation, equipment, and capacity building of Bear Emergency Teams (BETs) & use of deterring devices,</i> Yorgos Mertzanis, Callisto
10:00-10:30	<i>Bear Emergency Team interventions and use of deterring devices in the Maiella National Park",</i> Giovanna Di Domenico, MNP
10:30-11:00	<i>Non-Lethal Techniques to Reduce Conflicts with Bears: Electric Fencing & bear-proof devices in three National Parks in Greece,</i> Elpida Grigoriadou, NECCA/Yorgos Mertzanis, Callisto
11:00-11:30	<i>Use of damage prevention measures in the Maiella National Park,</i> Giovanna Di Domenico, MNP

JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA

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DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, 26-02-2025

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KEYNOTE SPEECH 11:45-12:05

Challenges and implications of brown bear management and conservation in Trentino – Italy

Claudio Groff, Wildlife Dep. of Trento

KEYNOTE SPEECHES – ROUND TABLE 12:05-14:00

Coordination: Yorgos Mertzanis, Spyros Psaroudas, Callisto

Brief Overview of Ongoing Initiatives for the Conservation of Bear Populations in Southern Europe

12:05-12:20: *Challenges for bear conservation in Bulgaria*, Aleksandar Dutsov, WWF Bulgaria

12:20-12:35: *Brown bears in Albania: insights from ecological and social research*, Alexander Trajce, PPNEA

12:35-12:50: *The Current Status of the Brown Bear in North Macedonia*, Aleksandar Pavlov, MES

12:50-13:00: Discussion

13:00-13:15: *Apennine brown bear status and the role of the Maiella National Park in its conservation*, Antonio Antonucci, MNP

13:15-13:25 *The experience of Bear Smart Communities in the Central Apennines, Italy - Towards a culture of coexistence*, Daniela Gentile, Rewilding Apennines

13:25-13:40 *Bear Conservation Projects in Spain*, Maria Paragga, Fundacion Oso Pardo

13:45–14:00: **Establishment of a Network of organizations and experts working on Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe**, Callisto & associates, and LIFE projects beneficiaries

14:00-14:30 JOIST FOYER
NETWORKING LUNCH BREAK

JOIST INNOVATION PARK



DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, 26-02-2025

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WORKSHOP 14:30-16:30

Human Dimensions of Environmental Management

14:30-14:50: *Human dimensions in large carnivore conservation and management: From the “knowledge-deficit” model to participatory processes*, Tasos Hovardas, Callisto

14:50-15:05: *Lessons learned from participatory processes in LIFE ARCPROM: Implications for stakeholder engagement in large carnivore conservation and management*, Georgios Chatzinakos, Callisto

15:05-15:20: *Small-technologies, social innovation, and human-wildlife coexistence in rural Greece*, Dimitrios Bormpoudakis, Callisto

15:20-15:35: *Stakeholder involvement in the Maiella National Park during the LIFE ARCPROM: methods, highlights and results*, Anna Crimella, MNP

15:35-15:50 *Human - large carnivores' coexistence: the context matters! Differences between Alps and Apennines in Italy*, Anna Crimella, MNP

15:50-16:10 *Methods and tools for participatory processes in large carnivore conservation and management*, Callisto HD Group

16:10-16:30 *Emerging tools and technologies at the wildlife-livestock interface*, Callisto HD Group

SESSION 6 14:30-16:30

Working Dogs in Wildlife Management and Protection

14:30-14:50: *Detection Dogs as a Tool Against Poisoned Baits: A Review of the First Units in Greece*, Victoria Saravia-Mullin, Hellenic Ornithological Society

14:50- 15:10: *Dogs battling the crime of poison baits in Greece: Results of the Antipoison Canine Units (A.C.U.) of the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (N.E.C.C.A.)*, Dimitris Vavylis, ACU Coordinator, NECCA

15:10-15:30: *Working dogs and bear management: The formation of the pilot KBD unit in Greece. Lessons learned and future prospects*, Athanasios Korakis, NECCA

15:30-15:50: *Dog skills for biodiversity conservation*, Ela Kret, Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace

15:50-16:10: *Livestock Guardian Dogs; Establishment and operation of a high-performance LGDs network under Life ARCPROM project*, Alexios Giannakopoulos, UTH

**16:30-16:45 JOIST FOYER
COFFEE BREAK**

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JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA



DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, 26-02-2025

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SESSION 7 16:45-18:30

Environmental Education as a Framework for Wildlife Protection and Conservation / Volunteering and Awareness Raising Activities

16:45-17:00: *Teaching approaches in effective environmental culture and awareness through art*, Evita Aggeli, LBSC associate

17:00-17:15: *On the Paths of Coexistence: Environmental paths for the coexistence of human and bears*, Effie Gelastopoulou/ Loukia Argiriadou, Callisto

17:15-17:30: *Communication and awareness raising as tools for the conservation of large carnivores: the role of WWF. Italy*, Marco Antonelli, WWF Italy

17:30-17:45: *Volunteering for wildlife protection: Tackling the illegal use of poison baits*, Effie Gelastopoulou/ Maria Psaralexi, Callisto

17:45 - 18:00: *Mobilisation of volunteers for communication and conservation activities in the Maiella National Park*, Marco Antonelli, WWF Italy

18:00-18:15: *Towards an Ecological Dimension of Visual Identity: The Contribution of the School of Fine Arts of Florina*, Yannis Ziogas/ Sofia Papadopoulou/ Cynthia Gerothanasiou / Annita Koutsonanou, UoWM

KEYNOTE SPEECH 18:30-19:15

Cultivating Conviviality in Human-Wildlife Relations: Challenges and Opportunities

Robert Fletcher, WUR & Svetoslava Toncheva, BAS

JOIST INNOVATION PARK, LARISSA

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR SPEAKERS

1. Aggeli Evita, Educator-Puppeteer, LBSC associate
2. Angelucci Simone, DVM, MNP
3. Antonelli Marco, Wildlife Conservation Specialist, WWF Italy
4. Antonucci Antonio, PhD, Zoologist, MNP
5. Argiriadou Loukia, Communication Expert, Callisto
6. Argyropoulou Maria, Teaching Staff, Dep. Touristic Studies, UoP
7. Billinis Charalambos, DVM, Dipl. ECZM (Wildlife Population Health), Rector UTH
8. Bormpoudakis Dimitrios, PhD, Biodiversity Management, Callisto
9. Chatzinakos Georgios, PhD, Human Geographer, Callisto
10. Chatzopoulos Dimitrios, DVM, Assistant Professor, UTH
11. Chatzopoulou Evi, Assistant Professor in Marketing, UoP
12. Crimella Anna, Environmental Scientist, MNP
13. Di Domenico Giovanna, PhD, Wildlife Biologist, MNP
14. Doukas Dimitrios, DVM, Assistant Professor, UTH
15. Galaverni Marco, PhD, Oases, Education & Activation Director
16. Gelastopoulou Effie, Social Worker specializing in Environmental Education, Callisto
17. Gentile Daniela, Communications Officer, Rewilding Apennines
18. Gerothanasiou Cynthia, Special Teaching Staff, UoWM
19. Giannakopoulos Alexios, Forester, LGDs Expert, Special Teaching Staff, UTH

20. Grigoriadou Elpida, Biologist, NECCA
21. Hovardas Tasos, PhD, Human Dimensions Expert in large carnivore conservation and management, Callisto
22. Karaiskou Nikoleta, Biologist, Assistant Professor, AUTH
23. Korakis Athanasios, Environmental Scientist, NECCA
24. Koutsonanou Annita, Adjunct Professor, UOWM
25. Kret Elzbieta, Environmental Scientist, Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace
26. Kyriakidis Stefanos, Forester, Callisto
27. Mertzanis Yorgos, PhD, Biologist, Callisto
28. Michalopoulou Panagiota, DVM, Ministry of Rural Development and Food of Greece
29. Papadopoulou Sofia, Assistant Professor, UOWM
30. Paragga Maria, Fundacion Oso Pardo, Asturias, Spain
31. Psaralexi Maria, PhD, Biologist, Callisto
32. Psaroudas Spyros, LIFE ARCPROM Project Manager
33. Saravia-Mullin Victoria, Hellenic Ornithological Society
34. Satra Maria, Biologist, Assistant Professor, UTH
35. Spentzou Mary, Agronomist-Food Scientist, UTH
36. Triantafyllidis Alexandros, Biologist, Professor, AUTH
37. Tsalazidou-Founta Tzoulia-Maria, Biologist, UTH
38. Vavylis Dimitris, Biologist, ACU Coordinator, NECCA
39. Ziogas Yannis, Professor, UoWM

DAY 1-2

25 -26.02.2025

SIDE EVENTS

JOIST INNOVATION
PARK, LARISSA

Human-Bear Coexistence Exhibition

Curated by UOWM Creative Team

Yannis Ziogas, Sofia Papadopoulou, Cynthia
Gerothanasiou, Annita Koutsonanou

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Fine
Arts, University of Western Macedonia (UoWM)

Bear-Friendly Products Exhibition

Laboratory of Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of
Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly (UTH)

DAY 3 THURSDAY, 27-02-2025

FIELD TRIP

TRIKALA – METEORA AREA, REGION OF THESSALY

- ☐ Visit to sites where actions supporting the human-bear coexistence are implemented
- ☐ Brief field demonstration of NECCA's Dogs Operational Skills: Antipoison Dog Units & Karelian Bear Dogs

08:30..... Start of the Field Visit
09:00-14:00..... Sites visit
14:00-14:30..... Light lunch
14:30-17:00 ...Continuation of the sites visit and return to Larissa

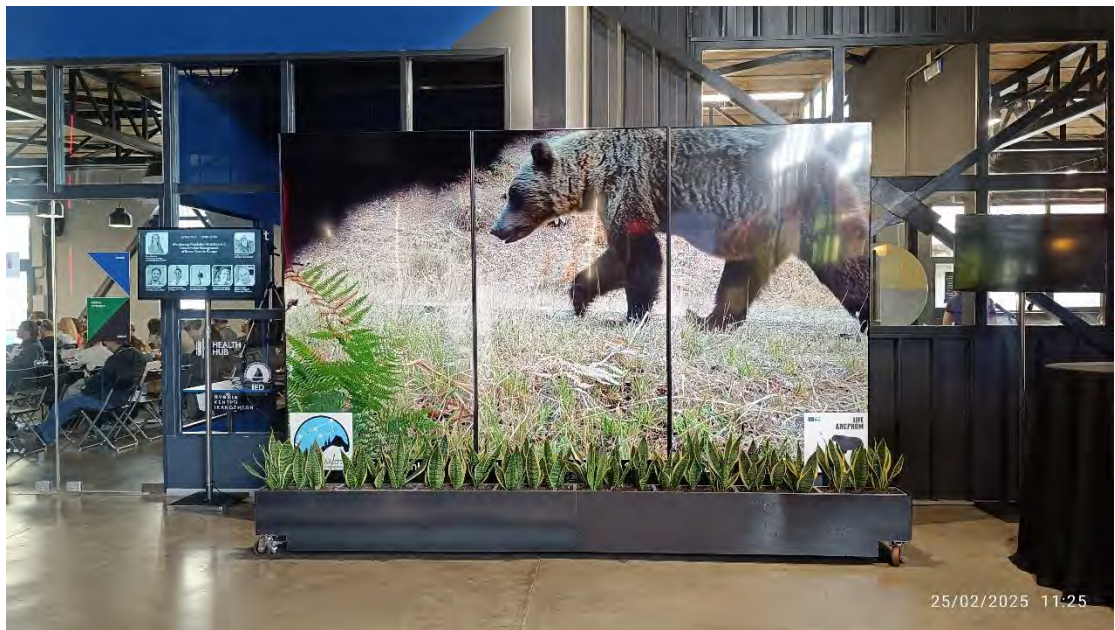
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

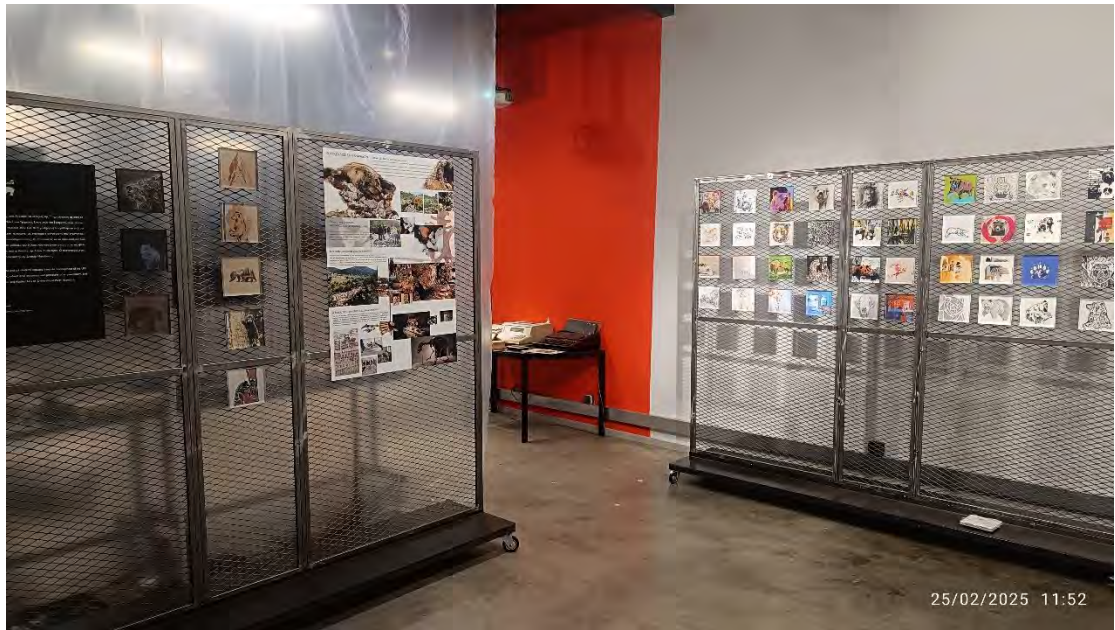


ANNEX VI – CONFERENCE PHOTOS





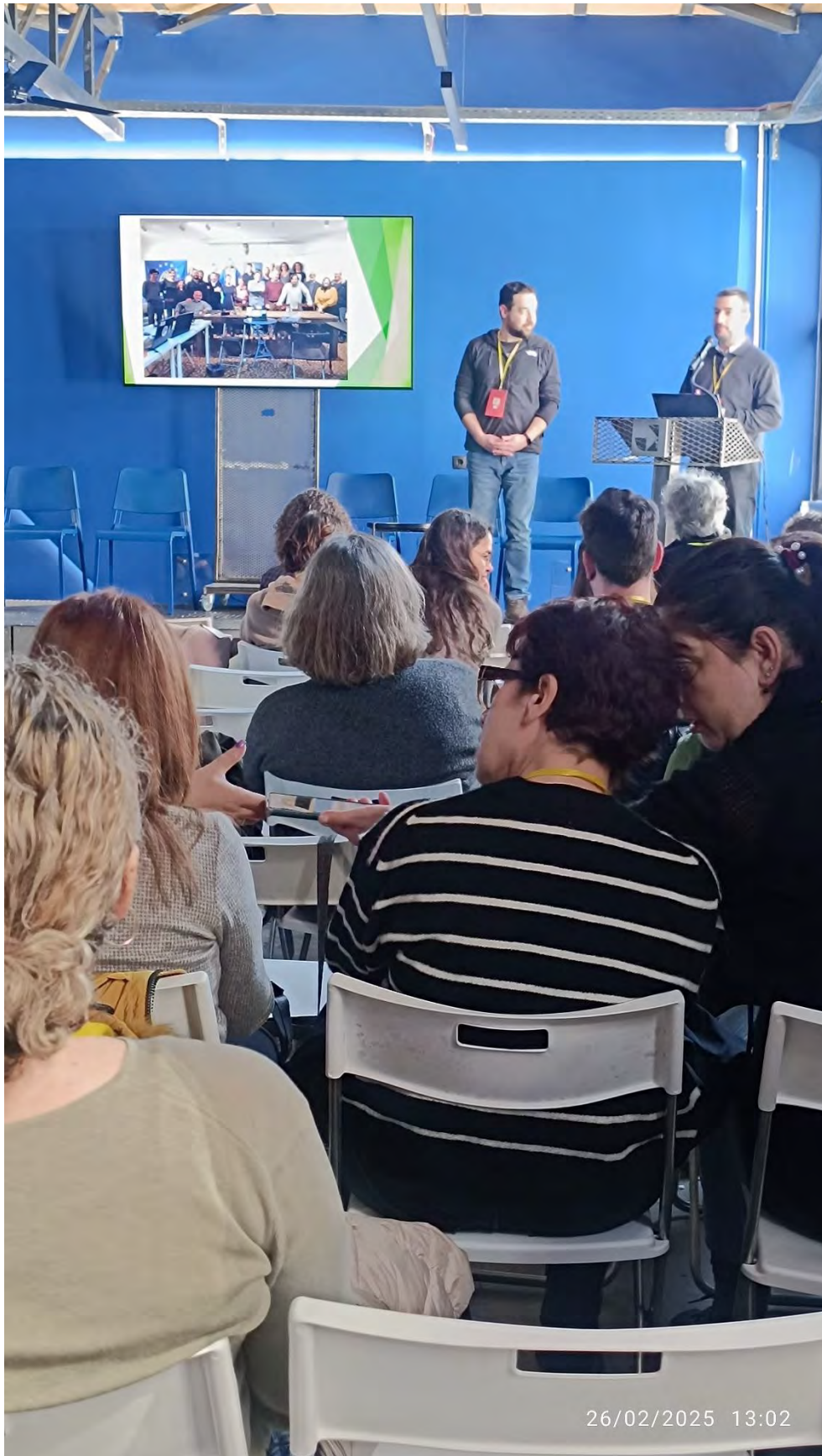














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ANNEX VII:

Presentations

During the Conference, the results of the LIFE ARCPROM project were presented in detail, and a productive dialogue took place, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences from various European regions. The discussions focused on best practices that promote human-bear coexistence.

The official opening ceremony of the International Conference took place on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at the Hippocrates Auditorium on the premises of the School of Health Sciences at the University of Thessaly in Larissa. The Director of the Environmental Organization Callisto and project manager of LIFE ARCPROM, Spyros Psaroudas, provided a precise overview of the project's objectives, scope, and results, while viewing the documentary produced as part of the LIFE ARCPROM initiative was the highlight of the event.

The next day, the conference proceedings, roundtables, and workshops began, during which many presentations were made. Due to the large size of the respective files, we uploaded them to the project website, in PDF format, in four parts:

1st Part: <https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PRESENTATIONS-part-1.pdf>

2nd Part: <https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PRESENTATIONS-part-2.pdf>

3rd Part: <https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PRESENTATIONS-part-3.pdf>

4th Part: <https://lifearcprom.uowm.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/PRESENTATIONS-part-4.pdf>

ANNEX VIII:

Memorandum of Understanding (Network)

A special workshop was organized for participants from neighbouring countries on the second day of the Conference, Wednesday, February 26, to facilitate the transfer of best practices and lessons learned from the project's implementation. The workshop included a roundtable with speakers from Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria, with additional contributions from Italy and Spain.

The main goal was to strengthen transboundary cooperation among public authorities, institutions, and NGOs on issues related to human-bear coexistence in shared areas.

The workshop concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a network of organizations and experts focused on the conservation of large carnivores in Southern Europe.

Memorandum of Understanding

On the establishment of a Network of organisations and experts working on the
Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe

Preamble

The International Conference of the European project LIFE ARCPROM was successfully held in the last week of February, 2025 (25-27/2) in the city of Larissa. A total of 185 scientists, representatives of environmental organisations, universities, and institutions from Greece, Italy, Spain, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria participated in the conference.

On Wednesday, 26 February, a special workshop organised by CALLISTO in the context of the LIFE ARCPOM International Conference “on the Establishment of a Network of organizations and experts working on Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe”.

The main objective of the workshop was the exchange of knowledge and the transfer of experience, as well as good practices and lessons learned during the implementation of the LIFE ARCPROM project in Greece and Italy. Another objective was the establishment or strengthening of transboundary cooperation between public authorities, institutions, and NGOs on issues related to the bear-human coexistence in transboundary areas.

The Conference Organising Team decided to broaden the audience of this workshop to include participants from other countries in Southern Europe, who present situations that differ from country to country, but also cases that are similar to each other.

A brief overview of current projects and initiatives for the conservation of brown bear populations in Southern Europe preceded the discussion on networking. Participants also had the opportunity to attend other sessions of the Conference, in which the actions of the LIFE ARCPROM project were presented, issues addressed to practically improve the conditions of coexistence between humans and bears, the problems that were encountered, the solutions that were provided, the lessons learned and the experiences gained in the project areas, in four National Parks in Greece and Italy.

The participants of the workshop found it helpful to establish a Network of organisations and experts working on the Conservation of Large Carnivores in Southern Europe. They agreed to sign this Memorandum by sending an e-mail to the organisers of the workshop, confirming that they agree to the following:

Article 1 – Purpose

The establishment of a Network of organisations and experts working on the Conservation of Large Carnivores could be a useful tool to improve conditions of coexistence between humans and bears in Southern Europe.

Organizations and individual experts working in the field of population and habitat conservation of the brown bear in Southern Europe can participate in the Network. These include specialized Non-Governmental Organizations, competent authorities, universities, research institutes, bodies and agencies managing protected areas, local government organizations, development companies, representatives of stakeholders, as well as individuals with studies and proven experience in the conservation of brown bears and efforts to improve the coexistence conditions between humans and large carnivores.

The Network operates as a forum for exchanging knowledge and experience, transferring good practices, and engaging in dialogue on issues concerning its participants. It also functions as an informal body of cooperation, without being a legal entity, which encourages the development of collaborations among its members/nodes. It does not bind or represent its members to third parties and is not bound or represented by one or more of its members.

Article 2 – Geography

According to current knowledge, the population size of the brown bear in South Europe is currently estimated to be around 5.000 specimens and it inhabits thirteen countries/regions in South Europe, including Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo*, Greece, and Bulgaria. Compared to the population size of the whole of Europe, it represents around 25% of the total bear population on the continent.

Article 3 – Standards

The co-signatories will work to improve conservation and management of brown bears in Southern Europe in accordance with the Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans, elaborated by the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe and endorsed by the European Commission as best practice.

To ensure a meaningful and participatory management approach, the co-signatories agree to support the identification and involvement of relevant stakeholder groups such as competent agencies, local and regional authorities, protected areas management bodies or agencies, hunting associations, etc., in the process.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Management plans and conservation actions shall be developed on the basis of stakeholder involvement, the most recent available data, and best practices. They shall be subject to regular updates.

However, signing this MoU won't commit the participants, or the organisations they are affiliated with, to make a certain financial contribution.

Article 4 – Shared Responsibilities

The co-signatories agree to continue working together according to the responsibilities outlined below to achieve the shared goal. Annual meetings of the Parties will be held to update one another on progress.

Within 60 days from the signature of this MoU, the co-signatories shall establish a Coordination Group, which will adopt internal rules of procedure that will regulate its operation and work. Additional experts might be invited upon agreement.

The Coordination Group will meet every six months to ensure knowledge exchange and good communication between the members of the Network. The Coordination Group will also try to organize in-person meetings of its members. To this end, an effort will be made to organize workshops or side events in the framework of international conferences organized by third parties, including beneficiaries of LIFE projects, Regional Platforms for Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, scientific conferences, and other events.

Article 5 – Final disposition

This Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into effect on the date of the last signing.

Each member will be entitled to terminate this Memorandum of Understanding at any time by notifying the other members in writing. In this case, this Memorandum of Understanding shall be terminated within 3 (three) months after the date of receipt of the notification.

The termination of this Memorandum of Understanding will not affect the validity and implementation of the projects and activities agreed upon according to the Memorandum of Understanding and initiated before its termination, until their completion, unless the Participants agree otherwise.

The MoU will remain valid for three (3) years and will automatically be extended for further periods of three (3) years unless one of the members notifies the other in writing of their intention to terminate the MOU six months in advance.

Participants in the Larissa workshop who signed the agreement:

Name - Surname	Position or expertise / Affiliation	E-mail address	Signing date (by e-mail)
Spyros Psaroudas	General Coordinator / CALLISTO, Greece	spyros@callisto.gr	20/06/2025
Charalambos Billinis	Rector/ University of Thessaly	cbillinis@gmail.com	20/06/2025
Dimitris Chatzopoulos	University of Thessaly, Greece	vetdchatzop@gmail.com	20/06/2025
Elpida Grigoriadou	NECCA, Greece	e.grigoriadou@necca.gov.gr	24/06/2025
Vaios Koutis	Director / TRIKALA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY – KENAKAP S.A., Greece	bkoutis@kenakap.gr	23/06/2025
Patrizia Giangregorio	ISPRA, Italy	patrizia.giangregorio@isprambiente.it	30/06/2025
Aleksandar Dutsov	WWF Bulgaria	adutsov@wwf.bg	4/07/2025
Aleksandar Stojanov	MES, North Macedonia	stojanov@mes.org.mk	25/08/2025
Naum Ilieski	Ekosvest, North Macedonia	naum@ekosvest.com.mk	4/07/2025
Giovanna Di Domenico	Temporary contract, Majella National Park, Italy	giovanna.didomenico@parcomajella.it	14/07/2025
Antonio Antonucci	Maiella NP, Head of the Wildlife Monitoring and Conservation Unit, Italy	Antonio.antonucci@parcomajella.it	14/07/2025
DANIELA GENTILE	Rewilding Apennines, Italy	daniela.gentile@rewilding-apennines.com	21/06/2025
Marina Gaona	Project technician / Fundación Oso Pardo, Spain	mgaona@fundacionosopardo.org	19/08/2025
María Párraga	Project Coordinator / Fundación Oso Pardo, Spain	mparraga@fundacionosopardo.org	19/08/2025
Aleksander Trajce	PPNEA, Albania	a.trajce@ppnea.org	7/07/2025
Svetoslava Toncheva	Researcher, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	svetahet@abv.bg	4/07/2025

