

**6 the meeting of the Conference of the Parties
to the Carpathian Convention
25 November 2020
Agenda item 3.2. – 10.20-10.50
High-level speech by the incoming Presidency – Poland
Mr Adam Guibourgé-Czetwertyński, Undersecretary of State
Ministry of Climate and Environment**

Your Excellencies: Ms. Inger Andersen -Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Sandor Farkas – Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Hungary, Mr Harald Egerer – Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, representatives of governments, self-governments, scientific community, non-governmental organisations and other actors involved in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention,

I am honoured to be speaking to this Carpathian gathering that encompasses leaders from seven countries of the region, cooperating with the aim to ensure protection and sustainable development of this area.

I would certainly prefer to be welcoming you to Poland in Rzeszów that is the heart of Polish Carpathian region. Unfortunately the global covid pandemic changed our plans, similar to many other initiatives worldwide. But I am happy that despite unfavourable circumstances we are able to meet and work virtually in order to ensure uninterrupted implementation of the Carpathian Convention.

Carpathians occupy a prominent place on the map of Europe and as a result – they play a very important role in the natural, social and

economic situation of our countries and Europe. The Carpathian Convention is a very well designed framework that, if successfully implemented, could serve as an example of regional instrument of sustainable development that aims at improving quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities and conservation of natural values and cultural heritage.

I would like to express my gratitude to the government of Hungary for their efforts and devotion that they have invested in the presidency of the Carpathian Convention in the last 3 years. We highly appreciate your work. I would like to assure you that we will build on your achievements and continue this work during the next presidency period.

Polish Presidency of the Carpathian Convention will strive to ensure balanced implementation of the Convention. We believe that it is important to highlight the potential of this instrument in various areas, including protection and sustainable use of its biological and landscape diversity, sustainable and multifunctional forestry, cultural heritage, sustainable agriculture, tourism, transport.

At the same time what we want to focus on, are two horizontal priorities:

First, we will work on the accession of European Union to the Carpathian Convention. Having in mind the size of the Carpathians, Carpathian natural environment is an important part of the European heritage and, in order to better protect it, the EU should accede to the

Carpathian Convention as a party. In addition to that, the Carpathians are a region not only of ecological, but also of economic importance on the European scale. Providing support to sustainable development of the Carpathians may serve as a stimulus to the EU growth. And finally, accession of the EU to the Carpathian Convention would significantly improve its implementation at all levels and would increase the potential of regional cooperation in the Carpathians.

While working on improving Convention's position at the European level, Polish presidency at the same time will attach great importance to the cooperation at the regional and local level. This is where the Carpathian Convention is implemented, and supporting and inspiring activities at this level will be our second priority.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me wish you interesting and fruitful debates despite the fact that they will have virtual form. During Polish Presidency in the Convention we will do our best to support further active work on realisation of the goals of the convention. And I hope that it is only a matter of months that I will be able to welcome you to Rzeszów, at a ministerial conference that will be an opportunity to meet face to face and to discuss current Carpathian issues in a friendly and joyful atmosphere.

Now I would like to invite Mr. Włodzimierz Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region of Poland as the representative of regional authorities, to deliver short statement.