

Statement of Hungary
by Mr. Zsolt Belánszky-Demkó Deputy State Secretary of International Relations
at the COP6 of the Carpathian Convention
(videoconference, 25th of November, 2020.)

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Hungary the Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of the coordination of the Carpathian Convention related activities and conducted/lead the Presidency related work in the past 3 years. In line with the wide scope of the Convention we have fulfilled it with strong backing by wide range of our ministries and institutions as well as by the Prime Minister's office. I wish to start my statement by expressing our high appreciation to them for this excellent cooperation.

Hungary has been actively involved in the Carpathian cooperation from the very beginning and significantly contributed to its development, we believe.

We are particularly proud of the activities and achievements reached together with the Carpathian Convention community since the 2017 Lillafüred COP5 as was reported in details by Deputy Minister Farkas and the Secretariat in the morning session today.

In our view most of the elements of the ambitious workprogram adopted at the Lillafüred COP progressed well, however there is always room for improvement therefore we are looking forward to the next triennium with higher expectations.

Results could not have been possible without our international partners, present and not present today (*WWF, ICPDR, ESDR, EURAC, SAC, EEA, , Visegrad Fund, etc.*). Cooperation with wide range of stakeholders is a basic feature of the Carpathian Convention and facilitates increasing of synergies, avoiding duplication and using available limited (financial and human) resources as sufficiently as possible for the benefit of all of us.

As far as wider **strategic issues** are concerned we fully support the envisaged further steps towards the desired accession of the EU to the Carpathian Convention as well as the establishment of close cooperation with the Carpathian Macroregional Strategy once in place. -We believe that achieving these aims will be beneficial for both the EU and the Convention.

We highly appreciate and see further potential in our cooperation with the Danube frameworks (ICPDR and the Danube Strategy), particularly look forward to the continuation of our already ongoing cooperation on the Tisza river basin.

We are proud that following our initiative most of the parties will take up leading role in the Convention working groups. It is highly appreciated. We consider this as an important burden sharing step forward, which at the same time well demonstrates ownership of the countries and hopefully to certain extent also eases the work of the small but very professional and hardworking Secretariat of the Convention.

Allow me to also highlight some **specific activities** in some areas declared as priorities for the Hungarian presidential period:

Good progress has been made concerning the two significant legal steps taken at the Lillafüred COP: As we heard earlier today the Sustainable Agriculture and Regional Development (SARD) protocol has entered into force and the ratification process of the climate change amendment to the text of the Convention is also progressing well.

Hungary hosted several meetings in the past 3 years in order to support the implementation of the Convention and we are ready to also contribute in similar way in the future.

The expert seminar on Education for sustainable development and awareness raising (held in April 2019 in Budapest) as new activity proved to be a success judging by the feedbacks received during and after it. Further cooperation possibilities can also be explored with partners out of our region, like the UN ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) particularly with the view of the next Environment for Europe (EfE) conference in 2022, where education and awareness raising activities will be given particular attention, even a Pan-European joint meeting of education and environment ministers will take place.

We hope that similar attention will be given to the education and awareness raising activity in the next presidential period since real changes for the protection and sustainable development can be made by the people of our region, and youth is particularly important in this regard. That is why we very much share the intention of the incoming presidency to further strengthening link and cooperation with the regional and local levels.

Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge was a field of activity which after an excellent revitalisation start, a successful working group meeting held in Hungary in 2018 unfortunately has slowed down due to institutional and personal changes. We encourage Parties to continue cooperation along the agreed roadmap and thank Slovakia for taking up a leading role in it. We recognise the importance of the Carpathian Route project for the further development of this cooperation and express support to its implementation, including its expected contribution to the completion of the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge protocol. We do hope for the reconsideration of the related cancellation decision.

Finally, - since Hungary is chairing the Climate Change Working Group on one hand, and a decision has been made on the elevation of related activity on the other -, allow me to share with you some information on the latest climate related developments in Hungary which support firmly the provisions of the new article 12 bis of the Carpathian Convention adopted at the previous COP.

= On 8th January 2020, the Government accepted five important energy and climate related documents which together form the basis of the Hungarian medium- and long-term, comprehensive, clean development. The accepted documents are the following: First Climate Change Action Plan; Report on the scientific assessment of the possible effects of climate change on the Carpathian Basin; Draft National Clean Development Strategy; National Energy and Climate Plan of Hungary and the National Energy Strategy 2030, with an outlook until 2040.

= The Prime Minister, Mr. Viktor Orbán, in his annual evaluation speech on 16th February 2020, announced the Climate and Nature Protection Action Plan, which contains 8 action points to operationalize Hungary's integrated energy and climate policy.

= Hungary has committed to national climate neutrality by 2050 and enshrined it in law. The Act on Climate Protection, adopted on 3rd June 2020, which declares Hungary's medium- and long-term climate targets at a statutory level, namely that we will reduce our emissions by at least 40% compared to 1990 levels by 2030, and by 2050 we will achieve full climate neutrality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Time is passing by fast, our presidency is over.

I wish to conclude by thanking again the cooperation and support of all partners during our presidential period leading to the achievements reported by the Secretariat today. We wish successes to the Polish presidency and remain committed to the further work of the Convention. We are ready to adopt the commonly agreed planned further activities as presented in the draft decisions document.

Thank you for your kind attention.