

**Carpathian Convention COP7, High-Level Segment**

**Palace of Serbia**

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**Statement of Romania**

**Mr. Mircea FECHET,  
Minister of Environment, Waters and Forests**

**Belgrade, Republic of Serbia**

**Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to firstly state the fact that I align my thoughts with the ideas already expressed by my esteemed colleagues regarding the need to promote a sustainable conservation approach in this region, especially as we commemorate the historic 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Convention.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Carpathian Convention is indeed a momentous occasion. It signifies not only a cause for celebration but also underscores the Convention's maturity over the years. As the Republic of Serbia concludes its Presidency of the Convention, in my national capacity I would like to address the warmest congratulations for all the work conducted in this framework.

In the meantime, talking about the hard work conducted in the event's margins, it is worth noting that Ukraine has been an active Party to the Carpathian Convention since its inception, signed in Kyiv. In the matter of the country's current situation, I would like to reiterate the fact that Romania condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression, which defies the UN Charter, the international law, endangers the environment, and contributes to the global food and energy crises. In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to support Ukraine until the successful resolution of the ongoing conflict.

Romania remains fully engaged in supporting the new vision of the Carpathian Convention, emphasizing conservation, restoration, and environmental protection. These themes are essential for better enforcement through the Convention's thematic actions.

As we all know, initially conceived as a regional Convention on sustainable development, the Carpathian Convention has evolved with a focus on various cooperation activities undertaken by State Parties. Biodiversity was the first area of intensive collaboration within the Convention framework, with ongoing cooperation. The Convention also complements other international agreements on biodiversity.

As a tangible example of this approach, we are here today to celebrate the signing of the intention to declare the Romania-Serbia cross-border Ramsar site.

Over time, our collective interests have expanded into other critical areas, with a growing emphasis on fields such as forests and agriculture. Notably, the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development was adopted within the Convention in October 2017.

In 2020, Romania assumed the management of the Protocol for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development through the National Agency of Mountain Area within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. We have expressed our readiness to continue leading this working group's efforts in the coming years.

Our meetings in Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, have allowed us to share and discuss several successful national-level practices related to agriculture in the Carpathians. It is my strong opinion that these practices hold the potential to be transferred to other mountainous areas and serve as a source of inspiration for broader Carpathian-scale activities.

One noteworthy initiative introduced during these discussions was Transhumance Pastoralism, a traditional activity that organizes the migration of sheep as a unique tourist attraction. Transhumance is closely tied to ecological, social, and economic aspects of sustainable development in the Carpathian region.

Moreover, pastoralism is closely related to the ecological, social, and economic aspects of sustainable development in the Carpathian region, as well as specific themes covered by the Carpathian Convention: cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services, sustainable agriculture and rural development, sustainable tourism, and spatial development. Therefore, its transboundary nature also gives it regional significance. Threats to pastoralism are inherently linked to the mountainous areas of the Carpathians, including the effects generated by climate change, as well as other socio-economic transitions, immigration, land abandonment, and the loss of traditional knowledge, which can even lead to the loss of cultural landscapes.

During our technical working group meetings, we recognized the need for regional legislation on pastoralism within the Carpathians. To achieve this goal, the dedicated Working Group within the Carpathian Convention has prioritized the theme of Pastoralism, aligning with the United Nations' declaration of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

**Dear colleagues,**

*Transhumance is deeply rooted in Romanian tradition, dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It has not only shaped the identity of mountain pastoral villages but also contributed to the development of practices passed down through generations.*

Romania is among the 10 countries that submitted the multinational dossier "***Transhumance, the seasonal migration of herds***" to UNESCO in March 2020, aiming for inclusion in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This process involved diverse experts, researchers, specialists from ministries, professionals in the zootechnical field, local communities, and transhumant herders' associations.

The inclusion of transhumance in UNESCO's representative list would be a significant achievement, recognizing the uniqueness and cultural and environmental importance of this tradition. It would encourage efforts to protect transhumance, supporting a sustainable economic branch and promoting food and artisanal products.

UNESCO's evaluation of the dossier is due in October 2023, with results to be announced during the UNESCO Committee meeting in Botswana in December this year.

We believe that sustaining pastoralism is still possible within our mountains if we preserve these areas as pollution-free zones with clean waters and forests, devoid of plastics, marine litter, or other pollutants. Our actions must be coordinated to address transboundary challenges effectively, including those arising from climate change, plastic pollution, and invasive species. But of course, these actions must be accompanied by increased education, awareness, and responsible involvement at all levels.

In order to conclude, in Romania's vision, it is imperative that we work together to address the transboundary challenges that environmental issues present.

Because as we all say, nature knows no borders, and our environmental challenges can only be managed effectively through regional and international cooperation. In that context, we all should keep in mind that as decision-makers, our role during this time is of utmost importance!

Let us celebrate 20 years since the signing of the Convention and embark on a new era of successful implementation.

***Thank you for your attention!***