

Carpathian Convention COP7, High-Level Segment

Palace of Serbia

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Opening speech

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Minister of Environmental Protection of Serbia

Your Excellences, distinguished ministers, ambassadors and other high representatives of countries and organizations, ladies and gentlemen,

- In the year when the 20th anniversary of the implementation of the Carpathian Convention is being celebrated, and when the Conference of the Parties of this convention is being held in Belgrade, it is my honor to take over the presidency of the Carpathian Convention on behalf of the Republic of Serbia.
- I firmly believe that one of the key advantages of the three-year presidency of the Carpathian Convention will be the exchange of our experiences, as well as the lessons we have learned during the implementation of the Convention.
- It is a fact that the Carpathian region contains resources of exceptional ecological and cultural importance, and we can safely say that the Carpathian Convention and its protocols represent a good mechanism for the preservation of those resources, and the sustainable development of the entire Carpathian region, with its extraordinary diversity.
- Serbia provides full support to regional cooperation established within the process of implementing the Carpathian Convention and beyond, within the framework of global processes and international agreements such as, above all, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention.
- Also, Serbia supports the adoption and implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework as a regional response to the new goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- For all the above reasons, it is clear that the Carpathian Convention and its protocols, on which we have all worked together for two decades, must be used in the best possible way, by taking actions for their integration into relevant sectors, including nature protection, agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, tourism and education, as well as in cross-sectoral national policies such as development plans and processes, budgets and economic policies.

- The Republic of Serbia sees the development of the Carpathian region as a practical tool, which contributes to the integrated protection of nature and biodiversity, but which also takes into account aspects of socio-economic development.
- Although the share of the Republic of Serbia in the Carpathian region is significantly smaller than other countries, it is strategically very important in terms of development based on cooperation with countries that face the same challenges of sustainable development and protection of this unique part of Europe.
- In addition to the internationally recognized localities recognized by UNESCO, such as the "Golija-Studenica" and "Gornje Podunavlje" biosphere reserves, the "Đerdap" Geopark and the "Mura-Drava-Danube" cross-border biosphere reserve, I am very pleased to announce another result of the cross-border cooperation that we are establishing today.
- Namely, with the Minister of Environmental Protection, Mr. Fechet, I am signing a letter for the establishment of the cross-border Ramsar area "Iron Gate Nature Park - Đerdap" between Serbia and Romania.
- I hope that this initiative will be an incentive and motivation for everyone to work even more intensively on the regional protection of natural values, strengthening the Carpathian region and building new green bridges of cooperation that will be the backbone of sustainability for the future.
- Shepherd's work reflects the traditional way of sustainable use of nature, which is neither easy, nor are the results of shepherd's work quickly visible, reminding us of true and traditional values with the application of innovative solutions based on nature.
- This shepherd's stick tells us that we must remain persistent and persevere, to plan long-term protection of natural values both in the countries we represent and in the Carpathian region.
- Only through continuous and persistent work and despite all weather conditions, just like shepherds, we can achieve sustainable use of the natural resources that nature has provided us.
- Thank you for your attention, and I wish us all a very successful Conference.