

Item 3. Statements by Ministers and High level Representatives

Speech of the Slovak State Secretary at the High Level Segment of the Forth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP4), 23 – 26 September 2014, Mikulov, Czech Republic

Excellencies, Representatives of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Within the last 3 years since we met at COP 3 in Bratislava the convention has moved forward with new initiatives, activities, and projects, but also with new people and – I would like to stress – many with new opportunities too. I am very proud that Slovakia has been able to assist with many of them. We, as the Presidency to the Convention during that time, tried our best. In case some processes stayed still open I do believe that our successor, the Czech Republic, will continually push forward the running process.

It is a great honour to lead the Slovak delegation today at the occasion of the successful end of the Slovak Presidency of the Carpathian Convention. At the same time I am very pleased to hand it in to our Czech colleagues, to a very committed party of this Convention!

Let me use this official opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention based in Vienna for not only the administrative but also the professional support to the Presidency and to the all seven Carpathian countries as well as for their always very friendly collaboration.

I am convinced that such an important regional platform as the Carpathian Conventions is, provides an ideal institutional framework among the Carpathian countries to foster a more systematic exchange and joining forces among different sectors involved in the implementation process.

To transfer all ideas from the convention's protocols to the practise is a learning exercise for all of us to ensure that by our decision-making we positively influence the people and the landscape in the Carpathian area.

Today, Slovakia is ready to stay on the path of commitment to the Convention and its overall objectives by signing the next protocol, the transport protocol.

Moreover, we are also prepared to actively continue cooperation in the fields of tourism, cultural heritage, forests, agriculture, infrastructure, climate change and especially biological and landscape diversity – all in the equal combination for quality of life of the local communities, their local economies and, and for the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathian Mountains.

Additionally, we as the party to this Convention will always be in endeavour to support that this multi-level governance mechanism finds the right way how to cooperate with the European Union in order to bring the Carpathians to the map as one important European region.

Thank you for your attention.