

# **First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians**

## **CARPATHIAN DECLARATION**

*We, the Ministers and High Representatives* of the seven Parties and Signatories to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (hereafter Carpathian Convention), the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine, gathering in Kyiv on 13 December 2006, for the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention;

*Reaffirming* the commitment to implement the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development;

*Recalling* the UN General Assembly resolutions proclaiming and celebrating the International Year of Mountains in 2002 drawing attention of governments, organisations and individuals to the particular role mountains play for biodiversity, wildlife and cultural heritage preservation, water and energy supply, providing benefits for a significant proportion of humanity, in both mountain and lowland areas;

*Appreciating* the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (“Mountain Partnership”) as an important platform for cooperation and experience-sharing between mountain regions of the world;

*Underlining* that the Carpathian Convention is an important instrument to enhance the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region, based on its exceptional natural and cultural heritage.

*Have expressed the following:*

### **Achievements**

*We express our satisfaction* with the entry into force of the Carpathian Convention on 4 January 2006 and *underline* our commitment to faithfully implement the Carpathian Convention;

*We note with satisfaction* that the Carpathian Convention unites seven Carpathian countries in a unique partnership, providing a transnational framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy integration, an open forum for participation by stakeholders and the public, and a platform for developing and implementing transnational strategies, programmes and projects for protection and sustainable development;

*We recognize* the important political support provided by the European Community and its Member States to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention through the EU INTERREG III B CADSES “Carpathian Project”. *We furthermore appreciate* the contribution of the other organizations and institutions to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention as reflected in the section on Cooperation and Partnerships;

*We appreciate* the activities of the interim Secretariat provided by UNEP in Vienna in preparation of COP 1, and *welcome* its activities in the development and leading of the Carpathian Project;

*We underline* the importance of the Carpathian Convention as an instrument to enhance the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region, based on its exceptional natural and cultural heritage of global importance.

### **Challenges**

*We are aware* that the Carpathian region represents a unique and dynamic living environment, ecologically valuable and rich of cultural heritage, having enormous ecological and economic potential, but currently facing rapid environmental, social and political changes;

*We note with concern* that unbalanced and spontaneous development patterns in the Carpathian region can lead to loss of traditional knowledge and values, livelihoods, and local practices;

*We emphasize* that more environmentally-friendly practices and technologies will need to be implemented, along with appropriate policies to support the development of sustainable transport, organic farming, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, sustainable forest management and sustainable tourism, creating new jobs in these sectors. Regional policy coherence and consistency between national policies are among the major prerequisites to achieve sustainability in the Carpathians;

*We are aware* that the challenge is to preserve and valorise the region’s potential, specificity and uniqueness, while increasing its sustainability. This will require responsible actions, taking into account global, regional and trans-boundary contexts and linkages, in order to enhance both the Carpathian environment and human livelihoods;

*We underline* that the process of enlargement of the European Union provides the opportunity to strengthen the environmental protection and sustainable development in the Carpathian region, through the application and implementation of EU policies, programmes and legislation.

### **Cooperation and Partnerships**

*We recall with appreciation* that the Alpine States have actively supported the development of the Carpathian Convention, and *welcome* the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding for the cooperation between the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention;

*We express* our gratitude to the Government of Austria for its support to the Carpathian Convention, notably by continuing to host and co-finance the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention on an interim basis;

*We appreciate* the continued support of the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, and the efficient cooperation and partnership with UNEP, the European Academy EURAC in Bolzano, Italy, and the Regional Environmental Centre (REC);

*We appreciate* the successful cooperation with the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), which resulted in the assessments of the SARD-M (sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountains);

*We note with appreciation* the contribution of the Carpathian Environmental Outlook (KEO), to develop a holistic, integrated and strategic environmental assessment of key issues in the Carpathian region for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention;

*We appreciate* the efforts of the Visegrad Group countries (the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic) to foster the dialogue with the European Commission;

*We encourage* full participation and involvement of the Carpathian communities in decision-making and implementation of relevant development policies, in accordance with the Aarhus principles;

*We note* that the experiences of cooperation of the “Alpine Space” reveal the need for long-lasting commitment and structural support by the European Union, to fully benefit of the considerable potential of the mountains for regional development;

*We express* our conviction that cooperation with and support from the European Community and its Member States will be crucial to the development of the “Carpathian Space”, as an area of economic, social and environmental progress and sustainability in the heart of Europe, building on the region’s advantages and potentials, and addressing the challenges of mountain regions in an innovative and coordinated manner;

*We invite* the European Community to accede to the Carpathian Convention and *also invite* the European Community and its Member States to join the transnational platform of the Carpathian countries, and to continue to support the protection and sustainable development of the “Carpathian Space” through relevant instruments and programmes.

*Done in Kyiv, Ukraine, 13 December 2006*