



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

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DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

**Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework
Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the
Carpathians (COP3)**

We, the Ministers and representatives of the Ministers responsible for the protection of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine, having met in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, on 27 May 2011, on the occasion of the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention)

1. *Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/205 of 11 March 2010 “Sustainable Mountain Development”, which “notes with appreciation the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, adopted and signed by the seven countries of the region to provide a framework for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development and a forum for dialogue between all involved stakeholders”;
2. *Acknowledging* the important contribution of the Carpathian Convention in promoting the objectives of the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and the United Nations International Year of Forests 2011;
3. *Welcoming* the Aichi targets and outcomes of the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10) hosted in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010, in particular the relevance of the decisions taken with regard to the Programmes of Work on Mountain Biodiversity and Protected Areas for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention;
4. *Recognizing* the Carpathian Convention as an effective tool to promote a more coherent management approach for the European Union NATURA 2000 and Emerald networks in the Carpathian region;
5. *Recognizing* the crucial role of the European Union (EU) and related national funding programmes in steering and supporting the future development of the Carpathian region and stressing the need for integrating continued attention and support for the region in the ongoing decision making and preparations for the next EU financial programming period 2014-2020.

6. *Welcome* the progress achieved in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, in particular the entry into force of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity and the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) Medium Term Strategy and the launch of related projects.
7. *Welcome* the approval of the “BIOREGIO Carpathians” project proposal under the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme of the European Union and *commit* ourselves to support the implementation of the project, of the Clearing House Mechanism developed by WWF and the newly developed Joint Biodiversity Information System and Carpathian Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for supporting the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol and effective management of the Carpathian protected areas.
8. *Acknowledge* the outstanding environmental value of Carpathian forests that represent some of Europe’s most significant remaining areas of old growth forest and greatest wilderness areas, and the ecosystem services that these forests provide, inter alia with regard to water management, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration and *we underline* the opportunity of the UN International Year of Forests to take some activities and raise public awareness on maintaining those values.
9. *Welcome* the adoption and signing of the Protocols on Sustainable Forest Management and on Sustainable Tourism, and call for their timely ratification in accordance with national procedures, and implementation, in collaboration, inter alia with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Forest Europe Process and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, entities and processes.
10. *Acknowledge* the outstanding role of extensive agriculture in sustaining biodiversity, sequestering carbon, protecting water resources, and supporting thriving rural communities in the Carpathian region and *we support* the development of a Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in close cooperation with all relevant partners.
11. *Stress* the importance of maintaining and improving conditions of the Carpathian region’s freshwater resources for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian mountain region, and *call for and support* enhanced collaboration with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, in particular in the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the implementation of the Tisza River Basin Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
12. *Express* our concern about the effects of climate change in the Carpathian region, *support* further collaboration with relevant international organizations and other public and private sector partners towards exploring relevant adaptation and mitigation measures, including flood prevention and control, researching and applying renewable energy options, as well as the development of a Protocol on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure.

13. *Welcome* the ongoing efforts at the European level, the initiative of the European Parliament and the important support by the European Commission with regard to the scientific investigation on climate change and adaptation in the Carpathians, and we further *welcome* the experience exchange with the Alps on the subject of climate change within the frame of the Alpine Space Programme.
14. *Welcome* the establishment and *support* the work of the Science for Carpathians Network as an important tool to coordinate and enhance cooperative research in the Carpathian region.
15. *Acknowledge* the importance of safeguarding and protecting cultural heritage as well as of encouraging information exchange, education and public participation in managing the Carpathians, and *we commit ourselves* to support the work of and collaboration with civil society organizations, including the development of a Cultural Heritage Inventory, a Public Participation Strategy and related action programs.
16. *Note* the ongoing discussion on the growing role of macroregions in the EU and in this context the importance of the Carpathian region as a vital link connecting the Baltic and Danube macroregional strategies. *We welcome* the European Commission Communication on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the accompanying Plan of Action, calling, *inter alia*, for the implementation of the Vision and Strategies for the Carpathian Area (VASICA), for the reinforcement of the Carpathian Convention to share best practices on sustainable development, e.g. on using biomass for energy purposes, and for specific action in the Carpathian region in the field of tourism, biodiversity, climate change and pollution risk management.
17. *Welcome and support* further efforts towards the development and inclusion of a Carpathian Space Program into relevant EU Funding Programmes, *inter alia* the European Territorial Cooperation Programs of the European Union for the financial programming period 2014-2020, and *invite* relevant existing EU Programmes to further support priority action in support of the protection and sustainable development of the region, as identified by the Carpathian Convention.
18. *Welcome* the approval of the “ACCESS2MOUNTAIN” project proposal under the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme of the European Union, and *commit ourselves to* support the implementation of the project.
19. *Call upon* the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders to explore the potential of using the Life program and other relevant Territorial Cooperation Programs of the European Union, including instruments of the EU Neighborhood Policy, for supporting the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and cross border environmental cooperation in the Carpathians.
20. *Reiterate* our invitation to the European Union to accede to the Carpathian Convention.
21. *Appreciate* the close collaboration between the Secretariats of the Alpine and the Carpathian Conventions in jointly promoting sustainable development in mountain areas through their relationship with the EU and international institutions.

22. *Urge* all relevant stakeholders to make further use of the Carpathian Convention as a sub-regional framework for the synergetic implementation of international Multilateral Environmental Agreements, we *welcome* the cooperation with international conventions and bodies, including the Alpine Convention, the CBD and the Ramsar Convention, in the context of concluded MoUs/MoCs and otherwise in promoting the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols. We further *call upon* UNEP to support experience exchange in the field of biodiversity and other MEA's related issues.
23. *Welcome* the organization of the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention to be hosted in Romania in 2012 and *express* our hopes this will lead to increased cooperation in the protection of wetlands in the Carpathian region.
24. *Highly appreciate* UNEP's ongoing support to the Carpathian Convention process, including through the interim Secretariat in Vienna, *express* the hope and expectation that the establishment of a trust fund will further facilitate the administration of the Secretariat and its work, and *request* UNEP to continue to support the Carpathian Convention process both in the context of its Program of Work and through the provision of the Secretariat functions on an interim basis in Vienna until permanent arrangements are made.
25. *Call upon* the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and all relevant institutions to promote the Carpathian Convention as a best-practice example of institutional framework for promoting sustainable development and green economy, in the context of the process leading to the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012, including the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 21 to 23 September 2011.
26. *Reiterate* our firm commitment to continue to contribute to and assist in mobilizing sufficient financial support for the Carpathian Convention process, in accordance with the scale of assessment of contributions and the additional budgetary requirements related to the implementation of to the approved program of work including the functioning of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols.
27. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Austria for its continuous support to the Carpathian Convention, notably by continuing to host and co-finance its Secretariat on an interim basis.
28. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of Italy for its continuous support to the Carpathian Convention and to the European Academy Bolzano (EURAC) for its close collaboration with the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.
29. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for its commitment to support the implementation of the Carpathian Convention as part of the Swiss Contribution for EU enlargement.
30. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of Slovakia for having hosted the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention.