

**Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention**  
**Statement by the Coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**  
**DG REGIO, the European Commission**  
**Marco Onida**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

let me first thank you for having kindly invited the European Commission, and specifically DG REGIO, to take part in CoP 4 of the Carpathian Convention. For me, having had recently a strong involvement in the "twin" Convention (Alpine Convention), is a personal honor and pleasure. It brings me back with my mind to the several joint activities we have undertaken in order to develop, promote and implement the respective conventions and the MoU which exist between them.

Today I address you as coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), a Region which encompasses the whole of the Carpathian chain.

As some of you may know, the issue of synergies between the EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention has been addressed for some time by now. In particular, a meeting has been held in Brussels in March 2014 on initiative of the Slovakian Presidency of the Carpathian Convention. Certain concrete ways of cooperating and specific commitments have been taken and are being implemented, such as the participation of the Commission to the EUSDR Annual Forum (Vienna June 2014) and in CoP 4. A specific event has been organised on the occasion of the Annual Forum, where important progress have been made on how to implement the Carpathian Convention relying on the EUSDR. It emerged that the implementation of the Carpathian Convention is fully compatible with the objectives of the EUSDR - and the two strategies are mutually supportive.

This cooperation allows for sharing of experiences and knowledge, which has an enormous importance during the current phase of programming of the available financial instruments. Embedding of the EUSDR (and CC) in the relevant programmes is key to achieving results, in particular knowing that the EU macro regional strategies do not imply the supply of further financial means.

The EUSDR has been existing for more than 3 years and we are now in the full implementation phase. In this context, I am pleased to inform you about certain important recent developments on the governance structure, aimed at improving the implementation of the Strategy. In September 1st, the 14 Countries participating in the EUSDR, in cooperation with the Commission, selected the Region of Baden Wuerttemberg as the site of the new "Danube Strategy Point" (DSP), which, initially through funds made available directly by the European Institutions and in the future through the relevant transnational cooperation programme, will facilitate the operational activities of the various actors implementing the Strategy (*in primis*, the Priority Area Coordinators - PACs). We expect that the DSP will be operation by Spring 2015.

We invite the representatives of the Carpathian Convention to follow these developments and closely cooperate with PACs and - when operational - the DSP. Furthermore, we recommend to continue making good use of the existing financial instruments (such as the Central Europe and Danube Region Programmes) in order to facilitate territorial cooperation with a view to the priorities and objectives of the EUSDR. Incidentally, let me underline that one of the tasks of the DSP will expressly relate to reporting and monitoring, in order to assess how the objectives of the Strategy are being achieved and where further fine-tuning will be required.

In conclusion, DG Regio will continue to look with interest at the CC, as an existing important structure and organisation, with a view of identifying synergies, avoiding duplications and enhancing the efficiency of transnational cooperation on those issue which cannot be addressed nationally in an equally effective manner. We look forward to further cooperation with the CZ presidency and the Secretariat of the Convention.