

Statement by the European Environment Agency

Distinguished Ministers and Delegates of the Contracting Parties,
Distinguished Observers,
Distinguished Secretary of the Carpathian Convention,

on behalf of the European Environment Agency I would like to congratulate for the successful meetings and the achievements of these days and thank you for the invitation to take part in this conference in Mikulov today.

After several years of “ad hoc” cooperation between the European Environment Agency – EEA and the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention in the elaboration of EEA publications such the state of the environment report and mountain oriented reports, eventually last summer we achieved the signing of a Partnership Agreement for a more structured and still mutual cooperation in the years to come.

While defining priority thematic areas for cooperation such as biodiversity and forests, tourism, sustainable transport, water and climate change, we would like to contribute to the improvement of an environmental observation and information system of the Carpathian Convention, through the joint production and sharing of reliable environmental data.

We believe that we all together can help manage better what it can be measured and assessed by a reliable and feasible reporting mechanism. To this regard we acknowledge it is more and more important to support policy decision making process with reliable information.

In this perspective our cooperation is meant to be a concrete one. As a first step we started supporting the creation of an inventory of natural and virgin forests of the Carpathians. Thanks to the technical support of the European Topic Centre on Spatial Information and Analysis and the guidance of the Working group on the sustainable management of forests we have recently made available an exhaustive collection of existing different data sets and indicators at European level concerning the Carpathian forests that now just waits to be further developed at regional and local level, in cooperation with the Parties, the Observers and other relevant stakeholders.

We believe it has the potential to properly help serve the objective of the Carpathian Convention to establish a solid knowledge base on the huge forest heritage of this mountain area.

We are also happy to see that the above mentioned activity sets itself right in the very moment of the adoption by the Conference of the Parties of specific criteria for the definition of natural/virgin Carpathian forests.

More in general, we believe that together with the Alps and the Pyrenees, the Carpathian Mountains too have the potential also to perform as a regional node for the information on mountain areas in Europe, in the spirit of the SEIS, the Shared Environmental Information System. That's the reason why we are also looking forward to cooperating with you in the recently launched Carpathian Convention Geoportal, moving away from a paper based reporting to a system where information is managed as close as possible to its source and made available to users in an open and transparent way.

Many thanks for your attention.

26 September 2014, Mikulov, Czech Republic