

Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention
Statement by Hungary
Deputy State Secretary for International Affairs
Katalin Tóth

Dear Chair, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and thanks to the Government of the Czech Republic for hosting the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention. I would like to also thank the dedicated work of the UNEP Secretariat, for providing continuous support to all our countries by coordinating the relevant activities of the Carpathian Convention and seeking ways for further development opportunities. I also have to acknowledge the endeavours of the Slovak Presidency for providing careful stewardship for the Convention and bringing our common case forward in the past three years, what is now taken over by the Czech Republic. At last, but not the least let me express my true appreciation towards the efforts of all national experts in all working groups and beyond, who - based on their best knowledge - have shared their insights and thoughts for the improvement of the documents to be adopted and signed today. Thanks and appreciation should also be expressed to the sponsors and all in the cooperation since the Carpathian cooperation is an excellent example of a real “multi-player” endeavour.

I believe that the existence of the common will for the achievement of a common goal - namely the conservation of mutually acknowledged values such as biological and landscape diversity and our common cultural heritage and finding sustainable paths for economic and social development - is a success in itself. However, it is far not enough to tackle our current challenges such as the prevalence of unsustainable human activities, changing climatic conditions, migration from villages and land abandonment, or rural unemployment. I strongly believe that beyond finding no regret common denominators, we have to make strong commitments to halt back the loss of biological diversity, sustainable manage forests, maintain valuable traditional farming practices, or protect the diversity of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that all contribute to the brightness and sustainability of the Carpathian region. I believe that domestic, rural, moreover eco-tourism is an unutilized resource in the area, therefore Hungary especially welcomes the adoption of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians. However, the prerequisite of mountain tourism is the existence of natural and cultural values and related services that attracts tourists' interests. Therefore we are also supporting the development, adoption and implementation of all strategies under the Carpathian Convention that are aiming at sustainably managing forests and farmlands, conserving species'

richness or endeavouring to maintain traditional culture and knowledge as well as build climate resilience.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is an undoubted interconnectedness between mountains and plains –and all kind of interventions on mountainous areas will have impacts just to mention the increased flood risk due to afforestation of the catchment area. Therefore in our endeavours we have to further seek opportunities for cooperation with other territorial programmes such as the EU Danube Strategy. Hungary is particularly looking forward to the cooperation development with the Tisza river basin. Appropriate coordination among different development actions and programmes is a must to improve overall efficiency and avoid duplication.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have great confidence that the Carpathian Convention already represents a successful platform for transboundary negotiations for sustainable development. The increased attention given to mountainous areas in the recent and ongoing global processes also offer further challenging opportunities for us. Therefore it is my immense pleasure to announce that the next Conference of the Parties in 2017 will be hosted by Hungary. We are looking forward to work for its success in cooperation with the current presidency and the Secretariat and I also truly hope that we do not have to wait three years to meet again, but will have other opportunities to discuss relevant technical questions to the Carpathians or celebrate results.

Thank you for your attention!