

COP4 Carpathian Convention
Mikulov, Czech Republic, 23-26 September 2014

Ministerial Statement for the High Level Segment

Friday, 26 September, 2014

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

I begin by expressing my appreciation to the Government and of course, the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic for hosting this important event of our Convention and for the warm welcome in the beautiful city of Mikulov. I would also like to thank the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention for all their work.

Romania is a Carpathian country. The Carpathians are a fundamental landmark of our identity, together with the Danube River. The conservation of natural patrimony and the sustainable development of the mountain area in Romania are main priorities of our environmental policy. Over 14% of the Romanian Carpathians are currently covered by national and natural parks and this percentage is even higher if other categories of natural protected areas are taken into account.

Nevertheless, the efforts to protect, maintain and sustainably manage the natural resources of the Carpathians cannot be achieved by one country alone. It requires regional cooperation. In this regard, I appreciate that the Carpathian Convention and its additional Protocols provide us an effective multi-sectorial policy coordination framework.

I would also like to mention the BioRegio Project as a successful initiative developed in the framework of the Carpathian Convention. BioREGIO Carpathians is relevant for the entire South East European and Danube - Carpathian region and it has been

appreciated by the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region. The project had outstanding results by helping Parties to implement the Carpathian Convention and its Biodiversity Protocol in a transnational and regional context.

As Romanian Environment Minister and Vice President of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), I would like to propose to you to see our world in a wide perspective. The instruments of the Carpathian Convention could be used for the implementation of the regional policies included in United Nations post - 2015 Development Agenda and Romania wants to facilitate this process.

It is important to strengthen international cooperation, *inter alia* by taking advantage of the synergies and facilitating policy coherence, active cooperation and coordination with the related conventions, agreements and regional initiatives. Still, I would like to draw to your attention the fact that duplication of activities between different strategies, initiatives or processes should be avoided.

I would like to reiterate our strong willingness to host in Romania, in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, in Brasov, the Coordination Unit of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, as well as the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention. The historical city of Brasov can successfully fulfil the requirements of a proficient environment for the activity of the Secretariat, providing all the necessary facilities and support.

Thank you!