

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

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

We, the Ministers and other Heads of Delegations responsible for environment of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine, attending the high-level segment of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (hereafter Carpathian Convention), held in Bucharest, Romania on 19 June 2008;

Recalling Resolution 62/196 of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 30 November 2007, 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 multisectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development and a forum for dialogue between all involved stakeholders”;

Recalling also the Ministerial Declaration of the Belgrade Conference held in October 2007, which welcomed “the mountain partnerships within and between the Alps, the Carpathians, the South-Eastern European mountain region, the Caucasus and the mountain regions of Central Asia”, recognized “the benefits from the existing legally binding instruments for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions like the Alpine and the Carpathian Convention”, welcomed “the initiative of South-Eastern European and Caucasian countries to develop such instruments”, and encouraged the Mountain Partnership “to promote and foster exchanges of experience and expertise with other mountain regions in the world”;

Reaffirming the commitments made in the Carpathian Declaration and the decisions adopted at the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on 13 December 2006, in Kyiv, Ukraine;

Have declared the following:

We express our satisfaction with the ratification of the Carpathian Convention by all its seven Signatories;

We welcome the progress achieved in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention;

We take note of the important role of the Carpathian Convention as a coherent framework for transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation for the implementation of activities through out the Carpathian region;

We acknowledge the role and contribution of the Carpathian Convention in the implementation of the relevant global and regional programmes;

We stress the importance of participation and further involvement of the regional and local authorities as well as other stakeholders in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention;

We highly welcome the adoption of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Carpathian Convention (hereinafter as the Biodiversity Protocol) and *call for* its ratification;

We look forward to developing the Strategic Action Plan as an implementation tool for the Biodiversity Protocol;

We appreciate the ongoing work on following protocols such as Protocol on Sustainable Forestry, Protocol on Sustainable Tourism and Protocol on Sustainable Transport and *look forward* to the finalization of these documents in order to enable more efficient implementation of the Convention and achieve its main objectives;

We welcome the development of a “Vision and Strategy for the Carpathian Area” as a strategic basis for the future sustainable development of the Carpathian region and other implementation strategies;

We welcome the successful work of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative as a partnership established in the framework of the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions;

We note with appreciation the establishment of a regional platform for sustainable agriculture and rural development in the Carpathian region resulting of the fruitful cooperation with the FAO;

We support the development of an Inventory of Carpathian Heritage as well as other practical activities in support of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the local people;

We welcome the Carpathian renewable energy partnership and programme for a regional competence network established in cooperation with UNIDO and the FAO, which should promote sustainable use and production of renewable energy while ensuring environmental sustainability;

We recognize the important support provided by the EU INTERREG III B CADSES “Carpathian Project” for the achievement of this progress in the implementation of the convention’s goals;

We underline the importance of continuing the structural support for the Carpathian region from the relevant European Union programmes, in particular the European Regional Development Fund, to support the follow-up projects prioritized in the framework of the Carpathian Convention;

We reiterate our call for the creation of a stand-alone “Carpathian Space” Programme of the European Regional Development Funds, following the successful example of the Alpine Space programme, supporting the general objectives of the Carpathian Convention, and request the interim Secretariat in cooperation with the EU Member States that are Parties to the Convention to undertake all necessary steps;

We appreciate the activities of the interim Secretariat provided by UNEP in Vienna in servicing the Carpathian Convention and leading the Carpathian Project, and we call upon the interim Secretariat to further support the Convention’s implementation by coordinating follow-up activities and projects;

We express our gratitude to the Government of Austria for its support to the Carpathian Convention, notably by continuing to host and co-finance the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention on an interim basis;

We appreciate the continued support of the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, and the efficient cooperation and partnership with UNEP, the European Academy EURAC in Bolzano, Italy, and the Regional Environmental Centre (REC);

We express our gratitude to Switzerland for its commitment to support the Carpathian Convention implementation as part of the Swiss Contribution for EU enlargement;

We express our gratitude to ALPARC and the Task Force Protected Areas of the Alpine Convention for their support to the cooperation activities of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas;

We reiterate our invitation to the European Community to accede to the Carpathian Convention;

We appreciate the signature of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions and the Convention on Biological Diversity, supporting the implementation of the CBD in the Carpathian region;

We take note with concern of the impacts of climate change on mountainous areas and emphasize the need of a coordinated approach for coping with this global challenge within the Carpathian region;

We express our satisfaction with the Carpathian Convention joining the Mountain Partnership and emphasize our readiness to experience-sharing with other mountains regions;

We reaffirm our commitment to faithfully implement the Carpathian Convention;

We express our gratitude to the Government of Romania for having hosted the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention.

Done in Bucharest, Romania, 19 June 2008