



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 12 December 2011

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NOTE

from: General Secretariat
to: Delegations

Subject: EU accession to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable
Development of the Carpathians
- Note from the Presidency

Delegations will find annexed a note from the Presidency on the above topic, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the Environment Council meeting on 19 December 2011.

**EU accession to the Framework Convention
on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians**

- Note from the Presidency -

The Carpathian Mountains, the largest, longest and most fragmented mountain chain in Europe, extend over some 200 000 km². This area presents a unique natural environment and culture, and is home to some 18 million people. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) is a basic instrument of inter-governmental collaboration between seven Carpathian countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia. This act, signed in Kiev on 22 May 2003, is the world's second convention (after the Alpine Convention) dealing with the protection and development of a specific mountain region.

The main goal of the Carpathian Convention (to pursue a comprehensive policy and cooperate for the protection and sustainable development of the region, with a view to improving the quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities, and conserving natural assets and cultural heritage) is fully in line with the EU's sustainable policy.

The last CoP in Bratislava (25-27 May 2011) invited the European Union, by Decision 3/10, to become a Party to the Carpathian Convention. Following that decision, participants in the XXIst Economic Forum (Krynica, 7-9 September 2011), in the Carpathian Memorandum, underlined the value of the Carpathians and called for further action to promote the sustainable development of the region, including the development of a common Carpathians macroregional strategy within the new EU Financial Framework 2014-2020. According to the Memorandum, the first symbolic step in that regard, acknowledging the engagement of EU policy in the region, should be the EU's accession to the Carpathian Convention.

Carpathian cooperation is an important element of regional cooperation in Central Europe. EU accession to the Carpathian Convention could create favourable conditions for further mobilisation of relevant countries and for strengthening efforts towards the sustainability of the region.