



## The Carpathian Europe Documents

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## The Carpathian Memorandum, September 8, 2011

The Carpathians are an important part of Europe's regional wealth. It is an area with great social, cultural and natural resources and, at the same time, one of the poorest and least recognized regions requiring coordinated support within the framework of European policy. The Carpathians have several important assets.

Firstly, they connect territories of strategic importance across the current borders of the EU – from the very core of Central Europe: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, through Ukraine, to the Balkans with Romania and Serbia. Secondly, they constitute a unique environmental resource, being the "green backbone" of Central and Eastern Europe. Thirdly, it is a culturally and socially important region, inhabited by nearly 20 million people. The Carpathians are also a problem area.

Its basic weaknesses include infrastructural deficiencies, both in transportation and environmental safety, lack of due care for sustainable development, social problems, including areas of high unemployment. If we do not take coordinated development actions, the economic and social problems of the Carpathian region will grow. Therefore, we believe that the efforts of the countries, the European Union and individual regional authorities should be combined to develop a common strategy for the Carpathians, which would use the strengths of this area to overcome its weaknesses.

Such a strategy, following the example of the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Danube Strategy, should first and foremost be based on synergies between existing initiatives and actions undertaken in the region and thus provide added value without creating new structures, regulations or institutions.

We would like to apply for funding for actions in the Carpathian region in a coordinated manner so that the resources, especially from the EU budget, are not dispersed but strategically directed towards joint Carpathian projects. A mechanism for financing joint activities aimed at sustainable development of the Carpathians could be created based on models provided by both the current EU macro-regional development strategies and initiatives such as the European Alpine Space program. (*Alpine Space*).

The number of existing good practices and initiatives in the Carpathian region convinces us that – with a well-developed strategy – we can achieve the desired concrete results of a new initiative in a relatively short period of time, be it in the field of academic cooperation ("the Carpathian University"), environmental cooperation, infrastructure cooperation or the interregional project "Carpathian Horizon".

Such cooperation will serve in particular to strengthen ties between the EU Member States and Ukraine, contributing to the accelerated integration of this country into European structures. A first step that could symbolically, as well as practically, demonstrate the commitment of European policy to the Carpathian region would be for the European Union to become a party to the Carpathian Convention, to which individual states are currently signatories. The Union, having obtained such a capacity by virtue of the Treaty of Lisbon, should use it in this type of initiatives.

Our common goal is to create a new European macro-regional development strategy already within the framework of the future financial framework 2014-2020. This is possible with the support of the main actors of European policy, both at the level of successive presidencies as well as the Commission and the European Parliament.

We call for such a commitment. The Carpathians are worthy of a European strategy.

## Conclusions adopted at the conference "Carpathian Europe" September 4-6, 2012

1) The Carpathians are an important region in Europe. Support for development activities in the Carpathians can give impetus to the growth of the EU

On the eve of the decisions on the financial perspective of the European Union for the period 2014-2020, it is important to emphasize the importance of cohesion policy for the implementation of one of the most important objectives of the Community – a harmonious social and economic development throughout the Union. Budget support for development activities in the Carpathian region will not only contribute to the economic development of the EU, help in the fight against unemployment and social exclusion, but should also be an important part of the search for new potential to regain growth momentum.

We cannot afford that Europe does not take full advantage of the resources found in the Carpathians. Today, this is hampered by infrastructural barriers, lack of appropriate, specifically targeted programs to support regional cooperation, and border difficulties.

Therefore, our goal should be to strive to overcome these obstacles and launch special cooperation programs at the local and regional level within the adopted financial framework for 2014-2020.

We encourage governments and self-governments of the Carpathian countries to undertake such initiatives. They could constitute a kind of "pilot projects" for the future macro-regional Carpathian Strategy of the European Union.

2. Cooperation of national parliaments in the form of the "Carpathian Parliamentary Cooperation Network" should become an important link in the Carpathian cooperation

Cooperation in the Carpathian region should not be limited only to governmental contacts and cooperation of local governments. Contacts of national parliaments should become an important element of cooperation. They can be an important platform for the exchange of experiences, joint interstate projects and coordination of policy in the Carpathians.

These needs gave rise to the initiative of establishing special 'Carpathian Parliamentary Groups' (Carpathian Circles or Carpathian Clubs, depending on the name adopted in a given country) in the parliaments of all the Carpathian countries. They would consist of parliamentarians of different parties and various specializations, united by the idea of cooperation in the Carpathians. These groups, acting together, would create a natural "Carpathian Parliamentary Cooperation Network" and thus could become a basis for substantive cooperation on specific issues in the field of infrastructure, environment, economy or culture.

3. Local entrepreneurship linked to the common good should take priority over transnational investors

The Carpathian region is a special economic region, where investment and development must coexist in a sustainable manner with rich environmental resources which are the national wealth of the Carpathian countries. Therefore, in supporting the development of tourism and related services, attention should be paid to ensuring national ownership of natural assets, especially national parks,

and supporting local communities so that they are able to face competition from transnational investors.

4. The natural environment of the Carpathians is a component of the European heritage. In order to better protect it, the European Union should become a Party to the Carpathian Convention.

Nature in the Carpathians is a unique environmental resource on a European scale. Therefore, it requires constant protection and working out such models of development of this area that would not disturb the natural harmony of man with the ecosystem. The Carpathians cannot be an open-air museum of Europe. They must develop and become richer but their natural values must not be destroyed. Therefore, it is important for the European Union, as an international organization, in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon, to accede to the Carpathian Convention guaranteeing sustainable development.

## The Krasiczyn Declaration, February 23, 2013

We, the participants of the "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Krasiczyn, share the conviction that the Carpathians are an important element of the European regional wealth. With their unique characteristics, the Carpathians are today one of the two most important mountainous regions in Europe. After the recent enlargement of the European Union, the Carpathians are also its eastern border. This significantly increases the importance of this area in ensuring sustainable development and cohesion of the Community.

Nowadays, the inhabitants of the Carpathian macro-region face numerous difficulties. Lack of transport infrastructure, visible differences in the social situation, including high structural unemployment, mean that without precise developmental measures, the situation of the inhabitants of the Carpathian region will deteriorate. Activity for the modernization and development of the Carpathian macro-region is necessary not only from the point of view of selected member states but that of the entire European Union, especially in the context of its future enlargement to the east.

We believe that it is necessary to coordinate actions for the benefit of the Carpathians in many areas. Their essence should be to strengthen interstate, regional and transboundary cooperation in economic, social and cultural dimensions, so that the macro-region presents a coherent vision of development on the forum of the European Union. Only a joint effort of societies, parliaments, governments and local authorities of the Carpathian countries will create the possibility of effective advocacy for the interests of the Carpathians in the European forum.

National parliaments can play an important role here by creating the Carpathian Network for Parliamentary Cooperation. This network should enable regular contacts between members of parliament from the Carpathian countries in all areas of interest to them. An important step leading to the creation of such a network would be the establishment of Carpathian parliamentary groups both in individual national parliaments and in the European Parliament and, in the future, the establishment of a Carpathian parliamentary assembly would be considered.

We emphasize the importance of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion as an institution that coordinates and activates activities for the development of the area. We support the proposal of creating a transnational European Territorial Cooperation Operational Program for the area of the Carpathian Euroregion in the 2014-2020 perspective called "Carpathian Horizon 2020". Such a solution would contribute to improve the coordination and increase the effectiveness of the existing financial instruments of the European Union supporting multilateral territorial cooperation. The program should include all areas that will apply to join it.

At the same time, we appeal to the European Union for more active support of the goals set out in the Carpathian Convention signed in Kiev on May 23, 2003, and we also call for accelerated efforts for the EU to formally accede to this Convention as a party. In particular, closer cooperation on water and forest management is necessary. We also consider it important to implement the tasks enshrined in the Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention.

We are pleased to note numerous examples of cross-border cooperation between partners from the Carpathian countries. We consider the initiative to start work on the publishing of the Car-

pathian Encyclopaedia to be extremely valuable. For this purpose we are establishing a working group of representatives of a number of universities interested in the issues of the Carpathians.

We are attentively following the progress of activities related to the renovation of the former Astronomical Observatory on the summit of Pop Ivan in Czarnohora and the construction of the center for academic cooperation in Mikuliczyn, in which Warsaw University and the National University of Carpathia in Ivano-Frankivsk are engaged in a joint project.

We draw attention to the common shepherding traditions belonging for centuries to the basic forms of activity of the Carpathian highlanders. An initiative worthy of promotion in this regard is the international Carpathian Redyk-Transhumance 2013, organized this year as a traditional hike with sheep from Romania, through Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Further expansion of border infrastructure will greatly facilitate the development of cooperation between the Carpathian countries – members of the European Union – and Ukraine. Therefore, we strongly support increasing the number of border crossings on the western border of Ukraine.

Moreover, reaching out for concerted demands and opinions of circles and institutions connected with the public and private media sector operating in the Carpathian area, we support the initiative to create an international platform for cooperation of the Carpathian media in order to jointly promote, develop and implement effective systems of information exchange.

We also emphasize that the overarching goal of all activities should be to work out a European macro-regional development strategy for the whole Carpathians, with the involvement of all interested countries and regions as well as European institutions. The establishment of this strategy would be of crucial importance for the territorial cohesion and for strengthening the cooperation not only between the Carpathian countries and regions but also between the European Union and its eastern partners. The macro-regional Carpathian Strategy ("Carpathia 2020" – CEEC – Cooperation, Economy, Environment, Culture) should be primarily oriented towards cooperation, including economic development, environmental protection and culture. An element of this strategy should be the inclusion of the "Via Carpathia" road into the TEN-T trans-European transport network. This route, running through the eastern areas of the EU, should become a kind of core around which the sustainable development of the entire Carpathian macro-region will be built.

## The Krynica Memorandum, September 8, 2013

The participants of the Conference "Carpathian Europe" gathered in Krynica, decided as follows:

1. Propose to the national parliaments the creation of Carpathian parliamentary groups. A further step could be to take steps towards the creation of an Interparliamentary Assembly of East-Central Europe. The Assembly should become a platform of permanent cooperation between the parliamentarians of the countries of the region. Its goal should be to work for the subjective development of East Central Europe. Due to its parliamentary character, the work of the Assembly will bring together politicians from different sides of the political divide and thus guarantee continuity of cooperation regardless of governmental changes.

2. Take steps to create intergroups in the European Parliament that would work on Carpathian cooperation.

3. Act on the forum of the European Union and governments of Carpathian countries in order to promote and implement the concept of EU macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian region. This strategy, by linking the development efforts of the EU, countries and regions, should become a strong impulse for sustainable and dynamic development of this part of Europe. We consider the development of traditional branches of the economy, agriculture, tourism, action for the benefit of national culture and the development of infrastructure linking our countries to be particularly important. These priorities should be properly integrated into operational programs for the disbursement of EU funds within the financial perspective 2014-2020.

4. Support the idea of protection of the heritage and cultural and natural environment of the Carpathians through the Carpathian Convention and especially extend the impact of this initiative to other countries in the region and international organizations.

5. Work to initiate regular meetings of intellectuals from Central and Eastern Europe to reflect on European identity and work to broaden and disseminate knowledge about our region. Related to this initiative is the idea of establishing a Carpathian University with the aim of both developing scientific research that will serve comprehensive development and popularizing it in academic and educational circles.



## The Krynica Declaration, September 3, 2014

The war in Ukraine represents the greatest security threat to Europe since the end of the Cold War.

This threat stems from the fact that, once again after the Russian-Georgian war in 2008, Russia's aggression is changing borders by force and seeks to recognize this as a permanent state.

The annexation and occupation of Crimea and the encroachment of Russian troops on the territory of eastern Ukraine are a violation of the basic principles of international law, undermine the principle of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, which are the foundations of peaceful order in relations between states.

In this situation, it is largely the reaction of individual countries, the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe, the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union that not only determines peace in Ukraine, but also whether Europe will be safe and remain a continent of the rule of law and universal values.

Passivity in the face of these facts is no choice. The policy of appeasement can still lead today to the catastrophe that Europe already went through once 75 years ago.

Therefore, the participants of the "Carpathian Europe" Conference gathered in Krynica on September 3, 2014 strongly condemn the policy of Russian aggression that destabilizes Eastern Europe and call on the states of the transatlantic community to respond consistently and adequately to this threat, including by expanding the defense capabilities of the allied states from Central and Eastern Europe.

Ukraine should be fully supported today in any form it may request, and the joint transatlantic response to Russia should be strong enough to deter its further aggression and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimea.

We especially call on the countries of our region to find a way to respond to the war in Ukraine with unity and solidarity. We express solidarity with all the victims of the occupation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine, especially the families of the fallen soldiers.

## The Przemyśl Declaration, January 29, 2017

### On the road to responsible development – the foundations of the EU Carpathian macro-regional strategy

The Carpathian region has for many years been an area of cooperation between sovereign nation-states of Central and Eastern Europe, which is implemented on several levels: presidential, governmental, parliamentary and self-governmental. We have given it an interstate and cross-border character in the form of the Carpathian Europe initiative. The Visegrad Group constitutes its institutional basis. Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic together present the interests of our region in the European Union in cooperation with other Carpathian countries, striving for its renewal in order to overcome the crisis and meet the challenges facing Europe. We advocate a return in the European Union to its fundamental values, including Christianity. This is because the principles of subsidiarity, auxiliary and solidarity were derived from them.

Understanding the uniqueness of the Carpathian region, whose potential stems from its cultural, economic and social diversity and the willingness of states and societies to cooperate, we consider it necessary for the European Union to adopt a macro-regional development strategy for the Carpathians. The Carpathian strategy should play a special role as a mechanism for cooperation and joint undertakings. In this way, it will significantly reduce the peripherality of our region, increase its security and strengthen public support for the European Union.

European unity, understood as cooperation of sovereign nation states, should be based on the model of responsible development. The aim of the Carpathian cooperation in the coming years is to build the North-South axis, which is necessary to increase economic cohesion in the region and its communication accessibility. In this context, investments of strategic importance in the economic sphere are: "Via Carpathia" together with the S19 road, the Podłęże-Piekiełko railroad line, the Odra-Dunaj canal. We also support other regional initiatives for responsible development, such as: Interreg Central Europe Transnational Cooperation Program, Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2014-2020, cooperation in youth exchange, Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, Carpathian Institute, Beskid Ski Centre. We will work towards popularizing tourism for intercultural communication and building strong ties between local communities. We believe it is necessary to expand the border crossings and create new ones. We are in favor of inscribing transboundary Austro-Hungarian fortifications, including the Przemyśl Fortress, on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In order to strengthen cooperation in the region, we support organization of conferences of Carpathian parliamentary groups and Carpathian economic forum.

We believe that the macro-regional Carpathian Strategy, based on responsible development, will bring socially expected results in economy, infrastructure, education, ecology and culture. By increasing innovation and creating space for entrepreneurship it will strengthen the competitiveness and effectiveness of economies of countries in the Carpathian region. It will also contribute to the protection of the multicultural heritage in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as natural diversity and tourism assets.