



EUROPE OF THE CARPATHIANS

KARPACZ 6-8 SEPTEMBER 2022



The future of Europe • Ecology • Digitisation • Infrastructure
Security • Tourism • Development

WYDAWNICTWO SEJMOWE

Co-Organizers and Partners:





EUROPE OF THE CARPATHIANS

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34. EUROPE OF THE CARPATHIANS CONFERENCE

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Introduction

We give the readers the materials of the 34th International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians” held in Karpacz 194 days after the start of full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine. In this situation, most of the Carpathian states became the immediate hinterland of the invaded country. This fact significantly influenced the theme of the conference and its proceedings.

We have emphasised the importance of **European unity and cooperation of Europe of the Carpathians** in the face of the multiple crises caused by the war in the “Message of the Program Council of the Clubs of the Europe of the Carpathians...” included on the pages of this publication. As of 24 February 2022, this keynote of our international conferences can be taken as literally as possible. We warned of

the danger of Putin's regime and sought military and economic strengthening of the region. Unfortunately, the attention of almost the whole globe focused on our part of Europe only when the war threatening the entire world broke out. Much of the West sees the continent's centre of gravity shifting to Central European countries, from Finland to Romania and the Balkans, on the issue of security that is most crucial today. And Europe of the Carpathian, which is part of the region, provides a "corridor of life" to struggling Ukraine, humanitarian support and care for millions of war refugees. It can be said that, under these dramatic circumstances, **our generation is building the peculiarities of the identity of Central Europe**, whose foundation has become the word **solidarity**.

The past year showed us all how **profitable investments in the Carpathian region** are, with the Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport being a particular symbol of them. Transports with supplies for the fighting Ukraine also reach the other side of the border by rail and highway. Consequently, the Russian aggression has caused the countries of the Carpathian region to cooperate even more closely. In the hour of trial, the declared friendship of the societies of the Carpathian region turned out to be as authentic as possible.

Everyone should by now understand that Ukraine's independence is in the interest of the entire eastern flank of NATO, the EU, Europe, and the world. For this, however, the country needs a smoothly executed reconstruction. According to preliminary estimates made at the end of 2022, it will cost more than USD 600 billion to repair the damage caused by Russia. Ukraine's GDP has probably shrunk by half over the past year, meaning that Ukraine will only be able to make up for its losses with a long-term foreign aid program. This is a topic that will probably be with us for many more conferences to come.

Another issue is also gaining incredible importance – **strengthening communications in the Three Seas area**: Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. For example, Via Carpatia, repeatedly discussed at the conference, is to form the core of a whole network of branches, e.g., leading to Gdańsk or Odessa. This is not the only way to connect the north with the south of Europe. The idea, which is already being finalised, also involves the creation of a high-speed Warsaw–Brno–Bratislava–Budapest railroad. At the next stage, this railroad can reach as far as Belgrade. Our role was to encourage governments in the region to work together on these initiatives.

We have been building a favourable climate for cooperation between the countries of our region for years. After 2010, the Visegrad Group was apparently strengthened,

especially in its relations with the European Union. That affected directing attention to cooperation in Central Europe, crossing the borders of the EU, Schengen or the Eurozone. Real success is also a rapprochement at other levels – institutions, NGOs, local governments, universities, and communities. Young leaders of the Carpathian region are often invited to the discussion to learn about their proposals for the future of our region. In particular, we are looking at the civilisation revolution that is taking place thanks to new technologies (GovTech is changing our world every day!).

The people of the Carpathians are culturally and linguistically diverse and have unique customs. This is the heritage of many nations and peoples. Regarding biodiversity, our mountains are the most abundant in all of Europe. The Carpathian Mountains are also a giant reservoir of drinking water – and only international cooperation can ensure sufficient supplies of this strategic resource for people. Let us also remember the food security provided by Carpathian farmers.

We have been working for years in Europe of the Carpathian for cooperation and peace. This is currently one of our most critical challenges. And we are aware that powerful states and strong armies best provide security. It is worth recalling the words spoken by Rev. Prof. Franjo Topić: “Peace is not everything, but without peace, everything is nothing.” The past year showed that cooperation in the Carpathian region was bearing fruit. And let this be a good prognosis for the future.



Marek Kuchciński



Rozália-Ibolya Biró

Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies

I highly value the pragmatism and efficiency of building the foundations for the development of the Carpathian brand for years, as well as the promotion of shared values and cultural heritage, especially today, in the context of the war in Ukraine, when the issue of Central European identity has become extremely important.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my special appreciation to the present Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm in Poland, Mr Marek Kuchciński. He initiated and expanded the concept of the Carpathian countries, supporting the creation of a favourable climate for the development of cooperation at the political and economic level between the EU Member States and their neighbours.

As President of the Women's Organisation of the European People's Party (EPP), I cannot but welcome and thank the organisers for the fact that starting this year, a special working session on equal opportunities between women and men has been on the agenda of the Conference, a topic in line with the fundamental values and principles of modern society.

While until yesterday, Europe was a continent of peace, today, more than ever, we are forced to realise the need for an open and authentic dialogue between all countries to support and promote cultural and economic interests in the region. At the same time, it is essential to preserve each region's multiculturalism and traditions and use and promote all the opportunities offered by the Carpathians.

Romania is a partner that has always encouraged and promoted an open dialogue and has always followed the principle of not overlapping activities in already existing regional cooperation formats, which is why we want and hope that this forum will seize those opportunities which, according to our national values, will provide an asset to the region.

I am convinced that the countries blessed with the wonderful gift of nature that the Carpathians represent are aware that only through close and active cooperation



Rozália-Ibolya Biró, Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies

we can continue to defend the economic, social and environmental interests of this area, transforming this mountain range into an actual visiting card for the communities we represent, thereby achieving our goal of strengthening the economic climate and increasing the social cohesion of the inhabitants and, why not, of the visitors to these beautiful lands.



Reflections on Historical Policy

1. The place of a state or nation in the international community depends on many factors – not only on its geographic location, population, military and economic strength, and cultural power but also on its role in European or world history. Therefore, the historical policy is becoming increasingly important in the life of states and nations, both internally and externally. As for the internal dimension, let me remind you that the state is not a joint-stock company or an association of economic interests but a national community grown on the heritage of the past. It is this common past, common culture, common religion for most, and common hopes for the future that integrate the society. Thus, the historical policy is the responsibility of every state power, as it is responsible for maintaining and continuously integrating the national community, stimulating its pride in the foundation of the past, and strengthening the national identity. Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, noted that only the political community enables a person to maintain and cultivate the collective memory despite the death of individual memory or the disappearance of generational memory. Thanks to state power and the institutions it has established, with the Institute of National Remembrance at the forefront, there is an ongoing process of building ties and a national feeling on the foundation of the past. The soul and strength of a nation largely depend on the effectiveness of the historical policy. Internally, it determines dignity, mobility, authority, and national aspirations. Internationally, these imponderables of the historical policy build the image of the state and strengthen its position by consolidating the knowledge about it and the belief in its strength and credibility. The internal and international dimensions of the historical policy attest to the condition and identity of the nation, which form the basis of the security and development of any state for those in power in today's increasingly turbulent world. Almost all countries have a history policy, and anyone who consciously abandons it becomes the object of the history policy of others.

2. So, in synthetic terms, how was the Polish historical policy implemented after 1989? The collapse of communism has caused it much trouble. On the one hand, the Third Republic drew on the traditions of the Second Republic by restoring, among other things, the national and church holidays or the national emblem. On the other hand, this return to independence traditions intersected with the painful legacy of the totalitarian communist state. At the time, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki chose the „thick line” option, wanting to separate the communist past from the traditions of the independent state. Using the manipulation of historical memory, he tried to convince Poles to abandon settlements, decommunisation and vetting. He probably modelled himself on the French variant used by Gen. Charles de Gaulle, who, in the face of the so-called hunt for collaborators from the period of German occupation, which threatened civil war, effectively banished the notion of collaboration from the consciousness of the French in exchange for the myth of „La France” or the vision of a strong French state and nation. But in Poland, the „thick line” manoeuvre failed and divided the nation and its effects are still being felt. He left Poland with two memories: that of independence and that of communism. At the time, the meaning of historical politics was negated, which was argued on the grounds that everyone has the right to their historical memory in a pluralistic society. The radical change did not occur until 2005 when Prof. Lech Kaczyński took office as President of the Republic of Poland. The results of that Presidency included: the appreciation of the concept of „nation,” followed by Poles fighting for independence, the creation of the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the National Day of Remembrance of the Warsaw Uprising, the National Day of Remembrance of the Condemned Polish Soldiers, or support for the Institute of National Remembrance in eliminating monuments and street names associated with the communist period from the public space. It was not without significance to restore the memory of the Jagiellonian idea, thanks to which the country’s eastern policy was dynamised. Care was also taken to protect the Nation’s authority and the inclusion of Article 132a in the Criminal Code in 2006, proclaiming: „Whoever publicly slanders the Polish Nation of participating in, organising or being responsible for Communist or Nazi crimes shall be punished with imprisonment for up to 3 years.” Unfortunately, in 2008, based on a judgment of the Constitutional Court, that article lost its legal force as allegedly unconstitutional.

The tragic death of President Lech Kaczyński was followed by a renewed retreat from the state’s historical policy. This fact is confirmed by a statement by President

Bronisław Komorowski's advisor, Prof. Tomasz Nałęcz: „The President's job is to unite, not divide. Bronisław Komorowski's approach to history is part of the strategy. It excludes the politics of history, instead making room for the politics of memory, which must be based on respect for different memories.” That statement was meant to signify that the subject of memory policy was a pluralistic society and, at the same time, that a pluralistic memory of the past had prevailed. Noteworthy is the omission of the term „nation,” which, after all, is the subject of historical policy. Let everyone answer the question: was the unveiling of the gravestone monument to Bolshevik soldiers in Ossów in 2010, on the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Warsaw, despite numerous public protests, an expression of the memory policy of the Polish nation? Perhaps of the memory politics but not of the Polish nation. Fortunately, the proper historical policy returned in 2015 following the ascent to the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland by Dr. Andrzej Duda. He not only continues Lech Kaczyński's historical policy but also completes the historical calendar of national memory. On the initiative of President Andrzej Duda, it was established: the National Day of Remembrance of Poles Saving Jews (in 2018), the National Day of the Victorious Greater Poland Uprising (in 2021) and the National Day of the Silesian Uprisings (in 2022). Grand national celebrations were held under his auspices: the 100th anniversary of the restoration of independence and the 100th anniversary of the victorious Battle of Warsaw, known as the Miracle on the Vistula, which saved Poland and Europe from Bolshevik communism. Those celebrations were accompanied by hundreds of events at home and abroad that contributed to the appreciation of patriotism, the dignity of the Polish nation, as well as the role and importance of Poland and Poles in Europe and the world. The Institute of National Remembrance has made a considerable contribution to this work of historical policy. A similar path is also being followed by the Witold Pilecki Institute for Solidarity and Valour with a branch in Berlin, established in 2017 as an agenda of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. We should also mention the reinvigoration of museums and archives, dozens of social organizations and reconstruction groups, and Internet portals that, together with state institutions, not only led to a renaissance of historical reflection but also deepened and continued to stimulate the capital of patriotism and Polishness.



Dunajec, Poland



Marzena Dominiak

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Digital Education in Poland

Are we living in a time of breakthrough? Are we setting trends that future generations will follow?

The digital world is an indispensable part of modern life. We have to deal with it almost every place and time, from communication (phones, Internet, social media), access to books (e-books, audiobooks), shopping, television, education, medicine and human health. Digitality is becoming an indispensable part of our daily lives, both positively and negatively. Among many advantages, the first and foremost is unlimited, rapid access to knowledge, the disadvantage of which, however, is that in the digital world, one can find a body of information that is not always peer-reviewed and reliable and does not always correctly shape our views and skills. Therefore, children's access to this content is of concern. Despite this, it seems expedient to introduce the youngest to the digital world, if only by providing them with games. There are various types of games for purchase, both educational and recreational. Regardless of the sort, they carry a vital cognitive and formative element for the child's skills, including manual skills. Repeated manipulations in the virtual world improve dexterity and precision in the real world. It is also known that children are very open to new technologies and learn to quickly and accurately control the movements of virtual machines or objects. Such precision, in turn, is essential in medicine, especially in surgery. The increasingly widespread robotisation of this field brings many benefits, from greater accuracy and speed to less invasiveness during procedures. It is unnecessary to make significant cuts to get to deep-lying anatomical structures. This definitely reduces the incidence and type of post-surgical complications and allows patients to recover faster and easier. Such manual dexterity, acquired during childhood games, eases the way to efficient and precise surgery; as a result, one can sooner stand up to a virtual treatment table and, at least technically, be a skilled surgeon without having to spend hundreds or



Marzena Dominiak, Vice-Rector for Development Strategy, Wrocław Medical University

thousands of hours at the operating table. Undoubtedly, excellent anatomical knowledge is still necessary, but because the image visible on the monitor screen can be magnified and thus more readable, the operator finds his way around the surgical field more easily and quickly. More minor cuts also result in less bleeding and faster recovery due to speedier wound healing. Manual dexterity is undoubtedly a significant advantage when a „big” procedure has to be performed in a small treatment field. The first example of virtual surgery was surgical laparoscopy, developed almost 25 years ago. In its case, too, the doctor focused his sight and skill on the monitor screen. This is where the surgeon actually operated and is operating on the patient. Thus, the canons of a good, „operation-tested” surgeon admitted to the treatment table are changing. Nowadays, a skilful classical surgeon often fails to make it in the digital world. In addition, learned traditional treatment methods are not always transferable to new technologies. This is happening not only in surgical medicine but also in dentistry. We are talking, for example, about the widely used digital navigation, which allows you to precisely reach a tumour or cyst and see exactly where the lesion is located in the jawbone. Patients are, therefore, not exposed to extensive, non-saving treatments. Tooth

implants are performed under visual control and in real-time. All anatomical elements are visible, which avoids complications and increases surgical success.

These two examples show the necessity of acquiring digital manual skills to navigate the real world accurately. However, it is still worth returning to the education of physicians themselves – to the basic knowledge they must acquire as early as their first year of study, namely, the queen of medical science: anatomy. Here, too, virtual tools are now being used, such as anatomical tables or VR goggles, providing a view of the human body both in parts and as a whole, allowing different cross-sections or comparisons of normal and pathological anatomy in a single image. Also, in this case, the manual skills acquired in the digital world become indispensable because it is faster, easier and without limitations to use these new tools for learning a subject seemingly so heavily based on the real world – the human body. Digital radiology should also be mentioned, i.e., X-ray imaging in the form of a three-dimensional spiral or volumetric tomography, ultrasound to magnetic resonance imaging. Only with the image on the monitor screen can any anatomopathological details be viewed quickly and easily with high-degree accuracy. This also requires the user's manual skill, spatial imagination, and unlimited use of digital tools. Similar examples can be cited, and this is just the beginning of the road to this type of change.

Hence, it is easy to conclude that acquiring digital literacy from childhood definitely enhances future career skills, and this translates into getting higher and more prominent jobs or degrees and titles.

So, the question posed at the beginning of the article if we are living in a time of digital breakthrough should be answered: yes, we are living in a time of breakthrough. There is no going back to the analogue world. Only the formation of digital skills can improve lives and develop future medicine.



Rusinowa Polana, Tatra Mountains, Poland

„Either we will learn in Central Europe to cooperate, or we will once again become passengers on a train whose direction we have no influence over,” used to say Prof. Wacław Felczak, an eminent historian and an expert on Central Europe and Polish-Hungarian relations. He led the movement of couriers during World War II between the Polish Government in Exile and Poland occupied by the Third Reich and the Soviet Union.

Established by the Law of 8 February 2018, the Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation, named after the late Minister of Foreign Affairs Wacław Felczak, finances or subsidizes the most important and valuable projects for the development of Polish-Hungarian relations. Among the events the Institute supported this year were a concert by the Hungarian Efrém Choir in Warsaw, a Polish-Hungarian friendship picnic at the Royal Łazienki Park, and workshops for students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and Budapest Metropolitan University.

The Institute runs a scholarship program and a program to teach Polish in Hungary (in 3 high schools) and Hungarian in Poland (in 17 schools). For the Institute, it is crucial not only to take care of language learning but also to spread knowledge of the shared history of both nations and to perpetuate the memory of their greatest common heroes, which is why it co-organises the already second edition of the immensely popular historical competition „Poland-Hungary – the History of Friendship.” In addition, the Institute’s editors publish every day (in three languages: Polish, Hungarian and English) on the www.kurier.plus portal current information on the politics, economy, culture or history of Poland and Hungary, as well as in-depth analyses, interviews, press reviews, articles on customs or recipes for those who would like to prepare any of the traditional dishes that reign over the Vistula or Danube.

The Institute also organises the Polish-Hungarian Summer University – School of Leaders in Krasiczyn near Przemyśl. Politicians, experts, academics, journalists and,

above all, 150 young participants from Poland and Hungary meet on the grounds of the Renaissance Castle to discuss the history and prospects for cooperation between the two nations and the entire area of Central and Eastern Europe. Numerous panel discussions, meetings with experts, and lectures on history, geopolitics, economy, culture, and civilisation issues are expected to provide future opinion leaders with a relevant portion of knowledge, while film screenings, cultural and sports events accompanying the event further promote direct contacts and strengthen Polish-Hungarian relations.

In addition, Felczak Institute staff members regularly comment on the latest developments both in the Polish media, especially on Polish Radio Program 1 in weekly broadcasts „After the Bugle – Central Europe,” devoted to such issues as Polish-Hungarian affairs and the politics and economy of the Visegrad Group countries, and internationally.

The Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation is thus an embodiment of the belief of prof. Wacław Felczak concerning the need to educate and use the talents of young people in the best possible way, the need to support their development and careers also in an institutional way, and the great importance of Polish-Hungarian sympathy and friendship, which Poles and Hungarians not only should nurture but also share this gift with other nations.

The Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation also cares about relations at the highest level. Thus, it serves as the headquarters of the „Clubs of Carpathian Europe” Association, established in 2022. Already its members include celebrated personalities from Central European countries and, as announced by Chairman Marek Kuchciński, who was honoured with the title of „Ambassador of the Felczak Institute,” „it is possible that, in the future, we will speak of this club as the Three Seas Club or even the Four Seas Club.”



Do Belarusians have a chance to return to Europe?

What is the current Belarusian society like? Is it capable of making conclusive geopolitical decisions that determine the fate of the nation? I think it is largely ready.

In 2020, the millions of Belarusians who took to the streets across the country to defend their dignity showed the world and, above all, themselves that they were a nation, not a post-Soviet society; that they were Europeans who wanted to live in democracy and freedom, choose their government, and decide their fate and that of their children. Undoubtedly, this is a crucial moment in our recent history, strengthening our spirit, but we cannot live only this event all the time. We must think about what will happen tomorrow and the day after; what we should do to win the battle for Belarus. What should the country be like after Lukashenko, what standards should we strive for, and what model of state will we choose?

We must fight for independence in these difficult times. The Russian empire is in agony. The Kremlin feels it is losing Ukraine; it is taking revenge with bloody aggression for its refusal to return to the „Russian world.” We Belarusians are proud of the Ukrainians; we admire their incredible fortitude. And if we compare ourselves with them, we will realise that we lack our state identity, the revival of the mother tongue, national culture, and historical identity. We should follow the example of Ukraine. Today, it is not only the reform of the army and the assistance of the consolidated West that significantly affect the course of the war against the cruel Kremlin aggressor but, above all, the deep sense of national dignity and love for one's land. They have formed so widely in Ukraine in recent years – literally before our eyes – thanks to the young country's effective cultural and historical policies.

Belarusians must educate and structure the new civil society that was born during the 2020 protests; prepare it to defend the right to live on its land, according to its principles and traditions, according to its own will. Otherwise, we may lack the



Aleksander Milinkiewicz, Chancellor of Free Belarusian University

strength of the Belarusian spirit when the dictatorship is gone. Sociology shows that most Belarusians are against the war in Ukraine. Fortunately, the imperial sentiment is not popular with us. But, at the same time, many disillusioned with Lukashenko have begun to sympathize with Putin, which is linked to total Kremlin propaganda and paternalistic post-Soviet upbringing.

We need to convince Belarusians that we are an independent nation and that we come from Europe. Many feel that but still rather intuitively, at the level of a clear mental difference between the Russians and us. Creating a research network of actual, not Kremlin, local history is necessary. All Belarusians lacking a sense of identity these days due to their profound denationalization under the Russian and Soviet empires need that. It will enable them to familiarise themselves with the fate of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers and revisit their traditions.

Belarusian democrats need new emphases in their international policy. Moving away from exclusively hostile rhetoric related to terror in Belarus is vital. We need to convince Western partners that our country is now the most promising for democratic, economic, and social reforms and that we can and must become security donors in

Eastern Europe. We need a joint Belarusian project, as consolidated as possible, in which the democratic world deems it essential to invest. It is necessary to constantly remind that Belarusians have a European history, culture, tradition, and mentality, are of European descent and want to return to their family. We are a very hard-working and law-abiding nation; we have a high level of education, primarily technical and engineering education, the best high-speed Internet infrastructure and automobile roads, and an ancient agricultural tradition. In Belarus, since perestroika, civil society has been well developed both in the centre and the regions. We have many specialists educated in the West who know how to carry out reforms and who are already working on Belarus' transformation programs, including in Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's office. That is what we need to convey to the West today, as well as to the Belarusian people, to strengthen their confidence in themselves and the possibility of positive change.

It would be a mistake to limit our rhetoric solely to demanding further sanctions from the West. Undoubtedly, sanctions are necessary and are one of the few tools available to the civilized world to combat an inhumane regime. But ordinary people also suffer from them. It should not be assumed that sanctions will bring us democracy and freedom. They are essential as a moral assessment of human rights violations under dictatorship. However, it must be remembered that economic sanctions lead to an increase in anti-Western sentiment in society and, as a result, often also an increase not in the desire for democratic reform but, rather, in the expectation of a „firm hand.”

Today, we must act consistently so that, after the fall of the dictatorship, the first elections will be won by pro-European, pro-Belarus democrats, not populists with pro-Kremlin imperialists.

Belarusian civil society – investment in good neighbourliness

Belarus is bound to Poland – as one of its neighbouring countries – by solid historical ties. In the second half of the 19th century, when attempts were made to build a national identity for Belarus in the eastern borderlands of the former Republic, our paths began to diverge. A brief period of statehood in 1918, followed by many decades of Sovietisation and degeneration, meant that Poland and Belarus had tried anew to seek common interests and build shared values since the early 1990s. The agreement with Belarus has the advantage for Poland that it is the only country across its eastern border with no fundamental historical disputes.

The independence of Belarus is one of the guarantors of the Republic's security. It is in Poland's long-term interest to foster pro-Western and pro-Polish sentiment in our country and to educate an elite that will strive to open Belarus to Europe.

Today, the Polish policy must be addressed to the civil society in exile and at home, for they will determine future changes in the country.

After Moscow's aggression, even in the worst-case scenario, Ukraine will remain independent not only because of the strength of its nationalism. Belarus, because of its unreformed economy and less sense of separateness, is more susceptible to Russia's reconquest program than Ukraine, so the struggle to prevent Russia from absorbing Belarus should be a priority of the Polish foreign policy.

Poland's actions today must go primarily in two directions: supporting independent media – especially Belsat TV, Radio Racja, and the most popular independent Internet portals – and educating a broad future democratic elite.

Investments in people and their value systems are spread over the years and require patience and consistent multi-year government programs. These investments, however, provide the most significant added value – they build a climate of security, understanding, and willingness to cooperate.

Poland has supported educational projects aimed at Belarus and Belarusians for many years. One of them is the Polish government's Konstantin Kalinowski Programme for Belarusian students expelled for political reasons. In addition, the Free Belarusian University has been operating for two years to create a cross-border inclusive European e-learning platform for Belarusians. It is a way of training cadres for the future management of the democratic Belarusian state based on the potential of Polish universities, taking into account the experience of reforms in Poland and using modern teaching technologies.

Other smaller programs consider students' and academic institutions' needs and capabilities. Strategic investments in Poland's security are, first and foremost educational programs, especially those dedicated to educating a new pro-European elite sympathetic to Poland, that is, covering these areas:

- education of Belarusian personnel of state administration, local government, and economic managers;
- joint research and development projects – to accumulate the achievements of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe;



Passenger train in the High Tatra Mountains, Slovakia

- humanities and social sciences – to build understanding and create tools to solve social and political problems in both countries;
- historical dialogue – through joint projects to demystify history and counter false memory codes, which is an integral part of the process of educating and intellectually shaping young people in Poland.



Roadside shrine in Bieszczady Mountains, Łupków Pass, Poland



Each edition of the „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference is an important event and an excellent opportunity to meet and, above all, exchange knowledge and experience from many fields – this year, also from the field of education.

We are proud to have had a technological component for more than a year – Digital Carpathian Europe. It aims to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the Carpathian region, build regional awareness among locals and tourists, and draw attention to Europe of the Carpathians. As part of the initiative, we have already managed to organize two editions of comic story contests and create a virtual model of the Carpathian Mountains (it is available on the website: gov.pl/cyfrowaeuropakarpat).

From our perspective, particularly important are issues of approach to education. As part of our work, we are implementing the largest project in Poland’s history – an investment in modern technology in schools across the country. We want to support all schools in Poland in building future competencies among students in the so-called STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). Within the framework of the Laboratories of the Future, school authorities have received more than PLN one billion in financial support from the state, thanks to which millions of Polish students can learn through experimentation and gain practical skills. The support is provided entirely upfront – no contribution is required.

Since September 2022, elementary schools have been visited by teams of mobile Future Laboratories to support the process of using modern solutions in each voivodship. Every day, 16 buses with experts and laboratory equipment travel miles to share knowledge with students.

The project is the first step toward changes in the approach to education and aforementioned competencies of the future that we want to focus on. That’s why it’s so



Justyna Orłowska, Plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister for GovTech

important to teach creative problem solving, the use of technology but, most importantly, cooperation – teamwork.

This year's debate allowed us to look at the issue from a slightly different perspective. The modern approach to education is already a necessity which we should now properly implement at every level of education.

Thanks to the participation of Professor Marzena Dominiak and Professor Andrzej Zybertowicz in the debate, we learned a broader perspective of the approach to the teaching methodology. We were able to exchange insights and our own experiences.

I am convinced that the next 'Carpathian Europe' will allow us to summarise the activities carried out and, once again, share the experiences and progress made.



Europe of the Carpathians – We Build the Common Security of the Region through Cooperation



The recent months in the history of our Region, but also of Europe and the world, make us reconsider how to provide a sense of security to the state and citizens effectively. The Russian Federation's unauthorised onslaught on Ukraine has shown that the previous political order has been shattered. The entire world order has been undermined, and not all institutions can effectively fulfil their mandate in this situation. However, the support the countries of our region are giving to Ukraine shows that regional alliances and initiatives of this nature are gaining importance.

The countries involved in the Europe of the Carpathians project are the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary. They all build their security guarantees on a foundation of different institutions and structures operating in various formats. They all belong to the United Nations, which, until recently, has been unquestionably the most important guarantor of security and respect for world order. The war in Ukraine has significantly shaken that feeling. All these countries, except Serbia and Ukraine, base their military security on NATO membership. It is worth emphasising that this is a defensive, not an offensive, alliance. Importantly, individual countries are directing their contingents to serve on NATO's so-called Eastern and Southern Flanks. For example, soldiers from Romania are stationed in Poland, while Poland directs its subdivisions to Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, among others. Initiatives under the so-called Bucharest Nine are thriving. The smaller sub-regional structure, i.e., the Visegrad Group (V4), is also experiencing its renaissance. All the cited examples show how geopolitics is changing in the 21st century and how vital regional and local cooperation is alongside global structures.

Cooperation within the framework of regional agreements can take place at different levels, take different forms, and have different frequencies. One of the reasons for building formats, such as Europe of the Carpathians, is to strengthen the sense of



Malá Fatra, Slovakia

military security. Indeed, the security of citizens and states is a priority in all sovereign and democratic states and governments' activities.

In Poland, in order to build this feeling, among other things, a decision was made to rapidly and by leaps and bounds increase the size of the Polish Armed Forces and affect its technical modernisation. In this process, the Polish Armaments Group occupies an important – not to say crucial – place. It is a capital group with the most significant potential in armaments domestically and regionally. We are the dominant player in the arms industry in our part of Europe. From this point of view, individual plants' production potential and capacity are critical. This took on added significance after 24 February when the illegitimate armed aggression occurred, committed by the Russian Federation against independent Ukraine.

Since the first moments of this war, Poland has provided real support to Ukraine, including taking in several million refugees and donating significant amounts of military equipment and armaments. Besides, helping the Ukrainian population, which has decided to leave its own country, is something that unites the nations of Europe

of the Carpathians. The Ukrainian diaspora has grown not only in Poland but also in Romania and Hungary, among others.

Military support, however, seems to be the most important. Here Poland is the undisputed leader in Central Europe. The transferred equipment and armaments are mostly products of the Polish Armaments Group or serviced and overhauled by its plants, primarily Pioruns, Krabs, Grots, tanks, ammunition, and personal equipment. In practice, however, this support is much broader and varied. It should also be noted that the conflict in Ukraine has not only increased the amount of equipment produced for the Polish Armed Forces, but also increased interest in those products among other armies and governments. This has been confirmed, for example, by a contract to supply Piorun manpads to Estonia and Norway, or by Slovakia's interest in Poland's new infantry fighting vehicle. It is also a major contract signed with Ukraine for selling Krab cannon howitzers that are proving successful on the front lines. Equipment is also coming to Ukraine from other Carpathian European countries, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, it is clear that cooperation in a regional format can play as important a role as global structures such as the UN or NATO. Cooperation in this format can cover many levels, among which the arms market holds a prominent place. This can range from selling specific national products – as in the case of Krabs, Grots or Pioruns – to participating in joint research and development or scientific projects. These projects can be forward-looking and long-term. They can provide support for the development of national arms industries and an essential glue for the whole concept of regional cooperation. That's why it is worth supporting initiatives such as Europe of the Carpathians because they carry great integration and development potential – both for their individual signatories and for the Region as a whole.



Pieniny, Poland



Central European Identity. Attributes and symbols

Marek Pęk, Deputy Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland moderated the panel. He announced that the discussion would revolve around what distinguished Central Europe. As he assessed, the key concepts for the region were „nation” and „sovereignty.”

Jan Draus, a historian and professor at the University of Rzeszów, recalled that Central Europe was made up of three kingdoms in the past: the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. Over the centuries, they have been linked not only by their Christian roots, but also by personal unions. Later, however, those kingdoms fell into slavery. The professor pointed to the historical commonality of fates as a distinguishing feature of Central Europe's identity. He added that, in discussing the attributes of the region, the first captivity and the first struggle for independence could not be overlooked:

The collective memory of the past, this longing for national statehood, hardened souls and stimulated national consciousness. Furthermore, this yearning for national statehood produced the paradigm of the cultural nation during the Romantic period, which shaped spirituality and dynamized identity.

The nations of Central Europe can also boast the institution of bards, national poets, whose work stimulated the vitality of nations and supported their free acts. Jan Draus noted that, after World War I, Central Europe was not politically stable.

After World War I, when most Central European nations regained statehood, the region did not become a politically stable organism despite its unifying independence traditions. Almost every state functioned within unstable borders with its own borderlands lost and opposing alliances.



Participants of the panel *Central European Identity. Attributes and symbols*, Karpacz, 6 September 2022

Desires for freedom were also alive after World War II:

After World War II, when Central Europe came under Soviet domination, liberty desires were once again revived. Although necessary and crucial, independent national revolutions, revolts, strikes or other uprisings of freedom built an independence ethos but, in the face of force, ended in casualties, repression, and emigration.

After the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, the symbol message for this part of Europe was the nations' common struggle for freedom, which took on special meaning when Solidarity was established in Poland. Jan Draus clearly emphasised that

Central Europe, built on a historical commonality of destinies and independence traditions, with the preservation of its own identity and statehood, and benevolent, albeit firm, relations with the West, can be a subject, not an object, of Europe.

Markiyan Malskyy, former ambassador of Ukraine to Poland, representing Lviv University, spoke about Ukraine's mission in Central Europe. He stressed that,

among Ukrainian politicians, there was no single consensus definition of Central European identity:

Some Ukrainian diplomats and politicians see Central European identity as a practical mechanism in Ukraine's foreign policy. This allows Ukraine to show that it is a European state, a state that culturally, economically, religiously, and spiritually belongs to the European family and is part of Central Europe. (...) Some experts say that Central Europe is a theoretical entity, that is, it is a certain image that has nothing to do with reality.

The speaker added that Ukraine had historically been part of Central Europe for a long time. Currently, the region is significant for Ukrainians because of important projects:

Today we look at Central Europe as a region where critical geopolitical and economic projects occur. We understand perfectly well that Ukraine's participation in such projects is the very military, political, and economic foundation we are building today to win the terrible war with Russia.

Markiyan Malsky described the „Europe of the Carpathians” conference as a significant political and economic project:

„Europe of the Carpathians” is a tool that allows Ukraine to come closer to the family of European nations – morally or economically, as well as in a completely natural way.

The speaker described Ukraine as a pillar of Europe's secure development:

From the point of view of Central European identity, it is clear that Ukraine is one of the foundations for the safe development of the whole of Europe.

Klára Mándli, an analyst at the National Assembly of Hungary, pointed out that Central Europe was an area lying within the former Habsburg monarchy. She added that this part of Europe was characterised by deep faith:

Poland and Hungary were the first countries to embrace Christianity. This is a vital thing. When Orthodox Christianity begins, Eastern Europe has already started. This shows that the role of the Church can also be kind of border between Eastern and Central Europe.

Another attribute of the Central European countries highlighted by Klára Mándli is their shared history:

We survived the tragedy of World War I and World War II, and fought together against communism. These are things that people living in Western Europe have never experienced.

The speaker also added similar surface of terrain and common architectural features throughout the region to the attributes of Central Europe.

Franjo Topić, Chairman of HKD Napredak, in his speech, deepened the theme of the religious foundations of Central Europe and stressed that the ongoing war in Ukraine was not religiously motivated:

Both countries are Orthodox and even share the same Slavic roots, a common religion and common traditions (...). This is no religious war.

The speaker cited two reasons for war: human fear and attachment to temporality. Moreover, he made it clear that Russia's quest for power, for dominance in territory size, could affect the identity of Central and Eastern Europe. Franjo Topić also mentioned the person of Patriarch Kirill who was critical of ecumenical dialogue.

Marian Šuplata, representing Comenius University in Bratislava, expressed the opinion that the figure of Pope John Paul II and the father of Europe, Robert Schuman, could become an inspiration for the Central European region, which is moving towards playing a leadership role in Europe:

Both had a perspective of the Christian heritage that must be preserved in a united, integrated Europe in different ways. Robert Schuman said that either democracy would be Christian or there would be no democracy because it would turn into anarchy

or tyranny. On the other hand, John Paul II stated that Europe would be Christian or not at all. This is a very strong message from these two great men.

The speaker also pointed out that Central Europe was based on two critical concepts – solidarity and justice in constructing its position in Europe. In doing so, he noted that those concepts were not clearly understood in both the West and Eastern Europe.

Those concepts were misunderstood, or not understood the way they should be, in Western and Eastern Europe. So we should formulate a clear definition to create a kind of intellectual whole that could then be discussed. It is necessary, first of all, to be clear about what we are thinking and talking about, so perhaps we need to start with the definition of a person.

Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the Seimas delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Foreign Affairs Committee member, praised Poland for helping the struggling Ukraine. At the same time, he stressed that Lithuania and Poland had to be prepared for the possibility of an attack from Russia. He then pointed to the legacy of the Union of Lublin, which should be a foundation not only for the countries belonging to it in the past, but also for the entire European community:

Lithuania, for 32 years of independence, has already done everything to make the legacy of the Union of Lublin accepted as our legacy, not only the legacy of both nations, the European legacy.

Krzysztof Szczerski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations, said in the context of the war in Ukraine:

It will be fundamental to the future, the identity of our part of Europe. I think we are in for what I hope will be a great geopolitical reorganisation in this sense, because this war shows the importance of Central Europe to world politics. (...) This war shows that the future of world peace and order, in general, is valued on the territory of our part of the world, on the territory of the struggling Ukraine.

At the same time, the Ambassador stressed that the war in Ukraine should result in a geopolitical reorganisation, conditioned by the entry of Central Europe as a subject into the great international institutions of global politics. The speaker noted, however, that the aforementioned geopolitical reorganisation depended on two elements:

First, the field of Central Europe must be expanded. It couldn't limit herself solely to a discussion whose horizon was Brussels. Central Europe had to discuss and have a policy whose horizons reached out to other continents, other parts of the world. Secondly, for the objectivity of Central Europe to increase, that reorganisation to occur, some structural reform of the world order was necessary.

Marek Kuchciński, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, noted that love of freedom was the main foundation of Central European culture. He added that cooperation was a prerequisite for maintaining independence. The Chairman invited all the assembled guests to attend a meeting of the Program Council of the Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians, during which proposals for messages to opinion makers in Central Europe and the world would be discussed.



Central European Identity. Attributes and symbols

1. The panel's thesis has both historical and contemporary context. In reflecting on the history of Central Europe, it cannot be overlooked that three kingdoms formed this part of Europe at one time: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland (from the Union of Lublin – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), which included many nations: from Lithuanians through Ruthenians to Croats. Each of these kingdoms had its golden age and experienced regional and even European power. What united them was not only their Christian roots but also their personal unions. And yet they fell – first the Kingdom of Hungary, Bohemia, and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the end. There were many reasons for their demise, but one lay in the policies of the Western powers of the time (which included Russia) and another in Turkey's expansionist policies. Nor should the political ambitions of numerous nations be forgotten. Unfortunately, they all came to live – for a long time, counted in centuries – in slavery. Then after World War I, not all nations gained their own statehood, and those that succeeded became small or truncated states, unable to cooperate and, therefore, politically divided, facing numerous adversities and threats to independence. Not all those countries made it to the outbreak of World War II. Then after it ended, post-Yalta Central Europe experienced enslavement for a second time, this time from the Soviets. Some pre-war countries disappeared from the map of Europe as they became Soviet republics. From this historical retrospection, a conclusion emerges for Central Europe: a historical community of destinies.

2. At last year's Europe of the Carpathians (2021) Conference, I put forward the thesis that the nations of Central Europe „were much divided under conditions of sovereignty but much united under conditions of struggle for sovereignty.” At the time, I cited facts relating to their liberation from the shackles of communism. Nowadays,



Jan Draus, historian, University of Rzeszow

however, when the question is asked about the attributes of Central Europe's identity, the time of the first captivity and the struggle for independence cannot be overlooked. Would it be possible for nations to strive for their own statehood without a collective memory of the past, formed on the experience of state life? This collective memory of the past, the yearning for national statehood, hardened souls and stimulated national consciousness. That yearning for national statehood, in turn, produced the paradigm of the „cultural nation” during the Romantic period, which shaped their spirituality and dynamised identity. Only the Central European nations can boast the institution of a national bard/poet. The works of Adam Mickiewicz, Sándor Petőfi, Karel Hynek Mácha, Taras Shevchenko, Ľudovít Štúr or Maironis (i.e., Jonas Mačiulis, a Lithuanian clergyman) not only stimulated the vitality of the nations but also supported their liberation act. What an essential attribute the national songs/hymns created and popularised at the time became for: Poles (*Our Poland has not yet perished*, 1797), Czechs (*Where Is My Home*, 1834), Hungarians (*God Save the Hungarians*, 1823), Slovaks (*Above the Tatra Mountains It Flashes*, 1844), Croats (*Our Homeland So Beautiful*, 1835), Slovenes (*Long Live All Nations*, 1844), Estonians (*My native land, my happiness and joy*, 1869),

Latvians (*God Bless Latvia*, 1873), Lithuanians (*Lithuania, Our Homeland*, 1898), Ukrainians (*Neither Glory nor Freedom of Ukraine Has Died Yet*, 1863), Belarusians (*And Who Goes There* from the beginning of the 20th century by Yanka Kupala). And after World War I, when most nations regained statehood, Central Europe did not become a politically stable organism in spite of its unifying traditions of independence. Almost all states operated within unstable borders, with lost borderlands, and in the face of opposing alliances. To illustrate the reality of the time, it is worth quoting the words of Milan Kundera, who wrote this in an essay titled *The veil*, on the nations of Central Europe: „Unity was not their intention. They were close to each other not out of choice, not out of affection, not because of linguistic commonality, but because of similar experiences and shared historical situations that united them in different periods, in different configurations, and in shifting, never ultimate boundaries.”

After World War II, when Central Europe came under Soviet domination, desires for freedom were once again revived. Albeit necessary, essential and built the independence ethos, independent national revolutions, revolts, strikes or other uprisings of freedom ended in casualties, repression, and emigration. But in 1968, after the suppression of the Prague Spring by Warsaw Pact troops, when the acts of self-immolation of Ryszard Siwiec in Warsaw (holding a Polish flag with the inscription „For our freedom and yours”), Jan Palach in Prague and Sándor Bauer in Budapest took place in solidarity protest, Central Europe received a very important symbolic message concerning the struggle for freedom shared by the nations of Central Europe. This symbol took on special significance when „Solidarity” was established in Poland, which, at its First Congress in 1981 in Gdansk, passed the „Message to the Working People of Eastern Europe.” The democratic opposition organisations that formed the Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity and the Polish-Hungarian Solidarity also followed this path. The path of peoples’ solidarity against communism thus proved to be correct and effective. And now, after 30 years of free Central Europe, when storm clouds are once again gathering over it, I ask: is it capable, as created by sovereign states, of acting in unity and solidarity or does this principle only work after the loss of sovereignty – as history teaches us.

3. Regarding the now-free nations of Central Europe, Milan Kundera wrote in *Betrayed Wills*: „they have always been met with obdurate ignorance on the part of the great ones and their existence is perpetually threatened and cast into doubt, for their existence is in doubt.” In the face of today’s European political reality revealed by the war in

Ukraine, don't these ominous words of Kundera appeal to the imagination as we learn about the process of building Russian and German spheres of influence? Doesn't the European Union policy that pursues German, French, and, indirectly, Russian interests threaten Eastern Europe? Following the accession of most Central European countries to the European Union, haven't European policymakers replaced the equality of states with the motto of *divide et impera*? Perhaps the concept of a European federation is to facilitate the realisation of Kundera's words? Central Europe, only as an integrated structure, built on the historical community of destinies and independence traditions, with the preservation of your own identity and statehood, and in friendly, albeit firm, relations with the West, can you be a subject, not an object, of Europe. We must think of an integrated Central European structure, and we must avoid making the mistakes of Brussels, which has left Russia's door open to non-integrated Central and Eastern European countries. Thus, this structure should include not only European Union Member States but also candidate countries, namely Ukraine, Moldova, and aspiring Georgia. I also submit for consideration the representative of the Belarusian people in exile. In the detailed solutions, all Central European countries can find their place, and this proposal harkens back to the 2016–2019 EUROWAW Summits of the Presidents of Central and Eastern European Parliaments, which not only reminded the Brussels authorities of unfinished integration but also symbolised the extent of Europe's eastern lung. The consequences of the West's failure to understand Central Europe and the former's hidden political procrastination are being experienced today in the form of war, an energy crisis, inflation, and millions of refugees. As a historical analogy, it can be said that the moment has come to replace the so-called legitimacy of the Holy Alliance (i.e., the 1815 alliance of Prussia, Russia, Austria, and, since 1818, France) with the principle of equality and solidarity of states and nations. An integrated Central Europe can only achieve this.



Markiyan Malskyy

former ambassador of Ukraine to Poland, Lviv University

Central European discourse in political thought and practical diplomacy of Ukraine

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has given rise to rapid and unpredictable geopolitical changes at the global and regional levels, and expectations for a new world order. The framework of the future world order is already taking shape, and the war in Ukraine confirms the broad process of its reconstruction. This new order emerging before our eyes requires countries to redefine their policy priorities and effectively confront new challenges.

Among the newly emerging diplomatic mechanisms and theories of forming a new global and European balance of power, the concept of Central Europe is becoming dominant – both in political and social thought and in the practical activities of Ukrainian diplomacy.

The primary purpose of such a conceptual approach is, on the one hand, to convince the peoples of Europe that Ukraine and Ukrainians belong to the European civilisation and, on the other hand, to follow the example of the successful integration of the countries of the post-socialist camp into the European Union, implemented by the Central European discourse, resulting in their membership in European structures and the EU.

From a strategic point of view, the Central European discourse has proven to be an effective tool – it has detached the region from Russia's sphere of influence and given it a status in foreign and security policy that is unique today. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a particular procedure for the gradual integration of Ukraine into Central Europe, into the structures of multilateral cooperation, and to use instruments for building a Central European identity. Discussions about Ukraine's identity should emphasise the Ukrainian people's belonging to Central Europe and oppose historical, civilisational, and political narratives linking the Central European region to the Soviet Union or modern Russia.



Markiyan Malsky, former ambassador of Ukraine to Poland

The geopolitical context, completely changed as a result of the Russian aggression, confronts Ukraine with the need to formulate new initiatives and new directions in foreign and defence policy, which will benefit from the diplomatic, political, security, and infrastructural projects of Central European countries (Eastern Partnership projects, the Three Seas Initiative, Europe of the Carpathians, the Visegrad Group, the Lublin Triangle, the Poland-Turkey-Romania Trialogue, the Ukrainian-Turkish Quadriga, the UK-Poland-Ukraine Defence Alliance).

The new configuration of cooperation between the Central European countries and intensive diplomatic efforts in the international arena aimed at strengthening Polish-Ukrainian relations in the face of Russian aggression provides an opportunity to create a qualitatively new Polish-Ukrainian alliance, a new political force in Europe, which would reduce the influence of Russia, Germany, and France, and consolidate and stabilise Central Europe politically, economically and socially. The basis of such an alliance is shared by Poland and Ukraine:

- roots – ethnic, historical, cultural, spiritual, and religious similarities;

- awareness of the real consequences of the war and the priority of victory over Russia in the hierarchy of tasks;
- the same or similar assessment of the state's role in developing the country's economy and the assessment of the possibility and fairness of the free market as reasonably regulating the welfare of the people;
- assessment of the effectiveness and capacity of international organisations and institutions (including the UN, OSCE and others) to respond quickly and effectively to extreme global and regional challenges;
- approach to intra-EU disagreements between EU member states, distrust of Brussels policies, and scepticism about the ability of Germany and France to act boldly against the Russian aggressor;
- the realisation that, since 24 February, Ukraine and Poland have done more in the way of mutual rapprochement and understanding than in the last 30 years.

We know that difficult and painful questions about historical politics, collective memory, and tragic events of the past are not disappearing from the agenda of our relations; however, a new trend is gaining strength and power before our eyes – the creation of a history of joint struggle and military brotherhood.

Such congruence between the two countries in assessing the situation and their role in Central Europe, the convergence of geopolitical challenges and interests, provides a basis for forecasting the possibility of creating a new phenomenon in Central European territories – a tandem of regional leaders (Poland and Ukraine) that define and form political processes in the region.

The EU's centre of gravity would shift significantly to the east. At present, the geo-strategic position of the entire continent depends on the attitude of the countries in our part of Europe, especially the leadership tandem.



Bukovel, Ukraine



First, let me thank you for the invitation to speak at this very interesting event. I am convinced that talking about Central European identity, its symbols, and its exceptional personalities is particularly important today. I would like to thank and pay tribute to Professor Jan Draus and the speakers who had already named some influential personalities that were shaping essential milestones in the history of our countries.

I agree with other previous speakers that the European Union is not – for various reasons – the United States of Europe despite many past and present efforts to change it. According to Milan Kundera, a Czech writer living in Paris, Europe is the “*maximum diversity on minimum space*”. Within Europe, every circa 200 km, there is a different culture, a different language or dialect, and different habits. Central and Eastern Europe, represented by our countries, is an excellent example to confirm this statement, with the rich and unique contributions of their history, in some cases underlined by their great glory and uniqueness formed on the tradition of kingdoms. Allow me to be precise about what was said about the Hungarian Kingdom by the previous speaker: I would like to remind us of the fact that even before Saint Stephen (*István*) formed the Hungarian Kingdom in the 10th century, the actual territory of Slovakia and Moravia had the good fortune to belong to the Duchy of Great Moravia from 833. Thirty years later, in 863, the Grand Moravia, following the request by Grand Moravia’s Emperor Rastislav addressed to Caesar Michael III from Byzantium, was honoured to host the mission by the Thessaloniki brothers – Saints Cyril and Methodius, who belong to the group of the most remarkable personalities that have ever lived on our territory. Their presence and mission have been significantly impacting our community’s religious, cultural, and social life, today enriching common united Europe. Ignoring the fact that both messengers came from Byzantium, at that time culturally representing the very centre of the cultural world, in 867, Pope Hadrian II acknowledged Slavic as the fourth

liturgic language in addition to three liturgical languages – Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. All other nations of the world, including the largest or politically influential ones, had to wait for additional thousand years until the Second Vatican Council, to be able to celebrate the holy liturgy in their own language (it was then that the celebration of the holy liturgy was allowed in all languages of the world). In 880, Pope John VIII, in his letter *Industriae tuae*, addressed to the Grand Moravia's emperor Svätopluk, declared Grand Moravia to be a base estate of the Holy See, which among others, meant the promotion of the Empire on the level of the Kingdom of the Eastern Franc (and other significant Empires of the 9th century).

As far as examples of exceptional – different but at the same time complementary – personalities of recent 20th-century history, representing values common to European countries (both past and present) are concerned, I would single out two great men: the first, coming from the west, and the second, coming from the central-eastern part of our continent. First is Robert Schuman – the founding father of the European project, and the second is Karol Wojtyła. Despite being born in various decades, and coming from opposite parts of the then iron curtain, they both were united by a strong and timeless vision of the necessity to construct Europe on the solid pillar of Christian values. Robert Schuman, inspired by Saint Thomas Aquinas, Maritain's concept of integral humanism, and Bergson's view on democracy underlined the Christian nature of democracy, declaring that "*democracy will be Christian or there will not be a democracy. Antichristian Democracy will be just a caricature that will turn to tyranny or anarchy*". Complementary, Karol Wojtyła – as Pope John Paul II – almost half a century later declares: "*Europe will be Christian or there will not be Europe*". These two exceptional personalities represent an ideal, complementary picture of persons fitting into the vision Pope John Paul II defines as the necessity that Europe should "*breathe with two lungs*" – with the Western lung and with the Eastern lung: a concept inspiringly elaborated by Dr Pavol Mačala. Following this idea and returning to the Saints Cyril and Methodius, in 1985, John Paul II published the encyclical letter *Slavorum Apostoli*, remembering and honouring the unique mission of the holy brothers in Grand Moravia and their unprecedented contribution to the idea of the two lungs of Europe. Undoubtedly, Robert Schuman, as a central figure in the post-war Franco-German reconciliation and founding father of the European project, together with Saint John Paul II the Great – two men of strong visions, clear and deep convictions – would today reckon fully with the message and values brought to our region by the mission of the Thessaloniki brothers, Saints Cyril



Marian Šuplata, Comenius University in Bratislava

and Methodius. These values are among the fundamental pillars on which the European nations are based, and in the enlarged Europe, our countries wished, as free and sovereign states, to be an enriching and complementary part of them; they wanted to join common Europe based on the values of these two exceptional men: to be a part of a joint, strong Europe that knows where its roots come from and where it should go. Renewing, understanding and nurturing this moral imperative is my wish for the actual decision-makers in European institutions, as well as for national governments and peoples of the European Union member states.



Saints Philip and James Church in Sękowa, Poland



The War and Religion

I would say that, for me, the topic of the relationship between a war and a religion came about on its own because of at least two main reasons:

1. Because in ex-Yugoslavia, we recently had a cruel war (and every war is cruel by definition), and we often had to answer the question if the war in ex-Yu was a religious war? (and there is extensive literature on that topic).
2. The second reason is that we are in Poland, which borders Ukraine, where the war has been raging for over half a year. Since war is a big disaster with numerous consequences, these consequences are feeling in Poland as well.

Only interests are eternal

What immediately questions the idea that different religions are to be blamed for wars is the example of Ukraine and Russia. Both countries are Orthodox and have even the same Slavic roots and origins. It is a paradox that Catholic Poland and other Catholic and Protestant countries are helping Orthodox Ukraine.

Although it is a minor issue in the context of this cataclysm, another thing that we should include in the context of the idea that religions are responsible for wars is the example of Chechens. The Chechen leader is on the Russian side, but some others Chechens are with Ukraine. So, what is the role of religion here? It is all purely about interests.

In the words of old politician Churchill: in politics, there are no eternal friends or enemies – only interests are eternal.

To recall: In the EU Constitution, they did not want to include Christianity as a historical fact – let's remember that the Constitutional Committee was presided by a Catholic, Giscard d'Estaing – primarily because of the belief that different religions

cause wars and that they could cause wars in today's Europe because of their differences. And Pope John Paul II the Great insisted, but without result. And then, two Orthodox countries enter a war that threatens to become a Third world war, which Pope Francis has said many times. Even in the 21st century, as is often emphasized in disbelief. As if people in the 21st century somehow became saints! Human goodness and evil are similar in the 15th and 21st centuries.

Justifying war

Although Russians justify the war by saying they want to help Ukrainians to become something else.

They “denazify” the Ukrainian government. Is it possible that Russians and Putin don't know Zelenskyy is a Jew? Or has God taken away their reasoning abilities, so they are using such wrong argument? Have they forgotten that no lie lasts long? Without propaganda, it's impossible to win a war, but propaganda isn't a lie but a serious business. Goebbels did say: that a lie repeated three times becomes the truth. But it is also true that lies don't last long. They are soon revealed, although it is too late for those who lose their lives.

It isn't just a physical battle; it's a metaphysical one as well! With these words, the Patriarch took on divine privileges. Religious leaders have some divine privileges, such as serving the liturgy and performing sacraments, but there is another side to that coin, and that's freedom. There is no faith, and there is no human being without freedom. If God wanted it, he would have created humans to be robots and not free beings. God could create only one religion. In ex-Yugoslavia, the Serbs proclaimed the concept of ethnic cleansing. God gave humans freedom, even under the risk and with the danger of that freedom being abused, which it often is. One Croatian poet says:

O beautiful, o dear, o sweet freedom, the gift in which all treasures God has given us, the true cause of our glory, the only ornament of this Dubrava, all the gold, all the silver, all human lives cannot be a payment to your beauty (Croatian poet Ivan Gundulić).

Jesus told a rich young man: If you want – there is no coercion in Gospel and generally by God. Everyone from Patriarch Kirill and others who supports the war is against the Gospel, against Christ himself, who said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will



Franjo Topić, Chairman of HKD Napredak

be called the children of God. Is there anything more beautiful than to be a child of God, a brother of Christ? What happens in people to reject this, especially whom we don't expect it from, like religious leaders? Some answers are: human greed and the will to power, as wrote philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Please notice: Putin has the biggest country; Russia has from Moscow to Vladivostok ca 10.000 kilometres (west-east), and he needs some more kilometres from Ukraine!!!

Consequences

Of course there have been many deaths, many wounded, many houses, manufactories destroyed.

The relations between Russia and Ukraine, or their Churches, will never be the same again. The relationship between Russia and the West will never be the same again. So,

“Christian roots” and religious positions are not enough to save the EU and the world and to make them good.

Today, some don't want to read these authors, e.g., Berdjaev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy...

Conclusion

You win nothing in war but can lose everything. In the confrontation of weapons and ideas, ideas win. In ex-Yougoslavia, the Serbs had many guns but didn't win.

I conclude with what I think is a fundamental idea: Peace isn't everything, but without peace, everything is nothing.

Crocuses, Gorgany mountain range, Ukraine





Public media in an era of threats and their cooperation in the heart of Europe

The panel was moderated by **Piotr Babinetz, Chairman of the Culture and Media Committee**, who noted that in parallel to the ongoing war in Ukraine, Central Europe was experiencing a non-stop information war – an organised Russian campaign of fake news and disinformation.

Marek Solon-Lipiński, Deputy Director of the Office of International Cooperation of Polish Television, pointed out that at the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Western European broadcasters tried to balance opinions, which was exploited by both the Russian government apparatus and the Russian media:

For days after the Russian invasion, we tried to convince people in Western Europe not to talk about the Russian-Ukrainian war but about Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In the end, it had an effect. I think it is possible to speak of such a life experience of the people of our part of Europe, who understand very well from both current events and historical facts that Russia is a country with which you cannot play such games and you should call a spade a spade.

The speaker stressed that a paradigm of fact-based journalism characterised Polish Television and Central European broadcasters.

Mykola Chernotytskyi, President of the Board of Directors of the National Public Teleradiocompany, concerning the war in Ukraine, indicated that his institution was preparing for a Russian invasion:

As a public media company, we prepared for the invasion. We had several scenarios of possible actions. We had an action plan. It should also be noted that our public broadcaster operates on a regional radio station basis. Accordingly, we developed an

action plan, and 70 per cent of it has been implemented. Nevertheless, we knew what we should do on 24 February.

Mykola Chernotytskyi also spoke about the start of cooperation between the public broadcaster and private radio stations, which included sending a signal to all citizens. The President stressed that journalists were constantly exposed to danger but worked according to pre-developed rules. Mykola Chernotytskyi also drew attention to the digital transmission, which was working flawlessly. He additionally mentioned the existing Telegram communication channel in Ukraine:

If 30,000 people used Telegram until the war, more than 2 million people used Telegram after the war began. This is a very important means of communication because we directly verify and validate information through Telegram. Also, it is imperative to provide timely information about possible air and missile attacks.

The speaker thanked European broadcasting partners for their assistance. He paid particular attention to the word „context” in a journalist’s work:

For us, it is imperative that journalists always talk about context because, after all, the war was started not on 24 February, but 300 years ago. Here we are talking about the Russian Empire; we are talking about the history of the existence of the Russian Empire.

Indrė Makaraitytė, Head of the Investigative Journalism Department of Lithuania’s LRT Television, pointed out that, before Western journalists understood what Russian propaganda was, they criticised their Lithuanian colleagues for their lack of objectivity in not publishing the Russian side’s position:

It took a long time, but finally, Western journalists precisely understood what was going on; they understood what Russian propaganda was, their eyes were opened.

The speaker stressed that Lithuania was also a victim of Russian propaganda, which resulted in protests by Lithuanians against political decisions:



Participants of the panel *Public media in an era of threats and their cooperation in the heart of Europe, Karpacz, 6 September 2022*

(...) there were mass protests that applied the narrative that they wanted to change the entire political scene and the way the country was governed. (...) Indeed, they wanted to remove all mainstream media and accused them of being bad. They wanted to sweep the official media off the stage, even the public media (...). There was also a push for the idea of a referendum so that the people would decide on every issue through a referendum.

Indrė Makaraitytė noted that the goal of the work of investigative journalists was to look for ways to defend against that propaganda and the people who create it. Moreover, an important issue is to detect funding sources for such groups. In February of this year, following the aggression of Russian troops in Ukraine, Lithuanian investigative journalists conducted an investigation that revealed that there were 200 groups spreading propaganda. The analysis managed to prove that about 100 of the mentioned 200 propaganda groups formed networks and operated in four blocks:

These four blocks of propaganda activities were interrelated. We've detected the people behind the scenes, behind the curtain, who gave orders and actually created these messages, that disinformation message. We've done our work, we've continued our analysis, we've developed measures, and now we're just watching it.



Gąsienicowa Valley, Tatra Mountains, Poland

Wojciech Surmacz, President of the Polish Press Agency, said:

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe smell Russian disinformation perfectly. (...) several hundred years of danger makes us feel it, but most of all, we understand it. We understand Russia is probably the best of all the countries in Europe, which translates into the fact that we have, as it were, early warning systems in our DNA.

The President stressed that the operation of the Russian propaganda apparatus affected the psyche of the public and its perception of reality. He went on to emphasise that it was the task of Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Poles, who had no problem identifying Russian propaganda, to educate their Western partners about how that disinformation works.

All media must unite not to lose the war to Orwell's dystopia

The 31st Economic Forum in Karpacz was one of the significant international events where attention was focused on Ukraine. I wish it were at a lower price.

The new stage of the war in Ukraine, which Russia started on 24 February with missile strikes throughout the territory, shocked the world and resulted in the seizure of regions, missile and air strikes on peaceful cities, civilian deaths, and brutal war crimes of Russians. In parallel, Russia deployed an information front as a clear illustration of Orwell's "war is peace".

It received fierce resistance from Ukraine and democratic countries. Our allies helped to defend and arm Ukraine, support our economy and, at the same time, imposed sanctions against Russia, making it weak and unstable in the civilized world, where war is war.

European broadcasters rallied around Ukraine and countered Russian propaganda from the very first days. Russia's membership in the European Broadcasting Union was suspended. Instead, leading media gave the front pages to Ukraine and European broadcasters transmitted news of Suspilne Ukraine so that Europeans understood what was happening.

The war was followed by the food crisis in the world and the energy crisis in Europe, and in their wake, Russia promoted its narratives, that is, hunger, high gas bills, and saving electricity and heating because of the war in Ukraine. Then the propaganda works efficiently, pressing on people's pain points: stop supporting Ukraine – grain, gas and electricity will appear. "Freedom is slavery".

It is easy to fall into this propaganda trap because the war is really in Ukraine. We see it every day on the streets of our cities. However, it started not on 24 February and not eight years ago. This war is not for territories or resources. It has been going on for centuries against the very idea of Ukraine's existence. The destruction of what cannot



Mykola Chernotytskyi, President of the Board of Directors of the National Public Teleradiocompany

be captured is the model of Russian propagandists' thinking. „Independence” suits them only in the format of today's Belarus, but it does not suit us.

Ukraine has become an example of heroic resistance; Ukrainian soldiers are returning to their territories and forcing the enemy to flee. Instead, it hits our power plants and critical infrastructure facilities. This winter will not be easy for anyone, but Ukraine, stopping Russia, pays the highest price for the lives of its people.

Ukrainian media have united to stand together against Russian propaganda, to smash fakes. Suspilne journalists collect evidence of war crimes, which they pass to law enforcement agencies to hold criminals accountable for each of them. They work in places that hurt the whole of Ukraine, namely Bucha, and Yahidne, overcoming their emotions to help people put their stories together, to tell them to the world so that it always knows the answer, that is, Russia is to blame.

Communicating with colleagues during the Economic Forum in Karpacz and at other international events, I receive many words of support and see the understanding of the need to join forces in the era of threats. We know that power lies in knowledge and freedom. We all want to hear on the news that the war is over and Russian

criminals are being held accountable in an international tribunal. However, Europeans should understand that this war will make it harder for everyone. Russia is fighting not only against Ukraine. It is fighting against the whole democratic, civilized world.

What can European media do?

Firstly, to explain the context of events and not to miss Russian narratives. Europeans should know that famine is possible because Russia blocks the export of Ukrainian grain. High gas bills that Europeans receive are the blackmail consequences of making a deal with a regime in exile. We need to connect the dots and give more context to what is happening. There should be a clear answer behind each of their crimes that Russia is to blame.

Secondly, to raise the issue of information security in their countries. The money poured into Russian propaganda exceeds the combined budgets of Eastern European broadcasters. Russian propaganda is a sophisticated machine that selects different methods for the audience it needs, penetrating through various spheres, not only political.

Thirdly, it is worth creating editorial offices in Ukraine and covering events from here. Someone may say: “We are tired of tears and tragedies.” But you will never get tired of inspiration. Our courageous people know how to inspire. This is what Ukraine can give to many other societies and democracies. That is why it is so important to perform on-site reporting. It is the right time for the world’s media to open their bureaus and newsrooms in Ukraine. Because it is the place to be and the country to fight for.



Magura, Romania



Food security as the foundation of the European and global order

The panel was moderated by **Teresa Pamuła, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development**, who stressed that for the past several years, Poland and Europe had not struggled with the food problem. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine directly influenced the current crisis.

Mykola Solskyi, Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, discussed the current state of Ukrainian agriculture. He noted that increasing the volume of agricultural exports from Ukraine did not depend solely on agreements or the support of trading partners but primarily on Russia's attitude. He added that work was underway to reduce the logistical costs of exporting Ukrainian goods:

We are actively working to ensure that routes through Poland and other countries, the Baltic ports, routes through Romania and other Black Sea ports are also used. The main task is to reduce logistical costs so that the Ukrainian farmer gets a good price and decides to keep working. (...) Half of the funds go to logistics. This price at which the farmer can sell does not even cover his own costs. This is a huge problem for the whole country, for all farmers, because they don't get the funds back; they don't even have the money to continue working and sowing more crops.

Mykola Solskyi also drew attention to the high prices of nitrogen fertiliser as a problem for Ukrainian farmers:

(...) expensive nitrogen fertilisers affect the decision on what to sow next year. As a result, many Ukrainian farmers will reduce corn plantings next year and increase

sunflower and soybean plantings. (...) If the situation does not worsen, farmers will try to sow all fields with cheaper grains, using cheaper technology.

Janusz Wojciechowski, European Union Commissioner for Agriculture, pointed to steps taken by the EU to increase food security:

The European Union, aware of the threats to food security, has taken measures, among others, such that all administrative restrictions – whatever could threaten the productivity of European agriculture – have been suspended: the obligation to maintain non-productive areas, the exclusion of four per cent of land for ecological reasons.

Janusz Wojciechowski also referred to the National Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy 2023–2027 – he emphasised that Poland was one of the first seven EU countries to approve the plan. As for coal farming, the Commissioner highlighted the issue of remuneration for farmers who followed that practice:

We want to reward farmers (...) who voluntarily introduce practices such as ploughing or mixing straw into the soil to improve soil quality; who use, for example, extensive grazing as a method in farming or a fertilisation plan – so very rational use of fertiliser to avoid wasting fertiliser that is so hard to get at the moment.

The Commissioner also noted the need to strengthen the EU's agricultural budget in order to stabilise food security. He said:

We talk about food security as if in the same breath with defence security and energy security; these are the pillars of security in general. While we now spend 2 per cent on defence security, and want to spend 3 per cent of gross domestic product – I'm talking about the European Union budget, the agricultural budget, which many believe is vast – indeed, we spend about 0.3 per cent of EU gross domestic product on food security.

As the Commissioner pointed out, concern for food security is not only thinking about securing the next food supply but also supporting agriculture in Africa, especially small farms that have great potential. In conclusion, Janusz Wojciechowski conveyed



Participants of the panel *Food security as the foundation of the European and global order*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

that food security in Poland was ensured in the short and medium term, but he stressed that strengthening the agricultural sector was needed to ensure safety in the long term.

Henryk Kowalczyk, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, referred to Janusz Wojciechowski's speech on the Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy for 2023–2027. He said:

I believe the Common Agricultural Policy 2023–2027 in the National Strategic Plan is complementary because crop and livestock production is very strongly supported in conjunction with each other, which is of great importance.

In reference to the farm-to-table strategy, Henryk Kowalczyk raised the issue of funding for local processing:

In both the strategic plan and the National Reconstruction Plan, funding for local processing is very important. This is extremely important because some food can be sold as an unprocessed product, but a significant part requires it (...) to be a processed

product. Therefore, I hope that funding for local processing will make the path from farm to table dramatically shorter.

Henryk Kowalczyk also mentioned that he and Minister Mykola Solski were working to improve the export of Ukrainian agricultural products through Poland. In this context, he asked European countries for technical assistance needed to improve the transportation of food products across the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Romanian borders:

We are also very much counting on the technical assistance of European countries. This includes handling equipment, carriages for wagons, and containers, among others. About all those elements that we need to improve the transportation of food products technologically – we are mainly talking about grain at the moment – across the Polish-Ukrainian or Polish-Romanian border.

Jarosław Sachajko, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, pointed to the astonishing behaviour of the countries that should care most about food:

African and Arab countries that have oil and gas are not lowering the price of that oil and gas for some reason. On the contrary, these prices are rising, and yet this directly affects production costs. These same countries could bring the war to an end in a short time; they have already done so before. They, after all, led to the collapse of the Soviet Union precisely by lowering the price of oil to such a level that Russia's oil exports were unprofitable. Yet, they are trying to do business, which means they are behaving absurdly towards their societies.

The MP noted that the key to pushing back the threat of famine lies in two things which are ending the war in Ukraine, and solidarity and rationality on the part of Brussels officials. He went on to stress the need to rearm embattled Ukraine to bring the war to an end.

Jarosław Sachajko also took up the subject of the benefits brought to the European Union by the inclusion of Ukraine in its community:

What Poland is doing right now, helping Ukraine and trying to encourage all other countries to integrate Ukraine into European structures, is (...) an immense opportunity



Żupny Castle, Wieliczka, Poland

for us. (...) Ukraine can feed – Ukraine alone – 600 million people so that we would be a giant food producer for the whole world. There are also great natural resources there, largely untapped at the moment. It would be a great success for Ukraine's admission to the Union. After Norway, Ukraine has the largest gas reserves. We wouldn't have to look at those strange North African countries anymore; we wouldn't have to look at Putin; we would have gigantic gas resources of our own. There is also uranium there, the largest uranium reserves in Europe – we are talking about nuclear power plants. There are iron deposits there, the second in Europe, titanium deposits, manganese deposits.



Orthodox church in Powroźnik, Beskid Sądecki, Poland



Geopolitical importance of the TEN-T network in Central and Eastern Europe

The panel was moderated by **Adrian Klarenbach, a TVP journalist**, who pointed out that the Carpathian region of Europe, sharing a mountain range, history and tradition, was also well connected, as evidenced by the Via Carpatia, Via Baltica and Rail Baltica routes.

Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, stressed that the idea of developing a communication network along the eastern European border was initiated by the late Prof. Lech Kaczyński in 2006:

Via Carpatia today is the „road of life.” Via Carpatia today is the road that gives many countries, but especially Europe and Europeans, a sense of transportation security. It has the peculiar character of a rocade road.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, **Andrzej Adamczyk** announced plans to expand the TEN-T network to Ukraine and Moldova:

On the one hand, the determination of the war, the determination of the events of the war and the needs associated with it, and on the other hand, the reflection that leads us today to approach the routing of the TEN-T network already in a changed reality, the reality that will probably not return to its former state soon. (...) We need to connect Ukraine with European routes, not only by road but also by rail. Today we are already confident in the idea of building Rail Carpathia, the rail route that will accompany Via Carpathia.

Martin Kupka, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, delivered an online speech in which he referred to the issue of expanding the TEN-T network:



Participants of the panel *Geopolitical importance of the TEN-T network in Central and Eastern Europe*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

The Czech Republic fully supports the development of this network to the north and the south and in all other directions, especially now that we are facing the Russian threat and (...) further instability. (...) Extending the network to Ukraine is a logical goal that will improve the transportation of essential goods in various directions – both today and after the war when Ukrainian territory will be rebuilt. The extension of this network should also bring candidate countries closer to the European Union by bringing them, too, under the expanded TEN-T network.

Martin Kupka went on to emphasise that the development of transportation infrastructure was at the top of the political agenda of the Czech presidency of the Council of the EU and that connectivity and transportation capacity were critical for economic development.

Pablo Fábregas Martinez, Member of the Cabinet of EU Transport Commissioner Adina Vălean, recalled that the Common European Transport Policy had its

beginnings in the mid-1990s when individual countries' transport projects began to be considered so that they could act as a single entity – the European Union.

What is important for the European Union, for the European Commission is that transport policy and investment must take into account holistic sectoral solutions. (...) When it comes to transportation solutions, we want to make this system work, and we want to be leaders and set an example so that the European Union can also be a leader in high-speed trains.

In this context, the speaker pointed out that while this type of transportation was developing in the West, all issues related to the implementation of the high-speed rail project were in the design phase in Central and Eastern Europe.

Pablo Fábregas Martínez also addressed current geopolitical issues:

(...) The European Commission has put forward a target related to military mobility; in May, we provided 450 million for projects to improve roads and the transportation network in both civilian and military dimensions.

The speaker also pointed out that the eastern part of the European Union lacked north-south connections. He added that the EU's proposal to create a transport corridor connecting the Baltic Sea with the Black and Aegean Seas was a response to this demand:

This will respond to a long-standing request and demand (...); it will also help add a geopolitical dimension to the development of our transportation network.



Przemyśl in winter, Poland



Andrzej Adamczyk

Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland

The September edition of the „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference focused on the priorities of the ongoing revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the prospects for its further development. Particular emphasis was placed on the new dimension of TEN-T policy in view of the current geopolitical situation related to the war in Ukraine. The prospect of network development in Ukraine and Moldova was a vital element of the panel’s discussion.

During the debate, organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministers of Transport, Foreign Affairs and Funds from Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Lithuania, and a representative of the Cabinet of the EU Transport Commissioner shared their experiences and thoughts.

In this time of war, re-aligned supply chains and the need to secure transport capacity for grain and coal, the perception of Central and Eastern Europe on the geopolitical map has also changed.

The TEN-T network defines the priorities of transport and investment policy in Poland. It is also the backbone of Europe’s transport network as it ensures the efficient functioning of transport corridors, which is of great importance especially today. Poland has long promoted a priority approach to developing connectivity on the European Union’s Eastern border, which also happens to be NATO’s Eastern Flank, further strengthening its geopolitical importance.

This edition of the „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference provided a platform to continue the debate on the changing geopolitical environment and showcase concrete steps to include Ukraine and Moldova in the TEN-T corridors. Poland has consistently supported these activities. The Polish Government already took steps in 2016 to extend transportation routes from Poland toward Ukraine. It was then that branches



Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland

connecting the Polish ports of the Three Seas with the Black Sea were added to the Via Carpatia priority project.

Another milestone is expected to be the continuation of Via Carpatia: from Doro-husk via Lutsk to Kyiv and from Hrebenne and Medyka via Lviv and Ternopil to Odessa and the Romanian border near Suceava. Poland's proposal coincides with the European Commission's proposal to extend the TEN-T corridor network into Ukrainian territory.

Mustafa Nayyem, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, thanked the Poles for their unwavering assistance and ongoing contacts on the Warsaw-Kyiv line. In turn, Pablo Fábregas Martinez, a representative of the Cabinet of the EU Transport Commissioner, confirmed that the European Commission seeks to further integrate Ukraine's and Moldova's transport networks into the EU system. Placing cities such as Mariupol, Odessa, and Kherson on the map of the new TEN-T network is a clear signal of disagreement with any violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

It should be noted that the TEN-T network in Poland overlaps to a large extent with critical infrastructure for defence and economic security. Therefore, one of the priority goals of the Ministry of Infrastructure is to work on modernising and expanding this

network. In addition, political conditions are changing; hence Polish calls for a revision of the TEN-T to better reflect current conditions in Central and Eastern Europe. The new approach to the TEN-T network provides an opportunity to strengthen the strategic importance of transport corridors.

The new Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Aegean Corridor will soon be a critical project for the further development of North-South transport axes. As part of this corridor, a rail component of Rail Carpatia is planned in parallel with Via Carpatia, a priority road investment.

In addition, Poland is seeking to extend the new Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Aegean Sea transport corridor towards Lithuania, given the current geopolitical situation. This way, we will take advantage of the synergies with the important Rail Baltica and Via Baltica projects and provide the right infrastructural dimension to NATO's Eastern Flank.

All of these efforts are aimed at creating a transportation system in Central and Eastern Europe in the not-too-distant future that will be a sustainable lever for the Region's economic development.



Trail on the Halicz mountain, Bieszczady Mountains, Poland



The geopolitical importance of the TEN-T network in Central and Eastern Europe. Ministerial debate

The panel was the second part of the conversation that started during the previous discussion block. **Adrian Klarenbach, a TVP journalist**, also moderated the debate in this part.

Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, continuing from Panel IV, emphasised:

The TEN-T proposals will be modified depending on how our external environment changes. I am referring here to the geopolitical environment, and beyond any doubt.

The Minister once again stressed that the European Union had set ambitious challenges: the construction of the Aegean-Black Sea-Baltic Sea transportation corridor, as well as the inclusion of cities such as Mariupol, Odessa and Kherson on the TEN-T network map:

This is a clear signal of disagreement, of opposition to all that is happening in Ukraine, especially in eastern Ukraine, as a result of Russian aggression.

Mustafa-Masi Nayyem, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, attended the conference remotely. At the outset, he directed words of gratitude to Poland for all its assistance.

The Republic of Poland was the first country that began to support us in all communication issues, transportation issues, and in dealing with humanitarian aid, permits, licenses, rail transportation, and road transportation. Poland is fighting for us. Poland is also fighting for us in the European Union.

The speaker further reported on the construction of a railroad on the Lviv-Moscow section, an essential step in connecting Ukrainian railroads to European networks. The Deputy Minister underlined that the priority now was the reconstruction of road bridges to enable military transport and the transportation of first-aid goods, and the routing of an access road to the country's western border on the Lviv-Krakovets section. Another of Ukraine's ambitious plans is to open new checkpoints on the Polish-Ukrainian border:

We have already started construction work at some border crossings – in Hrushev, Uhryniv. We will invest in such a way to shorten the queues of means of transport, both those going towards Ukraine and those going to Poland.

Mustafa-Masi Nayyem expressed his deep hope that Poland and Ukraine would become the most significant transportation allies in all of Europe:

Together, Poland and Ukraine will be the largest freight-carrying countries in Europe. The war will end, we will prevail, and I am sure our alliance, which is now being tested by time, will survive. Someday the day will come when we will remember how we laid the foundations of the Polish-Ukrainian transport alliance, how we worked to make our alliance the largest transport alliance in all of Europe.

Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that the Three Seas countries had great potential but it could not be fully developed due to the lack of a north-south connection:

The lack of this connection not only prevents the rapid movement of tourists and residents traveling to other countries but, most importantly, hinders trade and business relations.

The speaker also stressed the need to build energy routes in Central and Eastern Europe to become independent of energy sources from the East:

We must all the time increase the region's resilience (...) to the vagaries, the energy crises, and the fact that this energy from the East cannot be counted on. We should



Participants of the panel *The geopolitical importance of the TEN-T network in Central and Eastern Europe*. Ministerial debate, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

become independent of it in general as soon as possible, and for that we need these connections.

In the context of building the region's potential, Szymon Szyrkowski vel Sęk also pointed to the need to increase connectivity in the sphere of the digital economy. He then referred to the decision to include Ukraine in the TEN-T network.

The inclusion of Ukraine puts not only Ukraine but also our entire region in a completely different geopolitical situation. On the other hand, Poland is a bridge – for several reasons. First, it has a relatively dense rail network (...). Secondly, the country has a rail gauge limit (...). It is also a country with a large transshipment capacity (...). Finally, from a defence perspective, it is also the largest country on NATO's eastern flank; hence, a country that has to look at strategic issues in a unique way.

Pablo Fábregas Martínez, a Member of the Cabinet of EU Transport Commissioner Adina Vălean, pointed out that the European Commission had limited financial resources for infrastructure projects:



Pip Ivan Mountain, Chornohora, Ukraine

The resources of the European Commission are unfortunately limited, so when it comes to infrastructure projects, we focus on the European perspective; we focus on those projects that have added value. But we have limited funds and resources.

The speaker stressed that decisions to support specific initiatives were made from a pan-European perspective but with strict criteria in mind.

Julius Skačkauskas, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania, in response to a question on the revision of the TEN-T network, conveyed that in October this year, Lithuania would begin construction of a road section from Marijampole to the Polish border – as part of the Via Baltica route – and, by 2024, the highway from Kaunas to Warsaw and from Kaunas to the southern axis would be completed. Julius Skačkauskas stressed that Rail Baltica was a critical project and costly in financial and technical terms. The Deputy Minister also referred to the issue of the Trans-Caspian Corridor, which should have an alternative



route that would allow the transportation of goods from Central Asia and China to bypass Russia:

We need to have an alternative corridor to transport goods from Central Asia, from China, bypassing Russia – through the Caspian Sea basin, through Azerbaijan, so that we can reach the Northeast Corridor. Ukraine should also be connected to that corridor.

Malgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, said that funding for TEN-T projects came from, among other sources, the Connecting Europe Facility, centrally managed by the European Commission, with €26 billion earmarked for all member states for 2021–2027:



Traditional buildings in the Hollókő heritage site, Hungary

It is important to prepare good, well-thought-out projects that are international, European in nature because those projects that are important from the national point of view will only receive support under these measures.

Malgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak added that funds from the Cohesion Policy and the National Reconstruction Plan were also at the disposal of Member States, which also included funding for rail infrastructure activities:

We also place a firm emphasis on rail infrastructure activities since they fit into the assumptions of the European Green Deal – as that infrastructure which is less harmful, less burdensome to the environment.



Putin's war through the eyes of free people

The panel was moderated by **Antoni Macierewicz, Minister of National Defence in 2015–2018**.

Dmitry Muratov, a journalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, was unable to attend the conference in person, so he sent a video of a statement on the war in Ukraine. He said that, in Russia, people began to be paid ten times more for participating in the fighting than for doing regular work. In addition, to those who signed the military contract, banks withdrew lawsuits to enforce debts. A lifetime discount of 50 per cent on housing, electricity and gas payments was also introduced upon return from the war:

Warfare has become part of everyday life. What's more, war has become something of a service, and it has even become a profitable business; to many people it seems to be something like a mortgage.

The speaker stressed that there was no alternative point of view in Russia, and Russian propaganda has made a kind of patriotism out of the habit of war:

The Prosecutor General's Office has officially announced that 138,000 different websites have been shut down in Russia, and some 300 media outlets have been removed from the country, blocked or declared agents of foreign states, including both media outlets and journalists.

Vladimir Ponomarev of the Institute for Security and International Development said:

The most important task of the Russian opposition is to organise against the fascist regime that, unfortunately, now prevails in Russia. This is the most important thing. With the war already six months away, there is no way to fight just against the war; now you have to fight for victory.

The opposition, which is outside Russia, should organise a struggle inside the country and fight the existing regime by peaceful means.

This must be coordinated with Ukraine because Ukraine and the part of Russia that does not support the war are on the same side of the barricade. Only together, in mutual coordination, can the war end in Moscow.

Alexander Milinkevich, Chancellor of the Free Belarusian University, admitted that he saw in the Belarusian society a chance for democratisation in the Belarusian society since it had not completely given in to propaganda. He stressed that Belarusians learned a great deal about their history during perestroika:

Belarusians feel that they are a separate nation, i.e. that there is a basis for building their state, directing their own destiny, and fighting for freedom. That was demonstrated by the massive demonstrations in 2020.

Alexander Milinkevich noted a vital aspect in the context of Belarus achieving sovereignty:

We have a vision for the future and believe that we will win freedom, liberty, and independence for Belarus with the help of our Western partners.

Alexandr Vondra, a Member of the European Parliament, emphasised the impact of the experience of freedom defenders from Central and Eastern European countries on Ukraine's sovereignty:

The freedom fighters' experience is significant for the subsequent fate of these movements. We know the history of Central and Eastern European countries – Poles, Czechs – so we know well that if support is given to those fighting in Ukraine, it will



Participants of the panel *Putin's war through the eyes of free people*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

undoubtedly contribute to their victory, a triumph in defence of their independence and state sovereignty.

The speaker also stressed the need for support in Russia, Belarus (as well as other countries) that part of society that adhered to European principles and values:

Above all, however, Ukraine must be supported – by all means possible. Of course, it is also necessary to take care of people in Russia, Belarus and everywhere else, people who are fighting (...), who share the same principles and values. We must not turn our backs on them, and we must include them in these efforts. On the one hand, it's about solidarity, and on the other hand, it's about a turning point so that something changes in this situation. Above all, however, Ukraine's territorial integrity and independence must be defended.

Ján Figel' of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology pointed out that Europe meant more than just geographic location:

Europe is about co-dependence. For this idea to be fulfilled, a transformation of Russia is needed: its respect for dignity, inalienable rights, and peace – not barbarism, not messianism, not imperialism, both Tsarist and Putinist.

The speaker pointed out that the transformation had to have a moral dimension and involve both Russia and Belarus. In this context, Ján Figel' pointed out that the basis should be universal values that were and, at the same time, identified us and were identical to the idea of solidarity and peace.

Piotr Naimski, former Secretary of State in the Prime Minister's Office and Government Plenipotentiary for Strategic Energy Infrastructure, noted the Russian perception of the war:

The war waged by the Russians is communicated to the Russian people as a war against the West, a war against the North Atlantic Alliance. It causes a problem as Ukraine is both the target of the war and the area where it is being waged.

Piotr Naimski stressed that those in power in Moscow were effectively appealing to Russian patriotism. At the same time, he pointed out that any opposition to the criminal power in Russia should be supported, and hostilities in Ukraine could only be ended by a Russian and only in Moscow. A separate issue is the conditions under which this will be done. The speaker also touched on the transformation aspect of Russia:

It will be challenging to carry out, even with organised opposition in Russia, the transformation of this great country into a democracy unless there are favourable external circumstances.



War and society

An analysis of the situation surrounding Russia's aggression against Ukraine shows that, on 24 February 2022, Putin unleashed a global war against the European civilisation, which he called „satanic” in a statement made in the Kremlin on 30 September during the signing of the Acts of Annexation of the invaded territories of Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Putin, by the way, is not hiding the nature of this war – listen to the lecture he gave at the Valdai Club on 27 October 2022. In it, he presented his view of the world and his philosophy of perceiving reality, paradoxically based on the postulates of the national-socialist philosophy of the German fascists and the communist philosophy of the Russian Bolsheviks.

The barbaric manner in which the Russian side is waging war, the war against women, children, and the elderly, against the entire civilian population of Ukraine, only underscores that this war has, in fact, become a kind of crusade against human civilisation as such. This conclusion needs to be repeated as two ways of perceiving this war are clashing in the global public perception: some see it as a worldwide, existential, and value-based war (let's call it a global choice), while others see it as a local, colonial war, as a „Slavic dispute amongst themselves” (Alexander Pushkin, 1831). It is no coincidence that calling the aggression against Ukraine a war has, until recently, been forbidden in Russia, and the acceptable official term has been dubbed – emphasising the limited nature of the operations – „a special military operation.” That was an attempt to hide from the world, and especially from the Russians, the true nature of the ruling regime's intentions in Russia.

Currently, developed countries' assessment of the situation largely leans toward the first approach (war as a global choice), which can explain the consolidation of their aid to Ukraine. Nevertheless, the clash of opinions continues, as evidenced, for example, by recent statements by American billionaire Elon Musk.

In addition, it is crucial to understand that Ukraine's assistance from the anti-Putin coalition countries and, above all, the United States, however large-scale, allows Ukraine's Armed Forces at most to defend effectively and conduct limited offensive operations. In contrast, it does not guarantee that the situation on the war front will fundamentally change in favour of the attacked state. In addition, Russia's increased military spending (about USD 14 billion per month) is now many times greater than that of Ukraine's allies.

Undoubtedly, only a total military defeat of the Putin regime on the battlefield and the resulting radical political and structural transformation of Russia's socio-political system can save the world from the threat of a repeat of the situation on the morning of February 2022. It is equally clear that without the active participation of Russians, the Russian society and the Russian people, neither Ukraine with its allies nor the NATO armed forces will be able to bring about the defeat of the ruling regime without avoiding the threat of eradicating all of humanity posed by weapons of mass destruction in Russian hands.

What would drive the people of Russia to become citizens responsible for their fate, for the fate of the country? Is there even such a possibility? To be honest, I don't know the answer to this question, and I'm not too optimistic either. Nevertheless, some progress is being made in the attitudes of the population – multi-ethnic, I emphasise – of Russia. This is, of course, a topic for a separate, extensive, and very complex conversation, so for now, I will just cite the rather obvious facts.

Until 21 September, the war was distant for most Russians who had not had time to feel first-hand the consequences of economic sanctions or the pain of losing family members and loved ones. The weakening of the economy has affected no more than 30 per cent of the country's population, belonging to the third and partly to the second quintile in terms of income – only this part has felt the rise in prices and a drastic reduction in the range of goods and quality of services. In addition, mainly army contract units participated in the war. As a result, most Russians were able to adopt a passive stance without hesitation or even follow in the wake of the unleashed war.

With the announcement of the massive mobilisation (its first wave gathered about 500,000 people), the war with Ukraine entered the homes of a significant number of Russians. The Kremlin, through the mouth of Sergei Kiriienko, the First Deputy Head of the presidential administration and one of the most influential people in Putin's entourage, is trying to turn the special military operation into a „people's war” on this



Wladimir Ponomariow, Institute for Security and International Development in Warsaw

basis. It's a strong enough move because, if there's anything that unites Russians, it's the notion of the people's war – when the homeland is threatened, when everyone stands up to defend it like one man, and finally, in the face of a great, noble goal, they feel united.

However, the situation is different now. No bombs are falling on Russian cities, the enemy is not rushing towards Moscow, and our children are not dying. As a result, 13,000 of the 300,000 people being mobilised (and at least 500,000, according to Defence Minister Shoygu) voluntarily reported to the military registration and conscription offices. The war has not become a people's war. At least not yet.

As a result, there was a real opportunity to build on the resulting unrest and grievances to create an objective rationale for political change in Russia. It should be clearly noted that the possibility of dismantling the Putin regime by exclusively peaceful means was lost back in the days of the Bolotnaya Square demonstrations (2011–2012).

Over the past 10 years:

- a free press and an independent judiciary have been virtually completely deprived of freedom of speech;
- Russky Mir's ideas permeated all the power at the top and cemented it;
- repressive legislation was developed and implemented;
- a powerful repressive apparatus was created, including a full-fledged internal army – the Rosgvardia numbering nearly 500,000.

Therefore, in order to achieve the desired goal – to overthrow Putin's regime, it is necessary to use both legal and illegal means of struggle to coordinate them with the actions of the entire civilised world, with Ukraine at the forefront of the global fight against Putin's criminal regime; it is necessary to strive to create an increasingly anti-Putin solid coalition.

The foreign political opposition should become the political vanguard of activities and forces aiming to overthrow the current totalitarian regime. Perhaps it should form the basis for the formation of a temporary government-in-exile, which would take charge of organising a referendum on a new constitution and elections to the Legislative Assembly after the fall of the Putin regime.

The main tasks at this stage are:

- to prepare the concept and draft constitution, drafts of basic decrees and legislation of the new Russia;
- to organise activities among the population of the Russian Federation to raise awareness of the nature of Putin's regime and the criminal nature of the war against Ukraine;
- to mobilise and coordinate opposition forces and groups opposing the ruling regime located in the territories of the Russian Federation; they should become the backbone of opposition to Putin's regime, just as the units of the Home Army became the backbone of the Polish Government-in-Exile in the fight against the Nazi occupiers;
- to assist the Ukrainian military command in the formation of Russian volunteer units within the Ukrainian Armed Forces, assisting Russian citizens expressing a desire to join the Ukrainian side in the fight against Putin's criminal regime.

Lastly, carrying out the tasks facing the opposition forces inside and outside Russia requires maximum consolidation.



Short- and long-term effects of the war in Ukraine on Central Europe

The panel was moderated by **Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland.**

Rozália Biró, Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, pointed out that Europe, hitherto considered a continent of peace, had become a continent of war. Regarding the consequences of the fight for Ukraine, she cited a decline in GDP of more than 50 per cent, infrastructure losses amounting to hundreds of billions of euros, and an increase in debt for small and medium-sized enterprises. She also pointed to the reduction to a minimum of trade (exports and imports) with Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Belarus:

We must realise the need to work in partnership and develop the elaboration of all possibilities to help Ukraine and Moldova.

Zsolt Németh, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly, in response to a question about the consequences of the war in Ukraine for Hungarian foreign policy, indicated that they had implications for security policy. In that regard, he stressed that Hungary should focus on its defence and military capabilities in the coming years. In that context, he noted that Poland's defence outlay was exemplary. The second consequence of the war is economic – the energy crisis is ongoing, and a massive wave of debt in Central Europe is progressing:

It is not only Russian aggression that threatens our countries. Our sovereignty is also threatened by the development of the economic crisis, generating social tension that could decisively affect political behaviour in the near future.



Participants of the panel *Short- and long-term effects of the war in Ukraine on Central Europe*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

The speaker stressed that the war, on the one hand, had spawned strong alliances and, on the other hand, had significantly increased tensions in Central Europe and the Balkans:

We have adopted seven sanctions packages. That would never have happened in real life if not for a remarkable ability—unprecedented until now—to make joint decisions. But there are also tensions. We are looking at actions against Hungary and Poland that weaken our cooperation.

Zsolt Németh stressed that Poland and Hungary had the same position on the issue of Ukraine's recovery of sovereignty and territorial unity.

Haki Abazi, Chairman of the Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee (Kosovo), noted the consequences of the war that Europe would have to face:

We will have to help Ukraine's people, the government of Ukraine to win this war. Instead of moving forward toward the future, Europe must be guided by the principle of peace. We must fight for the survival of our continent with our values.

Among the positive consequences of the war, Haki Abazi counted European unification and solidarity, and Ukraine and Moldova gained candidate status for the European Union. The President noted the importance of understanding the aftermath of the war:

To understand the consequences of the war that Russia is waging in Europe, we also need to know where the gaps are and where the limitations are (...) to prevent the expansion of the war idea, not only physically but also mentally, so that people exclude war from their thinking pattern. (...) We all need to get ready to act, to make plans to fill in any gaps.

The speaker added that these words also applied to the Balkans, as Russia had not to be allowed to step into the vacuum that currently existed between Europe and the region.

Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the Seimas delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Member of the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee, recalled that Poland, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom have openly said that Russia was preparing for war with Europe. He stressed that the war in Ukraine was currently a priority:

We can't let economic issues come first in the winter, and the issues of liberating Ukraine from Moscow's thugs recede into the background. The economy is not more important. The priority is the war inside Ukraine against our enemy in Moscow.

The speaker also noted the need to stop promoting Russian authors of literature, culture, and art.

Oleksandr Merezhko, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada's Foreign Affairs Committee, participating in the online discussion, expressed his gratitude to Poland for all the assistance it had shown to Ukraine:

I count on Poland to play a leading role in helping and defending Ukraine and (...) also in rebuilding Ukraine. Poland deserves it. (...) It would be logical for the countries that so actively helped us defend our homeland to also actively participate in its reconstruction.



Participants of the panel *Short- and long-term effects of the war in Ukraine on Central Europe*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

As the President underlined, Poland and Ukraine were brotherly nations based on solid foundations – history and friendship, which offer many opportunities.

Ryszard Terlecki, Deputy Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, pointed out:

(...) at the moment, the fate of the war depends largely on external aid – which Ukraine is getting – on arms supplies. Here the key country is the United States. If the United States recognises that, to (...) maintain its position in the world and its importance in preserving the world order, it is necessary for Ukraine to win, then we will all benefit because, of course, the United States has the ability to influence many countries that may or may not provide assistance to Ukraine.

Ryszard Terlecki emphasised that the other country on which the fate of the war depended was Russia, with the prospect of losing the battle non-existent for the Russian command. The crucial question is whether, in the face of further military action by Russia, NATO will remain united and whether countries such as Germany and France

will feel enough solidarity and side with the United States in this conflict. At the same time, the Deputy Marshal insisted on the growing importance of Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, and the region as a whole.

Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, indicated that the short-term effect of the war was increased cooperation between the countries of Europe of the Carpathians and between members of the Three Seas Initiative. He also mentioned his visit to Ukraine in August this year, during which he discussed, among other things, a Polish-Ukrainian cooperation project:

At the moment, there is talk of reconnecting the 700-kilowatt line from Ukraine to Poland (...). But this also requires the military situation to calm down a bit because then we will be able to receive electricity from Ukraine and pay them for this electricity, and they need this money, EUR 4–5 billion a month, to survive.

Finland, the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova are in a position – with the help of the United States and the United Kingdom – to change the security structure of Europe. According to Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski, Germany, which has led the destruction of its armed forces and pursued an incorrect energy policy over the past 20 years, could not be held responsible for Europe's security:

We can't put the security policy of the European Union and Europe as a whole in the hands of people who have made such bad judgments for more than 20 years. We simply cannot agree to this.

The speaker stressed that the outcome of the war in Ukraine could change the geopolitical situation for a long time. Poland and the neighbouring countries, including Lithuania, are viewed very differently by the United States and the United Kingdom:

When Liz Truss became the new Prime Minister of the UK, the first person she called was President Volodymyr Zelensky, not President Joe Biden. It demonstrated that Britain would Britain will not back down from supporting Ukraine. From the Polish point of view, it is very good.



Tatra Mountains, Poland



Realism and values in politics

The panel was moderated by **Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Member of the European Parliament**. At the outset, he informed that the name of the panel referred to the title of Waldemar Paruch's book *Realism and Values. Law and Justice Party on foreign policy*.

Ryszard Legutko, Member of the European Parliament, spoke about values in politics and the relationship between values and power. Referring to the title of the panel, he noted that realism in politics was a matter of both strength and understanding of political mechanisms. In the context of political idealism, Ryszard Legutko said:

In the modern world, a realm of values and political idealism is powerful. This idealism seems false and wrong, but it is there. (...) There is also a great deal of political ruthlessness in this modern world, even though no wars exist, at least in Western countries.

The MP stressed that the Law and Justice Party understood the political logic and pursued the goals of strengthening the state:

The Law and Justice Party was the first party to pose the problem of the state, its force and efficiency. Because after 1989, we – many people in politics and opinion-forming circles – started from the other side: civil society and tolerance. But if there is no strong state, no entity can realise these goals. If there is no subject, then the state in internal and external relations will be an object.

In response to a question about values in European politics, Ryszard Legutko clearly emphasised that the values on which the European Union was based had taken on the opposite meaning to the dictionary one:

Take the word „democracy.” The European Parliament is the most democratic in the world, I hear. There, the rule is that the opposition is cordoned off, i.e. someone who does not belong to the mainstream, (...) does not get any position, function, nothing, or even participate in important decisions – in the end, they get marginalised.

The speaker further stated that society lived in a world of deceitful language that had entered the media, academic creation, and mass culture.

Jarosław Kaczyński, Chairman of the Law and Justice Party, noted that he was far from idealistic and was entirely on the side of political realism:

Taking the side of political realism does not mean rejecting values because political realism relates to goals; it refers to methods, but there is also an axiological factor everywhere. Goals are defined primarily based on values.

Jarosław Kaczyński argued that the Polish tradition was republican in nature and assessed as one of the biggest mistakes in Polish politics the rejection of the possibility of transforming the Solidarity tradition into a whole, mature republican idea. The Chairman emphasised that the Porozumienie Centrum (Accord of the Centre) party, of which Law and Justice is a continuation, wanted to transform this tradition into Christian democratic thinking, but it did not succeed. He then noted the need to create a strong position for Poland in the world. After 1989, this primarily meant pursuing two goals: regaining sovereignty by rejecting what was left of communism and defending against new attempts to create dependency. These goals required concern for military security, the status of the country, and the country's position on the international stage:

It was a courting of status and a courting of position, leveraging that position through all sorts of endeavours that were often misunderstood and assigned goals that could not be set at that time realistically.

President Kaczyński pointed out that the Law and Justice party in the sphere of values referred to the Christian civilisation, which is the civilisation that is most benevolent to humanity:



Participants of the panel, *Realism and values in politics*, Karpacz, 7 September 2022

Namely, this civilisation in which we live, the Christian civilisation, although we can already say that it is partly post-Christian today, (...) is the most human-friendly civilisation in the history of the world. It is worth defending.

Finally, Jarosław Kaczyński underlined that politics had to be based first and foremost on respect for the other.

Bronisław Wildstein, a columnist, writer, and journalist, pointed out that the Western civilisation – currently under military attack by Russia and simultaneously denied by dominant centres in the West – also had to be defended against itself:

This is no longer the civilisation that was most favourable to a human and that proved to have a universal character, which (...) crossed any barriers and became available throughout the world. (...) One might say that what has happened to this civilisation now is already anti-civilisation. (...) Those who create this model of civilization at the moment, impose their ideology on us, are enemies of Christianity and are enemies of the old form of civilisation.

According to Bronisław Wildstein, contemporary politics is a denial of realism:



Jarosław Kaczyński, Chairman of the Law and Justice Party

It is imposed on us; it is Western policy, European policy, but not only (...) for us to transcend the old civilisation, to transcend all its forms, to transcend traditional identities, such as the nation, and therefore the nation-state.

The speaker also touched on the creation of the European Union. He stressed that it was created, among other things, to overcome the power of powerful states and create a common European identity. However, these measures have proven unrealistic, Utopian, as the EU is ruled by the strongest and thus is a neo-imperial creation where the centre rules.

This actually tells us directly that we are the province to listen. The centre is such a German-French tandem with a considerable advantage for Germany because France is the junior partner here, constantly believing that (...) it will become an equal partner. I say this to show that something that was inherently meant to tame the power, the might of these countries, was *de facto* – because the actions were absolutely unrealistic – Utopian.



Young Europeans. One Europe, different perspectives

The panel was moderated by **Sebastien Meuwissen**, who, in his introduction to the discussion, spoke about the concept known as the mental iron curtain and asked the panellists to express their attitudes toward it.

Anna Menshenina, representing Eastern European Studies at Warsaw University, stressed that Ukraine belonged to European civilisation, not Russian as Putin's propaganda portrays it:

We are part of Europe, belong to Europe, and want to build the best possible relations with the European Union and with the peoples of Europe based on the values we value and uphold.

Anna Menshenina also stressed that Ukrainians understood that they were part of Central Europe, which helped them win the ongoing war. At the same time, the speaker pointed out that Western countries presented a different attitude, so Ukraine, in a complicated geopolitical situation, was calling on Western Europe for real support:

(...) we simply want from the western side of Europe not only to hear wonderful, good words, but we also want to see real action. We want real support, not only in words but also in deeds. And it's not about making hype statements; it's about action, it's about military support, it's about humanitarian support.

According to **Madeleine Enzelberger, Director of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe**, the war has changed people's thinking about Ukraine and made them realise that Ukrainians are Europeans. The speaker also commented on discrimination against Christians in Europe:

My organisation observes cases of intolerance or discrimination directed against Christians in Europe; these are hate crimes. There are actual felonies, even crimes.

Director Enzelberger pointed out the problem between Christians on the issue of gender censorship. She also indicated that people did not feel safe because of social pressure. She added that there was a difference between East and West on this issue.

The pressure from the West is very strong, stronger than in the East, especially in the universities, among young people who still need to be strengthened in their faith. It's just that there is social pressure, and the social cost of staying with the faith is so high that they abandon the faith because they think it's not worth the risk.

Madeleine Enzelberger emphasised that nowadays the Christian or conservative view in universities was eliminated:

At the moment, new elites are being formed at universities. It will have an impact on future generations. It seems that this is a perilous trend, a hazardous phenomenon; it is about this uprooting of conservative Christian thinking.

Kacper Płażyński, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee, pointed out that young Europeans were not educated on the subject of World War II. This opinion is based on the 2019 poll results in which 60 per cent of young Germans reported that their grandparents did not contribute to World War II, while 30 per cent said their grandparents did not contribute to World War II. – That their grandparents were victims of that war:

We, as Polish parliamentarians and Polish authorities, need to emphasise more in various forums that Germans should learn not only about the Holocaust but also about World War II in a broader context, including what happened in Poland during World War II, because otherwise – like any dictatorship, like any authoritarianism – it may be repeated on some scale someday. If the executioner thinks he is the victim, there is no telling what will happen in 20–30 years.



Participants of the panel *Young Europeans. One Europe, different perspectives*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

The MP stressed that Russia's pursuit of an expansive international foreign policy clearly indicated that peace in Europe is not a sure thing, and one must be prepared for anything. Kacper Płażyński also pointed out that the West's perception of Central and Eastern European countries resulted from hundreds of years of diplomatic efforts by Russia to undermine the region and convince Western Europe not to treat CEE countries as partners. The speaker clearly emphasised that, in the face of the war in Ukraine, the Central European region had consolidated:

The consolidation of our region is taking place, trade routes from north to south are being established, and as a result, awareness of Western Europe is bound to be greater because where there is money, interest is suddenly created.

George Byczynski, Editor-in-Chief of the British Poles Portal, noted that the British had little knowledge of Poland, so he pointed out the need for Poles living in the UK to promote energy, political, and cultural topics:

Here is a significant role for every Pole: student, activist or anyone, who lives in the UK, such a role of an ambassador. But there is also a considerable role for the Polish state because it has the funds, power, capabilities, and information on how to promote this Poland and how to promote the region.

The speaker went on to say that the ongoing war was the biggest threat to the stability of the region, which is why it was so important to push Russia back as far east as possible – to keep Ukraine free and to keep the Russians from approaching Poland. According to George Byczynski, the British could learn from the Poles how to anticipate threats, and the Poles could learn from the British how to structure operations.

Dénes András Nagy, a Europeanist, Head of the Visegrad College Plus Programme, and representative of the Hungarian Institute for Strategic Studies (Ludovika – National University of Public Service), stressed that today's youth should develop Central Europe in five areas. The first is roads to connect the capitals of Central Europe; the second is rail links; the third is corridors and canals; the fourth is airports, and the fifth is inventions. According to the speaker, Central Europe has great potential in this regard, which it can use to strengthen the regional economy and the European Union. Dénes András Nagy also addressed the future of Hungary's youth:

I want to generalise this to the Visegrad Four. I believe we have a bright future. We are the economic engine of the entire European Union. In our area, we have the chance to achieve what our parents did not even dare to talk about. My parents believed that Western Europe was our future. Currently, we here in Central Europe are convinced that the future of our part is outside of Western Europe. The future of Europe is what we will do in Central Europe.



Dénes András Nagy

Europeanist, Head of the Visegrad College Plus Programme,
and representative of the Hungarian Institute for Strategic Studies
(Ludovika – National University of Public Service)

Roads, railways and canals – flying cars, vacuum trains and spaceports

It all began with a ping: the e-mail application on my phone notified me that a letter had arrived in my inbox. I, a young Hungarian living in the heart of the Carpathian basin in our capital city of Budapest, felt a sense of joy. The letter was written in a language of high culture in our region: Polish. So rare is it nowadays that we, Carpathian peoples write to each other in our native languages. A thought ran through my mind: we should all do more to learn and use each-others languages, as our ancestors did. I opened the e-mail: it was an invitation to attend a conference in *Karpacz*. My immediate reaction was to check on my smartphone how I could get there. The screen glowed, and a mapping application opened. The answer was shocking: 15 hours via bus, ship and train. How can this be? How can we be so close to each other and yet at the same time so distant? How can it be that in the 21st century, it takes such a long time to travel from one Central European country to another? Many youngsters nowadays, so used to the comfort and ease of global travel, may have been dissuaded from embarking on such a long cross-regional trek. Indeed, if one considers that a flight to London from Budapest or Warsaw takes a mere 3 hours in comparison ... I decided to trod the untrodden path.

En route, I experienced the unexpected warmth of our Slovak neighbours, who greeted me in my native language at the border, saying “*Jó napot*” (good day) in Hungarian, to which I responded with “*Ďakujem*” – thank you in Slovak. I fervently believe that such seemingly mundane, everyday, kind gestures on both sides of our borders help to slowly mend the wounds caused by our 20th century of strife in Central Europe. As I travelled onward, I saw the beauty of the peaks of the Carpathians, and I thought: why do young people opt for winter holidays to go snowboarding or skiing so far away to the north, west, south and east of the Carpathians when right here at home we have everything we need? I promised myself that the next time I would have the chance to



Dénes András Nagy, Europeanist, Head of the Visegrad College Plus Programme, and representative of the Hungarian Institute for Strategic Studies (Ludovika – National University of Public Service)

go on a winter holiday, it would be to the Tatras. On the cold night, I opted to warm myself with Slovak “*Tatratea*”: when given a choice of a global or a local brand, let us always opt for the local. If my generation truly believes in environmental sustainability, one would have to agree with this sentiment. En route, I rested in the beautiful market square of a mediaeval town in Moravia within Czechia. Visiting a butcher’s shop, to my great delighted, I saw that the delicacy proudly advertised on a billboard outside the shop was “*Debrecínská pečeně*” – named after the city of Debrecen in Hungary. A slice of Carpathia, right here in the middle of Europe. Yet I was tired after being on the road for a long time. To keep myself awake, instead of buying a coke, I drank Czech “*kofola*” and thought, why was this excellent Czech beverage not stocked on the shelves of every shop back home? If we are serious about creating a “*Europe of the Carpathians*”, it all depends on our wallets: we all need to start making more conscious pro-Carpathian (consumer) choices. As I travelled onward and finally reached Poland, I felt I had arrived home. Entering a Polish grocery store named after a frog – *Żabka* – (where I half expected to see actual frogs on sale), I noticed that Hungarian “*tokaji*” wine was on sale. “*King of*

Wines, Wine of Kings” the inscription boasted proudly in Polish: a reminder of how much Poles appreciate our “*Szamorodni*” wine – a variant of wine-making originating from Poland, with the word itself descending from the Polish word “*samorodny*”. A sip of the Carpathians in a bottle. At night, I experienced Polish hospitality and gladly toasted one thousand years of Hungarian-Polish friendship with Polish wódki: “*Polak, Węgier – dwa bratanki, i do szabli, i do szklanki*”.

The next day, as we gathered together on 8 September 2022 to discuss the future of Europe of the Carpathians, I was reminded of how, exactly 11 years prior to our discussion, on 8 September 2011, the Carpathian Memorandum was published. Having travelled for an entire day, I was reminded by the prescient analysis of the Memorandum, which noted that among the “*major weaknesses*” of the Carpathian region were “*gaps in infrastructure with regard to transport*”.

Suppose we truly wish to foster the next generation of young, committed believers in the Carpathian idea, we need to ensure that as many youngsters as possible have a chance to personally experience the beauty and diversity of the Carpathians, as I did on my travel to Karpacz, thanks to the kind invitation of the organisers. The 21st century is an era of connectivity. Physically, young people expect to be connected automatically, instantaneously, and with ease. With this in mind, on behalf of the youth of the Carpathians, I suggest we decide to pragmatically build upon three spheres to create a better-connected Carpathian region.

1) **Roads**: since the era of the ancient “*Amber Road*”, we have known the geostrategic importance of building long-distance connecting roads in our region along the north-south axis. In the 21st century, our youth deserve high-quality international highway networks that connect our villages, towns and cities across the Carpathian region. While looking at the planned European Union highway projects in the Trans-European Transport Network, it is apparent that they would continue to perpetuate the peripheralisation that our region has suffered from by strengthening west-east connections whilst disregarding the need for more south-north connections in Central Europe. In response, the north-south “*Via Carpathia*” international Carpathian highway network is a good example of what we need. It is an argument in favour of situating our Carpathian region in the centre of the Visegrád Cooperation and the Three Seas Initiative – linking the Adriatic, Baltic and Black seas – two regional cooperation platforms which we should all fervently support. Let us make the Carpathians the centre of road networks in the region. We were, are and shall continue to be the crossroads of Europe.

2) **Railways**: today's youth deserve to be connected with highspeed railways. The Budapest-Belgrade high-speed railway project is a good example of how to connect the capitals of two proud Carpathian countries, Serbia and Hungary. But we must also focus on villages, towns and cities, not only our capitals. The tram-train connecting Szeged and Hódmezővásárhely in Hungary is an example of an innovative city-to-town link. Building on these best practice examples, let us finish the high-speed 320 kilometres per hour Visegrád Four train network connecting our capital cities in the Visegrád Group: Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Poland. But let us not stop there! Let us create a high-speed trans-Carpathian "*Carpathian Express*" railway that connects us across the Carpathian Mountains range.

3) **Canals**: I am convinced we are on the precipice of a new golden age of sailing. Our dependency on oil and gas – two natural resources we lack in the Carpathian basin – pushes us to look for alternative energy source'. With the advent of solar-powered sun-powered ships and highspeed wind-driven ships, we have a chance to rejuvenate our ancient riverports, which were the centres of our commerce in ages past. That is why we must restart a project that has been centuries in the making: the *Danube-Odra-Elbe Canal*, and extend it towards the Tisza River. We can thus make it into a pan-Carpathian project, connecting all the peoples of "*Europe of the Carpathians*".

Roads, railways and canals: modest requests from our youth for an ambitious reason. In 2023 we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the *Carpathian Euroregion*, established in 1993. As we celebrate the past and consider the future in the present, let us look forwards towards the next thirty years. How will the "*Europe of the Carpathians*" look like in 2053? The second half of the 21st century will be an era of flying cars, vacuum tube trains and spaceports. If we can first build the right roads, railways and canals, using these strong foundations, we will be able to focus on future technologies. The mission of our ambitious young generation is clear: by the 2050s, we need to make the Carpathian region the most liveable area in Central Europe. By 2075, the European Union. By 2100, our planet Earth. With the EU Agency for the Space Programme based in Prague and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology based in Budapest, we, Carpathians, are in a prime position to take our rightful place in the history books: from crossroads onward towards the gateway of Europe, our world and our solar system. All it takes is the right ping and choosing the untrodden road. Onwards and upwards, *Carpathia*!



Carpathian Women

The panel was moderated by **Lucie Szymanowska, a translator and journalist**, who said the discussion would revolve around the challenges faced by women in Central Europe.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Member of the European Parliament, participating in the online discussion, said:

(...) when I entered the European Parliament in 2014, I made the decision to be on the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. I looked at feminism as a need to take action to support women and develop their capabilities. This is because I believe our task in this modern world should be to look for solutions that will allow women to fully realise themselves and, therefore, develop those skills and competencies that are most relevant to them.

The speaker stressed that it was essential to introduce solutions enabling women to achieve not only professional goals but also family fulfilment and to combine both effectively. Jadwiga Wiśniewska emphasised that a woman who stays at home to raise children was also doing work:

However, I would like us to pay attention to the linguistic layer so that we do not get used to the situation when someone says in our presence that a woman does not work because she sits at home and raises children. There is no more responsible and socially valuable work than raising children. This is the work of the public.

In the context of the attitude of Polish authorities towards women, Jadwiga Wiśniewska stressed:



Participants of the panel *Carpathian Women*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

(...) certainly, Poland is an example that women, especially in the conservative party, have the opportunity to realise their ambitions in the political, and economic arena.

Klára Mándli, an analyst with the National Assembly of Hungary, said:

Nowadays, the interpretation of feminism poses a serious problem for thinkers because today, feminism embraces extreme values. Contrary to left-liberal views, no one expects women to stay at home or devote themselves solely to raising children. This is a misconception, a misinterpretation of the conservative understanding of the role of women. Women can make decisions. This is a crucial thing. Contrary to liberals' perceptions, conservatives do not want to banish women to the kitchen. They simply do not forget women's instincts and their innate qualities.

Klára Mándli also read a letter from John Paul II written on the occasion of the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, in which he emphasised the diversity of women's qualities and roles.



Participants of the panel *Carpathian Women*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

Marlena Małąg, Minister of Family and Social Policy, said:

(We women – editor’s note) perform routine tasks flowing from the heart, primarily from the role assigned to us in society. Our primary role, the role of every woman, is to create warmth in the home so that our families can thrive.

Referring to the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Marlena Małąg underlined that the Polish state, Polish families, and Polish women passed the test of humanity, as shown by the aid offered to war refugees:

Poland has opened its doors, opened its hearts – the legal residence of Ukrainian citizens, mainly Ukrainian women with children (...), more than 5 million people admitted through the Polish border, PESEL numbers assigned to about 1 million 300 thousand people and, above all, the opening of the labour market. (...) We also help through the benefits system.



Vysoká Mountain, Slovakia

Marlena Małąg also mentioned the pro-family policy that the Polish Government introduced in 2015. The Minister stressed that thanks to that policy, a strong position was being built for women who could combine professional and family life without diminishing the exceptional value of the family sphere. In that context, the speaker pointed out:

The state should create systemic, comprehensive solutions to support families and, above all, change the mentality.

Krystyna Wróblewska, President of the Carpathian Women's Association, admitted that when the Association was founded in early 2022, no one suspected its



activities would coincide with the outbreak of war in Ukraine. As the speaker emphasised, the organisation's goal was to support conservative women in various areas of society. After the outbreak of war, the Association's priority became helping Ukrainian women:

We, women, know our place. Indeed, our conservatism also stems from the fact that we want to cooperate with our husbands and parliamentary colleagues, and we are a kind of community.

Oleena Kopanchuk, MP, Deputy Chairman of the Budget Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, stressed that women understood very well what

constituted real-life values. Justice is a value particularly close to their hearts. In that context, the speaker pointed out that:

(...) it is very important for women to be active in social and political life, especially political life, because we feel, we see some differences as there were some limitations before. Women are mighty, so they must have equal rights and the same opportunities to realise themselves. Thus, when a woman acts in the public sphere, she is followed by people; people follow those values that a woman embodies.

This is why women need to be active in social life, especially in political life, because they can perfectly balance rights and values, and this allows justice to be achieved.

Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács, Hungary's Ambassador to Poland, assured that Hungary stood in solidarity with Ukraine during the ongoing war. In this context, she conveyed that a unique program for treating children in Hungarian hospitals had been launched. Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács also pointed out the need to overcome the language barrier that hindered the integration of Ukrainian children in Hungarian schools. The speaker addressed social issues and said the Hungarian constitution explicitly supported families and children. That's why when a conservative party took power in Hungary in 2010, it became clear that the middle class could not be strengthened without family-friendly policies:

(...) our family assistance, which has already exceeded five per cent of GDP in ten years, is currently the largest family support in the European Union. For a long time, France led the way, but thanks to such generous support for housing policy, we have just crossed the five per cent threshold.



Many thanks for the invitation to participate in the panel. I always appreciate such valuable conversations among women from the Carpathian region, and I am glad these meetings have already resulted in concrete actions more than once.

First, I would like to mention St. John Paul II and briefly explain why Hungarians refer to the figure of the Polish Pope so often. For Hungarians who grew up in the 1980s, the first Pole they ever heard of was St. John Paul II. When I was growing up in those years, he was referred to as „our Pope” and treated almost like a Hungarian.

Turning to the critical issue of the war in Ukraine, we Hungarians have been unequivocally in solidarity with Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict, and we are very aware as a nation that we must provide assistance to Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war. To date, Hungary, a country of nearly ten million people, has taken in more than 950,000 refugees from across the Northeastern border. This is an enormous scale of assistance.

It is worth noting what role women have played in helping those in need from the very beginning. For example, Hungarian President Katalin Novák, a mother of three, travelled to Ukraine with humanitarian aid shortly after the conflict broke out. The Hungarian Justice Minister, Judit Varga, also raising three children, had already welcomed a refugee family into her home during the first week of fighting in the East. Our diplomatic post in Warsaw has not remained indifferent to the situation in Ukraine either. The Embassy initiated a fundraiser for a Zamość-based association that cares for children with disabilities and has taken children with disabilities from Ukraine under its wing. We visited mothers with these children on the spot. I will not forget our conversations with them. Experiencing the drama of fighting, fleeing, the fear of falling bombs, and unexpected bangs – all that still remains a massive trauma for



Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács, Hungary's Ambassador to Poland

them. Equally challenging for those people was moving to Poland with their children with disabilities and finding a suitable doctor there. Our Embassy is in constant contact with the association.

In Hungary, humanitarian benefits are similar to those implemented in Poland. A special program has been launched to treat Ukrainian children in Hungarian hospitals. Unfortunately, the integration of Ukrainian children is hampered to the extent that a language barrier separates them from their Hungarian peers. This is a problem for all of us to solve. In such a situation, it becomes clear that we are tasked with opening our hearts even more to those in need.

When it comes to the issue of family-oriented assistance, it is also another long process in Hungary. When the conservative government took power in 2010, its goal was to strengthen the middle class, which cannot be done without adequate family-friendly policies. A woman must be given a choice: she can take care of raising her children at home, which is very valuable, or she can return to work, which a flexible system should allow her to do. A wide range of options is essential here. Appropriations for pro-family assistance have exceeded 5 per cent of Hungary's GDP in 10 years. Among the GDP

of all European Union countries, this is now the largest percentage. However, on the topic of family-friendly policies, the most important thing seems to be the mentality. Every child has the right to be born. It is vital for young people not to delay starting a family because the earlier a woman has her first child, the more her chances of having more offspring increase. Hungary's constitution clearly defines support for families and children. It recognizes that the family is made up of only a man and a woman; the mother is a woman and the father is a man. Changing the mentality is undoubtedly a multi-year process. With regard to family-friendly policies, I also want to mention the highly positive cooperation between Poland and Hungary in this area. The Polish Government has introduced a tax break for those under 26. Hungary introduced the same solution. In contrast, subsidising the purchase of apartments by young families is an idea of the Hungarian Government on which the Polish Government has also modelled itself. Hence, we can talk about the exchange of various practices between the Governments of the two countries.

Dam on the Łomnica river, Karpacz, Poland





View on Lake Synevyr, Ukraine



Women in the Modern World

In discussing the role of women in the modern world, it is worth recalling the thought of Pope John Paul II in his *Letter to Women*, promulgated on 10 July 1995, in connection with the Fourth UN International Conference: „For a woman expresses the deep calling of her life, precisely by sacrificing herself for others every day. Perhaps even more than a man sees a man because she sees him with her heart. She sees him regardless of various ideological or political alignments. She sees him in his greatness and limitations and seeks to reach out to him and come to his aid.”

These words say a lot about us women. We work for others – family, society – and the better we can read the needs of others, the more fruitful our work is.

The sacrifice that John Paul II spoke of is exceptionally close to a woman's vision of vocation. Each of us naturally gets involved in tasks where we help with our knowledge, experience and hearts so that we contribute to the development of the common good. We perform our professional duties while being mothers and wives at the same time. Therefore, it is important that women meet with understanding, assistance and facilitation in the period of intensity of caregiving activities and reconciliation of various responsibilities. This is especially important today, when we are struggling – as is the case throughout Europe – with a low fertility rate and progressively ageing population.

Situation of women on the labour market in Poland

Today Poland is one of the countries with the lowest unemployment rate in the European Union. It should be remembered that, when we joined the Union, our country's unemployment rate was the highest of all the countries in the bloc. In 2021, the labour force participation rate for women aged 20–64 was nearly 71 per cent, increasing by



Marlena Małag, Minister of Family and Social Policy

almost 8.5 percentage points in 10 years. At the time, the EU average for this growth was just over 5 percentage points.

This means the female labour force participation rate is only 2.2 percentage points below the EU average. By contrast, Poland's employment rate for women aged 20–64 last year was higher than the EU average for the first time, at 68.4 per cent, compared to 67.7 per cent in the EU.

An essential element in levelling the playing field is bridging the so-called „wage gap,” i.e. the difference between men's and women's wages. In 2020, the gap was 4.5 per cent in Poland, compared to the EU average of 13 per cent.

Programs serving the family

We have launched special programs to help women and their families raise their children. „Family 500 Plus”, „Good Start”, family care capital, subsidies for the stay of a child in care institutions for children up to three years old – these are supportive

programs for families, for which we have already allocated approx. PLN 212 billion since 2016.

Increasing the territorial availability of childcare places is also an important element of the United Right government's family policy. Indeed, the lack of this availability is one of the obstacles cited by women in their decision to expand their families. That's why we are developing the „Toddler Plus” program, thanks to which more nurseries and children's clubs are being built across the country. In 2015, they offered care spaces for less than 85,000 children, and now their respective number is up to 230,000. Between 2016 and 2021, we allocated more than PLN 2.1 billion for that purpose.

Our task is to introduce such facilities that will comprehensively help women combine work and family life, including, in the current situation, during the ongoing crisis caused by the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

Aid provided to women of Ukraine

We perfectly understand the suffering and difficult situation faced by separated families from Ukraine. Therefore, our task is to build an active coalition for Ukrainian women. A good example of such actions was set by the First Lady, Mrs. Agata Kornhauser-Duda, who joined in bringing the assistance. The Polish Government has shown from the very beginning that it is ready to support its neighbours at the moment of greatest danger.

We have ensured the safety of millions of Ukrainian citizens, primarily women and children, fleeing the terror of war. We have adopted the provisions of a special law that regulates the stay of Ukrainian citizens in Poland. Those who have remained in our country can apply for a PESEL number, which entitles them to benefits, including from the „Family 500 Plus” program, in the same manner, and on the same terms as Polish citizens. With the children of Ukraine in mind, we have also simplified the rules for establishing new care institutions and new care places in existing nurseries, children's clubs and daycare centres. Above all, however, we simplified the rules for hiring Ukrainian citizens because we wanted them to be able to start work as soon as possible.

Thanks to the measures taken, we have become an example of a solidarity state, a state that cares about the common good.



Carpathian Mountains range in winter, Poland



Collegium Carpathicum – inter-university cooperation

The panel was moderated by **Jan Malicki, Director of the University of Warsaw's Study of Eastern Europe**, who introduced the audience to the idea of the Collegium Carpathicum project and the universities involved.

Paweł Trefler, Rector of the State College of Eastern Europe (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Wschodnioeuropejska) in Przemyśl, spoke about the cooperation of the college he represented with the universities that made up the Collegium Carpathicum. The Rector pointed out that a key aspect of those activities was the popularisation of science and the historical and social legacy associated with the Carpathian Region. He went on to stress that learning about the cultural achievements of the countries that made up the Carpathian area was highly significant in the process of building a Central European identity:

We should unite, we should cooperate, and we should instil this awareness of our achievements, of our history within the Carpathian Region, or more broadly – Central Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, even hooking up with the Balkans.

In this context, the speaker expressed hope that the project would continue and that more universities would join. Paweł Trefler also referred to the ongoing war in Ukraine. He spoke of the mental support and concrete actions that had been taken in Przemyśl by the academic community – whom he represented – to help the fleeing refugees.

Ihor Tsependa, the Rector of the Vasyl Stefanyk Transcarpathian National University, pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the cooperation of the universities that made up the Collegium Carpathicum, and now many projects could not be logistically implemented because of the war in Ukraine:



Participants of the panel *Collegium Carpathicum – inter-university cooperation*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

Our task now is to think about how to build a new platform for relations within the Collegium Carpathicum which, regardless of the pandemic effects and the fact that there was a war going on, must develop a formula to allow us not to lose the momentum we had planned.

Ihor Tsependa thanked the Polish side for its support in implementing projects within the framework of the Collegium Carpathicum, which was crucial to Ukraine. He reported that, within a few weeks, modern meteorological equipment would be installed at the Observatory International Research Centre on Mount Pop Ivan to enable research:

We are conducting research that deals with meteorology and that will deal with ecology – related to the environment and biodiversity, which is directly in the Carpathian National Park. This really allows us to talk about influential research.



Participants of the panel *Collegium Carpathicum – inter-university cooperation*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

The speaker also mentioned the Ukraine-Poland Academic Exchange Centre, which is being built in Mikulichyn, Ukraine, focusing on educating the new generation of the Carpathian Region and creating a joint Polish-Ukrainian platform that other countries from the European Union and the post-Soviet space could join:

We need to create a community that will begin to think not in territorial terms: how to steal territory from someone, but in terms of what unites, in terms of how to prevent those who can disrupt the order we have been creating together for decades – a peaceful and democratic one.

Volodymyr Chernetskyi, Head of the Ivano-Frankivsk Region's Emergency Management Board, talked about the Polish-Ukrainian mountain rescue station operating in the Observatory building. The speaker pointed out that it was located next to one of the most popular hiking trails in Chernohora, which automatically reduces emergency response time. Volodymyr Chernetskyi pointed out that the location of the

refuge in a specific natural setting was an opportunity for rescuers to improve their skills:

Rescuers from Poland, Ukraine, and other countries come to the station and train there. We have developed a proper operation methodology and are preparing our rescuers, people who want to work in the mountains. We also work with volunteers, and NGOs, taking part not only in training activities but also directly in rescue operations.

In this context, Volodymyr Chernetskyi underlined that the station operated within the framework of the European avalanche testing system, which made it possible to use modern technologies in the work of rescuers. Finally, he indicated that cooperation with the University of Warsaw, the University of Transcarpathia, and rescuers from Poland was possible, necessary, and needed.

Čachtice Castle, Little Carpathians, Slovakia





The end of the world as we knew it. Leadership across boundaries. Poland, Three Seas, Europe

The panel was moderated by **Michał Łuczewski, President of the Board of Directors of the Three-Seas Association**, who presented the view that authentic leadership was born in crisis management.

Piotr Gliński, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Culture and National Heritage, pointed out that the war in Ukraine was a reference point for almost all debates and discussions held at the Economic Forum and for any analysis on new political formats and new leadership format in Europe:

There is undoubtedly a clash of powerful forces at the moment, and very different ones, so it remains to be seen what will emerge from this. On the other hand, I think we can all agree that there is a sense that a new geopolitical order will emerge. I hope a new Europe will also be created. (...) The new Europe that should be forged must be forged not only with the partnership but also with the leadership of Eastern Europe.

Piotr Gliński noted that the war triggered by Russia had made the world aware of two things: what the Russian Federation actually was and that the foundation for the survival of political communities was the willingness to sacrifice one's life for the homeland. The speaker stressed that Ukraine had changed the global deal thanks to its defensive posture. He further pointed out that while Western Europe was taken entirely by surprise by the outbreak of the conflict, Poland and other countries in the region had prepared for the war:

We built our independent energy policy, security policy, and many other political formats. We were involved in the Three Seas Initiative and made those formats of ours



Participants of the panel *The end of the world as we knew it. Leadership across boundaries.* Poland, Three Seas, Europe, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

because we knew the threat was real. This is a wholly different approach and, therefore, more politically mature than the one (...) in Western Europe.

Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka, President of the Bank of National Economy, stressed that not only Europe but also the whole world was in a disturbed comfort zone as a result of the war in Ukraine:

Due to shattering this comfort zone, the crisis we are in is incomparable to any crisis we have faced – neither the financial crisis nor the post-World War II crisis because the conditions and time are completely different.

The speaker pointed to two types of crises: 1) security which touches on cyber security, energy security, and food security, and 2) leadership consisting of decision-making. According to the President, times of crisis are times of leadership requiring the ability to make quick and decisive decisions regarding the social as well as economic

and business spheres. In that context, Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka pointed out that the format for new leadership could become the Three Seas Initiative:

The Three Seas Initiative format is perhaps a format for new leadership, making bold decisions, making decisions to build the security of countries. As a region that constitutes NATO's eastern flank, we know what Russia is. We understand what threat it poses to us as well. Unless we are united, none of these countries can win any war.

Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka emphasised that decisive leadership and social capital could prove to be factors that constitute an advantage and construct a strong state.

Ján Hudacký, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Prešov, drew attention to the crisis of morality of the new times, manifested in a departure from fundamental values. He assessed the combination of the new paradigm of global networks and narrow interests as a tool for the gradual introduction of ultraliberal policies in the world. This phenomenon is gradually penetrating the Central and Eastern European Region based on Christian foundations. Ján Hudacký stressed that the dictatorship of relativisation of values, which is evident, must be stopped – it was being carried out in institutionalised form by the European Union and the UN, as this was where new legislative projects supporting perverse ideas were emerging:

I see that Poland (...) could be an actual leader in protecting inherent, fundamental values. I think we could build beneficial cooperation on this basis. That's because if we neglect it, overlook it, and act as if everything is fine – which it's not – it can divide us more than bring us together.

Ján Hudacký also indicated that the countries of the Three Seas Initiative should work on a concrete concept of economic cooperation to increase their leadership in Europe.

Maciej Ruczaj, Director of the Polish Institute in Prague, stressed that slogans were the glue that bound the countries of Central Europe and the Three Seas Initiative Region together: „God, Honour, Homeland” and „For Our Freedom and Yours,” as well as a deeper understanding of the situation in Ukraine. According to the speaker, awareness of the diversity and dissimilarity of individual countries, while at the same



Rail viaduct, Silesian Beskids, Poland

time looking for common denominators, was an opportunity to increase the leadership of Central and Eastern Europe and the Three Seas Initiative countries in Europe:

Treating the region, the Visegrad Group or the Three Seas Region as a kind of monolith is obviously wrong and can only lead to problems, as we will immediately expose ourselves to the charge of Polish cultural imperialism. We are very different, which doesn't mean we can't find some common points on which to build.

Wojciech Kaczmarczyk, the Director of the National Freedom Institute, addressed the issue of including NGOs in a multifaceted way in the crisis shield during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also pointed out that since the outbreak of the war, regular consultative meetings have been held between representatives of many ministries



and NGOs helping Ukrainians. Wojciech Kaczmarczyk noted that the development of civil society had to be sustainable:

If we are serious about the development of civil society, this development has to be balanced and take account of all those who were present in the sector and wanted to work for the development of civil society.

The speaker added that Poland's model for supporting the third sector could serve as an example for the Three Seas Initiative countries. According to Wojciech Kaczmarczyk, the leadership of Central and Eastern Europe on the European stage could be built through dialogue and deliberate entering into cooperation with various organisations, taking into consideration the diverse cultural, political, and historical experiences of the individual countries.

Bartłomiej Pawlak, Deputy President of the Board of the Polish Development Fund, referred to the shielding measures for the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed at 450,000 Polish companies, which the institution he represented was able to undertake within three weeks. He went on to point out that the speed and effectiveness of such activities depended on the team that implements them, and on cooperation with other entities:

It is crucial to determine what kind of team is behind us, how much we are able to delegate work, how much we are able to motivate the team, how much we trust these people, how much we are able to be a lone leader, and how much we work in a group and are able to motivate these people and thank them for their work.

In this context, Bartłomiej Pawlak thanked the banks operating in Poland that responded to the Polish Development Fund's bond issue. He went on to point out that Poland was a country that was capable of responding to crises, as exemplified by the reception of large numbers of refugees from Ukraine:

Poland is able to cope with crises. There is no fear that we will be somewhere in the tail because, instead, we are in the vanguard of those who can respond to the crisis, who can mobilise, who can welcome home 2 million Ukrainians without procedures, without organisation, without the state behind it because the state only came in later.

Bartłomiej Pawlak expressed hope for Central and Eastern Europe to play a more significant role on the international stage.

Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka
President of the Bank of National Economy



Niels Bohr, an eminent atomic physicist, once said that if someone was introduced to quantum physics and it did not frighten him, he clearly did not understand it. These words can be aptly translated into today's geopolitical situation – we have a crisis but may not understand its complexity at all.

There have been several global crises in recent decades, some of which have been financially motivated. The crisis we are facing now has two dimensions. On the one

Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka, President of the Bank of National Economy



hand, it is a broad security crisis, involving energy, digital or food. On the other hand, we can observe a leadership crisis. It is strongly linked to the first dimension, as policymakers' choices will determine how quickly and effectively we deal with energy, infrastructure or broken supply chain challenges.

In times of crisis, society requires appropriate yet responsible leadership consisting of quick and decisive decisions that lead the country in the right direction. These decisions are not limited to politicians but also involve decision-makers from institutions with a broader influence on the economy or business.

There is a study that shows the average rate of decision-making on the same issue in the world's largest economies. In China, it takes 3–4 days, in the United States 1–1.5 months, and in the European Union 14 to 18 months. Let this indicate how much work we still have to do in the context of leadership building.

At the same time, solidarity must be our common weapon in times of crisis. This is well illustrated in our region, which is the Eastern Flank of NATO. We knew about the threat posed by Russia much earlier. We need to shatter our comfort zone, and we need to understand that the crisis is at our gates. Therefore, the necessity of reunification is non-negotiable. No country can win any war on its own.



War correspondents from the countries of Europe of the Carpathians about the war in Ukraine

The panel was moderated by **Jacek Przybylski, an author of correspondence from the U.S., Iraq, Afghanistan, and Chad, a columnist for the Do Rzeczy weekly and the Kurier.plus portal**. At the beginning of the discussion, the moderator noted that the panellists were brave people who risked their lives to go to war to provide verified and reliable information from the very centre of the conflict.

Ron Haviv, a reporter and photographer, stressed that the war in Ukraine was, in fact, a battle between the West and Russia and admitted that it was one of the most critical moments of history he had documented in his more than 30-year career of covering conflicts from nearly 30 countries around the world. Ron Haviv pointed out that while journalists could not stop the war, they were able to document war crimes and provide reliable information to the public, and thus contributed to educating the public. The reporter then relayed that international organizations were working with Russian journalists to improve the flow of information.

International organisations were working with Russian journalists to somehow improve this information situation because, after all, the public needed to understand and know what was really going on, including (...)what was being delivered to Ukrainians in aid.

Paweł Bobołowicz, Head of Radio Wnet's Eastern Editorial Department, reminded that the war in Ukraine had not been going on since 24 February this year but for nine years, and the topic of this conflict was close to Polish journalists.

We are aware, not only as journalists but also as a society, that we perceive this war as particularly close: this is not a war in a foreign country – this is a war at our friends

(...). From the first days, this is war simply at the people closest to us, those who live next to us, whom we have welcomed into our homes.

Paweł Bobołowicz then stressed that Polish journalists who reported on the ongoing conflict just across our eastern border were characterised by their reliability:

(...) it is essential for us, Polish journalists, who report on this conflict, because we know from the premise that we are close to this conflict (...), our state does not deceive anyone and talks about the community of interests with Ukraine. We do not seek common interests with the Russian Federation, we do not try to explain every crime on the frontline from the Russian perspective, and we do not ask Russian soldiers why they committed crimes in Bucha or Irpin. In fact, we immediately adopt the Ukrainian point of view – all the more reason for us to be reliable, including reliability that, for example, speaks about our emotions because I do not believe (...) that a journalist and correspondent could be devoid of emotions.

The speaker pointed out that if the media stopped reporting on the war, it became accepted. He also referred to Russian propaganda, whose activities were based on various methods:

Russian propaganda is not only saying that Russia is great, Russia is wonderful, but also undermines the credibility of the West in various ways (...); sometimes this propaganda can even be critical of Russia.

Paweł Bobołowicz also pointed out that people who succumbed to Russian propaganda were highly averse to dissenting opinions, so discussion with them was extremely difficult.

Matyáš Zrno, Editor-in-Chief of the Konzervativní noviny portal and Head of TV Prima's Foreign Editorial Department, relayed that the Czech press was clearly on the Ukrainian side. He also reported that some 3,000 refugees found refuge in the Czech Republic in the first weeks of the war. The country also provided humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine, including through the arms transfer. Regarding the prospects for ending the war, Matyáš Zrno stated:



Participants of the panel *War correspondents from the countries of Europe of the Carpathians about the war in Ukraine, Karpacz, 8 September 2022*

A great deal depends on the state of the Russian economy, on how it will be weakened by sanctions – current and, perhaps, future; on how it will be weakened by energy prices unfavourable to Russia.

Oleksiy Honcharuk, a military journalist and filmmaker, asserted in his online speech that, since the first days of the war, Ukraine had felt great support from the entire world community, including when it comes to the media and the very well conducted information policy. He pointed out that the task of journalists was to describe the events in which they participated so that they could guide the thinking of people following them from afar.

Oleksiy Honcharuk stressed that Ukrainians were grateful to the European community for correctly assessing the war, although it was sometimes tough to verify what was true and what was false. In his speech, he also addressed the issue of ending the war. He stated:

Russia will never leave Ukraine – we know this because it is in Ukraine that it is building its history. Kyiv is classically referred to as the mother of Russian cities. They will never leave it, and this issue with Russia must be resolved cardinally.

According to Oleksiy Honcharuk, the most important thing is for Ukraine to repel aggression patiently and for European politicians to understand that if the country collapses, Vladimir Putin will move for more territory:

We must be patient, and we must believe in our strength and endure, even if it takes a long time, for several years. This is difficult but, as history shows, this is the only way we can completely free Ukraine (...) and stop this aggression.

Rural landscape at sunset near Bran, Transylvania, Romania





The thematic block in which I participated was held on 8 September. And on 7, I was in the combat zone: I finished work on the documentary film “Soul of Armor-2022” about the events of the current stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war – after 24 February. And that is why I was interested in comparing the perception of the war by fellow journalists from other countries, especially since they had been in many hot spots before.

I remember how one of the participants in the discussion said that our military treated journalists politely but very carefully when they checked documents and equipment. I then briefly explained that journalistic work and information security interests converged here. Information security in this situation must be given an undisputed priority because no country has felt the danger of being hit by a missile at any point of the territory at any time. The aggressor’s weapon shoots several thousand kilometres.

During the days of the Conference, a successful operation continued on the territory of the Kharkiv region, which was preceded by “informational silence”. As a journalist, I understand that my colleagues want to receive information as early as possible. But as an officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, I say that the main priority is victory on the battlefield. I agree that it limits the activities of journalists, but they have many topics to pay attention to in this war.

As for direct military actions, here, in my opinion, the principle of “finished history” should be followed. That is, it is necessary to talk about the events that took place and have a result so as not to harm the actions of the Ukrainian military. For example, the documentary “Soul of armor-2022. The Flame of Chernihiv region” is dedicated to the defence of the northern borders of Ukraine. The film tells about the events from February 24 (when a full-scale invasion took place) to the beginning of April (when the Ukrainian army forced the enemy to leave the territory of the Chernihiv region). Currently, the film is being translated into Polish.



Online connection with Oleksiy Honcharuk, military journalist and filmmaker

And there are many more “civilian” topics that war provides. Many people lost their homes, changed their way of life, and organised help for both military and civilians...

And we see that foreign journalists pay attention to a range of topics. For that, I want to thank them on behalf of all defenders of Ukraine. Undoubtedly, everyone has their own view of events, as they say, their own truth. But in the vast majority of journalistic positions and comments, we hear a common idea: the aggressor – the Russian Federation – is to blame for this war. Russia is waging a senseless and bloody war, in which foreigners and its people die. Until Russia gets rid of the imperial idea on the mental level its rulers and other citizens, wars, in particular against Ukraine, will occur regularly. And the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, is considered by the aggressor to be the common cradle of the common people, which means that it is his historic property. It has the same encroachments on Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia... And thanks to mass media, we have to tell all nations that we have to force Russia to change its aggressive policy.



Ukraine – and what's next?

Reconstruction, transformation, human resources

The panel was moderated by **Jerzy Kwieciński, Vice President of the Management Board of Bank Pekao S.A.** He pointed out that aid to Ukraine after the war would not be limited to rebuilding the damage but will also aim to transform the country and prepare it for membership in the European Union.

Jan Malicki, Director of Eastern European Studies at Warsaw University, mentioned the planned Europe of the Carpathians Institute, which would also train state and local government personnel for Ukraine. The Director stressed that creating cadres was just as important as sending weapons and providing direct aid to Ukraine:

(...) we plan to educate others in the future as needed, not only citizens of Ukraine but maybe also Belarus, Georgia, Moldova or other countries. (...) the general premise is: to help Ukraine prepare young, new cadres to manage the state.

Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse representing the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Warsaw said that, based on recent U.S. budget decisions regarding military support for Ukraine, one could conclude that the war would last even a few years. In this context, the speaker emphasised that the primary perspective was:

to supply armaments and financial assistance for Ukraine to cope with the day-to-day tasks of state maintenance and the military effort.

In addition, Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse noted that for Ukraine to be strong, it had to be connected to Central Europe. Only in this way would its accession to the European Union be accelerated:



Participants of the panel *Ukraine – and what's next? Reconstruction, transformation, human resources*, Karpacz, 8 September 2022

The reconstruction of Ukraine, the rebuilding of its potential, could be realised, it seems, by strengthening cooperation, integration in Central and Eastern Europe, such as within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative. This is beneficial in terms of speeding up the process of Ukraine's accession to the European Union.

Władysław Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, noted that regional self-government is vital from the point of view of the reconstruction, development, and transformation of Ukraine. The Marshal recalled that all local governments in Poland had a say in using pre-accession funds. Additionally:

Local governments were knowledgeable and competent in programming, preparing various types of strategic and operational documents, implementing the funds and using them in the construction and investment process.

Władysław Ortyl also assured that local governments were ready to transfer their good practices to Ukraine. At the same time, he stressed that it was important to be aware that if Ukraine were to be rebuilt, it would not just undergo reconstruction:

It had to be a certain leap, going forward and implementing new solutions, taking innovative actions in all areas of the economy and social development.

Mykhaylo Khariy of the Centre for Transformation reported that a team had been formed that was organisationally and intellectually capable of carrying out the transformation process:

Our team is now developing a new concept, which is necessary to carry out the transformation process, and create a new knowledge transfer system. Modern technology gives us an opportunity to approach this process in a completely different way.

Mykhaylo Khariy stressed that the system was to be based on the experience of specific people who had participated in the transformation process. He also assured the entire Ukrainian nation wanted to move toward European integration. The speaker further expressed hope for making Ukraine part of the Euro-Atlantic community. However, he stressed that Ukraine's victory in the war remained a priority at present.

Oleena Shulak, Member of the Verkhovna Rada and Chairperson of the Servant of the People Party, who participated in the debate in an online format, noted that Ukraine was much more valuable to the European Union as a reliable partner than a few million skilled workers. In this context, the MP stressed that it was now imperative for European countries to have a policy supporting Ukrainian citizens in their return to their homeland so that they could participate in the reconstruction of the country:

We believe such reconstruction would take place on a full scale and unite the country. For this, we need millions of people highly skilled in various spheres of activity to ensure the comfortable and safe construction of our cities and the renewal of our country's economy.

The speaker stressed that the Ukrainian government was not only ensuring the decentralisation of this reconstruction but also continuing the urban reforms adopted several years ago. In addition, it was focused on increasing energy efficiency, environmental issues, and modernization in line with accessibility and barrier-free principles.

Taras Stetskiv, Member of the Verkhovna Rada, also speaking online, pointed out that the ongoing war was generating problems but also new opportunities, and Ukraine had a chance to modernise its economy and transform itself – in terms of institutions – into a Western-style state:



Lake Vidraru, Romania

Such successful modernisation would exemplify the victory of liberal democracy in Eastern Europe. This would have tremendous significance not only for the post-Soviet or post-Russian space but also for the entire Eurasian space, as it will be a successful example of how a democratic state could overcome an authoritarian state.

According to Taras Stetskiv, the development of Ukraine's reform plan should begin at the level of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council and consider Ukrainian realities. The speaker also noted the need to understand Ukrainian peculiarity:

It consists in the fact that we are always on the border of civilisation, which will determine the specifics of Ukraine's transformation model for a long period of time. On the one hand, we have the Western European model and, on the other, the Eastern European model.



As Taras Stetskiv reported, it could be forecast that Ukraine, if it used the Western model as a benchmark, would be able to economically match at least other Eastern European countries by 2030–2032.

Daniel Fried, former U.S. Ambassador to Poland and a representative of the Atlantic Council, referred in his online speech to a report prepared by the German Marshall Fund titled *Designing Ukraine's Recovery*, published a few days earlier, which focuses on the issues of Ukraine's reconstruction and the involvement of Western European countries in the process. Daniel Fried noted that the document lacked knowledge of Poland's potential role as a great friend of Ukraine, which has experience in the transition process:

Poland shows that such a transformation is possible. The Polish model is a good model for Ukraine. Undoubtedly, Ukrainian conditions are different when it comes to details, but overall, the Polish model is a good model and Poland, in particular, needs to be at the table when the West organises plans to transform and rebuild Ukraine.

At the same time, the speaker stressed that current Polish-Ukrainian relations were the best. According to him, the Ukrainian government, during talks with the European Union, Germany and the United States, should make it clear that Poland and the Baltic countries must take an important place in Western organisations that will deal with the reconstruction and transformation of Ukraine.

Andrzej Szejna, a Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, noted at the outset:

The Ukrainian issue is one that unites us in Poland, Europe, the world, and the European Union. It unites us not only because of values, a sense of responsibility for humanitarianism, for the world we live in today, and the new global relations to be arranged according to the principles we have been creating for centuries (...), and these principles and these values are being torn down by Russia today.

The MP indicated that Ukraine should transform its legal system and economic system. High-tech, cyber security, and renewable energy were also important aspects. The speaker stressed that European Union Member States, based on their experience, should prepare Ukraine to be a full member of the Community. According to the MP, a joint grant and loan plan should be created to reconstruct Ukraine. The return of Ukrainians to their homeland was also a priority to avoid the demographic problem.



Reconstruction of Ukraine must be a big step forward

When we started the „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference series initiated by Marshal Marek Kuchciński more than 11 years ago, we had high hopes and expectations for the development of our Carpathian regions. The idea was to share experiences, good practices, and planning for the even development of the regions of Central and Eastern Europe. It was hard to think that, after 20 years, we would come to debate warfare in successive conferences. We wanted to plan for the future, realise our dreams, and develop our Carpathian regions; meanwhile, today, we stand in solidarity with the bestially attacked Ukraine and wonder how to help it. We are still not giving up on our plans, but we have to lean today on the fate of our Carpathian neighbours.

We support Ukraine strongly and hope that this senseless war will end as soon as possible – although it is difficult at present to find even the slightest indication that such a scenario will come true. Nonetheless, we must already be thinking and planning carefully about what Europe, Ukraine, and the Carpathian regions will look like after the end of hostilities.

Ukraine's outbreak of war certainly surprised many observers of the political scene. The Poles, however, behaved magnificently. I wanted to note that our society, Voivode's services, local governments, and NGOs have worked wonderfully together. This excellent synergy was sometimes launched through unofficial channels. Everything worked, and, as a result, the process of accepting refugees and caring for them became a phenomenon. I have been to the Polish-Ukrainian border many times and have seen plenty of excellent examples of this. I think we were prepared for this by the great Solidarity movement because the way Poles behaved towards Ukraine was an unconditional reflex of solidarity with a capital „S.”

I am aware that this is not the panel's topic, but I want to mention briefly that we have already donated more than PLN 3 million to Ukraine's aid-providing local



Włodysław Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship

governments and the Regional Social Assistance Centre. We have also set aside funds from our Podkarpackie Regional Operational Programme, although these are funds from the REACT-EU mechanism, which was intended to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are still waiting for European funds for countries or local governments providing direct assistance to Ukraine. Everyone praises us for our commitment to this assistance but, surprisingly, there is still no such a programme. Our support for Ukraine is a wide variety of activities that are difficult to describe in one sentence.

It has been a long time since the outbreak of this war, and today we've become somewhat accustomed to this state of affairs. This is not a good phenomenon. We must remember that people are still dying there, and humanitarian aid is desperately needed. We will continue to provide this assistance to both Ukraine and refugees.

Podkarpackie, along with the Lublin Region, has been at the forefront of events as regions bordering Ukraine. Local government units served Ukrainian refugees in critical moments. We didn't ask about costs, we had to help and we did. I am glad that our health care system has passed the test and proved to be efficient. Nearly 7 million

people have passed through the Polish border. To date, more than 5 million people have already returned to Ukraine from Poland. However, these numbers show how much help, including medical, was and still is needed. At the moment, according to Poland's PESEL database, Ukrainian citizens number 1.35 million. 93 percent of this group are women and children. The government's family assistance programme, known as „500 Plus,” has already covered 421,000 children from Ukraine. I give these figures because they show the magnitude of the refugees' needs.

There are no indications of an end to the war yet but we already have to think about the future of Ukraine and, by extension, the future of the Carpathian regions.

All local governments are involved in the process of using European funds. We have experience in implementing pre-accession funds. From the level of the voivodeship government, we implement the Regional Operational Programme. Let me remind you that more than 40 per cent of the funds are absorbed in Poland by the managing institutions, i.e., the voivodeship governments. It is a decentralised process, which is a significant advantage. Therefore, we have the knowledge and full competence in programming, preparing various types of strategic and operational documents and, finally, utilising the funds, as well as controlling their implementation.

Ukraine aspires to join European structures and NATO. Accession processes are complicated, especially in terms of administrative procedures. I think many people are cheering for Ukraine to have a positive and smooth process. The country will have to introduce many reforms to bring its regulations in line with the EU. We are ready to help Ukraine prepare and implement external measures and transfer good practices. It is fundamental to have what is known as „design thinking,” i.e., to develop an investment plan for the future and to be confident in the readiness to implement projects. Such preparation of Ukraine is essential from our point of view. We have friendly regions in the country: Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odessa and Ternopil, as well as very good personnel relations – which will also be important in these processes.



Rock Town, Czech Republic



Meeting of the Program Council of Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians

On 6 September 2022, a meeting of the Program Council of Europe of the Carpathians Clubs was held in Karpacz. Chairman of the Council and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland **Marek Kuchciński** presented the idea of the Clubs. He also recalled the meeting in Budapest, where a debate between the Polish and Hungarian delegations on the vision of cooperation in Europe took place.

The Chairman pointed to the hypocrisy of information in the media space, the frequent aftermath of which is a mutual misunderstanding among European nations. In this connection, he indicated the need to create Europe of the Carpathians discussion clubs to discuss any – including complex – issues.

Maciej Szymanowski, Director of the Waclaw Felczak Polish-Hungarian Cooperation Institute, stressed that the Europe of the Carpathians Clubs served a primordial purpose so that there was communication, an intellectual hotline when large conferences were not taking place. As he pointed out, this was doubly important in this part of Europe because of the ongoing information war. It is always good to have first-hand information and know what is happening in neighbouring countries and what this part of Europe actually lives on. Director Szymanowski presented a proposal to send an appeal to people of science, culture, media, and other opinion makers.

Professor **Csaba György Kiss** of Hungary discussed a preliminary plan for an international anthology of the Carpathian Mountains, which would include selections from the region's national literature and thus show this common heritage from a multifaceted perspective. It would primarily serve as a resource for the younger generation and all interested parties. It would find application at many different levels of education.

Professor Jan Draus, a historian from the University of Rzeszów, argued that it would be best if historians, political scientists, and other academics (in particular circles, on different, pre-agreed topics) led the discussions, and politicians listened to



Meeting of the Program Council of Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians, Karpacz, 6 September 2022

them. He suggested a debate be held on Balázs Orbán's book *The Multiplication Table. A treatise on Hungarian strategic thinking*.

Mykhaylo Khariy of the Centre for Transformation said they were working with Ukraine's civil society, U.S. intellectuals and Congress members to transform Ukraine. Poland's experience is significant in this aspect, which is why Polish politicians and experts are helping to create centres of transformation, cooperation and transition.

We are trying to develop new knowledge about the transition, and this knowledge should be transferred to Ukrainian politicians and other influential members of our society who are involved in the transition process. We are working with the Americans, and at the moment, Mr Kuchciński and I are creating a channel of communication with the Americans, the Atlantic Council, and the North Atlantic Group. And we will also create a channel of communication between Ukrainian and Polish parliamentarians and between Polish and American experts. It is not a strategy for the whole region; it is a strategy for Ukraine only.

Jan Malicki, Director of the Centre for Eastern Studies, mentioned efforts to cooperate with Ukraine. One of them was the pursuit of the establishment of the Europe

of the Carpathians Institute, which was not only to train cadres for all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but also to develop elements of strategy for other countries, if there were such a demand. That way, it would be easier to create a community later on and coordinate activities over the different elements. The Director alluded to the fact that in our area of Central Europe – or more broadly, the Intermarium, the Three Seas Region – the broadest possible institutionalisation of the concept of ventures is needed. He mentioned that, in the past 30 years, there had been more than a dozen excellent ideas about the East in Poland alone, and only a few of them have survived. Without strength or enthusiasm, or persistence, or money, even the most interesting institutions and concepts will fail. And the institution offers a huge opportunity for survival.

I am honoured to be part of the creation of this concept. Fortunately, only one-third of this task fell on me, namely the creation of an international school for the training of state and local government personnel.

Krzysztof Szczerski, Poland's ambassador to the UN, conveyed that there was a chance for us to have a Carpathian, Central European exhibition during the next session of the General Assembly. It will be a session that is all the more special for the Carpathian region, as a Hungarian diplomat will be its presiding marshal. Hungary will preside over the UN General Assembly for the next year, so it is an excellent opportunity to organise an exhibition in conjunction with the conference in the spring of 2023 in New York as well.

MP **Emanuelis Zingeris** spoke about the heritage of the Republic (*Rzeczpospolita*) and the figures who built Central Europe over hundreds of years.

Dénes András Nagy of the Hungarian Institute for Strategic Studies, Ludovika National University of Public Service, Europeanist and Head of the 'Visegrad College Plus' Programme said that the future of the Carpathian Region depended on the next generation of leaders. Therefore, it would be essential to hold annual meetings of exceptional young personalities to enable them to make contacts early in their careers. The Organization of Turkic States, of which Hungary is an observer member, regularly holds such meetings. As part of the „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference, Dénes András Nagy proposed holding a special event – the Carpathian Young Leaders Forum.

Malgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, stressed that the Ministry was responsible for preparing the

Carpathian strategy and was working very hard on it. However, it needs support in convincing the Romanian and Czech sides of this initiative – and the functioning of the Clubs can foster this. Activities seeking to create another macro-regional strategy have, in a way, been put on hold due to what is happening in Ukraine today. All the while, however, efforts are being made to get the Romanians and Czechs involved. There is consensus at the regional level, but obstructionism arises at the political and governmental level.

Mykola Kniazhytskyi said that Ukraine was doing everything to become a member of the European Union. „We are already candidates and this is a challenge for the Carpathian Region. The Carpathian countries will have real influence and an authentic voice in the Union before other countries,” he argued.

Zsolt Németh, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly, noted that Marek Kuchciński was the driving force, the engine behind the idea of Europe of the Carpathians. Over the past few years, Poland has played a critical role in terms of creating this economic space through the Interreg III C Community Initiative. It has produced very concrete, practical results. The President also said that Ukraine is under attack at the moment, so Central Europe must stand behind it:

It really is a vital issue, and our support is absolutely essential. And our sovereignty is at risk, not only by Russian troops, but also by a severe economic crisis. We see energy prices climbing, inflation rising, and interest rates changing dramatically. (...) So we have to defend ourselves against this because it also threatens our sovereignty in various ways. One of the risks, for example, is instability – social tensions that are rising, we feel it. There are demonstrations across Central Europe and protests. Soon there will be elections in Poland. The kind of frustration we see in society is certainly a component, an element of this situation. Social discontent undermines our sovereignty. We also need to understand that rising debt is a huge risk. In previous years, we tried to cope somehow with pressure from the International Monetary Fund and financial institutions. That worked for us for a while but now the problem is back.

Németh also recalled a discussion in Budapest with the participation of Ryszard Terlecki, Marek Kuchciński, Maciej Szymanowski, and Balázs Orbán. He assessed that spreading the idea of Europe of the Carpathians and Polish-Hungarian relations was



Meeting of the Program Council of Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians, Karpacz, 6 September 2022

well-timed as Europe of the Carpathians Clubs proved to be very helpful in combating propaganda and misinformation.

Matyáš Zrno, editor-in-chief of the Konzervativní noviny portal, recalled the migrant crisis that had restarted the Visegrad Group. The editor assessed that today the Visegrad countries were in a similar situation as there was a war and an ongoing energy crisis.

Germany is a powerful and closest neighbour of the Czech Republic, but why couldn't we diversify and thus strengthen our economic infrastructure (...). When I came here from the Czech Republic, I realised how difficult it was to get to the Polish border by car or train. For the past 30 years, all roads have been built to the west, not south, so this is one of the few times in history when we can benefit from strengthening relations with Poland.

Professor **Marián Šuplata** stressed that our countries had to stick together.

Visegrad is a strategic necessity for all of us, and I am sorry when I hear voices to the contrary in my country or other Visegrad countries. This effort to partner with other



Green Lake (Zelene Pleso), Slovakia

countries is simply irresponsible. (...) the idea of Europe, Schuman's idea, actually rests on firm foundations (...). Not only Schuman but also Adenauer, De Gasperi. Konrad Adenauer, at a conference in Brussels in 1996, made a significant statement – that the European Community could not be a rigid corset for the member countries but should serve their development (...). This is a very important quote by Adenauer. And when I look at the text of the declaration, it seems wildly important. It should not be a rigid corset. The European Union should serve development, individual member countries, small or large, as Ambassador Szczerski has already suggested, including from the diplomatic community.



Professor **Ihor Tsependa** said that the war and the pandemic had disrupted many things, but then a good opportunity had arisen to expand the Collegium Carpathicum.

This year it is planned to complete the cross-border project Poland-Ukraine-Belarus 2012–2020, the first stage: the reconstruction of the former Warsaw University observatory on Mount Pop Ivan, an international research centre. Already this year, the observatory will start operating as a research facility since, regardless of the war, it was able to buy weather instruments under a grant (...) for sixty thousand euros. Of course, this equipment will already be at the observatory; thus, our university will contribute to the Europe of the Carpathians concept. A 2,600-metre-high observatory



The opening and presentation of the exhibition: Retrospective of the 33 conferences "Europe of the Carpathians", Karpacz, 6 September 2022

and weather station operates on Lomnický Peak in Slovakia. It will be the second meteorological station above 2,000 meters (...) and it will be a powerful research centre for Ukrainian, Polish, and, of course, Carpathian universities.

At the end of the meeting, Chairman of the Program Council Marek Kuchciński handed out diplomas to representatives of the Europe of the Carpathians Clubs.

**Message from the Program Council of the Clubs of Europe
of the Carpathians to people of science, culture, politics
and other opinion formers of Central Europe**

Karpacz, 8 September 2022

1. For the states and nations of Central Europe, European unity is a great value and a hope that must be protected and strengthened.
2. Russia's attack on Ukraine and the ongoing war cannot lead to the deepening the already existing divisions between EU member states.
3. Instead of support, solidarity, and respect for the principle of equality, Central European countries are increasingly subjected to a treatment which disregards the treaties. Federalist initiatives viewed favourably in Brussels and attempts to abolish the principle of unanimity in the European Council reveal the growing desire for the dominance of the big and strong over other nations and states, which are regarded as „Another Europe”.
4. Only by cooperating on the principle of „free with the free, and equal with the equal”, with respect for cultural diversity and national traditions, with the ability to share goods fairly and tolerate each other, the European Union will remain attractive to all its present and future members.
5. We are in favour of strengthening dialogue and cooperation across Central Europe, from the countries on the Adriatic and the Black Sea to the countries on the Baltic Sea, among others via the Europe of the Carpathians Clubs – in order to multiply the capital of mutual trust and effectively work towards achieving common goals.

Signatures

BELARUS:

Aleksandr Milinkevich

BOSNIA and HERCEGOVINA:

Franjo Topić

CZECH REPUBLIC:

Matyáš Zrno, Alexandr Vondra

LITHUANIA:

Emanuelis Zingeris

POLAND:

Marek Kuchciński, Ryszard Terlecki, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Maciej Szymanowski,
Krzysztof Szczerski, Jan Malicki, Marek Pęk, Jerzy Kwieciński, Bronisław Wildstein,
Antoni Macierewicz, Piotr Naimski, Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski,
Tomasz G. Grosse, Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Barbara Bartuś, Jan Draus,
Władysław Ortyl, Piotr Pilch, Piotr Gliński

RUSSIA:

Vladimir Ponomarev

SLOVAKIA:

Pavol Mačala, Ján Hudacký, Martin Fronc, Marián Šuplata

UKRAINE:

Oleksandr Merezhko, Mykhaylo Kharyi, Taras Stetskiv, Markiyan Malskyy,
Kulyk Ruslan, Mykola Kniazhytskyi

HUNGARY:

Zsolt Németh, Dénes András Nagy



Malá Fatra, Slovakia

Calendar of the International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians”

	1999
The then Deputy Governor of the Podkarpatie voivodeship, Marek Kuchciński, launched the „Green Carpathians” project, the aim of which was to develop Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation	

22 V	2003
Adoption in Kiev of the Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (the so-called Carpathian Convention)	

27 II	2006
Signing of the the Carpathian Convention by the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński	

19 VI	2006
Poland ratifies the Carpathian Convention	

30 XI	2007
1 st parliamentary meeting of the Carpathian states. initiated by the chairman of the Commission for Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and the Forestry Department of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Marek Kuchciński, MP	

26 II	2011
2 nd “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Przemyśl	

25 VI	2011
3 rd International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Nowy Targ under the slogan: “Europe rich of the Carpathians”	

7–8 IX	2011
4 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój. Adoption of the Carpathian memorandum.	

25 II	2012
5 th “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Kraszczyn, near Przemyśl	

6–9 VII	2012
6 th meeting on the topic of the development of Carpathian cooperation in Yaremche, in Ukraine.	

6 IX	2012
7 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój.	

23 II	2013
8 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Kraszczyn, near Przemyśl, adoption of the Kraszczyn Convention	

8 IX	2013
9 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój, adoption of the Krynica memorandum	

29–30 XI	2013
Meeting on the development of Carpathian cooperation in Sárospatak, Hungary	

3 IX	2014
11 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój, adoption of the Krynica Declaration	

27–28 II	2015
12 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Kraszczyn, near Przemyśl	

25 VII	2015
13 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Smerek, near Wetlina	

9 IX	2015
14 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój	

27 II	2016
15 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Przemyśl	

6–8 IX	2016
16 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum of Krynica-Zdrój	

29 I	2017
17 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” series conference in Przemyśl, adoption of the Przemyśl Declaration	

23–25 VI	2017
18 th session of the “Europe of the Carpathians” series as part of the 2 nd Forum on Local development in Truskavets, Ukraine	

5–7 IX	2017
19 th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój	

17 II	2018
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20th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl

16 VI	2018
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21st International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów

5–6 IX	2018
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22nd International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój

16–17 II	2019
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23rd International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Krasieczyn

15 VI	2019
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24th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów

4–5 IX	2019
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25th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój

21–23 II	2020
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26th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Krasieczyn

8–9 IX	2020
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27th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Karpacz

27–28 II	2021
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28th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl

19 VI	2021
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29th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów

7–9 IX	2021
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30th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Karpacz

27 XI	2021
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31st International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Węgierska Górka

5–6 II	2022
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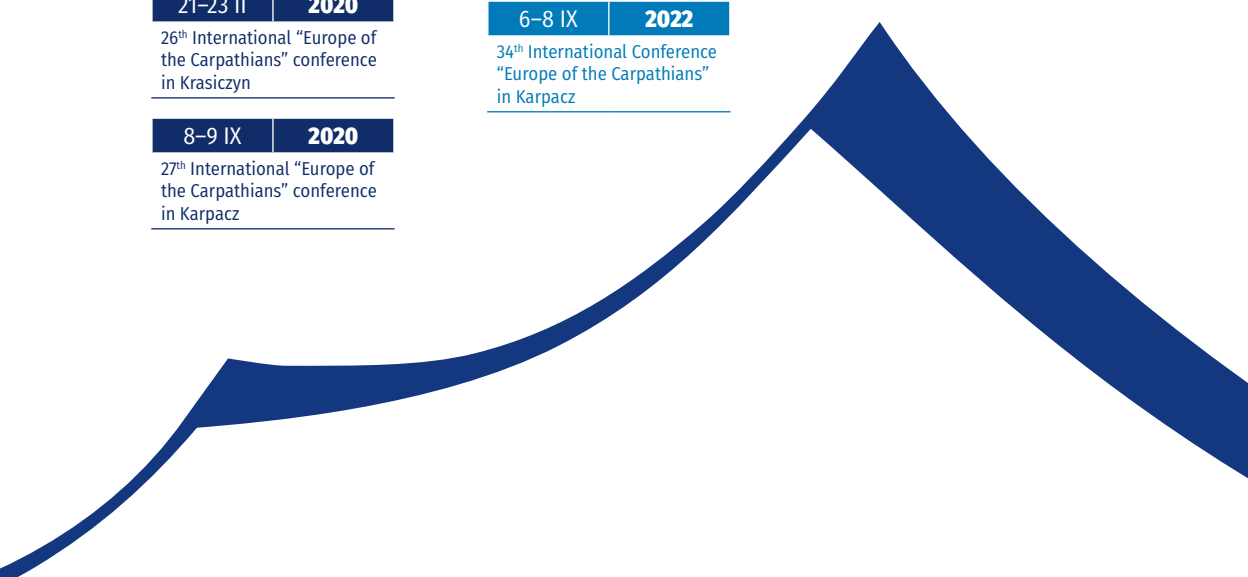
32nd International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Przemyśl/Krasieczyn, signing of the Declaration of the International Club of Europe of the Carpathians

13–14 V	2022
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33rd International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Krasieczyn

6–8 IX	2022
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34th International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Karpacz



Calendar of the Meetings of the Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians

5 IV	2022
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Establishment of the
Association "Clubs of Europe
of the Carpathians"

13 VI	2022
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Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Budapest

4 XI	2022
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Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Warsaw

19 XI	2022
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Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Bratislava

25 XI	2022
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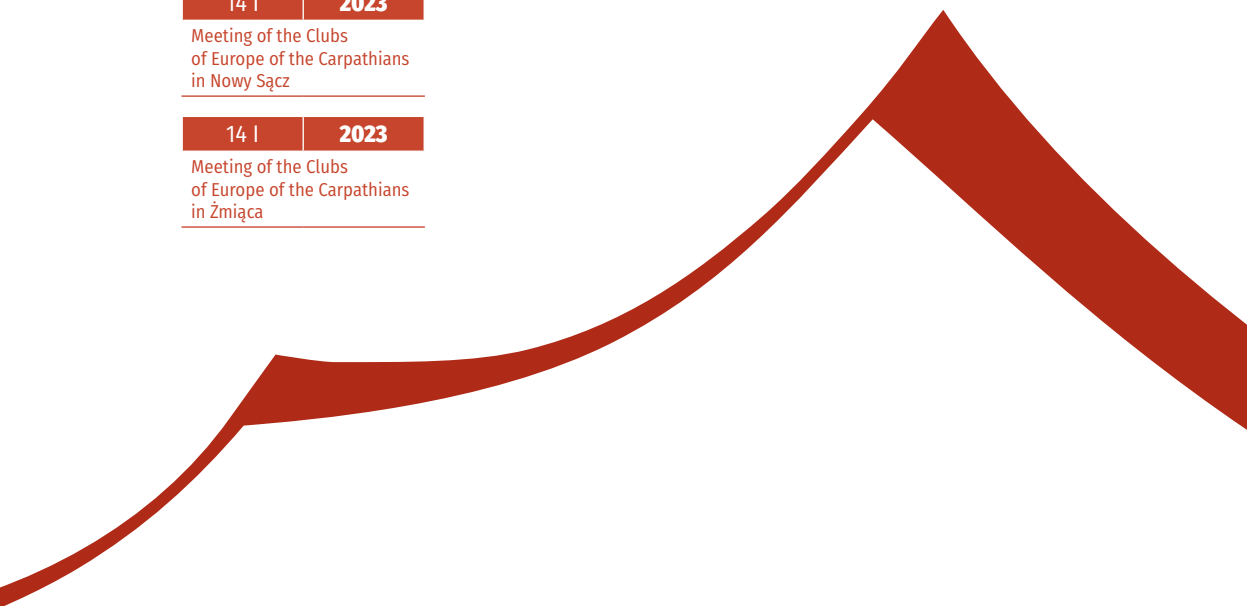
Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Tomaszów Mazowiecki

14 I	2023
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Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Nowy Sącz

14 I	2023
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Meeting of the Clubs
of Europe of the Carpathians
in Żmiąca



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