Transcarpathian County Council
Trancarpathian Regional State Administration

with the patronage of the

President of Ukraine

and

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

PRESS-RELEASE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CARPATHIANS AND
OTHER MOUNTAIN REGIONS OF EUROPE

The Conference supported by:

Council of Europe Program on Strengthening Local Democracy and Support for
Local Government Reforms in Ukraine

Foundation for Local Self-Government of Ukraine

Interregional Association “Carpathian Euroregion”

8-10 September 2010
Ukraine, Uzhgorod
How to save Carpathians and other mountain regions of Europe?

8-10 September 2010 in Uzhgorod, Ukraine the International Conference "Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and other mountain Regions of Europe" is held with the patronage of Viktor YANUKOVYCH, President of Ukraine and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, supported by the Council of Europe Programme "Strengthening promoting local democracy and local government reform in Ukraine, the State Fund for Local Self-Government of Ukraine and Interregional Association « Carpathian Euroregion ».

The Conference had been initiated by Transcarpathian Regional Council and the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration.

About 150 representatives from 18 countries participated in the Conference, among them scientists, state and public officials, parliamentarians, representatives of diplomatic institutions, heads of regional and local authorities. Among participants were the following important persons: Mykola TOMENKO - Deputy Head of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Volodymyr YATSUBA - Minister of Regional Development and Building of Ukraine, Ravil Safiullin - Minister of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine, Mykhaylo TOMAHIN - Deputy Minister for Environmental Protection of Ukraine, Gaye DOGANOGLU - President of the Committee on Sustainable Development of the of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Valerij KADOKHOV - Deputy Head of the Committee of the Congress of the Council of Europe, member of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, Andrij HUK - secretary of the Delegation of Ukraine in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Gyorgy ILLES - Secretary of Delegation of Hungary in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Martin GUILLERMO - Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions «AEBR », Jiří BEHOUNEK - hetman of the Vysochina Region of Czech Republic, Oszkar SESZTAK - Deputy of the Parliament of Hungary, Head of Szabolch-Szatmar-Bereg Region Council (Hungary), Stefan BOCIUTA - Deputy of the Parliament of Romania, Matthias JUREK - representative of the UNEP Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Vyacheslav TOLKOVANOV - Coordinator of the Council of Europe Program “Strengthening local democracy and the reform of self-government in Ukraine”, Ivan VOLOSHCHUK- President of the Association of Nation Parks and Protected areas ( Slovak Republic), Mykhaylo YATSUK – First Deputy Head of the State Committee of Water Management of Ukraine, Anatoliy PAHLYA - Head of the State Department for Tourism and Resorts and other representatives.

National and regional Media enlightened the Conference flow.

The International Conference has gained wide publicity: already during conference preparation search engine had found appr. 30 thousand web pages on this topic.
Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and other mountain regions of Europe – this topic had been discussed at 80 international and regional conferences and forums

Working meeting of regional leaders - members of the Interregional Association «Carpathian Euroregion», preceded a three-day international conference. Association «Carpathian Euroregion» was created in February 14, 1993. In the meeting representatives of border regions of Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Romania, experts from Czech Republic and Russia, as well as representatives of international organizations, namely: Gaye DOGANOGLU – Head of the Committee on Sustainable Development of the of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Martin GUILLERMO - Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions «AEBR ».

For the first time in the period of functioning of this euroregional organization, leaders of border regions discussed the perspectives of further cooperation between friendship border regions of “Carpathian Euroregion”. It confirmed that regional development on today’s Europe is impossible without improvement and intensification of cross-border cooperation and local democracy, taking into account modern geopolitical trends of border areas development.

Participants of the meeting declared that during the period of functioning of Carpathian Euroregion, it was played particular role to solving the majority of problems and to implementation of economic, humanitarian and cultural projects. Therefore, in their speeches Volodymyr YATSUBA - Minister of the regional development and building of Ukraine, Oszkar SESZTAK - Deputy of the Parliament of Hungary, Head of Szabolch-Szatmar-Bereg Region Council (Hungary), Jan RAGAN - deputy Head of Presov self-Government, Vyacheslav TOLKOVAO – Coordinator of the Council of Europe Program “Strengthening local democracy and the reform of self-government in Ukraine”, Gaye DOGANOGLU – Head of the Committee on Sustainable Development of the of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Martin GUILLERMO - Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions «AEBR » and other participants announced that Carpathian Euroregion did not exhaust its potential, but it proceeding in its development as an efficient instrument for cooperation in the conditions of Wide Europe, that aims to developing and extending the cooperation between border regions on the basic of European civilization values.

Taking into account the great potential of the Interregional Association “ Carpathian Euroregion”, presented at the 8-th of September meeting, the necessity to improve of the organizational and legislative base of Carpathian Euroregion and creation of the common international executive body of the Carpathia Euroregion had been announced. According to this at the meeting of the leader of member regions of the Carpathia Euroregion the following decisions had been made: to hold annually meetings of the leaders of border regions – members of Carpathian Euroregion and to establish the international expert group with the aim to develop the Concept of development of Interregional Association “Carpathian Euroregion” in the modern conditions of cross-border cooperation, as well as decisions on coordination of the activities in the following fields: flood protection, development of the network of industrial parks and logistics centers, development of the small scale hydro-power engineering in the river basins of the regions.

It is necessary to mention that within the Carpathian Euroregion implemented a number of important projects and initiated new partnerships. Thus, representatives of the Carpathian Euroregion actively cooperated in the framework of the Neighbourhood Programmes, the
European Union, acting on the eastern border of the EU, - TACIS, INTERREG, FARE, CADSES, ENPI. Only in Transcarpathia implemented a number of projects totalling over 10 million euros. Examples: built trucks crossing terminal in Uzhgorod, which made possible to increase the flow of trucks from 150 to 500 units a day, and reconstructed cross-border point "Chop-Zahony" on the Ukrainian – Hungarian border.

In addition, in the fame of the 1-st call for proposals of the program ENPI «Hungary - Slovakia - Romania – Ukraine » 2007-2013 announced 44 successful projects totalling over 13 million euros. The partners in these projects are representatives located all over the of the Carpathian Euroregion territory.

Head of the Council of Interregional Association « Carpathian Euroregion », Mikhaylo KICHKOVSKYY urged to heads of border regions at the international level to initiate a solution of some important issues, namely:

- establishment of international pedestrian cross-border point « Lubnia – Volosate » on Ukrainian-Polish border ;
- renewing the functioning of the cross-border point “Hyzha-Tarna Mare » on the Ukrainian-Romanian border
- opening the pedestrian cross-border point Dilove-Valya-Vysheuluy
- building the new cross-border point White Church - Sziget.

Regarding the last one, it is necessary to note that its opening will greatly reduce the load on the core operating cross-border point at the Ukrainian-Romanian border « Dyakovo – Halmu » and will give the opportunity to combine routers of the Carpathian region - Polish, Slovakian, Ukrainian and Romanian routes , which became more popular each year.

Representatives of the regions expressed the consolidated vision of the further cooperation taking into account the modern geopolitical trens of development of border regions. Presence and active participation of international organizations demonstrated first of all, the political importance of decisions addressed to solving the actual problems of development and harmonization of neighbourly and mutually beneficial partnership relations between border regions.

Participants of the meeting adopted the statement on support of resolution documents of the Conference « Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and other mountain Regions of Europe » and appealed to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe with asking to examine and to approve them.

Besides, at the meeting the following Appeals to the Governments of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine had been approved :

- Appeal on the expansion of the small border regime on the all territory of Carpathian Euroregion.
- Appeal on opening the new cross-border points on the Ukrainian-Polish, Ukrainian-Slovakian, Ukrainian-Hungarian and Ukrainian-Romanian state borders.

Approval of the above-mentioned documents by heads of local self-governments – members of Carpathian Euroregion has given the political value to them. Synchronized activities on the different sides of the border with using different financial instruments give the opportunity for effective solving the actual problems of cross-border cooperation.
Opening the conference began with greetings of the guests.

The conference hall was full of participants. 18 flags of States - participants of this event are raised over the presidium. The hall is equipped with simultaneous translation of 6 languages.

Welcoming the participants, the Head of the Transcarpathian Regional Council, Head of the Council IA "Carpathian Euroregion, member of the Ukrainian delegation in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mykhaylo KICHKOVS'KYY noted that the special significance of this honorary board provides support by the President of Ukraine and the Congress of the Council of Europe. Welcoming speeches to the organizers and participants from the President of Ukraine, the Head of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Prime - Minister of Ukraine and other officials had been read out and presented.

"Carpathians - a source of fresh water and clean air for most of European countries, place of living of the thirds of species of flora and fauna of the continent. Some of them can be found only in mountain regions of the Carpathians. In order to save them, coordinated efforts of state, regional and local authorities as the Carpathian region countries as well as all European community are required ", - said Mykhaylo KICHKOVS'KYY, addressing to the conference participants, and put forward proposals on the legislative level to recognize mountain regions by national natural and cultural domain, and to hold the policy of sustainable development, to fit legislation on environmental protection and regional development to the standards of EU environmental legislation. We are all united by common goal - to keep safe for human health environment through the transferring to the sustainable economic development and social services provided sustainable environmental management, ecosystem conservation.

In accordance with Gaye DOGANOGLU"s words, Congress truly supports the initiative of the Ukrainian delegation on sustainable mountain development, in particular, the Carpathians, which attributed by the World Nature Fund to the list of the most important natural regions of the world. Natural cataclysms and climate change on the planet that have place for humanity for today, there are the results of the degradation of our responsibility to current and future generations. These words said by Mykhaylo KICHKOVS'KYY from the podium of Congress consistently convincing the representatives of 47 member countries of the Council of Europe and need to find a quick and timely decisions how to preserve the natural resources of mountain systems, in particular, the Carpathians, where more than 20 million people are living, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe– to recognize the need to develop special Resolution and Recommendations on providing the sustainable mountain development in Europe in which cause and confirm the importance of such documents.

Perseverance and persistence of the Ukrainian delegation gave its fruits. At the end of September 2010 planned to present above-mentioned resolution documents at the statutory committees meetings, and in October 2010 - at the plenary session the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

In this context, according to Martin GUILLERMO’s speech, the most difficult task is to make balance between economy and ecology. According to Valeriy KADOKHOVA”s opinion, the Congress can and should pay as much attention as possible for development of the Carpathians and other mountain systems as had been paid attention to Alps.
Workshops were active and effective

Speeches, made at 6 thematic sections, which were held at a high scientific-theoretical level, addressed to mechanisms and principles related to sustainable development prospects of their implementation, regional policy, the role of environmental authorities, important industries in the country and the European experience of state policy for mountain regions.

In the section "Environmental protection as a necessary condition for sustainable development of mountain regions" moderated by Ivan VOLOSCHUK - President of the Association of Carpathian National Parks and Protected Areas (Slovak Republic), and Leonid RUDENKO, academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Director of the Institute of Geography, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

A reports on this subject had been made by: Stepan POP- Doctor of Science, Dean of Faculty of Geography of the National University of Uzhgorod, Fedir HAMOR, Doctor of Biology, Director of Director of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Yuriy TUNYTSA, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Rector of the National Forest Management Technical University (Lviv), Vitaliy NIKOLAYCHUK, Doctor of Biology, Dean of the Biology Department of Uzhgorod National University, Stepan CHUNDAK, Doctor of Chemistry, Head of the Department for Ecology and Environmental Protection of Uzhgorod National University, Zdenik HRUBY, PhD, Department of Forest Botany, Dendrology and Geobiocoenology, Mendel University, Czech Republic and others.

During the second section "Preservation of biodiversity, improvement of forestry, agricultural and agrarian activity in the mountains" that had been moderated by Mykola SHERSHUN, PhD, Head of the State Forestry Committee of Ukraine and Jozef TEREK, Professor of Presov University (Slovak Republic), presented their visions by Mykola SHERSHUN, PhD, Head of the State Forestry Committee of Ukraine, Mykhaylo YATSUK, First Deputy Head of the State Committee for Water Management of Ukraine, Orest IVANYTSKYY, Candidate in Economics, Associate Professor of the Department for International Business and World Politics of Transcarpathian State University, Oleh ADAMENKO, Doctor of Geology-Mineralogical Sciences, Professor of Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas, Gaspar BODNAR, Director of Upper Tisza Directorate of Environment and Water Protection of Hungary, Stepan STOYKO, Doctor on Biology, Professor of the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Jozef TEREK, Professor of Presov University (Slovak Republic), Martin HYSKY, Member of the Vysocina Council on Regional Development (Czech Republic).

The same level of intensity and work were in the section « Cross-border and cross-municipal cooperation aimed to sustainable development of mountain areas », which had been moderated by Fedir GAMOR - Doctor of Biological Sciences, Director of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, George ILLIYES - Secretary of the Delegation of Hungary in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Nadiya MYKULA - Head of the Department on the Problems of Market Infrastructure and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Institute of Regional Researches of NAS of Ukraine (Lviv). This topic had been presented by Eduard RAHIMKULOV, expert of the Council of Europe Program “Strengthening local democracy and the reform of self-government in Ukraine, Ihor STUDENYA - Doctor of Physics and Mathematics, Pro-rector of Uzhhorod National University, Oksana MARYSKEVYCH - PhD in Biology, Deputy Director of the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of NAS of Ukraine, Zinoviy BROIDE - PhD in Technical Sciences, Director of the State Scientific-Technical Center for Inter-sectoral and Regional
Problems of Ecological Safety and Resources Preservation (Chernivtsi), Rakoczi Andras - director of the Regional Development Association, First-Vice president of the International Association of Regional Development Institutions “IARDI”, Volodymyr CHIPAK - Head of Trancarpathian Water Management Department and others.

Fruitful work was at the section « Tourism as a factor of socio-economic development of mountain regions » that had been moderated by Anatoliy PAHLYA, Head of the State Department for Tourism and Resorts of Ukraine, Stepan POP, Doctor in Physics and Mathematics, Dean of Geography Faculty of Uzhgorod National University and Svatoslav HUSTAK, Director of the Regional Development Agency “POLONINY”, General Secretary of the International Association of Regional Development Institutions “IARDI”, Slovak Republic. To many-sided aspects of this topic were concentrated moderators” speeches as well as Volodymyr HOBLYK - PhD in philosophy, Deputy Head of Trancarpathian State Administration, Fedir SHANDOR - PhD in Sociology, Head of the Tourism Department of Uzhgorod National University, Arpad GANUS - Head of the Green Tourism Association of Szabolc-Szatmar-Bereg Region, Ivan LEMKO - Doctor of Medicine, Director of Scientific-Practical Association "Rehabilitation" and others presented their vision in the frame of this topic.

Professor of Uzhgorod National University Stepan POP proposed to form the high-technological, environmentally friendly and most targeted areas using their own resources (recreation, tourism), cross-border cooperation, solving a package of problems, of human development, developing their own renewable energy, etc..

Professor of the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Stepan STOYKO is sure that for optimization of the ecological balance in the six basins of cross-border rivers, which originated in the Carpathians, is necessary to develop and implement joint environmental program of the countries in which they are located.

Secretary of Delegation of Hungary in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Gyorgy ILLES supported these proposals and at the same time praised the level of the developed draft resolution and the Declaration of the conference.

Stefan BOCIUTA, Head of the Union of Ukrainians of Romania, Member of Parliament of Romania, supported the opinion on the level of developed resolution documents.

Deputy Head of the Deputy Head of Trancarpathian State Administration Volodymyr HOBLYK stressed that a number of reasonable suggestions and proposals of conference must be decided on the level of the Council of Europe Congress. But many of them should be taken into consideration by governments as well as regional and local authorities. And this is one of the main features of the conference.

In the deep conviction of academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Director of the Geography Institute of NAS of Ukraine Leonid RUDENKO, conference was an important step towards the adoption of the resolution in the Congress of the Council of Europe.
The conference has successfully accomplished the task - resolution documents that will be considered at a plenary meeting of the Congress of the Council of Europe had been worked over.

At the end of the sections the participants of the conference summed up their work and agreed resolution documents. Therefore, taking into account comments and suggestions to the draft Resolution and the Declaration of the forum, which were made during the sessions by scientists, representatives of public and diplomatic institutions, documents had been adopted unanimously. It is suggested to reach new agreements between governments, departments and regions of the Carpathians in the field of sustainable development of mountain systems, preparation of relevant international projects and programs for development of mountain areas and preventing catastrophes.

Head of the working group on elaboration of draft resolutions and declarations of the conference, Doctor of Economics, Director of the Institute for Regional Studies of NAS of Ukraine (Lviv) Vasyl KRAVTSIV proposed to give the title of the Declaration of the Conference by city name, where it had been adopted, namely: Uzhgorod Declaration. During voting this proposal was supported unanimously.

"We can say with certainly, - said Mikhaylo KICHKOVSKYY - that our work during these days was active and effective. Besides speeches and reports in the frame of the conference a number of different events and meetings, experience exchange activities are held. New creative contacts between scientists and leaders of the border regions identified real ways of further cooperation at the level of regions and scientific institutions. One of the bright experiences became the agreement between Uzhhorod National University and leaders of the province Antalia of Turkey concerning the practical work and studying of Ukrainian students of tourism specialization in Turkey”.

From this moment, said M.KICHKOVSKYY, delegation of Ukraine in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in the Council of Europe and personally himself, enlisted the support of conference participants, see that his main task is to do his best in order to achieve the final adoption just supported drafts of the Resolution and Recommendations.

Finally, in a sign of sincere gratitude and respect, and most active participants that took part in preparation of the conference, M/KICHKOVSKYY handed honorary awards.

In the frame of conference individual projects were presented, including project development and cross-border Beregove polder system in the Tisza river basin.

Traditionally, at the first day of the conference the press conference led by Natalia MYHALYNA, deputy Head of the Management Department of the Trancarpathian Regional Council. The press conference was attended by guests and organizers of the event, namely: Mykhaylo KICHKOVSKYY - Head of Transcarpathian Regional Council Oleksandr LEDYDA - Head of the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration, Volodymyr YATSUBA - Minister of Regional Development and Building of Ukraine, Martin GUILLERMO - Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions «AEBR »” and Gaye DOGANOGLU – President of the Committee on Sustainable Development of the of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. They gave clear answers to questions of local, national and foreign reporters and media.
In addition, Mykola TOMENKO - Deputy Head of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and Andriy SERBAYLO - Deputy Head of the Trancarpathian County Council met with journalists and mass-media and answered to their questions. Besides, many participants of the conference made interviews concerning the main topic of conference.

**About the conference. Opinions of participants of the conference.**

It should be noted that participants appreciated the level of the organization. Stepan STOYKO stressed that the success of the event was a high level of its organization, reports that sounded secured high status and professional experience of the speakers, and of course the active interest of all participants, because of the topic of the conference is very actual, painful and palpitating.

Academician Leonid RUDENKO expressed gratitude to the organizers for the initiative of such scale, saturated and highly actual international forum. And noted that Ukraine, unfortunately, very slowly moving in the policy on the agenda of the XXI century - sustainable development, which aims to change the place and role in human relationships with nature. Unfortunately, There is nor approved concept or strategy on sustainable development in Ukraine at national level. Such a breakthrough that made Transcarpathia due to Mykhaylo KICHKOVSKYY”s initiative on understanding of the need to consolidate efforts for achieving sustainable development at all levels of readiness in four regions of Ukraine and representatives of 18 Countries to unite for living environment, that adds optimism.

Professor Oleg ADAMENKO said that the conference is very special as officials and representatives of Authorieas as well as self-governments joined the scientific issues. And it is very important, since it is imperative to develop a consensus to sustainable development became a state priority, as it is in many European countries.

Andras RAKOCZI, Director of Association of Regional Development "KIUT", First Vice-President of the International Association "IARDI" announced that this Uzhhorod Conference is the greatest and the most large scaled conference for the period of last 10 years.

The list of comments of the conference participants can be continued...

Besides, words sounded sincere to the Head of the Transcarpathian Regional Council Mykhaylo KICHKOVSKYY, who not only drew attention of the Congress to the problems of one of the most unique and journalist, yet most vulnerable ecological mountain - the Carpathians, but also initiated and became an generator in organizing and holding such large-scale, interesting and surprisingly rich international forum in Transcarpathia, that borders with four European countries. The Conference Declaration rightly go in the history of environmental protection under its own name: **Uzhgorod Declaration**.

Participants had the opportunity to see an exhibition of folk arts and crafts masters in the foyer of building of Transcarpathian Regional Administration. The books exhibition on environmental subjects, That came into the world of publishing in the Transcarpathian region. Exhibition of works of members of the creative association of professional artists of the region, deployed in the halls of Transcarpathian Art Museum named Joseph Bokshay. At the third day of stay in Transcarpathian guest made a trip to Mukachevo city where they can visit the Palanok Castle, memorials and other historical places of the city over Latoritsy river.

**September 12, 2010 Uzhgorod, Ukraine**