## CONFERENCE DECLARATION *(text open for comments)*

## TRANSGREEN Final Conference

## “Pathways to Greener Transport Infrastructure”

## Bucharest, June 25th 2019

The TRANSGREEN Final Conference, organized in Bucharest on the 25th of June 2019, under the aegis of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, brought together representatives of national authorities, the EU Commission, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat and other international institutions, academia and NGOs working in the fields of transport, spatial planning, and nature conservation. They are united by the wish to make linear transport infrastructure development more sustainable, safe and resilient by avoiding landscape fragmentation, particularly in the Danube-Carpathian region.

The Conference concluded that minimizing and mitigating conflicts between linear transport infrastructure and nature protection not only is of high importance, but also possible if a science-based and pro-active cross-sectoral approach is applied at the local, national, regional and EU level. The Carpathian Convention and its Protocol on Sustainable Transport was acknowledged as a key promoter of this approach.

We, the conference participants, accepting the need for certain development of sustainable transport infrastructure in the Danube-Carpathian region, herewith call on the European Commission, the European Parliament and the national governments of the Danube-Carpathian region to preserve the beauty and richness in biodiversity of the region and to

* Foster interagency and international coordination for the systematic policy integration of biodiversity and transport objectives including financial aspects.
* Encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and stakeholder involvement right from the beginning of each linear transport infrastructure project in order to find best solutions for the harmonization of transport development needs with biodiversity conservation on the level of planning, construction, operation and maintenance.
* Build an accessible common database consisting of high quality data, tools, information and knowledge on biodiversity, spatial planning and transport infrastructure development in order to support good planning and decision-making processes.
* Acknowledge that proper integrated (multi-sectoral) spatial planning is the only approach that will support sustainable transport infrastructure and can prevent progressive isolation of wildlife populations and biodiversity loss.
* Emphasize the need for adequate strategic environmental assessments in the early (pre-feasibility) planning phase, environmental impact assessments throughout the entire planning and implementation of projects.
* Support the basic philosophy of the Mitigation Hierarchy that prevention is better than cure – avoiding the negative effects of habitat fragmentation is better than repairing or lowering the damage.
* Emphasize the need for reflecting not only social and economic costs and benefits in the option analysis of linear infrastructure plans or projects, but also values of the natural capital and ecosystem services.
* Underline that adjustments of national legislative tools might be necessary to effectively implement these principles.
* Draw the attention to the importance of a monitoring framework as part of the EIA process and of monitoring the state of the biota in the defined territory before and during construction as well as in the operation phase for assessing the effectiveness of measures applied and supporting the science based solutions on mitigation, and
* Emphasize the need to invest in the maintenance of ecological corridors and mitigation measures to ensure their coherence and functionality long after the construction phrase is completed.

We welcome the results of related projects such as ConnectGREEN, AlpBioNET, Austria-Slovakia cross border Alpine–Carpathian Corridor, Harmony CEDR and others, and express our willingness to sustain and apply the findings of those projects in the framework of future collaborative efforts towards harmonizing grey and green infrastructure in the Danube-Carpathian region.