

CONFERENCE DECLARATION FINAL

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 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 biodiversity and ecosystems functionality of the region and to

Foster interagency and international coordination for the systematic integration of biodiversity objectives into transport policy/projects and conditionalities for financing.

Encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and stakeholder involvement right from the concept stage of each linear transport infrastructure project in order to find best solutions for the harmonization of transport development needs with biodiversity 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 the decrease of their contribution to the production of ecosystem services.

Emphasize the need for adequate strategic environmental assessments in the early (pre-feasibility) planning phase, environmental impact assessments throughout the entire planning of programs/projects.

Support the basic philosophy of the Mitigation Hierarchy that prevention is better than cure – avoiding the negative effects of habitat fragmentation and traffic operations on wildlife is better than repairing or minimizing the damage.

Emphasize the need for reflecting not only social and economic costs and benefits in the option analysis of linear infrastructure plans, programs or projects, but also values of the natural capital, cultural capital and ecosystem services.

Underline that adjustments of national legislative tools may be necessary to effectively implement these principles.

Draw the attention to the importance of an integrated monitoring framework as part of the SEA and EIA processes 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 phase is completed.

We welcome the results of related projects such as ConnectGREEN, AlpBioNET, Austria-Slovakia cross border Alpine–Carpathian Corridor, CEDR's Road & Wildlife transnational research 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.

