

Statement of Dr. Gábor Fodor Minister of Environment and Water of Hungary¹

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies. Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me express my **appreciation** that this event was so well prepared and an agreement was reached in the working group on all critical questions. **Hungary** as a member of the European Union fully shared the strong commitment to Pan European environmental cooperation. This is a significant process, which resulted in important **achievements** and I have the strong view that it should be **continued**. The UN ECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements are significant pillars of this cooperation. Their **implementation significantly contributes to the environmental security in our entire region**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Since I am representing a country which is very much concerned about transboundary waters and dominantly dependent on the upstream activities, allow me to elaborate a little on these aspects of multilateral legal instruments and related cooperation.

The UN ECE instruments in question are the **Water Convention, its Water and Health Protocol, the Convention on Industrial Accidents and the Civil Liability Protocol to both conventions**.

Hungary as coordinator of the elaboration of the **Water and Health Protocol** hopes that although the ratification process took six years, the experience gained under the Water Convention can support the smooth implementation of this Protocol.

As concerns the other protocol, namely the Civil Liability Protocol, unfortunately, it has not entered into force yet. I should mention that **bilateral cooperation with our 7 neighbours on shared waters is essential and has long tradition**. We strive to develop the bilateral cooperation in harmony with international law so as to jointly prevent the adverse transboundary impacts.

Nevertheless, such pollution inadvertently may happen and the question of responsibility and liability for the caused damages is raised. The Liability Protocol has been developed just for such cases.

3. It is also noteworthy that the **Water Convention** served as a basis for the elaboration of such sub-regional agreements like for instance the Danube Protection Convention. Fourteen countries of different conditions and the European Community are partners in the cooperation under the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

Holding the first Danube stakeholder forum, yearly celebration of Danube Day as well as allowing observers to join and support the work effectively contribute to awareness raising and public participation. We are eager to continue and strengthen this international "Danubian" cooperative framework.

4. Equally important for Hungary is the cooperation on the **Tisza river basin**, one of the largest sub-basins of the Danube. River basin management plan and flood action plan preparation is underway. All of you are invited to the side event to be held tomorrow when results of the first phase of this cooperation will be presented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. At last, we should also clearly understand that besides the national commitments we have important regional and subregional contribution to the solution of various large-scale environment related problems, which are addressed within the framework of global environmental agreements. Let me mention, for instance, **the special role of our region in the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the Basel Convention or the Convention on Climate Change; we are also responsible for the effective conservation of the biological diversity and the habitats of our region and subregions in accordance with the Convention on Biodiversity**.

Thank you for your attention.

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