

Statement of His Excellency

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Secretary of State

*Ministry of Environment
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ROMANIA

*Environmental finance and partnerships to support the implementation of
environmental policies and programmes*

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**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Despite the progress that has been made across the region over the past fifteen years, we still face significant environmental challenges in our region.

Reliable, affordable, economically viable and socially acceptable financial resources for addressing these environmental challenges are essential.

Action starts with Governments. But Governments cannot do it alone. Civil society groups have an important role, as partners, advocates and „watchdogs". So do commercial enterprises. We are not asking operators to do something different from their normal business; we are asking them to do their normal business **differently**.

Environmental protection need not wait for tomorrow's actions. The policies, the science and the green technologies at our disposal today can begin to do the job. With concerted actions and partnerships in the main sectors as: air quality, water and biodiversity, progress could be far quicker than is commonly believed.

Transport development changed people's way of life. Transport allows a higher mobility but, in the same time, represents an important source of pollution. The vehicle industry operates world-wide and is one of the drivers of globalization. But, at the same time, insufficient actions for using cleaner fuels coupled with cleaner vehicles for improving air quality and protecting human health remain one of the most serious challenges we are facing today.

In Romania, we are very preoccupied on this challenge taking into account that transport is one of the few sectors where the emissions continue to grow, mainly due to an increased mobility, an increasing number of vehicles and due to the large number of old cars.

As EU Member State, Romania aligned its specific legislation to the European specific requirements on the lead and sulphur content of fuels, but we continue to be deeply concerned on challenges of transport and mobility.

In this respect, due to the fact that Romania has one of the oldest car fleet in Europe, about 13 years old, a National Program for the Renewal of the Car Fleet was initiated in 2005. This program was financed from the Environmental Fund and has taken into consideration the replacement of the 12 years older vehicles. After the first two years, a number of around

30,000 vehicles were replaced, and taking into account the environmental and social impact, this program is presently going on. Besides, Romania is ongoing to evaluate the opportunity to also include other alternative measures such biofuels use.

As you already know, the reduction of pollution can and should be made through an integrated, cost-effective approach that combines technological innovations from the car industry with the efforts of policy makers, consumers and the fuel industry. At the same time, the core of the integrated approach is the responsibility of all stakeholders for the achievement of these objectives.

To ensure its future, the automotive industry should reconsider its strategies, invest in research and development and design new intelligent and friendly environment cars contributing to the reduction of air pollution. Recently, on the Romanian automotive market, ecological cars with hybrid supply were introduced and, on the other hand, an agreement between our ministry and a very well recognized automotive company was established: for each sold car in Romania, a tree is planting.

Regarding consumption and production, in Romania, the consumption growth has increased during the last years, exceeding the economic growth, therefore, it is ongoing the adoption of a strategic action plan in the field, encouragement and support for the ecologic procurement system, in the public administration and private sector, introduction of new ecologic technologies, adoption of an environmental tax system, as well as introduction of a public awareness campaign. This year, the Green Public Procurement Action Plan was initiated in Romania. This Plan is coordinated at the governmental level, but also involves public and private organizations. The action plan aims the modernization of the public sector through the encouragement of eco-procurements and promotes the establishment of a market for ecologic products.

Only by such kind of cooperation and synergic measures, the environment can be protected. Without such kind of partnerships, environmental protection and, finally, sustainable development will remain only a distant dream.

At the same time, a real cooperation between all States, institutions, organizations or already established legal instruments can give a benefit impetus for a healthy environment in our region. A good example would be the protection and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems, which support particular livelihoods, and include significant watershed resources, biological diversity and unique flora and fauna. Many are particularly fragile and vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change

and need specific protection. We consider that only by such kind of synergic measures, developed at national, but also regional level, in the framework of all specific conventions or partnerships could lead to a sustainable development of mountain areas. Illustrative for this is the excellent cooperation between the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions, translated into a concrete document during the first COP of Carpathian Convention. Please allow me to end by using this opportunity and inviting you in Romania, next year, in June, to the second Conference of Parties to the Carpathian Convention.

Thank you.