



EUROPE OF THE CARPATHIANS

KRASICZYN-JAREMCZE

13-14 MAY 2022



The future of Europe • Ecology • Digitisation • Infrastructure
Security • Tourism • Development

WYDAWNICTWO SEJMOWE



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33. EUROPE OF THE CARPATHIANS CONFERENCE

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Introduction

The 33rd „Europe of the Carpathians” Conference, traditionally held under the auspices of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland – in cooperation with parliaments and institutions not only of the Carpathian countries but also of Central Europe in the broadest sense – was convened in an extraordinary situation. Initially, it was to be held in Ukraine – in Yaremche, in the Eastern Carpathians, close to the Black Mountain, but the ongoing war has thwarted these plans. So we meet in the hospitable and beautiful Krasiczyn.

Let us look back and return for a moment even to the times when Christianity was adopted in Central Europe by Poland, Kievan Ruthenia, Hungary or the Czech Republic. We can see that in every succeeding generation and century, there are numerous examples of outstanding people from these countries working together despite political disputes, different interests of rulers and other religions, examples of significant circumstances and events connected with our part of Europe – giving it special and unique features, which have been described many times. Among them are features that even encourage Central European cooperation and which are worth recalling today.

Central Europe remains divided by borders. Not far from here, a dozen or so kilometres away, we have the edge of the European Union. Thanks to providence and people – politicians from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania or Bulgaria – these countries have been part of the European Union since 2004 or, at the latest, since 2007. That is how we got out of Moscow’s orbit of influence. Others, however, are still within it. We rebuilt our states in peace, consolidating our independence in domestic and intra-EU disputes – as I would put it. There is regular fighting in Ukraine. That is why our Conference today is devoted mainly to the war in Ukraine and all its consequences.

Today, 13 May, we also meet in Krasiczyn on an important anniversary. Precisely 150 years ago, the first railway line was opened, and a passenger train started operating from Przemyśl to Chyrów and then to Budapest. At that time, there was no EU border, so it was possible to travel freely to Chyrów and beyond: to Romania, Hungary and so on. That is why we meet internationally, to talk also about neighbourly cooperation, about cooperation between nations, to look for what unites us and strengthens us mutually. We want to share our reflections and impressions. Let us remember that when we talk about the present, we also speak and think about the future.

Some of the events or topics of this Conference will be very important, others important, and others somewhat traditional. We always discuss infrastructure, as well as European funds. However, we will be talking about the transformation and reconstruction of Ukraine (a panel discussion devoted to this will conclude our Conference) for the first time. Concrete plans for future change will also be presented.

We will talk about the Collegium Carpathicum project in some new ways. We will also talk about the diversity of Europe of the Carpathians, about the routes of civilisation, which are the most important for us because they connect, as it were, not only East and West but also North and South.

And all this in the Carpathian area, a region of beautiful diversity, which brings with it great natural wealth, a wealth of fauna and flora, and a unique wealth of people and their courageous thoughts. People who, drawing richly on the heritage of the past – are building the future: a new identity for Europe of the Carpathians in times of significant new challenges.



Marek Kuchciński



History as a political battlefield

1. History has always played an essential role in social, state and international life, although in the pages of philosophy – from Friedrich Nietzsche to Francis Fukuyama – it has been fought against for more than 100 years. The latter even declared the end of history. It can be said to have ushered in the era of post-history. Supporting the fight against history was liberal philosophical thought, according to which history in the postmodern era enslaves people and nations because modern free man does not want to be burdened with obligations to the past. Questions are still being asked why free and democratic states in the age of European integration engage in their own historical policy. After all, it is an obstacle to building a European community. Because of the pursuit of such a policy by numerous states and to avoid the term „history,” a futile attempt has been made to build a European policy of mentality. Regarding the recent Polish reality – to the presidency of Bronisław Komorowski, when there was a retreat from the historical policy of the state, so vigorously promoted by President Prof. Lech Kaczyński, let me quote an excerpt from the statement of Prof. Tomasz Nałęcz, Komorowski’s advisor, on historical policy: „The president’s task is to unite, not divide. Bronisław Komorowski’s approach to history is part of a strategy. It excludes the politics of history, instead making room for the politics of remembrance, which must be based on respect for different memories.” That shows that history policy has been abandoned in favour of memory policy. With the nation as the subject, the historical policy has been privatised and given over to pluralistic society as a diverse memory of the past. The state divested itself from the all-important function of looking after the national community. It has turned out that for liberals, everything is subject to privatisation, even historical memory. Let everyone answer the question: will pluralism in the politics of remembrance fulfil an integrating function for a society which forms a national community within the state? Will it foster the strengthening of national identity and nurturing of national culture and heritage?



Krasiczyn Castle, Poland

Fortunately, after 2015, the Polish state returned to the tracks of historical policy and has successfully implemented it for the past four years, taking care of national imponderabilia. Indeed, conducting historical policy is the duty of any self-respecting state. The state is not a joint-stock company or an association of economic interests but a national community growing out of a historical tradition, that is, the heritage of the past. This common past, culture, religion and shared hopes for the future integrate society. It is the state that is responsible for maintaining and continually integrating the national community, and constantly stimulating its pride in the foundation of the past.

2. For a long time, in the wave of liberalism, history has been increasingly affected by the phenomenon of relativisation of truth, but also of ethics and morals. Linked to this process is the reinterpretation of historical facts. In June 2019, ceremonies were held to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the great Allied landing operation in Normandy. Chancellor Angela Merkel, who attended the celebrations, gave the world this news: the Allied landing in Normandy helped liberate Germany from Nazi occupation.

Undoubtedly, the thesis that the blame for the war and its aftermath lies not with Germany but with the Nazis is the result of German historical policy. The Germans were the victims of the Nazis. That is how the Germans celebrated their victory over Germany in Normandy. But similar phenomena of relativisation and reinterpretation of history can be seen on Polish soil. It is evidenced by, for example, communists or post-communists celebrating on 4 June, the day of the 1989 contractual elections to the Sejm, in which the nation voted to reject communism. Look also at the Ukrainian historical policy practised by the Ukrainian IPN. It questions the genocide of the Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Lesser Poland and adheres to the narrative that it was the result of a Polish-Ukrainian civil war. It was not the work of Ukrainians but Ukrainian nationalists. It is not ideologies that are to blame, but nations. Otherwise, the concept of responsibility does not function. It may also be worth mentioning Russian historical policy concerning the Second World War. For Russians, the Second World War began in 1941 with Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. Forgotten is 17 September 1939, when, following the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviets, as Germany's ally, militarily occupied and annexed 51 per cent of the then territory of the Republic of Poland. And not only the Republic. As "Der Spiegel" recalled a few days ago, 30 years ago, on 24 December 1989, the Soviet Parliament condemned the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Twenty years later, i.e. in 2009, President Putin declared it "morally unacceptable," but already in 2014, he asked the question: "But what is wrong with the Soviet Union not wanting to fight against Hitler?" Hence the telling title of this text: *Putin's men seek to rehabilitate the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact* and a reminder of George Orwell's words: "Politics was invented to make a lie sound like the truth."

3. Cyprian Kamil Norwid gave us this maxim: "The falsification of history is a work constantly practised." In the July/August 2019 issue of the weekly magazine *Do Rzeczy*, Waldemar Łysiak published a column entitled *Fake Story*. This seasoned connoisseur of history, especially of France, referring to the falsification of history, in polemic to a text published earlier in *Rzeczpospolita* (by J. Cieślak), put forward the thesis: "it is not the Right, but the Left that has been at the forefront of falsifying history since time immemorial – more than 90 per cent of historiographical embezzlements belong to them." At the same time, he gave several examples. To quote one: "A monument to the falsification of history by the European (EU) Salon – the Salon conducted by the Bundesrepublik Deutschland – is the House of European History, opened in Brussels (2017).

It reports on the fate of Europe using the politically correct method: a thousand-year history of European leftism. Curiosum? (...). The Christian foundations and Christian “milestones” of Europe, and especially the Catholic tradition, not only wiped out with a censor’s eraser but vilified without scruple, have become objects of particularly vicious elimination.” Afterwards, he cites other examples from Europe’s distant history.

The American political scientist Joseph Nay, who has analysed the politics of history, has recognised the growing phenomenon of creating a battlefield between nations and social, religious or ethnic groups. But he sees no reason to limit it; on the contrary, he believes it should be developed, nationally and internationally. For my part, I might add that we must not be afraid of the truth, even though it sometimes hurts. Perhaps because historical truth is too often replaced by political truth. Or perhaps there are other reasons? But regardless of them (these reasons), we constantly experience history on a daily basis, as every passing moment passes into it. To escape from the past is, therefore, genuinely futile.

Pechersk Lavra Monastery on the Dnipro River, Kyiv, Ukraine





Europe of the Carpathians – a land of diversity. The importance of individual countries, lands and regions in building the identity of Central Europe. The Przemyśl Region and Subcarpathia in Europe of the Carpathians

The panel was moderated by **Piotr Babinetz, Chairman of the Sejm's Culture and Media Committee.**

Jan Draus, historian and professor at the University of Rzeszow, focused on cultural diversity as the foundation of Europe's identity. He had three reflections and cautions about to this topic. The first reflection concerned the European Union's exclusion of many countries and peoples despite their European aspirations. The Professor emphasised that the day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw the culmination of this exclusion:

This proves that the European Union has understood little of Russia's past actions: the aggression against Georgia, the annexation of Crimea and the armed occupation of the Ukrainian Donbas. Unfortunately, these sad facts not only demonstrate the West's lack of foresight in the face of Moscow's neo-imperialist policy and its failure to understand the soul and aspirations of the peoples of Eastern Europe but also contradict the idea of an integral Europe as a whole.

The second reflection concerned the central-eastern part of Europe, which was labelled by the West as the „Other Europe”, despite its influence on shaping European civilisation and its links with the pan-European heritage. The third reflection referred to the division of the eastern part of Europe into countries integrated and not integrated into the European Community. The Professor drew attention to the threat to the whole of Europe from the unfinished integration process. Continuing with the theme of the division of Europe, he said:



Panellists Europe of the Carpathians – a land of diversity. The importance of individual countries, lands and regions in building the identity of Central Europe. Land of Przemyśl and Subcarpathia in Europe of the Carpathians, Kraszczyn, 13 May 2022.

On top of this, the war has divided Europe according to the scale of its economic dependence on Russia and aid to embattled Ukraine. The principles of trust and solidarity within the Union have been violated, although they are still declared externally.

Dénes András Nagy, Chief Advisor at the Department of Regional Cooperation at the National University of Public Service in Hungary, reported that by 2050 the Europe of the Carpathians area was expected to become the best place – in terms of quality of life and safety – to live in Europe. The speaker emphasised that it was necessary to strengthen institutional cooperation between the countries within the Carpathians to achieve this goal. He then expressed his hope for the completion of the 2013 project on the establishment of a General Assembly of Carpathian Parliaments.

Markiyan Malskyy, former Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland, representing Lviv University, began his speech by thanking Poland for the support shown to Ukraine since the first day of the war. He stressed that the other Carpathian countries that took in refugees from Ukraine also played a significant role. He said:

Refugees from Ukraine are refugees, who integrate into society, who become part of the cultural environment. They are not refugees who create their autonomies within other countries of the European Union.

The Professor spoke of Russia's brutality in gaining its geopolitical objectives. He said that in addition to Ukraine, the countries of central Europe were under threat. He stressed that Ukraine's struggle forced one to look at the activities of international organisations from a different perspective:

We see the helplessness of the UN. We see Russia insulting the most potent international organisation [...]. The functions of this organisation will have to change. We also see the low opinion of NATO, which, as it turns out, can do nothing as an institution. To get NATO's help, Ukraine negotiates with its member states, which, bound by agreements, cannot help without a general agreement. And who can say anything about the OSCE today? These are the institutions that were created to guarantee the security of the nations of the world.

Markiyan Malskyy came up with an initiative to create a global institution that would respond in real time to manifestations of banditry and dishonesty. At the end of his speech, he referred to the European identity within which we should think about territorial defence systems.

Tibor Gerencsér, Consul General of Hungary in Kraków, acted in place of Csaba Kiss, a cultural scholar and university lecturer in Zagreb, Nitra, Prague and Warsaw, and read out a paper on his behalf entitled. "Europe of the Carpathians in the literature of the region." As he pointed out, in the cultures of Central and Eastern Europe, the motif of the Carpathians could be found in visual arts and music or literature. The Consul said that an international anthology of Carpathian literature could contribute to the construction of shared collective memory and better mutual understanding of our peoples. The paper he presented also included quotations concerning the Carpathians from excerpts from the national anthems of the Central and Eastern European countries: Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary.

Waldemar Wiglusz, President of the Society of Friends of Science in Przemyśl, talked about the Przemyśl Cultural Society that had been reactivated at the end of 2021. He recalled the beginnings of the Society, dating back to the 1980s, and the meetings that took place in the attic of Chairman Marek Kuchciński and were called the Cultural Attic (after the title of the magazine “Cultural Attic” published at that time). Waldemar Wiglusz pointed out that Roger Scruton was one of the participants in such meetings. Thanks to the “Law on Associations,” the Society was registered in 1989, and the meeting place then became the premises of the International Press and Book Club (the so-called Empik). The President added that the organisation had published several books, and there are plans for further publications.

Pavol Mačala of the Scientific Association for Personalism spoke about current developments in Europe:

Europe is at the most critical moment in its history since the Second World War [...]. It faces significant challenges: the current drama of war in Ukraine, with all its consequences, the effects of climate change (drought), migration and declining living standards.

The speaker focused on the identity of Central Europe as seen by St John Paul II, who believed that the post-Communist states of the region could bring into the European family their identities, which they had managed to preserve despite the actions of Marxist ideology. Pavol Mačala recalled that in 1995, the Pope had called for the elaboration of a basic charter of peoples’ rights and referred to his words about the pursuit of freedom as one of our era’s distinguishing features. He then quoted his words:

One of the great paradoxes of our epoch is that man, who entered what we call the modern period with a confident conviction of his maturity and autonomy, today approaches with a feeling of fear of himself, frightened of what he is capable of doing, terrified of the future.

István Kovác, historian and former Consul General of Hungary in Kraków, began his speech by recalling the figure of Stanislaw Vincenz, a specialist in the culture and history of peoples living in the Carpathian region:

Europe of the Carpathians – a land of diversity. The importance of individual countries...

In this respect, he can be an example to the decision-makers of the European Union. We can say that no one knows the message of Europe better than Vincenz, who thought through Europe's prospects. It must be added that he was a man of high culture.

Finally, István Kovác expressed the hope that people would lead the EU with high culture and knowledge of critical European challenges and issues.

Maciej Szymanowski, Director of the Waclaw Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation, presented the common features of the countries of Europe of the Carpathians, using the acronym www: 1) community of destiny; 2) interdependence in the field of security, values; 3) community of nations (own languages, traditions, borders). Further common features are contained in the abbreviation npd – politically mature nations, characterised by a high level of cooperation.

Fisherman's Bastion, Budapest, Hungary





Dolina Pięciu Stawów, Tatra Mountains, Poland



1. The project known as the European Union continues to exclude many states and peoples from Europe's borders, despite their European aspirations. The policy of this exclusion, combined with the integrationist hopes of the excluded peoples, reached its climax on 24 February 2022 in the form of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the – still ongoing – war. This attests to the fact that the European Union has understood little of Russia's earlier actions: the aggression against Georgia, the annexation of Crimea and the armed occupation of the Ukrainian Donbas. Unfortunately, these sad facts not only prove the West's lack of foresight in the face of Moscow's neo-imperialist policy and its failure to understand the soul and aspirations of the peoples of Eastern Europe but also contradict the idea of an integral Europe as a whole. The many years of delaying the process of full European integration for fear of Moscow and its blackmail has externalised the face of the European Union, which, forced by the situation in Ukraine, is now trying to make up for a lost time, at least declaratively. And yet, as John Paul II proclaimed, Europe has two lungs: a western and an eastern one, and its prosperity and peaceful coexistence depend not on centralisation and the building of a federal project but cultural power. The concept of culture has never known borders. Culture does not divide but unites, so cultural diversity is a complementary value in the historical process. Jacques Delors wrote: "If Europe does not have a soul of its own, does not define itself culturally, it will not be Europe. And if it is only a political or economic community, it will utterly fail in its task." For the time being, this soul of Europe is defined by national cultures and thus by the cultural pluralism of individual nations and within nations by ethnic groups. The Maastricht Treaty, which established the European Union, stipulated that it would not seek to homogenise national cultures but would encourage the Member States to learn about and respect each other's cultural heritage of European significance. However, the ever-increasing process of political



Jan Draus, historian, professor at the University of Rzeszow

and economic centralisation, including the federalisation of Europe, shows that this treaty provision does not guarantee freedom for cultural diversity. A definition of European identity in the individual and collective spheres has been sought, and identity, also national, has been considered an obstacle to the political project for a long time. One way of overcoming this obstacle was to be the policy of multiculturalism, which, however, did not lead to a harmonious coexistence of cultures but rather to conflicts. Today, these conflicts are being dynamised by the so-called cultural revolution, a product of liberal, leftist and leftist thought. Significant is Zygmunt Bauman's thesis that identity "appears to us as something to be created, not discovered."

2. Historically, Central and Eastern Europe has been the site of important historical events for the whole of Europe and has played a significant part in shaping European civilisation. Even the first book on the history of Europe was written by a native of the region, the Pole Paweł Piasecki (in 1645). And yet, Central and Eastern Europe was referred to as "Other Europe" in the West, despite its being heritage is linked to the pan-European heritage. This dismissive attitude of the West towards Central and

Eastern Europe manifested itself not only on the political level. For this reason, in 1927, on the initiative of two Polish historians, Professors Oskar Halecki and Marcei Handelsman, the Federation of Historical Societies of Central and Eastern Europe was established in Warsaw to draw international attention to the need to treat Central and Eastern Europe symmetrically to the rest of Europe. Later, this cultural and civilisational motif continued in the post-Yalta world, when enslaved Central and Eastern Europe functioned under Soviet domination. It was then that the historiography of the West became increasingly saturated with Marxism, to the extent that Central and Eastern European history served as a subject of study within Russian Studies. Professor Marian Dziewanowski wrote: "The area between Germany and Russia was regarded as a territorial and civilisational annexe or geopolitical caravan of Russia. The autonomy of this part of Europe was not even recognised. Fortunately, such historians as Oskar Halecki, Piotr Wandycz, Francis Dwornik (an émigré from Moravia) or István Bibó and Jenő Szűcs in Hungary opposed this treatment of Central and Eastern Europe. They academically strongly emphasised the inextricable link of this part of Europe with Latin civilisation and the Western civilisation circle. This issue also appeared in the works of Central European dissidents, initiated by Milan Kundera with his famous essay *The West Abducted or the Tragedy of Central Europe*, and complemented by Václav Havel, who portrayed the spiritual, cultural and mental phenomenon of Central Europe, which he transformed, after the fall of communism, into the political Visegrad format. This proves that Central and Eastern Europe is forced to demand its due subjectivity constantly, both academically and politically. And yet the cultural criterion remains for defining Europe's borders and identity. Perhaps the time has come to get rid of the adjective "other" when referring to Europe.

3. Looking at contemporary Europe, one cannot fail to notice that its eastern lung is still divided: between those integrated and those not integrated into the European Community. The unfinished work of integration has today threatened the whole of Europe. The ongoing war in Ukraine has already shown that the road to Moscow leads to neither peace nor prosperity but new spheres of influence and dependence. In addition, the war has divided Europe according to the scale of its economic dependence on Russia, and aid to struggling Ukraine. The principles of trust and solidarity within the Union have been violated, although they are still declared externally. The war also externalised the selfishness, procrastination and ignorance of history, above all of Germany



Winter trail on Diablak, Babia Góra National Park, Poland

and France. Regardless of the outcome, a new European order is likely to emerge, for such are the consequences of the war due to the mistakes made. And in this new order, there must be a place for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe because it must be remembered that the civilisational dimension determines the political one. Therefore, the struggle for this full-fledged place in Europe will not be easy. It will depend, above all, on the will and solidarity of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe and its rulers and the political support of the United States of America.



Carpathia? The time has come to institutionalise Carpathian cooperation

2023 shall be a special year for our shared Carpathian region. On the one hand, we can celebrate the 30th anniversary of the *Carpathian Euroregion*, established in 1993. On the other hand, 2023 is also the 20th anniversary of the 2003 *Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians*. As we look back to take stock of our achievements, we should focus on what remains to be done. As we plan our common future, we should always remember that we are fundamentally united by a desired aim: to attain for our shared Carpathian living space the best quality of life that is possible on planet Earth. Thus we must have ambitious aims. By 2050, we need to make the Carpathian region the most livable region in Central Europe. By 2075, the European Union. By 2100, Earth. With strategic planning, this could be our grand 21st-century mission: to institutionalise Carpathian cooperation and thus elevate *Carpathia* to new heights. In order to do so, I propose 7 specific actions that can lay the foundations for a new form of interstate cooperation within our Europe of the Carpathians region.

1. Governmental dimension: let us create a *Council of Carpathian Governments!* In essence: regular, ordered systematic intergovernmental meetings between the Carpathian countries. By doing so, we could incentivise continuous multilateral cooperation among the Carpathian states. This would ensure that even if the compositions of governing coalitions may change over time, the impetus for partaking in long-term strategic cooperation would remain. A best practice example from the region for such a solution is the Visegrád Group, composed of four Carpathian countries, namely Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. On an annual basis, meetings could be held in various formats between the governments of the Carpathian countries, ranging from Heads of State and Government to Ministers and State Secretaries. In the long term, should this form of intergovernmental cooperation be successful, it may be worth

considering the consolidation of such an ad hoc form of interstate cooperation into an institutionalised intergovernmental body, akin to the Nordic Council of Ministers.

2. Parliamentary dimension: it is time to revive the idea of a *Carpathian Parliamentary Assembly*. As mentioned in the *Krasiczyn Declaration* that was promulgated on the 23rd of February, 2013, the fundamental idea was to institutionalise cooperation between the parliaments of the Carpathian region. A good example that we may learn lessons from in this regard is that of the Baltic Assembly, which unites parliamentarians from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on a regular basis. Building upon the success of the informal “Carpathian parliamentary network” that has organically developed, we should consider formalising our parliamentary cooperation via an assembly of the parliamentarians of our respective countries.

3. Economic dimension: let us create an annual *Carpathian Business Forum*! The Krynica Memorandum of the 8th of September 2013 noted that with regards to Carpathian cooperation, we should “(...) consider as particularly important the development of traditional sectors of the economy (...)”. In line with this principle, it would be important to create an annual gathering of economic leaders from our countries to create more trans-Carpathian business synergies. Here we may draw inspiration from the Three Seas Initiative, of which Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania among the Carpathian countries are members. The *Three Seas Business Forum* as an outgrowth of this cooperation framework is a good example from which we can learn.

4. University dimension: it is time to resurrect the proposal for a “Carpathian University”, mentioned in the Carpathian Memorandum, dated September 8th, 2011. Originally the vision was “(...) to conduct research aimed at comprehensive development and to popularise it among academic and educational communities.” As a starting point, a *Carpathian University Union* could be created among the leading universities of our region, to foster closer academic, educational and research ties.

5. Infrastructural dimension: we need a Carpathian Investment Fund. The “Carpathian Memorandum” notes that among the “major weaknesses” of the Carpathian region, “gaps in infrastructure with regard to transport” are a priority area into which we should pour significant investments. To overcome these gaps, we need to be bold.



Dénes András Nagy, Chief Advisor, Department of Regional Cooperation, Rector's Advisory Office, National University of Public Service (Hungary)

The *Via Carpathia* highway network and the *Belgrade–Budapest high-speed rail link* are steps in the right direction. To push forward, we could experiment with the latest, cutting-edge advancements in transportation infrastructure: for instance, city-to-city rocket travel and vacuum tube trains. Let us use to our benefit the fact that the EU Agency for the Space Programme is based in Prague, and that the European Institute of Innovation and Technology is based in Budapest!

6. European dimension: we must push together at the European Union level to create an *EU Strategy for the Carpathian Region*. It is time to realise this proposal that was detailed in the *Declaration of Intent to Create the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region* signed on the 5th of September, 2018 in Krynica-Zdrój, which noted that the Carpathian Region is “(...) an extremely important geopolitical area in which strategic political interests cross (...)” and thus “(...) requires particular attention and support from the entire European Union”. The creation of the Carpathians Interregional Group within the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is good example of how we can

advocate the joint interest of our region better together: in a June 2019 opinion the CoR stated it “Supports the initiative to create an EU Strategy for the Carpathian Region, which would form a permanent framework for cooperation between countries, regions and communities of the Carpathians.”

7. Youth dimension: the future of the Carpathian region depends on successive generations of young leaders who are able to continuously strengthen our cooperation. That is why it would be important to bring together on an annual basis a gathering of exceptional young personalities so that our future leaders can connect early on in their careers. The Organisation of Turkic States – of which Hungary is an observer member state – hosts on a regular basis an intergovernmentally organised “Young Leaders Forum” and declared Bukhara, Uzbekistan in 2022 the first “Youth Capital of the Turkic World”. In line with this positive approach, we could consider hosting annual “Carpathian Youth Capital” contests in our cities. To jump-start this level of youth cooperation, we could consider hosting a dedicated *Carpathian Young Leaders Forum* element within the Europe of the Carpathians conference format.

In summary, the future of the Carpathians can be bright, if we decide to realise our plans. The future of Europe depends on us. Let us ensure that it becomes that of the *Europe of the Carpathians*.



Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe abound in material concerning the mountain chain called the Carpathians – from fine arts to music to literature. This is a substantial national and transnational cultural potential through which we can better understand our macro-region's common destiny, parallels and divergences. If possible, we could use this heritage to strengthen relations between our peoples. The literary narrative of the Carpathians is strongly represented in every culture. Outstanding representatives of this literature have contributed with their magnificent works to the cult of this mountain world. The community of this region – like any, as a rule, national community – records first and foremost its own achievements and is less familiar with those of its neighbours. An international literary anthology of the Carpathians could contribute to the construction of shared collective memory and a better mutual knowledge of our peoples.

It cannot be a coincidence that the Carpathians are mentioned in the four national anthems of Central and Eastern Europe: Romanian, Slovakian, Ukrainian and Hungarian.

Romanian national anthem: *Awake, Romanian* (1848)

Author: Andrei Mureşanu

You were destroyed by ill will

And blinded discord at the Milcov and Carpathian rivers (5th stanza)

The author of the hymn speaks of the unification of the Romanian brothers, who were separated by mountains (the Carpathians) and waters (the Milcov River). In the collective memory of Romanians, the Carpathian chain separated the different parts

of the nation and the countries they inhabited. According to historian Lucian Boia, according to the collective imagination of Romanians, the Carpathians form the backbone of the nation.

Slovak national anthem: *Song of the Volunteers* (1844)

Author: Janko Matúška

Above the Tatras it flashes, thunder thunders wildly,
although they will be lost, you know, brothers, snadno –
Slovaks come alive (1st stanza)

The Tatras have a central place in the imaginarium of the Slovaks. Ján Kollár, the great myth-making poet, sees the ancient homeland, the cradle of the Slovaks and all Slavs under the Tatras, it is their consecrated land (in his collection of sonnets entitled *Slávy dcéra* – 1834). For Slovaks, the Tatras – part of the Carpathian Mountains – are, in a sense, a metaphor for the homeland, a symbol of Slovakia. They treat the Kriván peak as a perpetual guardian of Slovak destiny.

Ukrainian national anthem: *Shche ne vmerla Ukrayiny i slava, vola* (1862)

Author: Pavlo Chubynsky

Hands-on work and sincere enthusiasm will do the job
And freedom's song will spread across the country,
Beyond the Carpathian Mountains it will bounce and across the steppes it will thunder,
The glory of Ukraine will stand among the nations (3rd stanza)

The poem was written in 1862 and published in 1863 in Lvov. The Carpathian Mountains were not yet in the first version. The text of the hymn was modified several times. For a short time in 1939, the poem was the anthem of the so-called Carpathian Ukraine. We can count the Ukrainian myth of the Carpathians from the end of the 19th century when the Hutsul region (and specifically the village of Krzyworównia/Krivorivna) was gaining popularity among the Ukrainian intelligentsia (according to our Hungarian Carpathian doctoral student Szabolcs Veres in his work).

Hungarian national anthem: *Hymn* (1823)

Author: Ferenc Kölcsey

Thou didst lead us centuries ago to the sacred peaks of the Carpathians (2nd stanza)

The subject of the poem addresses (on behalf of the nation) God. “The sacred peaks of the Carpathians” refers to where the Hungarians arrived in 896 – the Carpathian Basin. According to the traditional account, the Hungarians entered their new homeland through the Verecka Pass (Ukr. Verechkyj Pereval). In the Hungarian imaginary, the chain of the Carpathian Mountains, shielding the Carpathian Basin from the north and east, marked the country’s borders and formed a defensive wall simultaneously.

We can state without exaggeration that culturally the Carpathians perfectly fit the criterion of a place of memory, even a common place of remembrance, whose multicoloured content and intercultural interrelationships would be worth analysing together.

I want to use a few examples (from Slovak, Polish and Hungarian literature) to illustrate the extraordinary richness of the Carpathian literary heritage. Slovaks consider their people to be the people of the Tatras, the most prominent poets of Romanticism (e.g. Samo Chalupka, Janko Kráľ, Andrej Sládkovič) were singers of the mountain country. The Carpathian Mountains and the Tatras are often treated as borders, places that simultaneously separate and unite, defend the homeland, and enable contacts. Ján Kalinčiak, a classic of Slovak prose, wrote in his novel *Orava* (1870): “The Kingdom of Hungary has one, still certain, never-changed border – the Carpathian Mountains.” Mór Jókai, an outstanding representative of the Hungarian epic, wrote in his sketch *The Carpathians* that it is “a mountain range different from all others.” In turn, the conclusion of this text reads: “A dead land where man is not a welcome guest is crossed by the trails of naturalists, spa-goers and chamois-hunters. It is there, on the border of two countries, that the echoes of two benevolent phrases meet each other every day: ‘Hozott Isten!’ and ‘Be well!’.” I will conclude with a short quote by Stanislaw Vincenz from his notes entitled *Outopos*: “These mountains, as long as they were a country unto themselves, created an age-old border between two countries. When it entered the Eastern Carpathians, there was only a faint trace of Poland or Hungary here and there. They were there to separate the countries by an inherent (divine) boundary.”

If these remarks were to contribute to the commencement of work on a common literary anthology of the Carpathians, the author of this short essay would be extremely pleased.



River Prut, Yaremche, Ukraine



Although this is the 33rd Europe of the Carpathians Conference, it is worth going back to its origins and explaining how the idea for it came from its leader. This will be a good pretext for introducing the Przemyśl-based independent culture community.

After martial law in the early 1980s, a milieu was formed in Przemyśl, now known as Strych Kulturalny (Cultural Attic). The name comes from the title of a literary and artistic magazine published at the time in conspiracy against the authorities and censorship. From 1983 onwards, this activity involved organising cyclical art exhibitions in churches entitled Man-God-World and Days of Christian Culture. It also included meetings with artists in an authentic attic, on the outskirts of Przemyśl, in the home of Marek Kuchciński, later Marshal of the Polish Sejm. Guests included: Roger Scruton, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Ryszard Legutko, Zdzisław Najder, Leszek Moczulski, Jarosław Kaczyński, Zbigniew Romaszewski, Bohdan Cywiński, Krzysztof Dybciak, Jan Józef Szczepański, Jacek Fedorowicz, Adolf Juzwenko, Ludwik Dorn, Michał Ujazdowski and Zdzisław Najder. Today, it is also worth remembering local artists/artists/activists: Józef Kurylak, Stanisław Koba, Grażyna Niezgodą, Wojciech Ingot, Zygmunt Grzesiak, Paweł Niemkiewicz, and Andrzej Matusiewicz.

In 1990, after the political changes of 1989, people from this community registered an association called the Przemyśkie Towarzystwo Kulturalne. The city provided premises in a tenement house at Wybrzeże Józefa Piłsudskiego 1 (formerly Manifestu Lipcowego), which in communist times housed the so-called Empik, or International Press and Book Club.

The PTK organised meetings with interesting people and conferences (also in the castle in Krasieczyn) and concerts by musicians from the Przemyśl area. It was a time when travel from Poland to nearby Lviv and further afield became popular so that many tourists in transit to the east were encouraged to stop in Przemyśl.



Waldemar Wiglusz, President of the Society of Friends of Science in Przemyśl

In the same way, people from this milieu later organised performances by such figures as Krzysztof Penderecki, Aleksander Bardini and Jerzy Maksymiuk.

PTK was also active in publishing. In addition to the “Strych Kulturalny” magazine (of which six issues were published), the “Spojrzenia Przemyskie” monthly was published (in 1989–1993), and three books were published as part of the PTK Library, including – written on a hot topic of the time – “Przemyski Karmel.”

An emanation of the quasi-political activity was the establishment of the “New State” club at the Society, which invited people holding prominent public positions to give lectures.

The public administration reform at the turn of the century provided the impetus for establishing the Regional Policy Institute at the Society. Within the framework of this Institute, programmes such as Civic Education, Dem-Lok – Local Democracy (Poland-Ukraine border cooperation), the Przemyśl Academy (for the continuation of the creation of an international university), Cultural and Natural Heritage, Environmental Protection and Tourism, Regional Promotion, Strategy for the Development of the Region, Sub-region and Counties were developed. Not all programmes managed

to take off, but the latter resulted in cooperation at the level of governmental and parliamentary structures: with Władysław Ortyl – co-founder of the oldest special economic zone in Poland in Mielec – or with the Minister of Regional Development Grażyna Gęsicka (who died in the Smolensk catastrophe). Among the programmes of the Institute of Regional Policy, the Eastern Poland programme, which supports the development of the eastern lands, enjoyed the best results.

To the supra-regional undertakings of the Przemyśl Cultural Society, a continuator of the activities of the Przemyśl independent culture milieu, one can include, in my opinion, the successive editions of the “Europe of the Carpathians” conference, an idea following in the footsteps of programmes previously developing, for example, the Alpine mountain ranges.

The long-standing activities of the Society’s members resulted in their participation in civic committees, later also in membership of political parties, holding various positions in local government, government and parliament, or business. Over time, this resulted in the suspension of the Society’s activities.

In 2021, however, it was decided to reactivate the Przemyśl Cultural Society. The association “Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians,” established as one of the results of the cyclical conferences, therefore immediately found refuge in the structures of this Society.



San River Valley, Bieszczady, Poland



Europe is at the most critical moment in its history since the Second World War, and no one doubts that. It is facing significant challenges – the current war drama in Ukraine, with all its consequences, the effects of climate change (drought), migration and falling living standards. The problems pile up too much, so where to look for solutions? What will restore stability and peace in Europe, and what principles will build them? How can Europe of the Carpathians contribute to creating these values? I will turn my attention to one specific fundamental theme of the identity of Central Europe as seen – in my eyes – not only by the most extraordinary Pole of all time but also by the most outstanding European of all time, yearning for the unity of East and West Europe – Saint John Paul II.

How did St. John Paul II see the perspective of Central Europe? In 1988, before the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Holy Father gave an interview to Jan Gawroński, an Italian journalist of Polish origin, which, at the Pope's request, was treated as a private conversation and only published after his death. Asked who would gain more from the rapprochement between Communist and Western Europe, John Paul II replied that one could wonder who would lose more: "I would not be far from hypothesising that the East would lose more (...). One sees better what religion means if one lives in a programmatically atheistic regime. And he sees better one thing that the Western human does not see. Namely, God is the source of man's freedom – the ultimate, the only, the absolute, the certain."

Answering the question of what Central Europe – Communist Europe can contribute to a greater Europe, St. John Paul II judged that, above all, the contribution of the identity of the peoples of the region: "These are peoples who, despite all the Marxist reworking, have preserved their identity. Perhaps they have even sharpened it in the process of self-defence."

St. John Paul II was convinced that Europe could only exist in the future as a Europe of nations. In 1995, in an address to the UN General Assembly, as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of this institution, he called on the world's society to prepare a basic charter of peoples' rights. He argued that a nation is on the same anthropological plane as the human person. The text of this address was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* under the apt title *From Human Rights to the Rights of Nations*.

St. John Paul II repeatedly said: "Europe, return to your roots." And he identified what Europe's roots are – the Christian concept of man as the image of God according to the Greek theology so beloved by Saints Cyril and Methodius and deepened by St. Augustine.

Why is this necessary? According to St. John Paul II, "the universal rights of man, the universal requirements of the universal moral law, are rooted in the nature of a human person. We do not live in an irrational and meaningless world, but in which there is moral logic. It illuminates human existence and makes dialogue between peoples and nations possible. If we want the age of coercion to give way to the age of persuasion, we must learn to talk about man's future in a language that everyone understands. The universal moral law, enshrined in the human heart, is that peculiar "grammar" that the world needs in order to enter into such a conversation about its own future" (speech at the UN).

In his homily at the Kraków Błonie in 1979, St. John Paul II said: "For each human walks ahead of themselves. He moves towards the future. And nations go ahead. And humankind as a whole... To go ahead is to be aware of the goal." What goal do the EU, the nations of Central Europe, have before them? Most often, it is said that freedom and the good of man. The pursuit of freedom was mentioned by St John Paul II more than 20 years ago as one of the distinguishing features of our era. And he supplemented: "One of the greatest paradoxes of our epoch is that man, who entered what we call the "modern" period with a confident conviction of his "maturity" and "autonomy," today approaches with a feeling of fear of himself, frightened of what he is capable of doing, terrified of the future."

Anxiety is the fruit of a lack of truth, a lack of normative ethics. Freedom builds a person as a human only when one puts oneself at the service of the truth, and acts in the truth. To be oneself means to transcend oneself through the normative power of truth. Human well-being is being in the truth and acting in the truth. The commandment "to love God and one's neighbour belongs to normative ethics." This moral norm



Pavol Mačala, Scientific Association for Personalism

is what the modern world lacks most. It is key for a nation to build freedom on the pillars of objective truth and normative ethics.

I cannot think of any other environment that could begin to fulfil the prophetic words of St John Paul II that Europe can only exist as a Europe of nations than the Central European environment. The environment of Europe of the Carpathians, nurturing the Polish personalist thought, was built by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Father Prof. Wincent Granat, and the personalist school of Father Prof. Stanisław Czesław Bartnik.

A Europe of the Carpathians could bring the vision of a Europe of nations not only to the countries of Central Europe but it could also answer to the challenges of today, the visible manifestation of which is the inability to face the contemporary dramatic crisis that is bound to change the nature of Europe and the world.

Saint John Paul II was convinced that the tears of the 20th century had prepared the world for a new springtime of the human spirit: “The hour of a new hope has arrived, which tells us to free the future of politics and human life from the paralysing burden of cynicism” (speech at the United Nations). Instead of a new springtime of the human spirit in Europe, the tears of mothers and children have returned. And not only theirs. What have we neglected?



Railway in Yaremche in the Carpathian region, Ukraine



The Europe of the Carpathians is a land of interlinked diversity – as rarely and rarely has been the case – and at the same time, a part of Europe whose peoples are interconnected like the World Wide Web.

WWW

The first of the letters, “w,” symbolises the “community of destiny” (from the Polish word for community – “wspólnota”). Two world wars, the Cold War, and the collapse of communism and the systemic transformation affected Central European societies very strongly. Many people lost their jobs at that time; many others had to move away from their homes, sometimes even beyond the borders of their home country. All these events represent a common destiny.

The second “w” is “interdependence,” (“współzależność” in Polish) whether in political, security, economic, infrastructural or value dimensions. In this part of Europe, we are united, among other things, in our way of thinking about family, nation and Christian values – as was clearly shown by a study conducted by the think-tank Századvég, the results of which were published in the book *Hajrá. Hungary 2010–2020*, published by the Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation. It is another issue that unites us, especially against the background of Western Europe and the European Union as a whole.

And finally, the third „w” of this Central European „www” of ours, the „community of nations”. We have our own languages, our own traditions, and our own borders. We are proud of our nations, our culture, and our science. Undoubtedly, we healthily compete with each other. These three letters bind our societies together like a reinforced concrete foundation.



Maciej Szymanowski, Director of the Wacław Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation

Politically mature nations

Central Europe is also linked by the subsequent three letters: “p,” “m,” and “n,” i.e. the first letters of the phrase “politically mature nations.” What kind of nations are these? Well, those that are able to cooperate as sovereign states, pursuing their national interests and operating as protectorates. Politically mature countries are additionally distinguished by the fact that they do what they say they are going to do. For example, evidence of this can be found in the summary brochure of the 2017 Europe of the Carpathians Conference – many key initiatives were already signalled at that time, such as the construction of the international Via Carpathia route, a convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, increased support for Carpathian countries outside the European Union, an EU macro-regional strategy for the Carpathians, Carpathian parliamentary teams, the Collegium Carpathicum, the Carpathian Encyclopaedia, the Visegrad Atlas or an international platform for cooperation between Carpathian media. Many of these have already been implemented to varying degrees. However, some great ideas are still waiting, and although they have

been mentioned many times, they are still “stray,” like modern electric scooters in big cities. It would be suitable for these ideas, like these scooters, to find the right places and use them properly, for which, of course, the right institutions are needed.

The role of true leadership

In conclusion, I quote the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama. He defined the role of leadership as a fundamental concept, especially if we want to talk about politically mature nations and states in Europe of the Carpathians: “Our role is to inspire others so that they can or even must succeed. This is what true leadership is all about.” I hope that this role of authentic leadership is what we are all maturing into at this very moment, in these hours, in these months, paradoxically also due to this tragedy of the war in Ukraine. Let us hope so.

Orthodox church of the Nativity of the Holy Mother of God in Chotyniec, Poland





The Carpathians tamed? Civilisational wanderings in Central Europe. Carpathian roads and trails. From the Transcarpathian Railway via Via Carpatia, Via Kulturalia to the Crimson Route

The panel was moderated by **Władysław Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship**.

Richard Hörcsik, Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly, said:

I regard the „Europe of the Carpathians” project as a critical macro-regional project. It is of great value. It is not only the Poles who benefit from it but all the countries participating in this project.

The speaker pointed out that the Carpathian Mountains had obstructed access to the Central European region and cut off its inhabitants from development opportunities for centuries. The opening of the Carpathian region came in 1874 when the Hungarian-Galician railway line was put into operation. It played a key role in economic development. The President also mentioned the revitalisation of the 150-year-old Krosno-Hungarian railway line, which began in 2006.

Anna Paluch, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Group on Mountain Rescue, pointed out that the public authorities had to act to make the mountains and monuments more accessible to children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. She also spoke about the specificity of the Carpathian Mountains and emphasised:

We have an accumulation of great natural values in one mountain range, combined with excellent cultural values [...]. The magnificent and interesting culture and building traditions show that the most beautiful and practical way to allow the local population

to live and to attract tourists is to combine natural, cultural and historical values into routes that are a magnet for tourists, that enable the local population to make a living, that make the Carpathians accessible and that encourage people to visit them.

Anna Paluch also referred to the “Europe of the Carpathians” Conference itself, which, in her view, provided ideal opportunities for parliamentarians from other countries to meet to exchange ideas and inspire each other.

Mykola Kniazhytski, Co-Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Inter-Parliamentary Relations with the Republic of Poland in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, first spoke about the heroism of Ukrainian soldiers in their fight against the Russian enemy, which was planning to occupy the Ukrainian part of the Carpathian Mountains. The speaker drew attention to the problem with the supply of arms to Ukraine. He stated that, as a result, 1956 could be repeated in Hungary, no matter how much the Hungarian state tried to avoid it. Mykola Kniazhytski also spoke about the refugees returning to their homeland, who had set themselves the goal of rebuilding their country. He stressed that as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Carpathian states had suffered the most, as their demographic situation had changed due to the influx of refugees fleeing the war:

We need to build housing for all refugees in the Carpathian region. The war will change society, the Carpathians and our countries suffering the most from this aggression. We should understand that the world will change. [...] The new Carpathians will be closer to each other and have no borders. [...] We should develop this region together and explore our culture together.

Grigoris Zarotiadis, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, President of the Association of Economic Universities of South-Eastern Europe and Southern and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region, said:

The Carpathian region and other areas of Central, Central-Eastern and Eastern-Southern Europe, in the light of history, are full of very concrete and deep ties of coexistence of different ethnic, religious cultures and related identities. We have profound



Participants in the panel *Carpathians tamed? Civilisational wanderings in Central Europe. Carpathian Roads and Trails. From the Transcarpathian railway line via Via Carpathia, Via Kulturalia to the Crimson Route*, Krasiczyn, 13 May 2022

historical links. [...]. At the same time, it is an area of opportunities and possibilities but also concerns and threats.

Grigoris Zarotiadis also mentioned the *Via Carpatia*, which

requires international and inter-regional cooperation on the one hand and, on the other, provides the means for people to come together economically, socially and culturally; it is crucial for the peoples of our region.

The speaker also addressed changes in economic relations and the geopolitical alignment in the Carpathian countries and the world at large – changes resulting from the war in Ukraine but a longer process. He added that there was talk in academia of a new bipolar system emerging.

Ján Figel' from the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** said:

I had a vision that we would be at the centre of development because of the enlargement of Europe, but we are at the centre because of the war. [...] Networking is the answer to peacebuilding and the future of Central and Eastern Europe.

The speaker also mentioned two projects he was planning to implement – the first was a rail link around the Tatra Mountains, and the other was a road link from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea. Furthermore, he spoke about the impact of innovation and creativity on the competitiveness of countries:

Innovation and creativity are essential in building a more competitive economy, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation, war, and resource problem. I think a panel on innovation should be added to the next edition of the conference.

In his introduction, **Ján Hudacký, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Prešov**, thanked the organisers, particularly Chairman Marek Kuchciński, for their continuous efforts to promote the development of the Carpathian region. The Consul spoke about current and future challenges facing Europe: the war in Ukraine, the upcoming economic recession, high inflation, and threats to energy security. He emphasised the need to find a way out of the ongoing crisis:

Regarding further regional cooperation, I urge us to move from proclamations and words to concrete actions. It is about looking for opportunities to intensify cooperation in the region and make it more competitive. We need to create a powerful economic bloc within the framework of Europe of the Carpathians so that we can compete economically, whether with Western Europe or with the world in general.

Expert Andrzej Mazur spoke about the initiative taken in 2019 by Wit Wojtowicz, Director of the Łańcut Castle Museum, to build the Via Culturalia cultural trail, running along the Via Carpatia route – from Klaipėda in Lithuania to Thessaloniki in Greece. The aim of this trail is to showcase important cultural sites. Andrzej Mazur emphasised that a well-designed trail is one that is accessible to both hikers and motorists:

The tourist, walking or driving along the trail, visiting its fragments, will be aware that they are moving along a route of a strictly European character. [...] The basic, obligatory criterion for qualification of facilities for the trail is a short distance from 24-hour medical care facilities—outpatient clinics for internal medicine and dentistry and 24-hour pharmacy on duty. The trail is non-commercial and does not involve state or local government funding. [...] The entire route will be made available upon completion of the Via Carpatia 2024–2025.



Bieszczady Narrow-Gauge Forest Railway, Poland



Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to this Conference. In particular, I want to express my gratitude to Marshal Marek Kuchciński for his significant contribution to bringing together people and institutions in the Carpathian region. This is all the more valuable as we are currently facing dangerous challenges, especially the armed conflict in Ukraine.

Suppose we are talking about the need for economic growth, employment, new investment in the region, and better cooperation in the fields of the environment, education, and culture, we must take into account one crucial strategic aspect, namely the construction of a strategic transport infrastructure in this common area.

Via Carpatia road link

It is said that where there is a road, there is life. I am convinced that if we want this region to be strong and full of life, we must finish building its backbone. Yes, I am sure many people know what I am talking about. Via Carpatia, the north–south road link, is a clear answer to the urgent need for comprehensive development cooperation in the region.

Let me briefly describe the status of work on the construction of certain road sections of the Via Carpatia route. I want to express my great appreciation to the Hungarian Government, which, thanks to the section between the Slovak border and Miskolc, has completed the construction of the corridor on its territory. As far as Poland is concerned, the intensity of construction of the S19 expressway is admirable, and I have seen on more than one occasion how quickly construction work is progressing between Lublin and Rzeszów.



Ján Hudacký, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Prešov

In Slovakia, the situation is much worse. The first phase of the 4.3 km-long Prešov northern bypass is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in 2023. The second phase of the same bypass, 10.2 km long, is scheduled to start at the end of this year. The remaining eight sections from Prešov to the Polish border, with a length of 55.1 km, are at various stages of preparation and it is not easy to estimate the exact timetable for their construction. However, one thing is sure: these sections cannot be expected to be completed by 2030. I see the reasons for delaying the construction of the R4 expressway first and foremost in the fact that all governments since 2012 have not prioritised the construction of this expressway. The second reason, which ties in with the first, is the lack of funding.

What are the possible ways out of this situation? The government should make R4 a priority project as soon as possible. The eight sections of the R4 should be combined into one and implemented as a PPP (public-private partnership) project using both private and public resources. In cooperation with other signatory countries, the national sections of the Via Carpatia route should be integrated into the main TEN-T network, which will open the possibility of their co-financing from the CEF (Connecting Europe

Facility). The Slovak government should also examine the possibility of obtaining co-financing from the Three Seas Investment Fund.

Trans-Carpathian railway

In addition to the Via Carpatia north–south road link, constructing or reconstructing a north–south rail link between several countries in the Carpathian region should be a priority. I am delighted that the recent Polish-Slovak intergovernmental consultations also addressed this issue. In this connection, I would like to make a short historical “excursion.” Two years ago was the 150th anniversary (1 September 1870) of the opening of the railway line from Prešov to Košice, the first section of the later railway line, which opened on 18 August 1876 and connected Budapest and other Hungarian cities with Tarnów in Galicia.

At this time, the “competing” railway line Michaľany–Humenné–Lupków–Przemyśl was also being built and opened in 1874. It was the first Hungarian–Halčian railway.

Greater strategic importance was attributed to the railway line to Przemyśl via Łupków due to the fortress of Przemyśl, which was an important anti-Russian stronghold. Therefore, a second track was laid on the section leading into Hungarian territory in 1888. The line through Prešov to Tarnów remained single-track.

After 1918, the railway, which ran only through a part of Austria-Hungary, became an international line connecting Czechoslovakia and Poland. The importance of the neighbouring Michaľany–Humenné–Medzilaborce–Lupków line declined, on which – on the Slovak section – the second track was laid after 1918, but the frequency of international connections was lower here than on the line to Tarnów.

After 1989, another change took place – Czechoslovakia, and a few years later Slovakia, began to integrate into European structures. The Budapest–Miskolc–Košice–Prešov–Plaveč–Tarnów–Kraków railway line became a European corridor, part of the extensive Trans-European transport network (TEN-T comprehensive).

Of the international passenger trains, only two EC Košice–Budapest trains currently run on the entire Kechnec–Košice–Prešov–Plaveč line. Passenger traffic to Poland was discontinued several years ago after the bridge in front of Nowy Sącz was torn down during the 2010 floods in Poland, and even after a new bridge was built, passenger traffic could not be restored there. In the recent past, for example, there were express trains Budapest–Košice–Kraków, Warsaw–Kraków–Budapest–Bucharest, an

express train Prešov–Tarnów and even a passenger train Plaveč–Krynica. However, there is still international freight traffic on the railway line to Poland via the Plaveč–Muszyna border crossing.

From the above historical description, it is clear that our ancestors were also aware of the importance and necessity of transport infrastructure for the development of economic cooperation and mutual cultural and social enrichment of the region.

Tunnel to neighbours

That is also how the possibility of connecting Slovakia to Poland via the well-known historical railway crossing between Medzilaborce (Slovakia) and Lupkow (Poland) can be described. Železničná spoločnosť Slovensko, a. s. (Railway Company Slovakia), together with Poland's largest passenger carrier PKP Przewozy Regionalne, offers connections at this crossing on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during the summer season. They can be used twice daily in both directions, both in the morning and in the afternoon. A passenger train on our Slovak side, running on the Medzilaborce–Lupków–Medzilaborce section, always consists of a motor car from the Humenné depot.

In conclusion, I am confident that with the accelerated development of new transport infrastructure projects, our Carpathian region can become one of the most critical regions in Europe.



The Crimson Route is the name of a hiking trail running along the Via Carpatia international transport route from Klaipeda in Lithuania to Thessaloniki in Greece (3,500 km). The idea of the route, linked to the International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians” from the beginning, was initially presented in the materials of the 27th Conference in Karpacz (September 2020) and the 32nd Conference in Krasiczyn (February 2022). In this talk, I will present the current arrangements for the trail (as of May 2022): its colours, unofficial logo, the philosophy and main objectives of the project, a map of the first section (Klaipėda–Dukla), the Przemyśl segment and the technical side of the project.



Trail colour – crimson

Start of the idea – Łańcut, October 2019

The idea of the Crimson Route along the Via Carpatia on the Suwałki–Dukla route (760 km) was proposed by me in Łańcut on 20 October 2019 at a meeting held at the invitation of Wit Wojtowicz, director of the Museum-Zamek in Łańcut. This meeting was attended by people experienced in activities to protect and promote cultural and natural sites (historical monuments, UNESCO sites, the South-East Carpathian region, national parks, landscape parks). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the “Via Culturalia” project – a route for cultural exchange and documentation between cultural institutions, universities, museums and art institutes of the countries along the Via Carpatia route. The originator of this project is Wit Wojtowicz.



Andrzej Mazur

The original name of the Crimson Route was “Polish Crimson Route.” At the request of Marek Kuchciński, an organiser of the International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians,” in 2020 I extended the route to cover the entire way from Klaipeda to Thessaloniki (3,500 km).

Assumptions, main ideas

The route runs from the Curonian Spit in Lithuania (a UNESCO site) to Thessaloniki in Greece, through beautiful natural sites and architectural monuments, mainly of Renaissance origin. It is designed for the average hiker, seniors, motorbike tourists (riders), car tourists and, in some segments, even mothers with children. Close by is the Green Velo cycle trail.

The colour of the trail is crimson, and the colours of the underbrush are green (natural sites), blue (UNESCO heritage sites), and grey (easy for hikers).

The primary criterion for qualifying sites within the route: short distance to on-call medical outpatient clinics (general and dental) and 24-hour pharmacy duty.



The trail is non-commercial; it does not infringe on any existing track. It builds on what is there and does not involve state or local government budgets.

Current list of objects located in the first section of the route (Curonian Spit-Dukla)¹

Lithuanian section

1) Klaipeda, 2) Curonian Spit (UNESCO site), 3) Kaunas, a 14th century castle, Marijampolė border crossing

1 The entire route will be available when Via Carpatia is completed (2024–2025).

Polish section

Suwałki – entry to Poland, 4) Suwałki Landscape Park, 5) Suwałki Lake District, 6) Augustów Canal (UNESCO World Heritage Site), 7) Augustów Primeval Forest, Wigry National Park, 8) Biebrza National Park, 9) Białystok, Branicki Palace (17th c, Baroque/Renaissance), 10) Białowieża Forest (UNESCO site), 11) Kruszyniany mosque, historical monument “Bohoniki and Kruszyniany – mosques and mizars” from the 18th c., 12) palace in Kozłówka, historical monument (1st half of the 18th c., Rococo), 13) old town in Lublin, historical monument (14th–16th c, so-called Polish Renaissance), 14) Zamość, UNESCO site (16th c., Renaissance), 15) Łańcut, history monument (2nd half of 16th c. – 1st half of 17th c.), 16) old town in Przemyśl, history monument (2nd half of 14th c. – 1st half of 17th c, Renaissance), 17) Przemyśl fortress, historical monument (2nd half of the 19th c.), 18) Krasiczyn, historical monument (16th/17th c., Renaissance), 19) Blizne, UNESCO site (15th c.), 20) Chaczów, UNESCO site (14th c.), 21) Iwonicz-Zdrój, stop, 22) Rymanów-Zdrój, stop, 23) Dukła–Barwinek, border crossing.

Conclusion: Greek section

Thessaloniki (founded 315 BC)

Segments

Due to a large number of outstanding cultural and natural sites, the route has been divided into so-called segments (e.g. Suwałki segment, Białystok segment, Lublin segment, Dukła segment, Thessaloniki segment). They can be visited independently of the whole.

In order to illustrate how many cultural/natural objects are located within the Crimson Route, I will use the example of only three Polish voivodeships: Podlaskie – 97 objects of historic wooden architecture, Lubelskie – 35 objects, Podkarpackie – 113 objects. The Przemyśl District (where the 33rd Conference is being held) has 109 objects to be visited on its tourist map.

Thessaloniki itself, which is the final stretch of the route, could be a textbook of Greek – and to a large extent European – history and culture.



Statue of Alexander the Great against the backdrop of Mount Olympus in Thessaloniki, at the end of the Crimson Route (the photograph is the unofficial logo of the route)

Illustrative material: Przemyśl segment

As the 33rd Conference is taking place in Krasiczyn and the panel is organised by the Przemyśl Cultural Association, I give an example of the Przemyśl segment of the planned set of venues:

- Palace in Krasiczyn – a historical monument (16th century, Renaissance);
- Old Town in Przemyśl – historical monument (16th century, Renaissance);
- Przemyśl fortress – historical monument (19th century);
- Botanical garden Arboretum Bolestraszyce (19th century gardens), which also houses the permanent exhibitions of the Physiography Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences and a specialist library;
- Green sub-trail: Brylińce–Kopystańka (541 m) – Rybotycze (2 h 20 min – ascent, 1–2 h – bivouac on the summit, 1 h 20 min – descent) (combination of the popular red trail Przemyśl–Bircza and yellow trail Rybotycze–Kopystańka); leads to the Kopystańka viewpoint with beautiful panoramas of the Bieszczady; tourist categories: Przemyśl Foothills Landscape Park, Kopystańka Reserve, Połoninki Rybotyckie (also Turnicki National Park planned), Calvary of Paclawska with a viewing tower (17th c.), hiking trails of the Przemyskie Foothills, hiking, health promotion: curing with landscape, curing with clean air, curing with sun, curing with hiking; available for mothers with children (in good weather, on the yellow Rybotycze–Kopystańka trail), seniors, cyclists, horse tourism;

As the Crimson Trail is designed for the average tourist, the cost of the trip is, as of today, around 13 PLN per person (transport by bus between Przemyśl–Krasieczyn–Brylińce and Rybotycze–Przemyśl).

- emergency ambulatory services: general (18 Bohaterów Monte Cassino Street, Przemyśl), dental (1 Kosynierów Street, Przemyśl);
- national and international PKS stations (coaches), Ukrainian PKS station, railway station with national and international connections to, among others, Warsaw, Wrocław, Kraków, Rzeszów, Graz, Vienna, Berlin, Lviv, Kyiv, Odessa;
- easy access to the specified facilities by MZK buses, minibuses, PKS.

Links

Map I section Klaipeda–Dukla, 24 objects, photographs:

<https://www.salon24.pl/u/prognozy2030/1114654,karmazynowy-szlak-klajpeda-saloniki-odcinek-polski-wersja-i>

Technical side of the project:

<https://www.salon24.pl/u/prognozy2030/1037144,crimson-route-w-planach-euro-py-karpat-2021-2024-diskusja>

Comparison of the Crimson Trail and the hiking trails of Europe:

<https://marekkuchcinski.pl/bez-kategorii/europa-karpat-krasieczyn-4-6-lutego-2022-wydawnictwo-sejmowe/>



Meeting of the Association “Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians” during the 33rd International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians” Krasieczyn–Yaremche, 13 May 2022

During the meeting of the Association “Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians,” a procedure was carried out to launch the judicial registration of the ordinary association “Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians” in Przemyśl.

The Presidium of the Programme Council was appointed, with the following composition:

1. Marek Kuchciński – Chairman of the Programme Council
2. Richard Hörcsik
3. Mykhaylo Khariy
4. Pavol Mačala
5. Ján Hudacký
6. Markiyan Malskyy
7. Maciej Szymanowski
8. Barbara Bartuś
9. Ștefan Purici
10. Jerzy Kwieciński
11. Władysław Ortyl

Alexandra Ochmańska was appointed **chairman of the board**.

Membership was granted to those attending the meeting after signing on the attendance list, as well as to those attending online after electronic signature.

The Association’s headquarters are located in Przemyśl at Wybrzeże Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego 1, while the Waclaw Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation



Meeting of the Association of "Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians," Krasieczyn, 13 May 2022

in Warsaw will be the headquarters of the secretariat of the "Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians."

Contact: klubyeuropykarpat@hotmail.com

Programme Board members:

- Adamczyk Arkadiusz, Poland
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- Babinetz Piotr, Poland
- Bartuś Barbara, Poland
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- Klarkowski Andrzej, Poland

Meeting of the Association "Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians"...

- Kniazhytski Mykola, Ukraine
- Cat Beata, Poland
- Kovács István, Hungary
- Kuchcińska Beata, Poland
- Kuchciński Marek, Poland
- Kwieciński Jerzy, Poland
- Lasek Dawid, Poland
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- Malicki Jan, Poland
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- Mazur Andrzej, Poland
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- Šuplata Marián, Slovakia
- Szymanowski Maciej, Poland
- Terlecki Ryszard, Poland
- Wiglusz Waldemar, Poland
- Wijas Sebastian, Poland
- Zybortowicz Andrzej, Poland
- Žuk-Olszewski Dariusz, Slovakia

Dolina Pięciu Stawów, Tatra Mountains, Poland





Railway stop in the Carpathian Mountains, Ukraine



Communication development in Central Europe. East–West–North–South

The panel was moderated by **Bogdan Rzońca, Member of the European Parliament**. He asked the guests about the impact of the war on the economy, transport and infrastructure.

Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, announced that on 10 May, he had held a meeting with Oleksandr Kubrakov, Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine and his deputies, and with the management of Ukrainian railways. The subject of the talks was the problems related to the organisation of rail and road transport in Poland and Ukraine. The Minister added that the issue of the war had been topical since 2006 when the then Polish President Lech Kaczyński initiated a trans-European project – the Via Carpatia project:

Today, everyone is pointing out how necessary the project was and is, how necessary the Tri-Sea Europe is, and especially how necessary the Via Carpatia project is. [...] The Tri-Sea Europe corridor is now a fundamental element from the point of view of EU defence. [...] Creating economic prosperity by building infrastructure is possible when we are free; and we are free when we are able to defend ourselves, and we are able to defend ourselves when we have the right infrastructure.

The Minister went on to talk about the consequences for European transport of the war in Ukraine:

At the Ministry of Infrastructure and with the railwaymen, we were preparing for the possibility of war. The Secretary of State, Andrzej Bittel, who is not here, became the person responsible for preparing transport channels in case war refugees had to be evacuated from the Polish-Ukrainian border. That became a reality. Since then, we

have cleared almost 4,000 passenger trains from the border, and we have cleared about 900,000 passengers who have taken advantage of the transport opportunity free of charge.

The Minister said that the smooth evacuation of refugees from the border was made possible by the rolling support of Germany and the Czech Republic. He emphasised that as Ukrainian ports are not functioning, it was necessary to organise the transport chain of supplies to and from Ukraine to meet all the expectations of the economy of the Ukrainian state.

Andrej Doležal, Minister of Transport and Construction in the Slovak Republic, spoke about the increase in the price of construction materials due to the war, which negatively affected the pace of investment. He said that he and Minister Andrzej Adamczyk were coordinating with the European Commission on the development of guidelines for the conduct of public procurement and the implementation of contracts in accordance with the law. Andrej Doležal also reported on the start of construction of a motorway towards the Slovak-Ukrainian border crossing Vyšné Nemecké–Užhorod, as this border could prove to be crucial in the future reconstruction of Ukraine. The Minister also mentioned cross-border corridors:

In Černá nad Tisou we have a transshipment point. I hope that the flow of goods from west to east will reverse its direction and start flowing from east to west. We have intermodal transshipment points, compressors and pumping stations to handle not only bulk goods, but also liquid goods.

The Minister spoke about the construction of infrastructure in eastern Ukraine. He expressed hope for financial assistance from the European Commission in this regard.

Vasyl Shkurakov, First Deputy Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, reported that the losses caused by the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops are estimated at around \$92 billion. The speaker first presented the losses in figures regarding the railway infrastructure. Since the first day of the war in Ukraine, 6,300 km of rail links and 41 rail bridges have been destroyed, and 22 railway stations have been put out of operation. The Deputy Minister then reported on losses in road infrastructure – 23 km



Participants of the panel *Communication development in Central Europe. East–West–North–South*, Krasieczyn, 14 May 2022

of roads and 291 bridges were destroyed. He added that the devastation had caused difficulties in the movement of the population, in the transportation of cargo and in the supply of food in the cities:

Around 200 million tonnes per year were exported by Ukraine, with approximately 120 million tonnes exported exclusively through Ukrainian ports. Since 24 February, these ports have ceased to fulfil their functions. Exports of Ukrainian goods are now slowly being restored through the borders with Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary.

Vasyl Shkurakov stressed that the ministry's current priority was to restore rail transport to improve the exchange of goods between European countries and Ukraine.

Václav Bernard, Deputy Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, spoke about the steps introduced by his country to assist refugees from Ukraine. He reported that evacuation trains had been sent to the east, with 300,000 people arriving in the Czech

Republic. The refugee assistance package includes health care, accommodation, social counselling and job offers. The Deputy Minister reported that the possibility of the so-called humanitarian corridor between the Czech Republic and Poland had been created in cooperation with the Czech Red Cross and partner entities:

The concept behind this solution is to create a system of transitional warehouses in the Czech Republic. Their purpose would be to collect humanitarian aid mainly using road transport. The idea is to collect this material and then create depots of goods trains and transport it by rail to the hub, after which it would be distributed within Ukraine using road transport. This corridor could extend across Europe under the auspices of the International Red Cross. It is assumed to be used in the reconstruction of Ukraine after the war conflict.

Václav Bernard added that the Czech Republic was the first to close its airspace to Russian carriers. The Deputy Minister informed about the agreement on the liberalisation of road transport with Ukraine and Moldova, which was being prepared, and the mutual recognition of driving licences and qualifications, and pledged assistance in the reconstruction of Ukraine:

We are working with Ukrainian partners. We are involved in the supply of parts needed to secure the destroyed infrastructure. We also plan to cooperate in the reconstruction of Ukraine itself, in rebuilding the transport fleet. The Czech Republic commends the progress that has been made in the implementation of the TEN-T neighbourhood policy. We will continue to support the expansion of the TEN-T policy, as it is a very beneficial tool to bring Ukraine closer to the Union and to interconnect our infrastructure systems.

The Deputy Minister pointed out that all of Europe should emphasise the development of an interoperable and multimodal transport network. The priority is to develop the north–south axis and strengthen the east–west axis.

Jerzy Polaczek, Chairman of the Polish-Slovak Parliamentary Group, said:

The war in Ukraine is creating an urgent need to reorganise and rebuild important strategic documents of the Ukrainian state – concerning transport, defence policy,

investments, and plans to reconstruct critical infrastructure. These are fundamental issues that need to be taken care of so that the flow of goods, people, train traffic, and airspace traffic can be rebuilt. [...] The political responsibility for the war in Ukraine should be borne – globally – by the Russian Federation.

Jerzy Polaczek expressed his satisfaction with the strengthening of Polish-Ukrainian transport cooperation. He referred to the future of Ukraine after the end of the war. He spoke about the support of Poland, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and Europe in political, military and economic aspects. He added that those countries defined the future of Ukraine as a highly significant partner aspiring to join the EU.

Oleksandr Kubrakov, Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, began his speech by recalling the projects – agreed upon by the governments of Poland and Ukraine – whose implementation had been interrupted by the outbreak of war (restoration of line 102, expansion of border crossings, construction of roads). The Minister also touched on the topic of the reconstruction of the national economy, around which discussions had taken place with the European Commission and Poland. Oleksandr Kubrakov then expressed his gratitude to the humanitarian aid carriers and the Poles for the kindness and openness shown to the Ukrainian refugees. He said:

Our nations are true friends. The war has shown that.



Lake Siriu, Carpathian Mountains, Romania



The Europe of the Carpathians Conference has been bringing together Polish and foreign parliamentarians, local government officials and scientists to discuss the development of the Carpathian region for 11 years.

The May edition was dominated by the topic of the war in Ukraine and its consequences for the transport system in Poland and the Three Seas Region countries. During the debate, organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministers of Transport from Poland, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia shared their experiences and thoughts.

In the first weeks of the war, transport networks in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries had to ensure that large numbers of refugees could move efficiently through the region. Poland, in cooperation with Ukraine and partners from European Union countries, provided rail transport of people and goods. Since 24 February, nearly 3,900 trains have been cleared from towns and cities along the border with Ukraine. Approximately 880,000 passengers departed from Chełm, Hrubieszów, Dorohusk, Przemyśl, Krościenko, Hrebenne and Jarosław stations. Free travel on PKP Intercity trains is also a tremendous support. War refugees from Ukraine have already used them more than 1 million 800 thousand times. It is also worth recalling that we have introduced free travel on motorways for, among others, people driving cars with Ukrainian registration numbers. The Czechs have decided on a similar move, as Václav Bernard, Czech Deputy Minister of Transport, said in Krasiczyn: “Trucks and buses carrying humanitarian aid are exempt from tolls in our country. This also applies to passenger cars with Ukrainian plates.”

In these new circumstances, one of the challenges for Poland and Central and Eastern European countries is to ensure the region's transport cohesion with the Ukrainian transport system. Andrej Doležal, Minister of Transport and Construction of Slovakia,

announced in Krasiciń that an infrastructure expansion is planned in the east of his country: “We have already started work on a feasibility study when it comes to pulling the motorway towards the border with Ukraine. This border may soon become crucial for us.”

The May edition of the Europe of the Carpathians Conference provided a platform for debate on the changing geopolitical environment, particularly regarding international trade. Ukraine’s Black Sea ports are currently blocked, and grain cannot be transported to its traditional markets. The need to secure supplies for a struggling Ukraine is also not insignificant. Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov thanked the Poles for their unwavering assistance, noting how relations between Warsaw and Kyiv had recently changed: “We have amicable relations; we act at lightning speed. The war has made us use SMS or instant messaging instead of formal communication channels.”

The ongoing war is also having a noticeable impact on the infrastructure programmes of the countries in our region, as it causes many undesirable macroeconomic developments. However, despite the difficult situation, Poland does not intend to limit its investments, as they contribute to the country’s economic growth. It was emphasised several times during the Conference that the stronger the economy, the less susceptible the country is to the turbulence currently faced by the entire Carpathian region. Poland is consistently striving to develop transport routes and is using, among other things, subsidies from EU funds for this purpose. A project constructing a cross-border section of the **Via Carpatia**,¹ submitted by Poland jointly with Slovakia, awaits funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).²

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- 1 In Poland, the Via Carpatia road project is well-advanced. Of the approximately 715 km of the route, more than 215 km have already been put into use, almost 293 km are under construction, tenders are being conducted for more than 90 km, and the remaining almost 115 km are in preparation. Funds for the implementation of the Via Carpatia corridor were provided by the current government as part of the amendment to the National Roads Construction Programme 2014–2023 (with an outlook to 2025) when we increased the spending limit to approximately PLN 164 billion.
 - 2 Connecting Europe Facility – CEF. The CEF is a financial instrument managed centrally by the European Commission, which selects projects for funding as a result of calls for proposals it issues. Only the most critical projects on an EU-wide scale, in addition to those competing with applications from other Member States, have a chance of receiving funding. The CEF supports three areas: transport, energy and telecommunications networks.



Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland

Furthermore, it should be emphasised that the tragic war events in Ukraine confirmed the validity of the transport policy guidelines adopted by Poland several years ago when the directions of Polish transport infrastructure development were redefined, and the importance of the North–South axis was raised.

This change, together with the development of the geopolitical concept of the Three Seas Initiative, is entirely in line with the current needs arising from the consequences of the war. The integration of the Three Seas countries is a fundamental factor justifying the need for new, convenient connections along the North–South axis, including Ukraine, ensuring its transport accessibility and security of supply. Moreover, Via Carpatia is to be the backbone of the new Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) corridor, the Baltic Sea – Black Sea – Aegean Sea corridor. Poland is endeavouring to make this transport route as multimodal as possible by also stepping up efforts to build the **Rail Carpatia** railway line.

In addition, attention should be paid to the defence dimension of the transport system. Without roads, railways and airports with adequate parameters, the implementation of defence policy will be severely hampered or even impossible. The North–South

axis, the importance of which is so emphasised by Poland, is an essential direction from the point of view of NATO's Eastern Flank, with particular reference to military mobility. A key project in this respect is the previously mentioned **Via Carpatia**. This undertaking also includes branches in Ukraine, leading from Dorohusk to Kyiv via Lutsk, from Hrebenne and Medyka via Lviv and Ternopil to Odessa, and to the Romanian border near Suceava. In terms of strengthening NATO's Eastern Flank, it is also noteworthy that Rzeszów Airport was awarded funding (over EUR16.5 million from the CEF) under the Military Mobility Component for two investment projects. That was the first CEF competition of its kind in which Poland (together with Lithuania) was the leader.

The scale of the challenges faced by Ukraine, Poland and other countries in the region clearly shows that the determination to date to ensure the region's transport coherence with the Ukrainian transport system, as well as the efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, are bearing fruit in the form of increased traffic flows and increased transport capacities for Ukraine. An example of this is the communication presented on 12 May by the European Commission on improving Ukraine's transport accessibility to create conditions for the export of, among other things, grain and stocks impossible to export due to the maritime blockade of Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea.

War in Ukraine

On 14 May 2022, a panel discussion on the war in Ukraine was held as part of the XXXIII International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians.” The debate was attended by: Ryszard Terlecki – Deputy Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Olena Kondratiuk – Deputy Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Rozália-Ibolya Biró – Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament, Emanuelis Zingeris – Head of the Seimas Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Michal Šipoš – Chairman of the Friendship Group with Poland in the Slovak National Council, Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski – Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Björn Söder – Member of the Swedish Riksdag, Vladimir Ponomaryov – former Deputy Minister of Construction of Russia, now a dissident, and Dariusz Żuk-Olszewski – pedagogue, Polish translator and publicist living in Slovakia. Mykhailo Bno-Airiian – advisor to the chairman of the Lviv Military District State Administration – also spoke in the discussion. The debate was moderated by Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski, Professor at the University of Łódź, Advisor in the Political Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland and Permanent Advisor to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Sejm. The panel was thus dominated by active politicians-parliamentarians, complemented by the voices of expert advisors.

A large number of panellists and the diversity of countries they represented made it possible to look at the war in Ukraine from many national perspectives. At the same time, the fact that the panellists were, without exception, from the countries of the Eastern Flank of the EU and NATO resulted in a high degree of coherence in the conclusions and uniformity in the message, both in the assessment of the causes of Russian large-scale military aggression against Ukraine, its goals and methods and regarding

the recommendations for actions to be taken to defend against Russian imperialism successfully.

Compelling were the words of Oleksandra Kondratiuk, who began the discussion by quoting the words of Ukraine's First Lady Oleksandra Zelenskaya about the fact that while baby care products, provided to Ukraine as humanitarian aid, are needed so that babies have their nappies changed, they need to live, and weapons are needed to save their lives – so it is these that Ukraine needs most at the moment.

All speakers strongly condemned Russian aggression and expressed their admiration and respect for the heroically defending Ukraine. They rejected any settlement proposals unfavourable to Ukraine. In their speeches, they pointed out the importance of Ukrainian armed resistance to the security of the entire region. They raised the issues of humanitarian aid to this invaded country and also pointed to urgent tasks to strengthen its defence capabilities. These tasks include, in addition to the supply of armaments – including heavy offensive weapons, as well as a diverse range of war materials – logistical and infrastructural activities, at the forefront of which is the expansion of rail links to Ukraine with a European gauge, which would facilitate the transport of war materials for this embattled country. At the same time, it would improve the transit of Ukrainian grain to Polish ports and thus influence the breaking of the Russian blockade of Ukrainian Black Sea ports and reactivate food exports from Ukraine, the interruption of which threatens not only producers' losses but also a food crisis in numerous regions of the world, including Africa. And this, in turn, could stimulate immigration pressure to the south of the EU.

Rozália-Ibolya Biró's speech focused on the moral dimension of the war and the humanitarian aid to Ukraine provided by Romania. Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski expressed full Polish support for Ukraine in a powerful speech firmly rooted in the war-political realities. Vladimir Ponomaryov, who knows the Russian regime from the inside, presented a wide-ranging diagnosis of the nature of the system. His conclusions about the chances of active Russian opposition to the war were pessimistic. None of those present questioned them.

Lithuanian solidarity with Ukraine was expressed in beautiful Polish by Emanuelis Zingeris, who reaffirmed Lithuania's total commitment to all possible material and political assistance to Ukraine. He expressed admiration for Poland's attitude towards war refugees from Ukraine and the condemnation of Germany for its policy of expanding business ties in the energy dimension with Russia and the political



Participants of the panel *War in Ukraine*, Krasieczyn, 14 May 2022

consequences of such behaviour. Poland's stance towards the war in Ukraine, according to the Lithuanian parliamentarian, gives it moral leadership in the EU, and the common Polish-Lithuanian traditions from the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, bring all three nations, well aware of the nature of Russian possessiveness, closer together.

The conclusions of the debate as a whole were serious and precisely formulated. They led to the conclusion that the only way to lasting peace in Europe is to break Russian possessiveness, which must be defeated on the battlefield. Compromise with imperial Russia is impossible, and trying to make a deal with it on a land-for-peace basis will only encourage the Kremlin to continue its expansion – it will give perhaps a break in hostilities, but not a lasting peace. Suggesting that Ukraine cede part of its territories to Russia is therefore not only immoral and contrary to European values, but would also be politically ineffective. It is also absolutely unacceptable because it essentially means bringing the population of these territories under Russian rule. After the experience of the Russian crimes of Bucha and Irpin, which are, after all, only symbols of a wider phenomenon, there can be no doubt that a large proportion of these people would be handed over to death in this way and the rest condemned to slavery. Ukraine needs weapons and they must be provided. Russia, on the other hand, must

be condemned and sanctioned in the strongest possible terms, and those guilty of aggression should be brought before the International Court of Justice.

After the end of the war, a significant challenge will be the reconstruction of Ukraine. Resources confiscated from Russia should be used for this purpose. Support from the EU would be very welcome. All countries of the EU's Eastern Flank strongly support the project of Ukraine's accession to the European Union. At the same time, as Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski pointed out in his panel summary, the probability of the EU opening up to Ukraine – up to its accession – is low. The pessimism in this regard stems from the reluctance of Western European governments and societies towards any further enlargement of the EU, the legal constitutional barriers in France (the requirement to ratify the accession treaty by referendum of any state whose population exceeds five per cent of the EU population), the experience of the negative outcome of the Dutch referendum on the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, Germany's reluctant policy towards Ukraine and the realistically assessed consequences of Ukraine's possible accession to the EU for the interests of Paris and Berlin. This is because Ukraine, as an EU member state with a severe Russian threat, would form a political bloc with Poland, the Baltic and Scandinavian states, which would prevent EU-Russian cooperation and be a hotbed of hard Atlanticism – close cooperation with the US. This would reduce the positions of Germany and France in the EU, which they both know and will counter. Nevertheless, pressure should be exerted on Brussels to admit Ukraine to the European Union and, based on these efforts, open the way for Kyiv – as a “future EU Member State” – to become a member of the Three Seas Initiative quickly.

The massive influx of war refugees from Ukraine to Poland gave Poles and Ukrainians an opportunity to get to know each other. This fact transformed relations between the two peoples – elevating them to the highest level in history. The shared experience of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, its collapse and the ensuing three centuries of Russian captivity, punctuated by brief periods of freedom, united Poles and Ukrainians – the two most prominent nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Their cooperation, around which the other nations threatened by Russia are consolidated, is a *sine qua non* for the effective defence of the independence, territorial integrity and happy future of all the states of our region. We believe that, with the support of our US, British and Canadian allies, the countries of NATO's Eastern Flank, expanded to include Finland and Sweden, together with Ukraine, will put up an effective barrier to Russia, which knows only such limits to its possessiveness as are set by the armed strength of the nations threatened by it.



Who would have thought that, in the 21st century, Europe would face a war that would have repercussions throughout the world? It's been more than 4 months since the Ukrainians fought for their lives and freedom. We are witnessing an aggression that cannot be motivated by any argument, in the face of an indescribable tragedy.

In these moments, more than ever, we need solidarity, unity. Only solidarity and unity can be the weapons against Russian aggression.

Russia is attacking civilians and targeting civilians, including hospitals, medical facilities, schools and shelters. These war crimes must end immediately. Our involvement in solving this conflict is very important. Although the EU must have a unique voice, it is essential that each member country be aware of its role as an important factor in this context and contribute to the harmonization of that unique voice.

Romania is making a consistent financial effort to ensure a proper response to the current crisis and to show its solidarity. This is not an easy task for us, especially since we need to stick to our fiscal commitments at EU level.

It is therefore important for us to receive financial support from the EU budget for sustaining this effort on a longer term, especially since there is a high uncertainty with regard to the duration of this crisis.

Romania appreciates the initiative of PL and SE to organise the Donors Conference on 5th of May and its results. Romania has participated at Prime-minister level and has announced an additional contribution of 3,2 mil. euro (in kind, combustible).

At the same time, Romania appreciates COM's initiative to create a fiduciary fund for Ukraine.

Stopping Russian aggression, however, remains our most important goal.

NATO's eastern flank needs to be better strengthened. We need to be aware of where the aggression is coming from, the aggressor is Russia and we need to build a very solid



Biró Rozália-Ibolya, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament

and secure defence on the Eastern Flank, Battle Groups are a very good start, but we still need to strengthen the Eastern Flank. For this, solidarity and unity are essential.

The initiative of the Conference Europe of the Carpathians is an important support for the development of dialogue in the parliamentary dimension, in order to harmonize our efforts to have a common voice.

We welcome the initiative and efforts of the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Marek Kuchciński.



I would like to thank Vice-Marshal Terlecki and former Marshal Kuchciński for the invitation and to once again get the opportunity to participate in the Europe of the Carpathians conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today I first would like to reflect on the possibility to speak freely in a country that is a neighbour of Russia. I think in the heightened tensions it's not something that we can take for granted. Only a strong commitment to defence and deterrence can guarantee the fundamental freedoms of our societies, as the war in Ukraine has made very clear. The fight in Ukraine is not only a fight for freedom in Europe but given the immense Russian threat also including nuclear weapons it's a fight for all those that cherish freedom and prosperity.

This is why it's so important that we all as free societies in every way support Ukraine. In this regard I think that Poland clearly has shown the way with your humanitarian aid and willingness to take responsibility for Ukrainians fleeing from the war and perhaps most importantly with your supply of arms to Ukraine's freedom fighters. In this regard I especially noticed that you also have supplied offensive arms as for example main battle tanks. This support is very important in giving Ukraine means to fight back.

We have seen what's going on in the occupied areas especially after the liberation of Bucha. Massacres, rapes and plunder is routine of the Russian forces in Ukraine and the Russian regime is encouraging such behaviour. It can only be stopped if Ukraine is given offensive arms so it can retake all occupied areas.

In Sweden we have shipped defensive arms as for example anti-tank weapons in large quantities. This is a policy that I, in our parliament, have worked for starting



Björn Söder, Member of the Swedish Riksdag

before the Russian invasion and I am grateful that the parliament unanimously, except the left party, supported sending arms and other military equipment to Ukraine.

However, this is clearly not enough! In the present situation, Sweden must also open up to send offensive arms to Ukraine and this is what I'm working for at the moment. Fortunately, more and more countries are sending offensive arms to Ukraine and this is a most positive development. Especially considering that Ukrainian forces is now on the offensive and recapturing territory from the Russian occupiers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the present situation it's of immense value that we keep up the support to Ukraine and continue to work for tougher sanctions against Russia. The war in Ukraine is at its culmination point where it's clear that the Russians are losing. It's now that we have the chance to make a difference for the future not only in Ukraine but in all of Europe and ultimately the whole World.

In the crossroads of history our actions must be firm and never bend under the pressure from Putin's aggressive regime. I believe this moment will be seen as a starting

Björn Söder

point when Russian influence was finally stopped and I also hope it will bring about a better and more secure Europe for all of us.

Thank you for your attention! Slava Ukraini!

View of Yaremche, Ukraine





Crocuses



Putin's Russian aggression against Ukraine is only the first stage of a war against the existing world order in Europe.

The basic principles of this order, the ultimate goal of which is comprehensive integration within European civilisation, were formulated in the 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The most important of these are the principles of democracy, the primacy of individual rights and freedoms and the inviolability of borders in Europe. The fundamental stage of this integration was the Maastricht Treaty, which created the European Union in 1993.

The end of the Cold War, the subsequent dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the collapse of the Soviet empire (based on the Belovezhskaya Accords of 1991) gave rise to specific new processes in independent Russia. These were similar to the procedures and mood in Germany after its defeat in the First World War. In Russia, the drivers of these processes were, on the one hand, people from the secret services (active or retired), heirs of the Chekists Felix Dzerzhinsky, the punitive sword of the Bolshevik dictatorship, and, on the other hand, the bearers of the ideology of big-city Russian chauvinism that had always slumbered in Russian society.

Russia initially declared its adherence to the ideology of democracy, as evidenced by the 1997 NATO-Russia Act, whose preamble states that Russia “continues to build a democratic society and implement its political and economic transformation.” However, on 10 February 2007, Vladimir Putin expressed his dissatisfaction with the established world order in a speech at the Munich Security Conference (a kind of Chekist manifesto). But the world did not hear him, although it should have – for it was the first signal!

The political situation inside Russia changed significantly at the turn of 2011–2012, when a massive wave of protests arose, triggered by the colossal rigging of the



Vladimir Ponomarev, former Russian Deputy Construction Minister, now a dissident

parliamentary elections and Putin's return to the presidency. Frightened by this wave, the Chekists and chauvinists formed an offensive alliance. From this point on, the country began a consistent dismantling of democratic institutions, including an independent judiciary, local government, free elections, etc., as well as the creation of repressive legislation to suppress the free press and opposition. In addition, the police apparatus was repeatedly strengthened, a path aimed at severing relations with the European world and the United States was embraced and, at the same time, a powerful networked system of totalitarian, aggressive propaganda about Russia's sole mission, the exclusivity of русский мир ("the Russian world") was created.

As a result, an autocratic regime took shape in Russia, which eventually, with the adoption of amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation after 2020, turned into an authoritarian totalitarian regime with a fascist ideology based on the exclusivity of the русский мир, just as the German fascists based their ideology on the exclusivity of the German race.

Externally, the aggressive militarised essence of the regime manifested itself in consistent hostilities against Georgia, the special operation in Syria, the "annexation"

of Crimea or the pro-Russian putsch in the Donbas, carried out mainly by Russian military associations of volunteers equipped with Russian weapons. All these operations were preparations for the most important one – launching a war against a united West. Convinced that all his actions would go virtually unpunished, in the absence of a defeated opposition inside Russia, with a lethargic response from the united West, Putin launched this war on 24 February 2022. He chose, he thought, the weakest link – Ukraine – and the most opportune time, when the formation of the Ukrainian army and its equipment with modern weapons had run out.

Ukraine is fighting back, and now everything will depend on whether the democratic world manages to consolidate itself to the point where Russian fascism is not only stopped on Ukrainian fields but also stuck and killed on them. If this is not the case, we will face severe trials.

Next in line are countries that were formerly part of the Soviet empire, as well as the post-war Eastern Bloc, which Putin believes are part of русский мир – the Baltic States, Poland, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria. Even the Balkan countries would be pushed into the Kremlin's orbit.

The situation today is very reminiscent of the aggressive aspirations of the Nazi regime in the 1930s. The Munich Agreement of 1938 on the partition of Czechoslovakia did not stop the German fascists. Today, “peace in exchange for Ukrainian territory” will not appease the Russian fascists.

We cannot live by illusions. As long as Russian fascism exists, the world is in danger and will constantly live under the threat of a new catastrophe. That is why I look to the future with trepidation.



Independence Square, Kyiv, Ukraine



Collegium Carpathicum – what future?

The panel was moderated by **the Director of the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw, Jan Malicki**, who began by outlining the framework for the activities and cooperation of the Collegium Carpathicum. He also talked about the idea of establishing, as a matter of urgency, an international school in Przemyśl under the auspices of the Collegium Carpathicum, which would educate young Ukrainian citizens as a human resource base for the management of the future Ukrainian state undergoing reconstruction.

Markiyan Malskyy of Lviv University addressed the idea of establishing a Carpathian university:

Europe of the Carpathians is not only a region of nature, a region of people, economy and culture but also a region of intellect. Therefore, the establishment of such an institution was a matter of course in these times.

The speaker said that the university would succeed if it were modern, dynamic and virtual. The question of the audience remains whether it will be students of universities in the Carpathian countries or people already working. The Professor also pointed out that setting up secretariats to arrange an adequate curriculum, organise regular conferences, and coordinate research and scientific cooperation and student exchanges. A meeting of rectors of Carpathian universities should also be held every two to three years.

Igor Tsependa, from the Vasyl Stefanyk Subcarpathian National University in Ivano-Frankivsk, said that the idea of establishing a school in Przemyśl under the auspices of the Collegium Carpathicum was a perfect one and that a quick decision



Participants of the panel *Collegium Carpathicum – what future?*, Krasiczyn, 14 May 2022.

should be taken. The Professor also pointed out the interest of the Carpathian University in partners from Europe and the USA:

I want to point out that we have many powerful partners, both in the United States and in the European Union, who are attracted to the Carpathians because they are interested in comparisons, comparisons that allow them to understand the processes they are seeing today in their countries, in the mountain areas.

Igor Tsependa, for the sake of Europe's second mountain range, the Alps, pointed out that it would be worthwhile to establish an Alpine University as well.

Sándor Őze from the Péter Pázmány Catholic University in Budapest, in the context of establishing cooperation with Collegium Carpathicum, said:

Since we are a Catholic university, religious aspects and issues of faith play a major role for us in establishing cooperation.

The Professor said that he would like to visit the University of Stefan the Great in Suceava together with professors and students from Los Angeles. He stressed that a functioning Carpathian network provides an opportunity to maintain relations with Eastern religions:

This network of ours is in place and working, so we have opportunities to maintain relations with eastern religions – I'm talking about Georgia, Armenia, Syria – or with the Greek Catholic Church. We have an extensive scholarship system, and this year even the Vatican gave us additional scholarship opportunities.

Sándor Őze also declared his participation in the Przemyśl initiative and stressed its great importance.

Marián Šuplata from Comenius University in Bratislava talked about his university as not only the oldest Slovak university but also ranked highest in the rankings of Visegrad universities. The Professor pointed out that the Faculty of Management was open to professors and students from Ukraine. He went on to talk about the faculty's initiatives and exchanges with EU countries and other countries. He stressed that, in terms of the Collegium Carpathicum, it was vital to strengthen the shared values, traditions and histories underpinning it while being ready to respond to contemporary challenges. He added:

We need to be aware that we are operating in a geographical space that is unique in Europe. This gives us an outstanding balance and an opportunity to re-create the bridge destroyed by the conflict. And we should renew this bridge [...] between East and West, North and South. I see this as our mission, and I hope that the Collegium Carpathicum will contribute to this.

The Mayor of Przemyśl, Wojciech Bakun, pointed out that the rebuilding of Ukraine would involve not only the economy and infrastructure, but also education. He stressed that those fleeing the war, mainly from the east of Ukraine, need to develop pro-European, pro-Western thinking, and teaching this thinking is one of the biggest tasks to be performed by the international community. The president explained that Western thought is not just thinking about democracy – it is a culture of democracy. He said:

The culture of democracy should be learnt by all of us and, above all, by the cadres who will be responsible for rebuilding the Ukrainian state, and at every level. Not only in terms of the reconstruction of buildings but, first and foremost, in terms of education, the formation of statehood, the construction of local government, and the establishment of the institutions that will govern this state.

Wojciech Bakun added that establishing a university was a matter of years. At the moment, the most important thing is to quickly establish a school that will educate and develop future and present staff, which can be transformed into a university in the future.

Volodymyr Kopanchuk, PhD in public administration and law from Khmelnytskyi National University, spoke in the discussion. He stated that the institution discussed by the speakers would provide an opportunity to shape cadres of Ukrainian and other Carpathian countries. It could play a vital role in shaping cadres in specialised fields, ensuring development and effective cross-border cooperation.



In the “Europe of the Carpathians” project, which has already acquired factual content in recent years, close cooperation between universities plays a unique role in shaping the intellectual space of the Carpathian region. New ideas and formats are of interest within the framework of existing institutions and mechanisms (Association of Universities of the Carpathian Region, S4C – Science for the Carpathians, Forum Carpaticum, Carpathian Open University).

Virtually at all conferences and meetings of “Europe of the Carpathians,” representatives of national parliaments, central and local governments, politicians and experts discuss the institutionalisation of regional cooperation of universities of the Carpathian countries. We consider such cooperation to be a much-needed and effective form of educational diplomacy that, by seeking and implementing effective ways for universities to cooperate with different regions and local social groups, highlights and supports the key role of modern universities in the socio-economic and cultural development of the Central and Eastern European region.

Discussions mainly focus on two organically related and complementary ideas. Lviv’s Ivan Franko National University, drawing on experience gained through the operation of educational projects of this type in other regions of Europe, has proposed a model for a virtual network structure – the “Carpathian University” programme. This type of interdisciplinary programme can become an added value for students of different majors and specialisations at universities and other higher education institutions in Poland, Ukraine, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Serbia.

Universities belonging to the Carpathian University programme incorporate unique teaching, and university courses into their own agenda, carry out joint research projects in close coordination and cooperation with local authorities and businesses, plan



Markiyan Malsky, Lviv University, former Ambassador of Ukraine to Poland

and coordinate thematic undergraduate and graduate courses, student conferences, summer schools, remote lectures and online meetings.

The Carpathian University project proposes five basic educational strands: a) the shared history of the Carpathian region as part of Europe; b) the mountain economy, tourism and sustainable development of the region; c) democracy and self-government in the Carpathian region; d) culture and multicultural society in the Carpathian countries; e) mountain economic and social systems.

The first institutional steps are related to the creation of a formal network of universities in the Carpathian region headed by the Council of Rectors of the partner universities, a secretariat that administers educational activities, issues teaching materials for teaching, organises and coordinates contacts between universities, conferences and seminars for teachers, researchers and students.

The second idea concerns an agreement between six (for the time being) universities from the Carpathian region (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Romania), which formed the basis for the creation of the Collegium Carpathicum, with plans for a broad exchange of students and researchers, ideas and experiences,

as well as the organisation of joint thematic conferences, debates and publications. A significant direction for Collegium's future activities may be training new managerial staff for post-war Ukraine.

Both models envisage interesting scientific publications – an atlas and encyclopaedia of the Carpathians, and a geo-information system, “Carpathians.”

Fagaras Mountains, Romania





The Transfagarasan Highway, Romania



Chairman,

Dear Marshal, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

Thank for the kind invitation for this highly interesting event to speak on the future of some educational aspects of the countries of Carpathian region. I am glad to speak here as a lecturer at the Comenius University in Slovakia. Let me first briefly introduce our University and then add a few reflections to the idea of *Collegium Carpathicum*, which is the actual topic of this panel. The Comenius University in Bratislava is the oldest University in Slovakia, called „the national University“, ranking amongst three top Universities in the V4 region. Comenius University, among other, enjoys very intensive international collaboration: on the institutional level it is a member of European University Association; University Agency for Francophonie; Network of Universities of the Capitals of Europe; Utrecht Network, Danube Rector´s Conference; European Association of International Education; Virtual Association of International Education; Virtual Technology Library Systems, The Magna Charta Observatory and others.

On the level of the Faculty of Management, we enjoy very intensive exchange contacts of students and teachers, Joint research and common projects as well as other international initiatives. By the Universities from V4 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) we have contacts with Universities from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, France Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. From non-EU countries we enjoy collaboration from Norway, Serbia, Turkey, the UK, Northern Macedonia and on the University level also with South Korea, Israel, Japan, Canada, USA, Ukraine and Taiwan. I personally have been privileged to have a dialogue or collaborate personally with distinguished academicians from V4 region, countries of Western, Central and



Marián Šuplata, Comenius University in Bratislava

Eastern Europe, as well with colleagues from other continents, including the most renowned Universities of the world. We offer study programs in French, English, German and Slovak languages. When speaking about Ukraine and the difficult times its people is currently facing, mentioned in the previous panels, I would like to thank and pay tribute to both the Rector of the Comenius University and the Dean of the Faculty of Management to do their best in opening the door for both Ukrainian professors and students. They are a firm part of our institution today.

Now, let me share a few ideas regarding the topic of this panel which is focused on the future of *Collegium Carpathicum*. I would like to welcome this initiative and thank Mr. Marek Kuchcinski and his collaborators from various fields of the society for his constant and precious efforts to enhance the collaboration of our countries in the Carpathian region we share within EU borders.

In order to move forward and bring added value of our ideas that could be both, complementary to, and, helping to refresh the initial moral ideals and imperatives of the founding father of the common European project – Robert Schuman, joined by

other exceptional personalities – Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and by others, we would, sooner or later, need to formulate our own ideas, that would be able to express in full our common identity, roots, culture, history, values and respect for the same traditions, but at the same time, would be able to reflect and react on new, developments and actual challenges we are facing today. As already said by some other speakers, some of these challenges are very alarming indeed and need an adequate response. As already suggested by the previous distinguished speakers – professor Sándor Óze and Dr. Pavol Mačala – the concept of the Two Lungs of Europe – the Western Lung and the Eastern Lung – by Saint John Paul II, will be a challenge it would be particularly worth to be worked on together in the future. The Carpathian region, as well as the common Europe urgently needs to understand and follow this concept, in order to have a chance to continue to be a serious and relevant actor and “the ruler of its own destiny” Robert Schuman dreamt of, especially in times of severe conflict returning to Europe, bringing new divisions, tragedies and potential crises. I am glad to see that Dr. Pavol Mačala is already delivering a concrete interesting and inspiring concept that might be very enriching to share and start with, in order to understand more in depth, the roots and value of our own identity, culture, history and civilisation. I am sure, these ideas have a great potential to be an enrichment in the European and the larger world context as well. I hope there will be other authors that will lay a hand and help to develop meaningful common ideas and initiatives.

Perhaps the circumstances will bring more opportunities to elaborate more on the concept of *Collegium Carpathicum* in depth. I would like to welcome and pay tribute to all already involved that have already taken first steps in launching this initiative.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the organisers, and all involved in the achievements already done and I keep my fingers crossed for the next initiatives to be jointly worked on.

Thank you very much for your attention and I wish you all an inspiring conference.



Waterfall in Šalaika Valley, Hungary



European Development Funding in Central Europe – Scope of Funding Opportunities

The panel was moderated by **Dawid Lasek, Vice-President of the Association “Carpathian Euroregion.”**

Ruslan Kulyk, Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Promotion of the Ternopil Regional Council (Ukraine), spoke about the war damage done to his country. He pointed out that Russian soldiers left mines at the sites of their crimes, which, according to the think-tank, Ukraine would be fighting for the next 100 years. The speaker said:

Weapons are now necessary. And it is imperative not to make any concessions because this will have negative consequences. [...] The only way to end the war is to win – to bring Ukraine to the pre-war borders.

Of the post-war era, Ruslan Kulyk said:

We want to talk about projects that would have as their objective not the reconstruction of the country, but the construction of a new, modernised country, according to world standards. We should talk about ideological projects, for which the best European projects are an example.

Ruslan Kulyk reported that the officials of each regional council dealt with professional matters during the day and worked as volunteers in the evenings and at weekends.

Ihor Korhovi, Deputy Minister of Local Communities and Territorial Development in Ukraine, in response to a question on administrative reform, reported that

in 2020, the Ukrainian government approved a new division at the local level, which included 1,470 communities. They were given most of the competences to respond directly to the needs of citizens. The speaker also informed about the creation of 136 new regions by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 2020. He said that the Government of Ukraine had ensured revenues to local budgets from a tax on individuals as support for initiatives of local governments or mayors. The Deputy Minister informed about the government's plans, which were interrupted by the war. The intention was to complete sectoral decentralisation, amend the constitution and lay the groundwork so that it would be impossible to restore the previous system. Improved budgetary mechanisms and fiscal or tax initiatives were developed. There were plans to give more autonomy to local governments and to empower them through sectoral legislation, a code.

Currently, the government is focused on military administrations. They are the link that allows the government to carry out its core functions during the war. We expect that once the war is over, the role of government administrations at regional and sub-regional levels will be reviewed. We will amend sectoral laws to create a maximally effective military and military-civilian administration system.

Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, informed about the EUR 76 billion allocated to Poland under the EU Financial Perspective 2021–2027, adding that our country also benefited from the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Programme:

Today we are saying that Belarus should not benefit from this programme and should be excluded from it. Funds should be earmarked for the implementation of cross-border programmes for Poland and Ukraine to carry out joint actions that will allow for developing stable entrepreneurship, which will make it possible both to build a new Ukrainian state and to increase the competitiveness of the Polish economy. Projects of a comprehensive, strategic nature are important.

Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak emphasised that Poland also had the opportunity to benefit from the Interreg Central Europe programme, under which EUR 224 million were earmarked for implementation in the Central Europe area. The Secretary of



Participants of the panel *European Resources for Development in Central Europe – Scope of Funding Opportunities*, Krasiczyn, 14 May 2022

State expressed her hope for the completion of the initiative to create a Carpathian Strategy, which:

(...) will make it possible to implement joint projects. This will be another macro-regional strategy at the European Union level, making it possible to use external funds to a greater extent than hitherto, especially those managed by the European Commission. I am referring here to the Horizon Europe programme, the LIFE Programme and the Connecting Europe programme, under which we are making transport investments.

In response to a question about Polish-Ukrainian relations in the following ten-years perspective, Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak expressed the hope that the economies of these countries will be competitive with those of the rest of the world. The speaker mentioned the cooperation between Poland and Ukraine within the framework of Polish Development Aid and said:

We show our “know-how” in terms of cooperation with local administrations – how to create and develop development strategies so that they are used when applying for European funding.



Shepherd's hut in the Dolina Pięciu Stawów, Tatra Mountains, Poland

Piotr Patkowski, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Finance, said:

The first challenge facing the Ukrainian state is to rebuild its infrastructure. Ukraine has passed an extreme test and survived it positively. Namely, the institutions of the Ukrainian state withstood the onslaught. Many countries, not only Russia as the aggressor, were convinced that these institutions would collapse.

Based on the Polish experience, the Minister shared advice on how to get out of the crisis:

The first thing is to tighten up the tax system, allowing entrepreneurs to develop further. The second important thing, especially in the first period after the end of hostilities, will be to receive non-refundable funds from the European Union in the form of grants for the reconstruction of Ukraine. [...] Ukraine itself, in the beginning, should be very much in a position to decide on what to spend the funds. It is evident that the European Union will require some institutional strengthening reforms. [...] It is worth avoiding radical reforms of public finances and the tax system if there is no absolute conviction about them.



Damian Szacawa, senior analyst in the Baltic Team at the Central Europe Institute, continued the theme taken up by Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak on the Carpathian Strategy:

Every macro-regional strategy is adopted in order to implement projects which, more often than not, are a response to the challenges facing a particular geographical area. By implementing these projects together and addressing these challenges, we can strengthen territorial cooperation, contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion, and increase the spending of EU funds.

Damian Szacawa stressed that the key issue regarding the adoption of the Carpathian Strategy, however, was the political commitment of all Member States, local authorities and partners from Central European areas. He added that Romania was currently sceptical about the plan to adopt this strategy.



Historical windmill, Kuželov, Czech Republic



For many years, the Europe of the Carpathians Conference has provided an interesting forum for exchanging views and ideas related to joint activities for developing not only the Carpathians but also Central and Eastern Europe.

This edition of the conference was dominated by the topic of the impact of Russian military action in Ukraine on the situation in the macro-region. There were also discussions about building a Central European identity and strengthening cooperation between individual regions. The Carpathian strategy can be a practical recipe for both already diagnosed development challenges and new needs for increased security.

European funding for sustainable development

We are fighting as Poland for the European Commission to release additional funds to deal with the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. EU funding for investments in the Carpathian region from the Interreg Central Europe 2021–2027 programme, with a budget of around EUR 224 million, is earmarked for a horizontal programme and is used to support pilot investments in areas including strengthening innovation capacity, developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transformation and entrepreneurship and energy transformation, climate resilience, closed-loop economy, environmental protection and green urban mobility. In the new EU financial perspective, there is no room for the participation of Russian and Belarusian partners in the programme, pending the withdrawal of aggressive actions towards Ukraine.

Our security can be enhanced by joint action in the framework of the Carpathian Strategy. We are striving for it to become the fifth macro-regional strategy of the European Union. Our country has initiated work on the document, and the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy is leading efforts for this initiative.

In the current geopolitical situation, the importance of the Carpathian Strategy as an essential instrument for strengthening cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe is increasing. This strategy will enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region and limit the exodus of its inhabitants by improving the quality of life in the Carpathian region. The process will create a sustainable framework for cooperation between countries and regions, enabling synergies for a dynamic and sustainable development of the area. Joint infrastructural investments (e.g. Via Carpatia) will improve communication within the Carpathian regions and increase their external accessibility. The Carpathian Strategy can also enhance security at the EU's eastern border and ensure its stability.

Environmental issues are also a significant element of the Carpathian Strategy, as it provides measures to protect the environment and rational management of natural resources. There is a need for activity to protect species and create transboundary ecological corridors for wildlife. Also important are issues related to counteracting air and soil pollution and the negative impact of tourism on nature.

The war in Ukraine has put Europe on alert and changed the plans of many European leaders to pursue energy policy. These issues are becoming one of the most crucial elements of security. The Carpathian strategy emphasises the need to use a variety of energy sources and to increase the share of renewable energy through the development of solar and hydropower as well as biomass and geothermal energy. Reducing the dependence of economies on energy resources from Russia is currently a priority not only for the macro-region but also for the whole of Europe. An economically well-developed, infrastructure-connected Central Europe, whose voice is heard in the EU institutions, is also an essential guarantor of the security and independence of the Ukrainian people.

Ukraine on the road to the European Union

In the debate “Women of the Carpathians. The great role of women in modern Europe,” we discussed Putin’s propaganda war, which targets the Ukrainian people, NATO and allies to build a narrative favourable to Russia.

Russian propaganda, spread in various ways, is aimed at destabilising relations among EU Member States. Putin’s method is not hitting fertile ground at and European leaders are in no doubt as to which side is right and the truth. On the Russian side, we are dealing not only with the consent of the army command and the highest



Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, State Secretary, Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy of the Republic of Poland

state authorities to pathological behaviour but also with something much worse – the recognition of crime as a helpful tool for achieving military and political goals. And this is what the message of Russian propaganda serves.

It is necessary to support Ukraine in every possible way: militarily, humanitarian and politically. While defending their country, the citizens of Ukraine are also defending Europe – and above all, our part of the continent.

Today, Ukrainian society very much needs a sense of acceptance of the West. That is why the idea of granting Ukraine the status of a candidate country for accession to the European Union is so important for us too. It is a challenging and complex process that Poland itself has gone through. It requires time and appropriate procedures.

We are currently focusing on setting up special funds to support refugees. The amount of these funds should be proportional to the number of refugees accepted. The countries that today provide the most significant refuge for people fleeing war from Ukraine should be supported by the European Union. This is the most crucial issue for our government, which we are now raising not only in all possible EU institutions and European forums but also among individual countries.



Bălea Lake, Romania



Ukraine faces a challenge that developed and developing countries have not encountered for years – that is, the challenge of organising the state’s public finances effectively during hostilities. The Ukrainian state is involved in a military conflict, but at the same time, it has to function, i.e. ensure the smooth operation of the administration – to pay employees’ salaries in the budgetary sphere and benefits to citizens. We are now learning from Ukraine how to act in such a difficult situation and secure the state’s public finances for such an eventuality. What happened to Ukraine in the first place is a great tragedy, but we must nevertheless learn the right lessons from it.

Ukraine withstood enormous pressure during the war. Many were convinced that the state institutions would cease to function. However, it turned out that the Ukrainian state survived the crisis and continues to function smoothly. When the war ends, hopefully, with a victory for Ukraine, the country will face the great challenge of rebuilding the state. Particularly important will be the renewal of the infrastructure destroyed by the aggressor’s troops, which will require a high financial cost.

What advice can Ukraine be given for the future through the prism of the Polish experience?

Firstly, the tax system must be tight. In this context, a particular problem in Poland after 2010 was the VAT gap, i.e. the difference between theoretical and actual VAT receipts. Such a situation was disadvantageous for the state budget and honest entrepreneurs, as they were less competitive against dishonest companies. However, thanks to effective measures taken by the Ministry of Finance since the middle of the last decade, the VAT gap has narrowed from around 26 per cent to just over 4 per cent last year. In 2021 alone, the improvement in VAT revenue, resulting from better compliance by citizens with regulations (the so-called compliance effect), amounted to around PLN 14 billion.



Piotr Patkowski, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Poland

The good news is that 2020 – despite the pandemic-induced recession – could not see the VAT gap unsealed again as in the years following the 2008 crisis.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the tax system must not be too burdensome for market players. It is very important for entrepreneurs to be able to operate freely, develop and innovate. Therefore, reforms to tighten the system should be carried out skilfully, taking into account the interests of taxpayers.

Secondly, financial support for Ukraine will be crucial, especially in the first period after the war. In this respect, we should count on the European Union, which, despite its shortcomings, is an international institution that understands the need for such measures. However, it is not a good idea for Ukraine to blindly copy solutions that have worked in developed countries. The Polish experience from the times of transformation shows that such actions can be counter-productive. Development policy should consider local needs, history and social conditions.

However, it should be borne in mind that financial support from international organisations is never the primary source of funding for state needs. For example, roads in Poland are often thought of as having been built entirely with EU funds.

Piotr Patkowski

However, the European Union's financial contribution covers a minor part of its value, and the main part is paid for with national funds. That is why streamlining the tax administration will be necessary for the post-war reconstruction process. In this area, Ukraine can undoubtedly benefit from Poland's experience.

St James and Philip Church in Sękowa, Low Beskids, Poland





Danube Bend, Hungary



Panel VII

Nelli Rokita (moderator of the panel)

The great role of women in contemporary Europe

The panel was moderated by **Nelli Rokita, the Carpathian Women's Association** member, who asked for a female perspective on the aggressive war in Ukraine. She also tried to get an answer to the question about the role of women in the EU and their expectations in relation to the difficult situation in Ukraine.

Oleena Kopanchuk, MP, Vice-Chair of the Budget Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, explained the difference between Ukraine and Russia and why such an aggressive war had occurred. Ukrainians wanted to be a free nation, and in the last two to three years, Ukraine had clearly shown that it wanted to belong to a community of democratic states. On the other hand, the Russian Federation seeks to develop under dictatorial conditions and does not want to have a free state around. The MP said:

Historically we are Europeans, culturally we are Europeans and geographically we are Europeans because the centre of Europe is in the Carpathians. And right now, we are defending the whole democratic world.

Ukraine has the right to sovereignty, nationality, and friendship with other countries. Olena Kopanchuk pointed out that it was crucial to understanding what Ukrainian women expected:

We have always said that the war has been going on for eight years, and sanctions should be strengthened.

Olena Bilecka, President of the Association "Ukrainian Women's Vanguard", established in 2014, said that in the hard times of the war with Russia, more than



Participants in the *The great role of women in contemporary Europe* panel, Krasiczyn, 14 May 2022

24,000 trained women were helping the Ukrainian population – providing psychological support, working in hospitals, collecting information against Russian counter-propaganda and war crimes material. “Ukrainian Women’s Varta” sends information, in 33 languages, to Ukrainian consulates and foreign media.

Olena Bilecka stressed that the war is being fought without recognition of human rights. The Russians do not respect any agreements or allow humanitarian corridors. According to the chairman:

The war will not end soon because the enemy is aggressive. I thank Poland for supporting Ukraine, despite the difficulties in reconciling economic interests.

Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács, Hungarian Ambassador to Poland, expressed strong support for Ukraine in this brutal war and recalled the words of the new Hungarian President Katalin Novák, who spoke of the need to condemn Putin’s aggression:

We are on the side of the West, we support Ukraine in its move towards the European Union. We believe in a Europe of strong nation states.

The Ambassador said that Hungary had taken in 600,000 refugees from Ukraine. She added that President Novak was planning his first foreign visit to Warsaw, where he would offer a scholarship for Ukrainian children.

Klára Mándli, an analyst at the Hungarian National Assembly, said that women could play a vital role in that difficult situation. She also highlighted the successes of women active in Hungarian politics and their concrete actions.

Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, assessed Ukraine's path to the EU as harsh due to the procedures in place. She said that it was important for Poland that the Brussels administration facilitates Ukraine's accession to the EU. The European Commission must open its eyes to what is happening, to the consequences of the brutal war. There is also a need for funding for Ukraine and those EU countries that take in Ukrainian refugees. Putin's propaganda strives hard to divide the member states so that they do not cooperate to bring Ukraine into the EU. Poland aims to make people and governments aware of the need for a united Europe for Ukraine, and to show the benefits that Ukraine's membership will bring to the Union.

Olga Semeniuk, State Secretary at the Ministry of Development and Technology, pointed out that Ukraine had applied to the EU precisely under the influence of the war. The speaker said:

The longer it sticks in the minds of Europeans that war can come to any of us, that it is a war not only between Ukraine and Russia, but also our fight, of the whole of Europe, the longer we are able to transmit such images beyond Poland's borders, the better the chances of ending the war, maybe not the whole war, but the stage we are at. This is not Putin's war but the war of Russian society. We should take a soft approach to Russian women.

Olga Semeniuk mentioned the campaign "Stop the war in Ukraine," initiated by the First Lady of the Republic of Poland Agata Kornhauser-Duda. She said that women have the skills to convince different circles. It is therefore necessary to talk more with Russian circles. The minister also spoke about the economies in the respective countries



Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Sejm Marek Kuchciński with participants in the panel *The great role of women in modern Europe*, Krasieczyn, 14 May 2022

and raw materials policy. She drew attention to the behaviour of French President Emmanuel Macron and the resulting impediments to Ukraine's EU accession. The speaker stressed that the war had created a new economic architecture. Finally, the Minister assessed that the debate with France should be held in the broader circle and that it was worth including the Americans in these discussions.

Teresa Pamuła, Member of the Polish Parliament, pointed out that on 24 February 2022:

We have all passed the test as citizens and as the Polish state. Each of us has a different task to fulfil, but each of us [...] is prepared for emergencies. We are able to divide our time to carry out our many duties. Women from Ukraine came here to Poland and met wonderful women, wonderful people and excellent tolerance. However, we cannot get used to war. It is our role to convince other people, reach their hearts, talk about evil, and show the cruelty of war. We need to talk about war, showing its different aspects.

Krystyna Wróblewska, President of the Association “Women of the Carpathians,” talked about the Association’s first conference, dedicated to Ukraine. The event under the slogan “Women of the Carpathians to Ukraine” was held in the Przemyśl Museum and included an auction of paintings by Ukrainian children. The President emphasised that such conferences created a new form of cooperation between organisations and added that the Hungarian Ambassador to Poland, Orsolya Kovács, wanted to organise an exhibition of such paintings in her country. President Wróblewska emphasised the role of men in the work of the Association – she said that behind every woman was a man. She pointed out that the organisation “Women of the Carpathians” – the younger sister of Europe of the Carpathians – had been established thanks to the support of President Marek Kuchciński.

Rozália-Ibolya Biró, Chairperson of the Romanian Foreign Affairs Committee and President of a minority organisation in Romania, highlighted the need for mutual dialogue during the brutal war in Ukraine and asked for a joint roundtable meeting of various women’s organisations.

St Leonard’s Church in Lipnica Murowana, Poland





Mountain shrine, pass over the Łapszanka Stream, Poland



I was delighted to participate in a panel discussion on the role of women in contemporary Europe. I very much appreciate the “Europe of the Carpathians” Conference, and I am therefore delighted to be able to discuss important issues with many wonderful guests from this region – the Carpathian region.

Thank you for quoting John Paul II’s words from the Letter to Women at the beginning of the discussion, which is an apt introduction to the conversation:

Yes, the time has come to look back at the long history of humanity, to which women have contributed no less than men, and in most cases under much more challenging conditions, with the courage that memory demands and with a sincere sense of responsibility.

I can sincerely agree with the Pope’s sentence above and sum it up by saying that “women see with their hearts,” which is essential in this day and age, given the different ways of thinking that women usually represent in the context of politics. Fortunately, it can be seen that more and more of us are taking an active part in the social and political life of Europe and the world.

The question of which narrative Hungary adopts – European or Putinist – is extremely important in the context of the current situation in Europe. There is no proper answer to it other than that Hungarians believe in the truth and not in any predetermined narrative.

Regarding the current situation in Ukraine, I would like to mention the noteworthy attitude of the newly elected President of Hungary, Katalin Novák. Interestingly, it was on the very day of our panel on the women of the Carpathians that Katalin Novák was sworn in. Until now, she has served in the government as Minister for Family Affairs,



Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács, Ambassador of Hungary to Poland

which is all the more noteworthy when discussing the role of women in Europe. Moreover, as the new Hungarian head of state, Novák announced at the very beginning that her first foreign trip would be to Poland. With this, one can see how keen Hungarians are to maintain friendly relations with Poland constantly.

In her inaugural speech, the first female president of Hungary stressed that the Hungarian people strongly condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine. She added that Hungarians were not indifferent to the drama of the Ukrainians. They are opening their homes and hearts to them and are in actual contact with the refugees of whom they have already taken in a total of more than 670,000 by mid-May (the number in July 2022 is 850,000 people). Considering that Hungary is a country of 10 million people, this is assistance on an immense scale. All Hungarians are aware of the tragic events in Ukraine and, like other Western European countries, support the Ukrainians in various humanitarian actions and support their neighbour's aspirations to join the European Union.

I want to point out that Hungary has an unequivocal stance on the inclusion of Ukraine in the European Union and on the enlargement of new countries in general. It has always been in favour of this, as seen from its support for the Balkan States' aspirations to join the Union. Furthermore, I would like to emphasise that Hungarians see Europe undoubtedly as a Community built primarily by strong nation states.



Transformation and reconstruction of Ukraine – Programme presentation

The panel was moderated by **Vice President of the Management Board of Bank Pekao S.A. Jerzy Kwieciński**. In his introduction, he spoke about the Centre for Transformation of Ukraine initiative, launched by him and Mykhayl Khariya in 2013 to prepare Ukraine for EU membership. Jerzy Kwieciński also talked about the idea of creating an inter-parliamentary cooperation platform with the participation of Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and the USA, which could support Ukraine's transformation process. The next step for the Centre would be to set up an expert team to develop a programme and strategy for Ukraine and a body to oversee funding. The last element would be the establishment of the Academy of Transformation of Ukraine, which would train cadres in connection with the implementation of Ukraine's transformation plan.

Mykhaylo Khariy of the Centre for Transformation (Ukraine) pointed out that while Ukraine inflicted heavy losses on the Russian aggressor, it was also severely affected by the consequences of hostilities – cities, villages, and infrastructure were destroyed, and millions of people had become refugees. Despite the heavy economic, social and humanitarian losses, Ukraine still has a motivated, courageous military and citizens:

All political forces and civil society groups have united around the idea of defending their country and around the President of Ukraine, who has presented himself as a very courageous and patriotic president since the beginning of the war. And he inspires everything we do.

Mykhaylo Khariy said that the Western world had united to help Ukraine militarily, financially, humanitarian and diplomatically. The Vice President pointed out that the

United States had changed its perception of Ukraine and believed in its victory. He assured that he also believed in Ukraine's victory, so it is important to think about its reconstruction now:

We need to work on a shared vision and build a global Ukrainian project. The socio-economic front during the war is hugely important, as is the military, and it, too, needs international support. And just as Western countries have joined together to defend our country, we should now create a system to combine our economic and financial efforts.

The speaker thanked the Polish Sejm and government for their assistance in the implementation of Ukraine's transformation projects.

Arkadiusz Mularczyk, MP, a member of the Polish Parliament and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, talked about his visit to the United States when he had the opportunity to observe in Congress the activity of Ukrainian parliamentarians, who managed to bring about a breakthrough in the – initially relatively passive – approach to the war by the Joe Biden administration. The MP spoke of the solid American commitment in Ukraine – militarily, financially or socially. Giving the example of France and Germany, he stressed the importance of exerting media and social pressure on governments and presidents. He pointed out that frozen Russian funds of USD 300 billion should be confiscated to reconstruct Ukraine. The second major resource is the funds of Russian oligarchs. The MP stressed that countries helping Ukraine should also contribute to its reconstruction:

Participation in the reconstruction of Ukraine should be proportional to the aid other countries are providing to Ukraine today. We would like this to happen so that those countries which today are very much involved in defence of Ukraine, providing it with arms, with humanitarian aid, also have a share in the reconstruction of Ukraine.

The MP took the initiative to include in the programme for the reconstruction of Ukraine the demand that Polish companies replace Belarusian state-owned companies:

Belarus made its territory available for an attack on Ukraine, and then for many, many weeks, Ukraine was also blackmailed with a Belarusian attack. So it would be



Participants of the panel *Transformation and reconstruction of Ukraine – programme presentation*, Krasieczyn, 14 May 2022

worthwhile simply replacing some of the companies from countries that were hostile to Ukraine with companies from countries friendly to Ukraine and helping it.

Arkadiusz Mularczyk stressed the need to expand Polish-Ukrainian border crossings. He used the statement that Poland was a window to the world for the Ukrainian economy.

Chris Holzen, Senior Advisor for Central and Eastern Europe at the International Republican Institute (USA), said that his work focused on working with the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to strengthen the institutional capacity of Ukrainian parties, parliament and local governments. He pointed out that one of the goals of the Institute's work was the decentralisation of Ukraine, which was slowly already taking place and is part of the transition. Chris Holzen presented the results of a survey conducted in Ukraine during the war. The survey was about Ukrainians' views on the direction their country is currently heading:

97 per cent of respondents said the country was moving in the right direction. And this was in the middle of the war. That is something amazing. So, we also asked whether they thought Ukraine would win the war. 97 per cent of respondents are confident of victory.



Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland Marek Kuchciński with participants in the "Europe of the Carpathians" Conference, Krasiczyn, 14 May 2022

Mychajlo Panoczko, Bishop of the Evangelical Church, said that Poland was now Ukraine's closest partner and friend and expressed gratitude for the political, humanitarian, military and spiritual support. He added that this was some precious experience, as fraternal relations were in the interest of both countries. The bishop also spoke about the tough time the Ukrainian state is currently experiencing:

Ukraine is now in one of the most difficult phases in its history. Thirty years ago, God gave us independence, in which we have grown, developed, made mistakes and learned. However, the Ukrainian people's aspiration to be in the Community has caused much discontent and hatred from our eastern neighbours. But we will not give up.

The bishop stressed the need to transform the worldview of Ukrainians fleeing the war from the eastern border:

Kindness and (...) service to these people provide an opportunity to change their thinking. This is the very beginning of the transformation. Without a change in thinking, without spiritual change, Ukraine cannot survive the transformation.

Taras Stetskiy, MP of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, said that Ukraine should be rebuilt using new, innovative technologies. He also mentioned that the systemic transformation of Ukraine in all aspects of economic life should not have an externally imposed plan but result from a bottom-up initiative. According to Taras Stetskiy, the internal condition for transformation was the defeat of Russian troops on Ukrainian territory. The MP emphasised the energy potential of his country:

I think Ukraine has energy potential and, after victory, it will have an even more excellent opportunity to realise this power, this potential.

Oleksa Petriv, Archbishop, Head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Coordinator of the Spiritual Direction of the National Forum “Transformation of Ukraine,” referred to the question of identity in his speech:

Europe does not need to seek, model, or invent an identity. Identity needs to be reclaimed, go back to one's roots, and delve into one's soul. And there, you will find our identity, which manifests itself in all nations united by the magnificent Carpathians.

Vasyl Pochorylenko, a war volunteer, said in the discussion that the desire for freedom and victory over the enemy, so alive among Ukrainians, was proof of that nation's strong will to survive. The speaker then went on to thank US President Joe Biden for signing the Lend-Lease bill, giving a tool to support the Ukrainian people and government in their struggle for the country and its democracy. Vasyl Pochorylenko also addressed words of gratitude to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and the Baltic States. He stressed that the defenders of Ukraine were heroes. Finally, the speaker asked for helping the army and humanitarian convoys.



Scots pine on the summit of Sokolica, Pieniny, Poland



The war in Ukraine continues, but the enemy cannot put its plans into action. The Ukrainians have liquidated a large number of Russian service people and a considerable amount of their equipment and ammunition. They have suffered appalling casualties. There are demolished towns, villages, residential houses, and infrastructure.

Millions of people have been and are becoming refugees. Schools, hospitals, churches, and kindergartens are being turned into ruins. We have businesses and economies destroyed and exports blocked.

Nevertheless:

1. Ukraine has citizens who are extremely brave, freedom-loving and patriotic. They are ready to defend their freedom and our European choice.
2. We have a strong army and a robust supreme government.
3. All political forces and civil society groups united around the President.
4. The Western world has united around the idea of condemning Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine by providing it with the latest military equipment and humanitarian aid, showing diplomatic and financial support, introducing coordinated sanctions to destroy the enemy's economy.

The vital of the United States of America, Poland and the United Kingdom should be particularly emphasised. In this war, the socio-economic front is no less important than the military one, as it requires the same international support.

The priority now is to develop a common point of view, plan and strategy for the transformation and reconstruction of Ukraine.

Together we will win, renew territorial integrity, and transform and rebuild our country. These are our common goals.

“Ukraine's success is at the centre of the global struggle between democracy and autocracy” – this is a quote from the “Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership between



Mykhaylo Khariy of the Centre for Transformation of Ukraine

Ukraine and the United States of America,” issued and signed by both presidents. This document also states: “Ukraine is preparing an ambitious, comprehensive transformation plan.”

The war made adjustments, and our perspectives and opportunities changed.

After Euromaidan, we organised a citizens’ initiative, the “National Transformation Forum of Ukraine.” In it, we wanted to draw on the positive experiences and assessments of experts participating in the Polish transformation process regarding the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria.

Europe was represented on the initiative’s supervisory board by Jan Tombiński, then EU ambassador to Ukraine, and Jerzy Kwieciński. The council also included heads of churches and Maidan activists. Creating an international platform to coordinate the efforts of the three state-building components and developing a common approach to the strategy of transforming Ukraine into a fully-fledged member of the transatlantic community – these were and are our goals.

In our view, the three components that shape statehood are:

- 1) structured civil society,
- 2) Ukrainian authorities (parliament, president and government),
- 3) support from friendly countries and international financial and security institutions.

We have created a platform that brings together heads of churches, soldiers and volunteers, MPs, civil society leaders, politicians, businessmen, diplomats with international experience and experts who know the transition processes from the practical side.

In cooperation with the best experts from Poland, the United States of America and the European Union, we have developed the “Concept of Ukraine’s Transformation Strategy,” which has been accepted by the most important links of civil society and the experts of the Washington think tanks. “The Inter-Club Union of Deputies ‘Transformation of Ukraine’ was created in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to support this idea. – It includes representatives of all parliamentary parties and groups. One of its organisers is the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Since the war began, we have changed and corrected our views on the issue and our approach to it. Representatives of the Polish Sejm and government are working with us.

A videoconference was recently held with the participation of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Sejm and Ukrainian and Polish experts. Representatives of the Atlantic Council also attended it.

Together we are developing practical steps towards our goal. This is a secure and prosperous Ukraine, a member of the transatlantic community.

Thank you for your attention.



Czorsztyn Castle, Pieniny, Poland



I want to sincerely thank all the organisers of the 33rd Conference “Europe of the Carpathians” for the invitation to participate in this significant and interesting forum. I am very grateful for the immense pleasure I experienced during the last two days, listening to such great speeches by the speakers! I am a person whose body and spirit grew up in our picturesque Carpathian Mountains. I grew up on the longest village street in Ukraine (perhaps even in Europe) (14 kilometres). As such, I am particularly pleased to participate in this forum.

The topic of our final panel, “Transformation and Reconstruction of Ukraine – Presentation of Viewpoints,” has already been highlighted by previous panellists. All that remains for me to say is: “Amen! Let it happen!”

May our ancient green Carpathian Mountains be for us not only a place to relax, improve our health and gain bodily strength but also our spiritual salvation, our return to the basics, to the sources. It is no coincidence that our most critical waterways start in the Carpathians and carry their revitalising waters to all areas of our countries and all people in need.

In the spiritual sphere, the Carpathians – at the heart of which lies the geographical centre of Europe – are the cradle of many (and, if we look deeper, probably all) European nations. In the family, home there always remains the eternal spirit of what is most important, what endures across the centuries and nations. What inspired the founding fathers of the European Union to devote their lives to the good of the community of nations living on our continent is hidden and stored in our blessed green Carpathians. It is about what is unfortunately considered by many to be inappropriate (because one can be subjected to *cancel culture*) – a sincere belief in God.

On the first day of the Conference, one of the speakers told us that we Europeans do not need to search for or produce any sense of our existence. We need to reclaim

and use what we have, what we have grown on – that is the meaning of our existence. Yes, indeed – we all need to return to the sources. Especially now, when we all stand at a crossroads and are under attack (physically and spiritually) from all sides. Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister from 1948 to 1952, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, said this about what I mean: “Europe needs a soul, an ideal and the political will to serve that ideal.”

What fatherly message and teaching is one of the foundations of a united Europe? The answer lies in the thesis put forward by the moderator of this panel discussion, the highly esteemed Mr Jerzy Kwieciński: “In the period of transition and reconstruction, it is most appropriate for Ukraine to follow the experience of Poland and South Korea.” Exactly so, because the guarantee for these countries’ further development is that they are built on a firm foundation of Christianity. Saint John Paul II taught us that in his last book, his spiritual testament *Memory and Identity*. A prosperous and free society cannot be built without respect for human dignity, concern for the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity.

It is worth summing up these two days of our reflections in the words of Otto von Habsburg, president of the International Pan-European Union from 1973 to 2004: “The Christian faith has made it possible for Europe to grow and become stronger. The concept of human dignity and the development of human rights are unthinkable without Christianity and its Judaic roots. Even if it is often claimed that human rights were first formulated during the Enlightenment, one should note that the Enlightenment found its philosophical basis in the charity and scholasticism of the monks of the medieval period. When faith disappears, idols take the place of the Supreme. Man follows that which is transcendent. God’s place will rarely be taken by anything but pseudo-ideals or pseudo-ideologies that promise humankind paradise on earth – which is dangerous. Looking at the world map helps us understand that this Europe is doomed without its own spirit. Lasting political forces only arise from ideas, because this is also the soul of continents. Europe existed as long as it was Christian.”

The soul of Europe is essentially Christian. Besides, as Robert Schuman, whom I have already quoted, said – democracy will be exclusively Christian, or there will be no democracy at all.

Ukraine is Europe, and the soul of Ukraine is Christian. And on this rock, on this foundation, we are trying to rebuild Ukraine and transform it. Thank you for your attention and the understanding I see in your eyes!



During the 33rd “Europe of the Carpathians” Conference, flowers were laid under the Adam’s oak tree to mark the 155th anniversary of the birth of Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Speaker of the Sejm Ryszard Terlecki, Chairman of the Sejm Foreign Affairs Committee Marek Kuchciński – the originator and initiator of “Europe of the Carpathians” – and Deputy Head of the Sejm Chancellery Christian Młynarek.

Cardinal Sapieha was born on 14 May 1867 in Krasiczyn. He gained his education and experience in Lviv, Kraków and Rome. In 1911, he became Bishop of Kraków. He held that office for 40 years, from 1911 until he died in 1951 – Cardinal.





“Either we in Central Europe learn to co-operate with each other, or we will once again become passengers on a train whose direction we have no influence over,” used to say Prof. Wacław Felczak, an eminent historian and expert on Central Europe and Polish-Hungarian relations, who during World War II headed a courier service between the Polish Government in Exile and Poland occupied by the Third Reich and the Soviet Union.

The Wacław Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation was established by the Act of 8 February 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 538). Our main tasks are:

- financing or subsidising projects for Polish-Hungarian cooperation;
- nurturing Polish-Hungarian traditions and heritage and promoting them in public and international life, as well as passing on their significance to younger generations;
- promoting language learning, culture and Polish-Hungarian youth cooperation;
- establishing contacts between representatives of the younger generation and developing scientific, educational, cultural, economic and sporting cooperation;
- creating and supporting scientific and educational initiatives and projects aimed at the mutual understanding of the language, culture and history of both countries;
- supporting the activities and innovative thought of Polish-Hungarian cultural, political and economic organisations that serve to strengthen the competitiveness of Poland and Hungary;
- analysing the political, economic and social changes that affect the development and security of Poland and Hungary.

The Institute runs a scholarship programme and a programme for teaching Polish in Hungary (in four secondary schools) and Hungarian in Poland (in ten schools).

Since its inception, the Institute has been organising the Polish-Hungarian Summer University – School of Leaders in Krasiczyn near Przemyśl. Politicians, experts,

academics, journalists and, above all, 150 young participants from Poland and Hungary meet on the grounds of the Renaissance castle to discuss the history and perspectives of cooperation between the two nations and the whole area of Central and Eastern Europe.

Successive editions of the Summer University are attended by students of various faculties and specialisations from Poland and Hungary, as well as people who, despite their young age, are actively involved in the public life of their countries. Numerous panel discussions, meetings with experts, and lectures on history, geopolitics, economy, culture and civilisation issues are intended to provide the future leaders of public opinion with an appropriate portion of knowledge, while film screenings, presentations of publications and cultural and sporting events accompanying the event additionally foster direct contacts and strengthen Polish-Hungarian relations.

The Institute of Polish-Hungarian Cooperation embodies Prof. Wacław Felczak's conviction about the need to educate and use young people's talents in the best possible way, the need to support their development and careers also in an institutional way, and the great importance of Polish-Hungarian sympathy and friendship. Poles and Hungarians should nurture the latter and share this gift with other nations. The fruits of the Institute's activities are projects implemented by both countries, well-used scholarships, more effective and intensive cooperation and new areas of collaboration: from science and economy to culture, education, sport and many others.

Calendar of the International Conference “Europe of the Carpathians”

1999

The then Deputy Governor of the Podkarpatie voivodship, Marek Kuchciński, launched the „Green Carpathians” project, the aim of which was to develop Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation

22 V 2003

Adoption in Kiev of the Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (the so-called Carpathian Convention)

27 II 2006

Signing of the the Carpathian Convention by the President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński

19 VI 2006

Poland ratifies the Carpathian Convention

30 XI 2007

1st parliamentary meeting of the Carpathian states. initiated by the chairman of the Commission for Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and the Forestry Department of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Marek Kuchciński, MP

26 II 2011

2nd “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Przemyśl

25 VI 2011

3rd International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Nowy Targ under the slogan: “Europe rich of the Carpathians”

7–8 IX 2011

4th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój. Adoption of the Carpathian memorandum.

25 II 2012

5th “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Krasieczyn, near Przemyśl

6–9 VII 2012

6th meeting on the topic of the development of Carpathian cooperation in Yaremche, in Ukraine.

6 IX 2012

7th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój.

23 II 2013

8th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Krasieczyn, near Przemyśl, adoption of the Krasieczyn Convention

8 IX 2013

9th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój, adoption of the Krinica memorandum

29–30 XI 2013

Meeting on the development of Carpathian cooperation in Sárospatak, Hungary

3 IX 2014

11th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój, adoption of the Krynica Declaration

27–28 II 2015

12th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Krasieczyn, near Przemyśl

25 VII 2015

13th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference in Smerek, near Wetlina

9 IX 2015

14th International “Europe of the Carpathians” conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój

27 II	2016
15 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl	

6–8 IX	2016
16 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum of Krynica-Zdrój	

29 I	2017
17 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl, adoption of the Przemyśl Declaration	

23–25 VI	2017
18 th session of the "Europe of the Carpathians" series as part of the 2 nd Forum on Local development in Truskavets, Ukraine	

5–7 IX	2017
19 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój Konferencja "Europa Karpat"	

17 II	2018
20 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl	

16 VI	2018
21 st International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów	

5–6 IX	2018
22 nd International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój	

16–17 II	2019
23 rd International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Krasiczyn	

15 VI	2019
24 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów	

4–5 IX	2019
25 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference at the Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój	

21–23 II	2020
26 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Krasiczyn	

8–9 IX	2020
27 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Karpacz	

27–28 II	2021
28 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Przemyśl	

19 VI	2021
29 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Regietów	

7–9 IX	2021
30 th International "Europe of the Carpathians" conference in Karpacz	

27 XI	2021
XXXI International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Węgierska Górka	

5–6 II	2022
XXXII International Conference "Europe of the Carpathians" in Przemyśl/Krasiczyn, signing of the Declaration of the International Club of Europe of the Carpathians	

5 IV	2022
Establishment of the Association "Clubs of Europe of the Carpathians"	



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