

Joint Statement

**23rd Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of V4 countries, Bulgaria
and Romania**

12 – 13 May 2016, Lednice

The Ministers of Environment of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Poland, Slovak Republic, Republic of Bulgaria and Romania met in Lednice to further conduct an open dialogue on important topics of the environment and nature protection.

B E A R I N G I N M I N D the previous meetings of the Environment Ministers of Visegrád Group countries, Republic of Bulgaria and Romania,

R E C A L L I N G the Program of the 2015-2016 Czech Presidency of the Visegrád Group and

N O T I N G the importance of discussed topics in the European framework,
They agreed as follows:

BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING

We appreciate the efforts taken and we are looking forward to the results of the fitness check of the Birds and Habitats Directives. We stress the importance of maintaining the current legislative framework and focusing on better implementation and management issues, as well as improving monitoring.

It is important to ensure proper implementation of the Invasive Alien Species Regulation and to ensure appropriate funding. At the same time, we emphasise the need of closer cross-boundary cooperation in harmonizing regional priorities and in providing practical measures related to the definition of species of regional concern, early detection and controlling of the spread of Invasive Alien Species. The knowledge might be utilized through practical measures of transboundary cooperation and in the process of negotiating of the List of invasive alien species of Union concern.

In order to avoid the negative impact of subsidies and incentives on biodiversity and reform them if necessary, we call for a broader exchange of views on how to harmonize current set of incentives, such as those set in the EU Common Agricultural Policy, Common Fishery Policy or those relating to support of renewable energy sources. In this regard we would welcome practical guidelines from the European Commission applicable across the EU in order to improve the coherence of sectoral policies.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

We generally support transition towards circular economy as proposed by the EU Action plan for circular economy. Recognizing the urgent need to boost up our competitiveness we see the opportunity in innovation and stronger link between research and industry. Additionally, we should focus more on economic instruments, such as green public procurements, ecodesign criteria and other proposed actions leading to the development of market for good and proved quality secondary raw materials, which would increase their use.

Having in mind that circular economy means changes in the whole value chain we strongly support the active involvement of stakeholders in creating new business models and exchanging best practices. The EC action plan and legislative proposals brought more realistic approach specifically for waste management. For the strengthening of circular economy principles V4 countries see also the priority areas in clear and coherent definitions of basic terms, unification of calculation methods, harmonization of reporting, and gradual substantial reduction of landfilling, as well as raising public awareness. However, it is important that the final legislative proposals define realistic and achievable targets for all countries, taking into account their different stages. The proposals must not lead to an increase of administrative burden for member states.

Being aware of the complexity and the cross-cutting nature of circular economy, we will strive to examine all financial tools available at the moment and propose to the European Commission to reconsider them if necessary.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Recalling the latest drought events in the region we recognize that even though drought is a natural phenomenon, which cannot be entirely prevented, we need to increase our common efforts when dealing with drought and water scarcity in the interaction of whole water resources

management with the integration of other economic sectors, including agriculture, water supply and sanitation, industry, forestry, energy production, which will reduce the likelihood and severity of consequences of drought events.

We observe the increasing number of water scarcity and drought events and their effects on water quantity as well as water quality. Thus, we support the future facilitation of exchange of information on the best practice examples and progress in research as well as common activities expanding the knowledge on the issue of drought and water scarcity and appropriate risk management plans.

Done in Lednice, 13 May 2016

For the Czech Republic

His Excellency *Mr. Richard BRABEC*
Minister of the Environment

For Hungary

His Excellency *Mr. V. Németh ZSOLT*
Secretary of State of the Ministry of Agriculture

For the Republic of Poland

His Excellency *Mr. Paweł SAŁEK*
Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Environment

For the Slovak Republic

His Excellency *Mr. László SOLYMOS*
Minister of the Environment

For the Republic of Bulgaria

Her Excellency *Ms. Ivelina VASSILEVA*
Minister of the Environment and Water

For Romania

Her Excellency *Ms. Simona Olimpia NEGRU*
Secretary of State of the Ministry of Environment,
Waters and Forests