



## 15 Years of the Carpathian Euroregion



On 17 April, Nyíregyháza hosted an outstanding event, as on the said date we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Carpathian Euroregion. Apart from commemoration and celebration, the meeting focused on a key topic: the first set of experience earned with the introduction of the Schengen borders in Eastern and Central

Europe, within the territory of the Carpathian Euroregion.

With the support of EuroClip/EuroKapocs Foundation, the event was organized by the Regional Development Public-Benefit Association for the Carpathian Euroregion..

*(to be continued on the 2nd page)*

## Schengen borders

In the foreign policy of the member states of the Carpathian Euroregion, a specific role is attributed to the cooperation of the regions, counties situated by the Schengen borders, in particular the development of the euroregions, as well as the support of the Ukraine's endeavours for Euro-Atlantic integration. Presentations on the Schengen effect have been delivered by **István Szepesi**, major-general, the Police Chief of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and **dr. phd. Svitlana Mytryayeva**, Director of the Regional Office of the National Institute of Strategic Studies in Uzhhorod.

It has been expressed that on 21 December 2007 the European Union arrived at a milestone in its history. After a few years' time, the international organization now embracing 27 member states came to the decision that it was high time to declare the ten countries acceded in 2004 to be mature enough to exercise full-right control over the external borders of the member states. At the time of this decision, the external continental borders of the Schengen Zone shifted to the East.

From among the seven neighbours of the Republic of Hungary, four countries are members of the European Union, and three of them are full-right members of the Schengen Zone. Romania joined the European Union on 01 January 2007, while Slovakia and Slovenia became parts of the area within the Schengen borders together with Hungary. As it is known, the European accession negotiations with Croatia have arrived at the home stretch, and thus our Croatian neighbours can soon be welcomed within the Community. Unfortunately, in the current situation it seems that the Ukrainian and Serbian border sections will permanently be subject to the strict border control in line with the Schengen norms.

*(to be continued on the 8th page)*

## New President

Before the anniversary conference, the Presidium of the Carpathian Euroregion held its meeting to adopt a change in the office of the President of the Council.

On the part of the host country, **Oszkár Seszták**, President of the General Assembly of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and the President of the Hungarian National Part of the Carpathian Euroregion:

— It is clear for us that each of the member countries are interested in the most possible efficient operation of the organization. After our accession to the European Union, and especially in the light of the new priorities of the European Union our primary interest must be to obtain even larger funds in the form of grants and other supports. We have made certain measures, worked out our strategy to have a proper framework for the arrangement of our day-to-day activities, which is a practice to be continued. We are able to shape organizational issues any time in line with the wishes of the member countries, on the beaten tracks of compromises.



For today, we have organized a celebratory conference for the 15th anniversary, and produced a commemorative publication to sum up the experience, outcomes, results of the past one and a half decade, as well as to outline to opportunities of the future. The aim of this conference is again to strengthen our cooperation, discuss our joint goals and concerns. The meeting of the Presidium before the conference has also served these ends.

With respect to the fact that nearly three years ago, at the Council meeting in Bardějov a unanimous decision was made to give the presidency to the Ukraine, now we have adopted a change, and thus **Jozef Polačko** has handed over his office to **Mihail Kicskovszkij**. The Presidium has thanked the resigned Slovakian President for his work, and expressed their commitment to support the new President.



# 15 Years of the Carpathian Euroregion

(to be continued from the 1st page)

The conference offered an opportunity to discuss the experience of the cooperation, as well as the current issues. For us, it was very important that this international event was hosted by Nyíregyháza in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, which has a geopolitically strategic location along the new external border of the European Union.

The celebratory conference was also honoured by the initiators and active participants of the interregional cooperation with their presence, among them the first Secretary General of the Carpathian Euroregion, **dr. Pál Virágh**. The representatives of international organizations were also present, such as the former Secretary General of one of the first euroregions in Europe, Regio Basiliensis, **Christian J. Haefliger** (who had had a key role in the establishment of the Association of European Border Regions and the Carpathian Euroregion), as well as the representatives of EU's Committee of Regions, US foundations, diplomatic bodies, the governments of the member states, member regions, the presidents of the member counties and the mayors of the member towns.

On the part of the member states, all the national parts represented themselves on high levels, thus there was an opportunity to hold the meeting of the Presidium of the Carpathian Euroregion, which turned out to be very successful. A great achievement was that a problem having been unresolved for years could finally be tackled: the Ukrainian National Part took over the Presidium of the Carpathian Euroregion, which had been an issue without a proper solution in the past few years due to the general elections in the member states, and consequently because of the inadequate representation of the countries at the recent Council meetings. Information on the first experience of the introduction of the Schengen borders was provided from the perspective of several member states, from both sides of the border.

I would like to greet everyone at the 15th anniversary celebration of the Carpathian Euroregion — with these words, **prof. dr. István Süli-Zakar**, member of the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion opened the event. — It is in fact a great occasion for all the members of the organization, and I myself see it with pleasure that all those people are today here who in the past few years have contributed to the work of the organization. Fifteen years ago, we were living in a totally different Eastern Europe.

Today's world and today's Central and Eastern Europe seem to be much more human, friendly and cooperative. Of course, I am aware of the opportunities and limitations of our Association. It is clear that the leading politicians of the five countries, as well as large international organizations, such as the European Union, the European Council and NATO have all had their considerable shares in shaping today's positive political situation. Carpathian Euroregion also has its own role, function — which is sometimes a weighty function — in today's favourable course of affairs.



— I would like to congratulate You and the Carpathian Euroregion from at least two aspects; on the achievements that You have made — with these words **Christian J. Haefliger**, the Secretary General of Regio Basiliensis, founder and member of the Presidium of the Association of European Border Regions took the floor. — For me, this event has a personal significance, as in Basel we have had the chance to provide You with very active support in the establishment of the Carpathian Euroregion. I remember at least four occasions when we have met in person.

After recalling the past, the Secretary General talked about the importance of the exchange of experience, the ways that European regional cooperative efforts having been set up earlier have walked, and then added: — We are the members of the same extensive region, and know why these forms of cooperation are important within the Euroregion, inside and outside the European Union, and how we can heal the wounds caused by history with such cooperative efforts. I can just congratulate You, and wish You courage, great achievements to the European border region.

— The fact that the Carpathian Euroregion has been operating for such long years is indicative of the importance of the organization and the work it attends — explained

**Ivan Ivancso**, Consul General of the Consulate General of the Ukraine to Nyíregyháza. — Countries are in good cooperation with each other, and the Ukraine has an important role in the process. It is to be noted how special this regional cooperation is, as

## Carpathian

The 15-year-old Carpathian Euroregion Interregional Cooperation has achieved internationally acknowledged successes. The epoch-making changes in recent years have made the Carpathian Euroregion a strategically significant region for the European Community, as well. There are many working to enable the Carpathian Euroregion to fulfill its particular mission in efficient response to the challenges that have arisen with the enlargement of the European Union.

With its very foundation, the Carpathian Euroregion has had a key role in the cultivation of good neighbourhood relations among the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Even the birth of the first CBC organization established in the Eastern part of the continent — with the participation of solely post-Communist countries — was not a simple matter, because several leading politicians were suspicious of the existence of indirect intents. In spite of this hard start, the process that had already proven its benefits in Western Europe could be introduced to the Carpathian region, and thus the Carpathian Euroregion has contributed to the stability of the region with its activities, achievements. The founding counties of Hungary, Poland and the Ukraine were in a few years' time joined by the counties of the Romanian and Slovakian parts that were also on their way to accession. The enlarged CBC organization embracing the neighbouring regions of five countries has succeeded in attracting the attention of the European Union, NATO, other Western European euroregions, such as the Rhein-Maas Euroregion. Founded by the commission of the European Union, the Association of European Border Regions has also joined the organization.

In the 15 years since 1993, the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion have been largely diversified, and apart from its geopolitical role the cross-border social-cultural-economic functions have also been strengthened. It has staged several conferences, meetings, initiated are supported the activities of a long series of events. Outstanding achievements have been brought about by the sister euroregional cooperation with the Rhein-Maas Euroregion. Or instance, the Carpathian Euroregion could participate in the large INTERREG III.C project covering 37 organizations of 14 countries. Af-



there are great programs here. The process of interregional cooperation is of high significance, and it is important to recognize opportunities, as well as the limitations of these opportunities in order to be able to jump over these obstacles together.

## Euroregion

ter 2004, new opportunities have been opened for the Carpathian Euroregion with the EU accession of Hungary, Slovakia and Poland; new funds and resources have become available for CBC developments.

2007 represented a special turning point in the life of the Carpathian Euroregion. On the one hand, Romania also joined the European Union, and thus by now the larger part of the Carpathian Euroregion has come to belong to the large European integration, and thus the scope of developments crossing the so-called "internal borders" can be broadened. In the 2007–2013 programming period, there remains the central issue of developing cross-border relations within the European Union, as one of the three common priorities is the assistance of the cross-border regional relations. In the period of 2007–2013, the Carpathian Euroregion will found itself in a strategic position, as the Eastern border of the European Union runs across its area. Therefore, the geostrategic role of the Carpathian Euroregion will again be in the focus with the key task of assisting the Ukraine in her Euro-Atlantic integration. It is a well-known fact that the European Union pays special attention and offers considerable financial support to the development of relations crossing the "external borders". In our case, separate finances have been supplied within the framework of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Program with the associated fund maintained by the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

Consequently, apart from the "internal" borders of the European Union relations crossing the "external borders" are also important for us, and both approaches have the option to receive considerable supports from Community funds. Nevertheless, hard work is required to have access to these resources – sufficient number of high-standard grant applications is needed in order to be preferred in the allocation of funds. Our grant applications should be based on scientific researches: the socio-economic situation of the Carpathian Euroregion is to be explored, the main directions of breakthrough should be designated, and appropriate development programmes are to be compiled. The European Union will finance only well-established programmes!

## In an elevating age

— First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation wherein you have referred to the initial efforts that many of us did make at that time, as well as the early outcomes that to some extent were substantial results to be relied on in the future — said **dr. Pál Virágh**, the first Secretary General of the Carpathian Euroregion. — At the 10th anniversary, I was talking about the obstacles of cooperation, because throughout its history the Carpathian Euroregion has always witnessed obstacles. Upon the establishment of the cooperation, some of the parties wishing to participate were hindered by their own governments. Yet, persistent action correctly recognizing the need for cooperation has yielded its fruits. Now, we can claim that the roads leading to each other's countries are unblocked, because the countries of the participating border areas – except for one – have become members of the European Union, and this single fact has opened up unprecedented opportunities for cooperation. Nevertheless, we cannot be entirely happy with our achievements, because both conceptually and geographically the "Schengen border" has in fact raised some obstacles for the full-scaling evolution of our relations, unhindered walk on the interconnecting roads. It seems that this region is to shoulder the burden of continuously coping with obstacles, yet I think that the participants are harnessed with adequate experience in finding their ways to each other, walking the path of achieving further results. As a person always starting out from realities, I would like to call the attention of the cooperating parties in the Carpathian Euroregion to the necessity that they should never forget about the fact that the chance for any large-pace development is not to be expected from the European Union, but their own national governments – emphasized Pál Virágh. — I know it is a very difficult and complex issue, but we should acknowledge that in Europe the parties that launched cross-border cooperation were in fact on the same level of economic development, and therefore their cooperation did enjoy certain initial vantages right from the beginning, receive proper support from their national governments, which has then also reflected in the achievements, results. On the other hand, the participants of the Carpathian Euroregion cannot claim even these days that they would be standing

on the same foundations, have nearly the same level of development. Consequently, the first task would be to arrive at such a status, and the principal responsibility for this process lies or should lie with the national governments. After reaching a nearly identical level of developments, these countries could set larger objectives wherein European Union could also take its role.

In the atmosphere of today's celebration, I propose for the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion to undertake the task to contact the individual national governments with such actual requests that potentially facilitate the acceleration of the development of the respective areas, and thus boosting the development of the entire region and the efficiency of cooperation. Throughout the history of the Euroregion, there has been an example when we contacted the foreign ministers of the participating countries in connection with the opening of certain border-crossing points, as well as the extension of the existing stations – not without a success.

Upon the foundation of the organization, in Debrecen Madame Catherine Lalumière and the foreign ministers of several other governments were present to demonstrate: this regional cooperation was in line with the wishes of Europe and the governments of the participating countries; they supported the effort and intended to promote the development of the region. If in certain fields of activities, areas, the desired development has not taken place it is the lack of will, the lack of support that should be blamed.

— The Carpathian Euroregion was established when Hungary witnessed the emergence of various non-governmental organizations and foundations, and it was indeed a great and elevating period in the country's history — said **Mrs. Csabai Lászlóné**, the Mayor of Nyíregyháza in her greeting words. — Fifteen years ago we thought that this organization had the potential to become a really influential entity to generate cultural, economic, youth relations in between the individual members states. I should admit honestly that what we see today is not the exact imprint of what we strove for at that time. There are fields where we hoped much more, and this anniversary is a good occasion to consider the actual outcomes.

(to be continued on the 4th page)



## In an elevating age

*(to be continued from the 3rd page)*

The thoughts of **Sándor Köles**, President of the Advisory Board of the Carpathian Foundation – Hungary were conveyed by **Boglárka Bata**, the current Director of the Foundation:

— Due to my other and unforeseeable duties I cannot attend the commemorative celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the Carpathian Euroregion in person, which I awfully regret, because as the first director of the Carpathian Foundation I had the opportunity for more than a decade to follow the operation of this unique initiative, and in the framework of the programs of the Foundation to contribute to the realization of the objectives of the Carpathian Euroregion by supporting the non-governmental organizations and municipal programs of the region. I think today we all can be proud of the fact that in Eastern and Central Europe this was the first Euroregion, and thus has served as the model for the foundation of other Euroregions in this geographical part of Europe.

Looking back at the outset, the establishment of the organizations 15 years ago may not seem such a historical undertaking, nearly a milestone as it actually was. In this respect, the „Founding Fathers” could – and hopefully will – tell long stories, because towards having more than just a symbolic message with the regional cooperation embracing five countries in this rather stormy corner of Central Europe several pre-conditions had to be met. It was not enough to face the complex problems of cross-border relations, demolish the physical and mental barriers hindering cooperation, but one had to learn the only expedient strategy of interdependence, that is the exploitation of the mutual benefits of cooperation, which was to be built upon trust in each other. As there is no cooperation without trust. From this perspective, the arithmetic of regional cooperation is not based on the rational approach that 1 plus 1 equals to two, but here 1 plus 1 equals to three.

Since the establishment of the Carpathian Euroregion, radical changes have taken place in the external environment that actually motivated its foundation, and determined its mission. One of the major changes is that in the meantime four out of the five countries of the Euroregion have become members of the European Union; the accession has significantly relieved the peripheral situation of the region, and by eliminating the borders it has broken down the physical barriers of cooperation; at the same time, it has shifted the importance of regional cooperation to other dimensions, and seemingly weakened its function. Today, Europe is the Europe of regions, and not nations. Therefore, the question arises whether the Euroregion has become a



utopia by today; whether it would not be more correct to talk about Carpathian Euro-Utopia again instead of the Carpathian Euroregion, as we once did it some fifteen years ago.

We are also to face this new challenge, and in this context all such former and novel problems shine even clearer that may be tackled within the framework of the Carpathian Euroregion, as the organization has all the required means, tailor-made institutions and cooperating partners.

The Carpathian Foundation offers its contribution to these ends, because it provides support to the local governments and non-governmental organizations operating in the region, in the form of financial and technical, professional assistance towards the implementation of their innovative, local development initiatives in all the five countries of the Carpathian Euroregion; the Foundation also encourages these organizations in their activities, the cross-border cooperative efforts of local communities.

## Importance of cooperation

In his greeting words, **Oszkár Seszták**, President of the General Assembly of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County recalled that the constituent meeting of the Carpathian Euroregion was held on 14 February 1993, in Debrecen, Hungary. Upon its foundation, Carpathian Euroregion undertook an important mission: the safeguarding of peace, strengthening of the stability in the given region, attenuation of the separation that national borders represented, creation of more human conditions for cross-border movements, improvement of the life standards and life circumstances of the local inhabitants. In the past years, the Carpathian Euroregion has proved that it has the potential to promote the participation of the member local governments in the European integration processes successfully, create the conditions of quality changes, and support development activities as an umbrella organization. Comprehensive municipal and professional relations have emerged; broad-scaling experience has been accumulated on the difficulties that peripheral regions face; in the light of the local circumstances common regional demands and interests have been conceived. All these actions serve as an appropriate background for joint planning and thinking to which a proper perspective is offered by the process of accession to the European Union, the roles of the regions and the development of their cooperation, as well as European integration in terms of strategy, economy and social policy. In recent years, we have relied on our experience of cooperation to work out the strategic development program of the Carpathian Euroregion.

Nowadays, the member states of the Carpathian Euroregion are again subject to important changes in the process of EU integration, because by now the new external border of the EU has come to cross the territory of the Euroregion, thus covering a significant part of the new external Schengen border in Eastern and Central Europe — as Oszkár Seszták pointed out the current processes. — In this new situation reflecting novel objectives and expectations, it is time to return to the cooperative efforts that were characteristic of the initial period. It is our conviction – the President emphasized — that in the future the Carpathian Euroregion will preserve its geostrategic position, primarily due to the fact that it is situated by the new external borders of the EU, and thus constitutes a link, bridge between



the European Union and the countries of Eastern Europe (especially the Ukraine, as well as Russia, Moldavia and Belarus).

The gradual approach of the Ukraine to the European Union, as well as the Euro-Atlantic integration of the neighbouring countries is a challenge not only for the Ukraine and the Carpathian Euroregion, but for the whole of Europe, and in this process the Carpathian Euroregion Interregional Cooperation makes every effort employ its regional role, and thus support the implementation of the new neighbourhood program of the EU.

**Pamfil Bercean**, the Romanian member of the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion, the President of the Romanian National Part has also emphasized the importance of cooperation. He has referred to the fact that by today the organization has come to be operated under different circumstances, as four of the member states are members of the NATO and the European Union. For four member states, the issues of obtaining visa, the permeability of borders have been solved; Hungary, Slovakia and Poland have become the members of the Schengen Zone, Romania will join the area in 2011, while the Ukraine makes every effort to move closer to the EU structures. Partnership is particularly important in the border regions; special relations should be established with the Ukraine, because even if the Ukraine is not a member of the European Union, the uniform nature of the Carpathian Euroregion should not be injured. It is rather a welcome effort on the part of the Ukraine being worthy of support that she intends to take an active role in the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion, and facilitate cross-border traffic. Within the context of cooperation, the Romanian part has several projects with the Ukraine in the fields of trade and tourism. Bercean has noted that in the course of the years the members of the Euroregion have organized several events, fairs, cultural meetings, and strengthened their mutual business relations. He has specifically referred to the related operations of the Association of the Chambers of Commerce of the Carpathian Euroregion headed by his compatriot, Gheorghe Marcas. An essential condition of the deepening of the

social-economic relations is the improvement of the communication infrastructure.

**Mihail Kicskovszkij**, Ukrainian member of the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion, who was elected to act as the President of the Council just before the conference:

— In connection with this anniversary, it seems to be especially topical to raise some questions. How can cooperation within the Euroregion be aligned with good neighbourhood relations. Where is cooperation within the European Union heading for? How can we reconcile our common interests, and how can we frame a joint foreign policy, joint program? I would like to emphasize that it is our shared organization with really thorough experience, and therefore this regional cooperation is to be continued. Within the European Union, the Carpathian Euroregion has a particular role. It enjoys huge support from the European Union and the European Council, as well as from other international and European organizations. Furthermore, the Carpathian Euroregion has received weighty recognition, and in this merit the Hungarian side has had a crucial role. I think that this is an important pillar of our future cooperation both in economy and culture. This is an internationally acknowledged, important organization. It serves the unification of nations, as it has had enormously positive influence on people who have started to look at their neighbours in a different light,



and rather tended to search for the things that connect them. By today, it has become reality. Naturally, there are important issues that we are to revisit from time to time – because our cooperation can be efficient enough only if non-governmental organizations operating by the borders are also involved, and supported in their process of institutionalization. It is very frequently said that the Subcarpathian Region is the western gate to Europe, still it is rather the eastern gate for Europe, and therefore our support to entrepreneurs, cultural and economic organizations is of high significance, as they have the potential to strengthen development further. And this is the very basis

It is now 9 years that Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County accommodates the International Secretary of the Carpathian Euroregion, which coordinates the activities among the member states and internal cooperation as a stable working organization. Furthermore, in the Presidium of Association of the European Border Regions it represents the organization, as well as provides for the preparation and implementation of programs, projects jointly organized with the Rhein–Maas Euregion.

The President of the International Secretariat is: **Mrs. Majorné Brigitta László**.

At the conference, several participants have emphasized that the work of the Carpathian Euroregion as an organization are highly esteemed in the European Union, the Council of Europe, as well as other international and European organizations. Thus, the Carpathian Euroregion receives weighty appreciations that to a considerable extent can be attributed to the Hungarian part and the President of the International Secretariat.

of our good neighbourhood relations. The Carpathian Euroregion contributes to the solution of problems that are key issues in view to the development of the region, as well as with respect to the internal integration of any society. We have amalgamated great cooperation with the local government of Kosice, as well as regional governments and municipalities in Hungary. On the part of the Ukraine, The General Assembly of the Subcarpathian County is a promoter of the programs along the border. It is in fact a joint cooperation that we are able to expand further. Local governments have an essential role in the process, because they are the ones to support cooperation among people, and they are at the same time the vehicles of cooperation among people within the Carpathian Euroregion. Cultural institutions are also intertwined through very good relations. It is, of course, very important for us to cope with the problems that have arisen with the Schengen borders. The Ukraine has already taken over the presidency, which she naturally intends to fulfill in line with the Statutes and with strong focus on the most significant issues. For instance, a key point in the Carpathian Euroregion is environmental protection, because we have a green belt that should be protected by all means. Therefore, I opine that such a key issue is the safeguarding of the ecological values of the Carpathians. The outcomes of damaging impacts are to be mitigated, and here local governments, as well as organizations, like the Carpathian Euroregion, take a crucial part. Tourism is another priority



area. After lifting the Schengen borders, we should not let well-established cooperative efforts among the people break off, or even loosen. We have already entered a kind of border cooperation with Hungary with a territorial scope of 30 km from the borders in order to facilitate cross-border movement.

— Since the establishment of the organization, the Carpathian Euroregion has also faced a need to adapt to new conditions and circumstances — added in his speech **ing. Jozef Polačko**, the Slovakian member of the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion, who acted as the President of the Council so far, and just handed over his office to Mihail Kicskovszkij in the morning of the celebration. — With the passing of time, we started to frame democratic infrastructure in our countries, and sat down to negotiate with the European Union. Before the EU accession, we did have certain financial resources, yet today we are to rely on totally different funds. I would therefore express my gratitude to all the Secretaries of the Euroregion, the delegations who were always involved in serious negotiations, talks. Naturally, there have been things passing without achievements, but on the whole the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion have embraced a lot of positive aspects, influenced the inhabitants of the border regions. The Slovakian part has its own history, as we had joined the organization as associated members, and then in 1999 we became full members. In the name of the Slovakian part, we have always supported interregional cooperation in the border areas. We will continue to strive for improving the life circumstances of our inhabitants. What I wish is that the oncoming 15 years should be even more successful than this one and a half decade behind us has been.

**László Gazda**, President of the Regional Development Public-Benefit Association for

**As occasioned by the anniversary, the conference has been greeted in letters by several persons:**

**Mme Catherine Lalumiére**, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe • **Terry Davis**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe • **John Mroz**, President of the EastWest Institute • **William S. White**, President of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation • **Akira Iriyama**, former President of the Sasakawa Foundation • **Lambert van Nistelrooij**, President of the Association of European Border Regions • **Martin Guillermo-Ramírez**, Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions • **Klaus Klipp**, Secretary General of the European Regions.



the Carpathian Euroregion has greeted the participants. He told:

— The Carpathian Euroregion covers an area that is in fact one of the least developed regions of the European Union. We are to set the objectives jointly, and then reach the determination to have a major target. If there is such a target ahead of us, we can recognize the results, implement and achieve our objectives.

— Social and personal relations are essential — emphasized **Kazimierz Ziobro**, the member of the Polish Delegation. — At a great celebration like this, we should talk

about the mistakes we have made, but unfortunately we are not able to exploit all the chances and opportunities that the European Union offers. The experience that we earn day by day enables us to operate in the line with the Statutes. I honestly trust that these relations within the region will further deepen, also with the Ukraine, or any other acceding countries. And I wish all of You to achieve great successes in Your work so that we could rely on the opportunities, chances offered, and attract general interests to the mountains of the Carpathians in terms of both economy and culture.

## The EuroClip Public Foundation

When Hungary joined the EU in May 2004, many people understood the meaning and importance of the link-idea. The Nyíregyháza Initiative, (which is supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in many ways), concentrates on the Eastern-European region. The reason for this is obvious: the initiative fits in the aims of Hungarian foreign policy (and within that, the regional policy) very well. It is one of the aims of the European Union's "Wider Europe" concept (European Neighbourhood Policy), realising the basic principles of partnerships. The Nyíregyháza Initiative and its institutional structure, the EuroClip Public Foundation means that Hungarian foreign policy can make a contribution on a regional level towards the European Union's eastern policy (the "Wider Europe" concept) and can play an important role in Hungarian-Ukrainian relations (especially regarding cooperation along the border).

Aspiring to become good neighbours was institutionalised by the Public Foundation and started a process, which has already successfully begun here. This is the process of the flourishing cross-border regional cooperation, which is becoming more and more important. The mission of the Public Foundation will not change in the future. It will keep working towards helping the process of European integration with its own tools.

The EuroClip Public Foundation also aims to provide thorough and widespread information through its Hungarian-Ukrainian-English language newsletter and website ([www.euroclip.hu](http://www.euroclip.hu)).



## Nyíregyháza Initiative



EuroClip/EuroKapocs Public Foundation has been established and operated by Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County in cooperation with the City of Nyíregyháza, as well as with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — said **Oszkár Seszták**. — The Foundation aims at the promotion of the democratization and European integration of Eastern European countries and Hungary, the assistance, support of the cultural and economic development of the members states of the European Union. Via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Hungary makes considerable financial funds available for the promotion of integration, relations and cooperation between the European Union and its eastern neighbours, and towards this end it organizes and supports conferences, events, trainings and re-training courses, announces various calls for grant applications. The target areas of most of these calls are the Subcarpathian region, Lviv, Chernovci, Dnepropetrovsk, Kiev and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County. In recent years, hundreds of projects have been implemented with the contribution of thousands of participants. This celebra-

tion has also been organized with the support of EuroClip/EuroKapocs.

A few years later of establishing the the Carpathian Euroregion, still another initiative was launched — recalled **Mrs. Csabai Lászlóné** —, the Nyíregyháza Initiative, which aimed at functioning as a trigger of relations in order to promote cross-border movements. The real opportunity was then offered by our membership in the European Union, and I strongly hope that sooner or later the Ukraine will also be a part of this community. We in fact regard the Ukraine as a community that is suitable for such a membership, and at the same time we are striving for eliminating the feeling in our Ukrainian friends that they would be subject to any discrimination. I opine that joint thinking can generate results, mutual benefits. The region has had its own successes and problems; therefore, I think that meetings like this have the potential to yield actual results.

— Hungarian foreign policy considers the Nyíregyháza Initiative as one of the most important initiatives having been launched so far within the context of the realization of our endeavours in the region — asserted **Árpád Rónay**, Head of Department from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — The Hungarian Government strives for bringing the Ukraine close to the European Union, and this is the aim that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also promotes. We, on the part of Hungary support the country's accession to the Community. We support eco-

nomical integration. Within the framework of the bilateral relations between the two countries, Hungarian foreign policy counts on the various forms of regional cooperation, local and regional organizations, and thus continues to provide them with all the available means.

Launched in 2003 in association with the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Nyíregyháza Initiative aims at promoting the efficient close-up of the Eastern European region, cross-border cooperation, the strengthening of relations among local and regional governments also be disseminating the experience that Hungary has earned in connection with the process of integration.

At the same time, the "Nyíregyháza Initiative" is deemed as such a vehicle of active Hungarian foreign policy that efficiently contributes to the implementation of the reform processes in the Ukraine with the use of educational–training and support programs focusing on the expansion of capacities and the development of human resources.

The activities of EuroClip/EuroKapocs Public Foundation acting for the implementation of the projects of the Nyíregyháza Initiative are supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs annually, with considerable budgetary funds, and by way of its representatives delegated to the Advisory Board of the Foundation the Ministry also takes part in the planning of the annual programs of the Foundations, as well as the process of decision-making.

— The Association of the Chambers of Commerce of the Carpathian Euroregion was founded in 1999, and at the present the organization has nine member chambers — said **Gheorghe Marcas**, the President of the Association. — Today, I have had attended debates where the question has been raised whether it was worth at all establishing the Carpathian Euroregion? Looking back former period of our histories, one can see that this region was also existent here, together in the past centuries; in the past centuries when free-market trade – known to everyone as the salt market – used to dominate. As centuries ago, people used to trade with salt, wood and paraffin. These relations knew no borders, were not aware of any Schengen or European Union. Trading activities was really free, held back by no borders. The development of the Carpathian Euroregion has been advanced by industrial and commercial relations, as well. The free movement of persons, goods and capital

## Economy is important

is crucial, and is deemed as the primary precondition of cooperation. Businessmen tend to put it plainly. When their expectations are not met, they become nervous. I am happy to see that we have succeeded in opening up the ways for launching free trade with the involvement of the Chambers. When Hungary joined the European Union, there were three types of states, countries within the Euroregion: members of the European Union, candidate countries and the ones that desired to be members in the future. The Ukraine still belongs to this latter group, and therefore we have followed a policy of supporting Ukrainian businessmen in being regarded as colleagues, friends and business partners. We have also strengthened our relations with the Hungarian and Slovakian colleagues in order to advance the Ukrainian economic

environment. We have experimented with unique things, established partnerships, such as the county councils of Satu Mare and Maramures, as well as the county councils in the Subcarpathian Region. Our second program is related to clusters that our development policy is based on. We are requesting You to show trust towards these organizations, because they are existent within the framework of the Euroregion, and at the same time have helped the operation of the entire Carpathian Euroregion. Let us organize meetings in various countries, and make them a tradition to enable them to make decisions. For instance, the activities of Euroclip set a positive example to follow. It can be of great help for us to break out from this negative sphere, and turn our eyes at the dynamic policy of development.



# Schengen borders

(to be continued from the 1st page)

Romania is foreseen to become a full-right member of the Schengen Zone in 2010–2011 with her border sections becoming also permeable.

Prior to the country's admittance to the Schengen Zone, the competent Hungarian organizations had been preparing for the test for years. The scrutiny of the land borders in May 2006 was followed by the inspection of the aerial borders in June. During the process, the delegation consisting of the representatives of the member states studied the preparedness, fulfillment of duties and efficiency of the organizational units deployed by the external borders of Hungary.

The results of the inspection – save for minor deficiencies to be corrected – were found to be excellent. Naturally, there still remained tasks to be executed and solved in the period following the inspection:

Built upon three pillars – i.e. the reliable safeguarding of the external borders, the operation of an in-depth screening system, the effectuation of legal enforcement activities compensating for the security deficits at the internal borders –, the system of activities is to be operated in line with the security objectives, which is foreseen to ensure efficient action against illegal migration and the associated organized (international) crime.

The successful accomplishment of the above objective has been ensured by the following activities:

- termination of the control of internal border traffic, breakdown of physical obstacles,

- introduction of the Ukrainian–Hungarian local border traffic convention,
- creation of the conditions for the temporary restoration of border control, reaching the stand-by status of enforcement,
- priority focus on the preparation of the personnel for the continuous enforcement of the Schengen requirements, with special respect to foreign-language training,
- ensuring the realization, acceptance and system integration of the developments to be implemented from the Schengen Fund, External Border Fund,
- full-scaling establishment of the contact posts towards Romania, Croatia, Serbia and the Ukraine,
- continuous execution of the preparative tasks towards accession to SIS and the Schengen visa system.

In the course of the integration, the Hungarian Border Guards have been dissolved, and its organizational elements have been merged into the organization of the Police, or terminated.

The Police Headquarters of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County has six border security branches that attend the control of the external borders of the Republic of Hungary and the member states of the European Union in a 245-km long border section. Apart from these branches, border security duties are also performed by the operational subdivisions that have been formed from the former border police companies, primarily in in-depth missions.

The border security branches of the Police Headquarters have also been renewed. Within the context of compliance with the relevant Schengen and EU requirements, recent years have seen the reconstruction, modernization of all the border-crossing stations and branches from various European Union resources.

The territorial scope of competence of the County Police Headquarters continues to lie in the axis of Eastern–Western migration. For migrants, Hungary is still not a primary target country. Crossing the state borders of the Republic of Hungary, they head for reaching the Western countries of the Schengen Zone.

The related figures reflect: in the first quarter of the year, the number of illegal border crossings has drastically risen. In Szabolcs County, the migration pressure has almost fully impacted the controlled border section between Hungary and the Ukraine.

Another key problem of our scope of competence is the trafficking of tobacco products. Unfortunately, such activities may give rise to considerable fortunes, and thus have been targeted by organized crime. The methods of smuggling are highly varied, contraband goods are trafficked on land, water and in the air. These operations “produce” extra profits, and efficient counteraction is of high priority in order to prevent organized crime from being strengthened financially due to these activities.

Naturally, it is not only the Police that should struggle against illegal cross-border activities. The so-called migration network is still existent and active; this integrated activity system established with the participation of several organizations aims at enhancing the efficiency of authority actions against illegal migration and other related unlawful operations. In the framework of the system, joint actions, controls are executed in the most affected and threatened areas and territories (markets, construction works, stations, railway stations, etc.), as well as junctions, with the cooperation of the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guards, the Police and other organizations.

In addition to the foregoing, our county has seen considerable results and experience obtained in the fields of various international border security actions, joint activities and operations – mostly under the organization of FRONTEX. Experts from various countries have offered their assistance and active contributions to these events towards executing simultaneous border security controls on the external borders of the European Union, at the green borders and border stations.



## The Newsletter of the Carpathian Euroregion Interregional Association

**Publisher:** Feliciter Publishing Ltd. commissioned by the Regional Development Association for the Carpathian Euroregion with the support of the EuroClip/EuroKapocs Public Foundation.

**Editors:** Mrs. Majorné Brigitta László, István Monori, Dénes Kováts

**Address:** International Secretariat and Hungarian National Office of the Carpathian Euroregion  
H-4400 Nyíregyháza, Hősök tere 5. • Telefon: (36-42) 599-685 • Fax: (36-42) 312-603  
E-mail: cesecr@szszbmo.hu • Web: www.carpathianeuroregion.com  
Regional Development Association for the Carpathian Euroregion  
H-4400 Nyíregyháza, Hősök tere 5.  
Feliciter Publishing Ltd.  
Web: www.feliciter.net • www.feliciter.hu