



***Statement from the Meeting “Intergovernmental Consultation on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions in South Eastern Europe” held in Pelister (12-13 May, 2006)***

Hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Macedonia and organized by the Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development and with the support of UNEP, Italian Ministry of Environment and Territory and EURAC .

Following the Bolzano meeting held in December 2005, we the participants from the South Eastern European countries and other stakeholders:

- Recognize that some recommendations from the Bolzano Statement are already being implemented ;
- Recognize the good value done by the study: Assessment on the current situation and needs of cooperation on the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions/areas in South-Eastern Europe (Balkans) and request the BFSD to finalize it accordingly to the discussions and to the inputs coming from the participants;
- Recognize that a legal framework for the cooperation is feasible, and a draft should be prepared and ready for the next meeting;
- Recommend that the future legal framework should involve the following countries/entities: AL, BIH, BG, CRO, MK, SCG, UNMIK, and recognize that association of Greece and Slovenia is highly appreciated;
- Recommend that the legal framework should deal with the following areas in an integrated approach: biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and rural development , forest land use, management of water resources, transport, tourism, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, energy, spatial planning etc. and the different trends in the development of mountain technologies;
- Recommend that the legal framework that will be prepared should focus on the above areas taking into account the recommendations included in the Annex;





- Recommend that the process and the implementation of this legal framework should take into consideration the importance of education, public awareness and participation;
- Request UNEP in cooperation with EURAC and BFSD to continue supporting this process and organize the next meeting before the end of 2006;
- Recognize that the landmark of this process is the Belgrade 2007 Environment for Europe Conference;
- Call for active information exchange and cooperation with the Alpine and Carpathian Convention and their constituencies in the context of Mountain Partnership;
- Encourage the participants to take action for having and/or continuing support from inter-alia CEI, REREP, FAO, SECI, SEECP, ENVSEC, REC, IUCN, WWF, UNESCO, EUROPARC, EAR, USAID, CIHEAM, ADA, NORAD, SDC, SIDA, CIDA, EC and others, to make this issue as a priority.

The participants express their gratitude to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of Macedonia for hosting the meeting in Pelister. (The Republic of Greece offered to host the next meeting in September 2006).

Pelister - Macedonia, 13 May 2006

