

**JOINT STATEMENT [after first and second session]**

**of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Environment Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries,**

**Bulgaria and Romania**

**18 – 19 April 2013, Sobienie Królewskie, Poland**

Environment Ministers of the Czech Republic, Republic of Poland, Slovak Republic, Republic of Bulgaria, and Representatives of Environment Ministerst of Hungary and Romania

- reaffirming the importance of the cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries together with other countries of the region in the field of environmental protection,
- bearing in mind the previous meetings of the Visegrad Group Environment Ministers,
- noting the Program of the 2012/2013 Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group with the main theme of the “Visegrad 4 Integration and Cohesion”
- recognizing the potential of and impact on the environment of the European Union policies and hence – the need to coordinate national positions related to those policies,
- noting that the next Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be hosted by the Eastern European Group and will take place in Warsaw

**have agreed as follows:**

**Climate and energy policy 2030**

The Ministers and Representatives discussed issues related to recently published Green Paper on the Climate and Energy 2030 Vision with a view to agree their common position in the form of Concept Paper.

In particular, the Ministers and Representatives confirmed their countries were on track to meet the objectives of the 2020 climate and energy package.

They underlined initial stage of discussions on the Green Paper in their respective countries. They also stressed the need to combine discussions on EU climate and energy policy framework with the global negotiations. These two dimensions should go hand in hand.

The ministers agreed that it is necessary to have a long-term vision but stressed the need to take into account national and sectorial circumstances and the assessments of how Member States have delivered current targets and how it impacted their development. Member State and sector-specific impact assessments should be the basis for new framework deliberations and country specific objectives.

The balance between policy objectives should be the guiding principle of the new framework, with a special focus on competitive growth and job creation. The new framework should therefore factor in the need for affordable energy prices and should also enable exploiting national resources of energy.

**The 2015 International Climate Change Agreement: Shaping international climate policy beyond 2020 Communication from the Commission (COM(2013)167) - exchange of opinions**

The Ministers and Representatives highlighted that the global agreement is possible and should be concluded in 2015. Global action on climate change is the best way to address climate change issues, therefore the EU should do everything in its power to further negotiations in this matter.

The Ministers and Representatives agreed that the new agreement should establish enabling conditions for transition to a low emission economy, it should be inclusive and it should differentiate legally binding commitments along the lines of respective capabilities and different responsibilities.

The Ministers concluded that the new agreement should create a level playing field for all and incentivize action on climate change rather than disincentive it. Hence the new agreement should be fair and recognize the mitigation contributions and efforts countries already made.

The Ministers and Representatives reemphasized that the new agreement should be flexible enough to respect individual climate, social and economic conditions of all countries, and the respective capabilities of emerging economies should be fully taken into account. The same level of flexibility as at the global level should be ensured for the EU Member States.

**Review of the EU Thematic Strategy on air pollution and associated legislation – exchange of opinions on the further development of this dossier**

The Ministers and Representatives agreed that the V4+ countries should take joint actions in relation to the review of the *Thematic Strategy on air pollution and associated legislation* to enable future fulfilment of the air quality standards set in the CAFE directive. Improvement of guidance, expert and information support to the implementation process from the European administrative and expert bodies should be strengthened building on existing experience with implementation of the EU air quality legislation. Extensive use of legislative, non-legislative instruments, effective legislation, and sufficient financial funds are necessary for successful implementation.

The V4+ countries are open to set a joint objective as regards the air protection policy, including air quality standards and national emission ceilings. These objectives should not be tightening the obligatory air quality standards, nor increasing their number until all Member States achieve existing standards. Existing national emission ceilings (Annex II Gothenburg Protocol, LRTAP) are a good starting point for setting more ambitious but realistic emission ceilings for 2025 or 2030.

**Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 "Living well, within the limits of our planet" (7th Environmental Action Programme)**

The Ministers and Representatives of the V4+ countries exchanged views on the proposal for the 7. EAP.

The Ministers and Representatives agreed on the need for ensuring that the 7. EAP properly reflects the decisions of the Council. In this context the reflection of the difference between Council's decisions on „Roadmap for a resource efficient Europe” and „Roadmap for a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050” should be ensured to avoid diminishing the importance of the decisions of the Council in the future.<sup>1</sup>

The Ministers and Representatives are looking forward to the forthcoming debate based on recently published by the European Commission „Green Paper – A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies”, which raises crucial issues to be resolved. Considering this, the Ministers concluded that 7.EAP is not designed to prejudge the outcomes of the ongoing discussion on post-2020 climate and energy policy framework.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministers and Representatives highlighted the importance of impact assessments at Member States level for properly reflecting differentiated national circumstances in the process of knowledge-based, responsible policy making. Endorsement of policy initiatives on EU level should depend on results of such analyses.

The Ministers and Representatives concluded that the 7. EAP should provide political commitment without laying down legal rules of mandatory nature.

### **Work on the amendment of the EIA Directive - national positions of V4+ countries**

The V4+ countries see the room for improvement of the EU legal basis of the EIA procedure and for streamlining of the assessment process. Nonetheless the fulfillment of this aim would require necessary adjustments of the amendment project, to exclude the risk of profound changes to the Member State's legal systems that established separated EIA procedures and to prevent putting unnecessary burden on the public authorities participating in the EIA process.

Done in Sobienie Królewskie, on 19 April 2013

For the Czech Republic

For Hungary

For the Republic of Poland

---

<sup>1</sup> HU disassociates itself from this paragraph

<sup>2</sup> HU disassociates itself from this paragraph

For the Slovak Republic

For the Republic of Bulgaria

For Romania