

## STATEMENT

of Lubka Katchakova, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water  
of the Republic of Bulgaria

at the Ministerial Meeting Danube - Black Sea: Towards a Sustainable  
Partnership for Integrated Water Management

Bucharest, 23 February 2007

Dear Mrs. Barbu,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be part of this high level forum. I would like to start by congratulating the Romanian Presidency of the ICPDR and personally Mrs. Varga for taking the initiative for this key meeting so timely in its presidential mandate.

The Danube countries have achieved a lot in the process of improving water quality in the Danube River Basin. We hope that the work ahead and in particular the Joint Danube Survey – 2 will back up with figures the positive trends in Danube water quality which also contributes to the signs of recovery observed in the Black Sea ecosystem.

The platform provided by the ICPDR backed up by valuable assistance of the Danube Regional project have allowed the Danube countries to make constant progress towards a Danube River Basin Management Plan. Results are visible, and the Danube seems to have become a world recognised “trade mark” when it comes to international river basin management. While this process is in progress there are some issues which deserve more attention and commitment for joint efforts. Among these issues are flood prevention and mitigation and minimization of risks from accidental pollution particularly accidents with transboundary effect. The recovery from floods and accidental pollution very often require substantial financial resources.

The Danube Basin is shared by countries with different economic growth where the issue of funding continues to be a key element of the strategy for achieving basin wide objectives. In the pre-accession period Bulgaria has designated its entire Danube and Black Sea catchments as sensitive areas. This entails enormous financial costs but is particularly important for us being a Danube and a Black Sea country at the same time. We therefore call upon all countries concerned and also the financial institutions to invest in

pollution reduction in the wide Black Sea basin. DABLAS is a good example and a good basis for bringing together priorities in the Black Sea and one of its big tributaries. We should not forget however that the Danube River is not the only large tributary of the Black Sea. That is why the experience from this basin must be transferred in other parts of the wider Black Sea basin. As a Danube and Black Sea country Bulgaria is very interested and ready to support all initiatives in that respect. Another focus of our investment strategies should be on flood and risk prevention measures, the latter being equally important as proper pollution reduction measures basin-wide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a representative of Bulgaria I am here to confirm that Bulgaria as a Member State of EU shall continue now with even stronger commitment and energy its efforts to promote the cooperation between the Danube and the Black Sea countries. As an EU Member State Bulgaria will assume and share the responsibility of being one of the leading parties in this process. We consider that our traditionally good relations with all Black Sea countries could be a solid base for further enhancement of cooperation in the region. We believe that our common efforts in the field of water management together with the cooperation at political, economic and social level will contribute for the democracy and prosperity of the region.

Thank you for your attention.