

Gabriella Parhomcsuk

Distinguished delegates, my Gabriella [inaudible] and I speak to you as a Carpathian Rusyn from Ukrainian Transcarpathia, representing the stateless people of the Carpathian Mountains. After the Russian invasion of 2022, Transcarpathia as Ukraine's safest region, became a refuge for thousands fleeing war. Their arrival brought businesses and investments, creating hope for economic revival, yet a new danger followed. Profit-driven development that sidelines native Transcarpathians. Companies unfamiliar with our land import cheap labor and advance large energy projects without safeguarding an environment that has already suffered repeated natural disasters. Although Transcarpathia is Ukraine's most multicultural region, its minorities often face stigmatization shaped by geopolitics. Hungarian and Romanian communities have managed to protect their language rights. Their school institutions were recently visited by EU and UN representatives, some of whom are here today. But one community was absent from these discussions: the Carpathian Rusyns. We remain unrecognized in Ukraine. The silence by both national authorities and international communities create a vacuum exploited by a small, but loud group of separatists tied to Russia. They take advantage of the lack of recognition and legitimate representation. But this can be prevented. Distinguished delegates, unlike many sitting in this hall, I am no professional politician, but I would like to use this stage and opportunity to respectfully call for the official recognition of the Carpathian Rusyn minority in Ukraine, genuine cooperation between Rusyn civil organizations and state institutions, and economic development that enables native communities that thrive alongside newcomers, rather than being displaced. Thank you.