

Adriatic Sea Partnership (ASP)¹

Background Paper for MAP Bureau Meeting --

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**Slovenian Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)**

I. Rationale

The Adriatic Sea is a sensitive and vulnerable marine ecosystem facing numerous environmental challenges nowadays and is generally considered to be the most endangered region in the Mediterranean Sea. The Adriatic is home to some of the most significant treasures of world heritage, including the Venice Lagoon, the fortress city of Dubrovnik, and dynamic karst formations. At the same time its rocky coves, historical cities, and pristine beaches mark it as an economically significant region for tourism and recreation. By far the most significant impact on the sea comes from the Po River Valley, one of Europe's most developed industrial areas. The Adriatic Sea links six countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, and Serbia and Montenegro) whose recent history is marked by intensive and diverse development. While some of the Adriatic countries have well developed institutional systems and have put in place mechanisms to ensure sustainable development and management of Adriatic Sea relevant areas, others have experience challenges in doing so due to instability, political isolation and lack of experience, technical capacity and financial resources. In this regard mutual cooperation and support have to be strengthened. Countries with coastlines on the Adriatic include EU member states, candidate countries, and others.

Various international initiatives have arisen in recent years as the political agendas of the Adriatic countries increasingly acknowledge the need to boost regional cooperation to improve the management of the Adriatic. These initiatives tend to have a special focus on a particular aspect of the problem, or bring together specific sets of actors. While these initiatives are important, there is still place for strengthening cooperation among the Adriatic states, helping them to implement already taken commitments, and contributing to prosperity and stability in the region. We assume there is a need to establish a comprehensive framework for international cooperation focused on the Adriatic Sea that can lead to real commitments for action.² A major step forward has recently been taken in the adoption of three priority projects for the Adriatic under the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development. These include the Contingency Plan, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and Ballast Waters Management Plan. The

¹ The Slovenian Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning has requested the REC to elaborate the concept for an Adriatic Sea Partnership modelled upon the recent positive experience with the Sava River Basin initiative. Presently steps are being taken to involve other countries as lead partners.

² This point was among the conclusions of the "Workshop on Transboundary Water Management in SEE: The Complementary Roles of the EU WFD and UNECE Water Convention," held in Belgrade in March 2006.

above-mentioned comprehensive framework would not only assist in obtaining commitments and a plan of action to implement these three projects, but would also generate additional priority projects for protection and sustainable development of the Adriatic.

II. Adriatic Sea Partnership – Goals

It is proposed to establish an Adriatic Sea Partnership (ASP). The overall objective of the initiative is the protection and sustainable development of the Adriatic Sea Region. The Slovenian presidency of the Mediterranean Action Plan provides a window of opportunity to take substantial steps towards this objective.

The Goals of the ASP are to:

- facilitate project preparation and implementation aimed at protection and sustainable development of the Adriatic Sea region, through
- a comprehensive umbrella partnership and a platform for joint action based on commitments by littoral states under an international agreement.

The ASP concept builds upon and brings together existing mechanisms and tools for cooperation on the Adriatic Sea, including the Trilateral Commission for Protection of the Adriatic Sea among Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and others. A major goal of the ASP is to establish an operative **international body** on the basis of political commitment by littoral countries, to fill a gap and act as a **common platform** for binding commitments and regional cooperation on action to protect the Adriatic Sea and promote its sustainable use. This platform for joint action will provide the necessary framework for **project preparation and implementation**. It will be a **magnet for funding** from major sources, for example the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The development, funding and implementation of specific projects aimed at achieving sustainable development in the Adriatic region, through a comprehensive **Adriatic Management Plan**,³ shall be linked to the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and will build upon and take into account relevant commitments, including the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the draft EU Marine Directive, EU Water Framework Directive, "AdriCOSM Project," etc. The ASP will also enable the establishment of a working **umbrella framework for cooperation and exchange** to serve as a **clearinghouse** to link and ensure synergies among the diverse existing Adriatic-based initiatives.

The elements of the ASP partnership include the following:

³ This should not be confused with other documents such as an AAI "Adriatic Action Plan" presented at an extraordinary meeting in Zadar (June 2003) or an "Adriatic Action Plan" connected with an Interreg project with a similar name "Adriatic Action Plan 2020" (<http://www.interreg3c.net/sixcms/detail.php?id=6657>).

- 1) Umbrella initiative (partnership) as a focal point for action on sustainable development of the Adriatic
- 2) Legally established international body based on an international agreement
- 3) Interim secretariat to serve and facilitate processes related to the above
- 4) Support to stakeholder engagement in the Adriatic Sea Partnership
- 5) Development of inventory of projects as a basis for drafting an Adriatic Management Plan
- 6) Clearinghouse for project financing

A possible starting point to be explored is an extension of the agreement of the **Trilateral Commission** towards other Adriatic states. Other options for formalization of the cooperation between the Adriatic states may provide better opportunities and will be investigated.

III. Adriatic Sea Partnership - Services

At the Sub-Regional Workshop on the Adriatic Sea to be held under the MAP in June, the REC could be mandated with the task of servicing the ASP since it is non-for-profit, neutral, impartial and unbiased international organization. Due to its non-advocacy and non-partisan character, long experience in facilitating communication among, and capacity building of, various stakeholders, and also its unique position in the region (REC representative offices in all Adriatic countries except Italy⁴), the REC seems to be an appropriate international organization for this task (see About the REC, Appendix A). Based upon the successful experience that led up to the establishment of the Sava Commission (see Appendix B), the REC is able to service a process for negotiations potentially leading to an agreement on protection of the Adriatic Sea and the establishment of relevant joint institutions, such as a commission modelled after the Sava Commission.⁵ The services to be provided fall into two main categories: A) Support to Project Preparation and Implementation through the Adriatic Sea Partnership, and B) Capacity building component for the SEE Adriatic countries in the MAP process.

⁴ The REC will insure an equal, balanced approach towards all Adriatic littoral states. It intends to establish a partnership with an appropriate Italian organization as a counterpart to its country office network in the other Adriatic countries.

⁵ Both the Sava Initiative and the proposed ASP are aimed at intensive cooperation of the bordering states in water resource management and sustainable development. Although the subjects of cooperation under the initiatives are different, the approaches to the protection of both the Sava River and the Adriatic Sea are similar. Both of them require the application of the principles of integrated water resources management, establishment of new legal and institutional frameworks, development of action plans, etc. The Sava Initiative has already established a mechanism for cooperation for the Sava River Basin. Although the Adriatic region would need its own process taking into account the necessities, challenges and complexity of the marine environment of the Adriatic Sea, it has the advantage of drawing upon the existing experience in the region including the results of the Sava Initiative.

A. Support to Project Preparation and Implementation through the Adriatic Sea Partnership

1. Coordination Element

The overall coordination and negotiation element to be undertaken by REC includes administration, presentation and representation of the partnership, development of the concept, participation at high level meetings, lobbying and fundraising support.

2. Servicing negotiations and secretariat support

- a) Facilitation of the process of negotiations for the launching of ASP
- b) Overall support to the establishment of an intentional body transferring the experience from SAVA river
- c) Coordination of development and implementation of workplans and coordination of activities
- d) Promotion of the process and producing materials
- e) Information focal point, electronic forum for discussion
- f) Regular dissemination of information on achievements-events-news, web site, newsletter
- g) Links with other related processes
- h) Development of databases for stakeholders-key actors

3. Legal support and drafting

- a) Legal support in the launching of the ASP

The REC will provide legal advice and relevant legal expertise during and after the negotiations on a whole range of issues. The REC will assist the laying down of the legal framework for formalization of the ASP including support to the drafting of a cooperation agreement between the Adriatic countries and other legal documents, e.g., drafting of related protocols, etc. The REC will explore the existing cooperation agreements with regards to the Adriatic Sea and will investigate other similar agreements to advise on the most appropriate legal arrangements for the Adriatic region.

- b) Legal support in the establishment of an international body

Once the mechanism for cooperation and needed legal structures are defined through the governmental negotiations the REC legal team will provide full support in drafting of the founding documents for the relevant international body including rules of procedure, headquarters agreement, staff regulations, etc.

4. Stakeholders engagement/support

The REC will facilitate the stakeholder involvement at regional, national and local level including the following activities:

- a) Information provision about the initiative and promotion of stakeholder involvement at regional level including stakeholder forums
 - a. Developing and assisting in implementing a stakeholder involvement and communication plan for the new initiative and for the new international body (including mapping the relevant stakeholders, proposing methods and tools for information provision and involvement)
 - b. Implementing stakeholder involvement and communication activities until the new international body can take it over
 - c. Developing a web site for the initiative and providing regular information on the process as well as printed brochure (through REC and REC COs web sites)
 - d. Organizing regional stakeholder meeting/s (one per year) and support participation of key stakeholders in the process of developing the initiative and to attend meetings

- b) National level information provision and promotion of stakeholder involvement including national stakeholder forums
 - a. Developing national language web site for the initiative and providing regular information on the process as well as preparing a printed brochure in all countries
 - b. Identification of relevant stakeholders
 - c. Organizing regular stakeholder meeting/s, (1-2 per year/country), support and prepare participation of key stakeholders in the process of developing the initiative including selection of their representatives (one per country)
 - d. Organize 2-day capacity building trainings especially for SEE countries on stakeholder involvement in the preparation and implementation of the projects (1-2/country)

5. Support related to project preparation and implementation

The REC will also provide support related to the development, adoption and implementation of projects that contribute to practical implementation of Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy and Marine Directive in Adriatic Countries, including inter alia project cycle management.

Following activities will be performed for relevant stakeholders on national and international level:

- supporting the implementation of three priority projects: on Contingency plan for prevention of, preparedness for and response to major marine pollution incidents in the Adriatic Sea, on Ballast Water Management and on Integrated Coastal Zone Management; identification of lead partners and of funding sources, capacity building of project partners;
- presenting the goals and priorities of main strategic documents (focused on Adriatic);

- enabling forums for discussion on strategic directions, prioritization of goals, discussions on priority actions needed;
- identifying project ideas of different stakeholders, linking compatible ideas, partner search, lead partner identification, networking on national and international level;
- providing training on project cycle management (from the identification of problems / needs and related project ideas, to preparation of applications for relevant grant; schemes, implementation of projects, monitoring and evaluation of results and output)
- assisting in identification of potential financial resources for projects

B. Capacity building component for the SEE Adriatic countries in the MAP process

One of the relevant existing platforms for cooperation among South Eastern European countries where they can contribute to dialogue on a large geographical region is the Mediterranean Action Plan. However the MAP processes tend to be dominated by dialogue between the European Community and the Arab states. An additional set of voices with varying perspectives would be beneficial to the cooperative process. SEE countries have the chance to support each other and develop common positions in order to reach compromises and to serve the interests of these specially located countries. Also, the general level of public awareness within the Adriatic region about the MAP activities and their environmental relevance is rather low. Having in mind historical, traditional, geopolitical and other circumstances, the Adriatic Sea Partnership might also be an excellent tool for improving cooperation and communication between EU MSs and North African states in the future.

Through the ASP, the REC will facilitate an efficient, consistent and beneficial means for preparation and participation of the four SEE Adriatic countries (Albania, BiH, Serbia and Montenegro and Croatia) with the collaboration and support of interested partner countries (Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary, etc.) in MAP activities and events, and an improved level of public awareness about relevant MAP activities within the Adriatic region.

The above goal will be achieved through:

- a) organization of preparatory meetings for MAP major events and MoPs which will ensure exchange of experience and views, development of common positions, and capacity building on specific urgent topics.
- b) improved/regular informing of the public about MAP activities and projects relevant for the Adriatic region as a whole, or for particular SEE Adriatic country or countries.
- c) financial support for the participation of additional relevant SEE officials and others in delegations sent to important MAP events.

IV. Coordination with Major Cooperation Initiatives and Projects

With the aim to ensure sustainable development, strengthen regional cooperation as well contribute to the stability in the Adriatic region a wide range of initiatives have been launched supported by concrete projects. These initiatives can be linked through the round table of the ASP.

1. Adriatic Euroregions

The Council of Europe supports the initiative of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, together with local and regional authorities of Adriatic countries of the establishment of an Adriatic Euroregion with resolution 1446, 6, June, 2005. A statute of this Euroregion will be adopted, which foresees in particular the participation of the Assembly in the planned "Adriatic Council".

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc05/EDOC10563.htm>

2. Mediterranean Action Plan

The [Mediterranean Action Plan](http://www.unepmap.org/home.asp) (MAP) endeavours to protect the environment and to foster sustainable development in the Mediterranean basin, The MAP is a regional cooperative effort involving 21 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the European Union under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Its legal framework comprises the Barcelona Convention adopted in 1976 and revised in 1995, and six protocols covering specific aspects of environmental protection.

<http://www.unepmap.org/home.asp>

Under the MAP, the Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) in Split, Croatia is globally recognized as a leader in Integrated Coastal Area Management.

<http://www.pap-thecoastcentre.org>

3. Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Barcelona on 27-28 November 1995, marked the starting point of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process), a wide framework of political, economic and social relations between the Member States of the European Union and Partners of the Southern Mediterranean. In 2005 at the **EURO-MED PARTNERSHIP ENVIRONMENTAL HIGH LEVEL MEETING: "HORIZON 2020"**, partner countries adopted a five year work programme that included an initiative to "de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by 2020," as proposed by the European Commission (EC). Synergies between the Strategic Action Programme and EU measures to combat marine pollution, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Strategic Partnership, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), and the MAP-EC joint programme.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/

4. Stability Pact

While not taking on major new initiatives, the Stability Pact has expressed an interest in Adriatic cooperation and could use its good standing especially among the southern tier countries to encourage their involvement. In the field of Cross Border Cooperation SP Work table will continue supporting Euro regions and micro regions already in place in

the region, such as the GPKT (Gnjilane, Presevo, Kumanovo and Trgoviste) and the Southern Adriatic Euro region.

<http://www.stabilitypact.org/rt/Conclusions%20WTI%20meeting%20Prague%20Nov%202005.pdf> 5.

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc05/EDOC10563.htm>

5. The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)

The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) was formally established at the conference held in Ancona in May 2000. Seven countries cooperate in the framework of AII: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Serbia and Montenegro. AII is aimed to link together the both seas' coastal countries to cooperate for development and safety of the whole area. The following Round Tables have been established and meet regularly; combating illegal activities, environmental protection and sustainable development, economy, tourism and small and medium enterprises cooperation, transport and maritime cooperation, culture, education and inter-university cooperation. Its decision-making body is the Council of Foreign Ministers (Adriatic-Ionian Council), whose agenda is prepared by periodic meetings of the National Coordinators. The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative is part of the framework of the Stability Pact, which makes explicit reference to the Initiative. In the framework of the Table on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development a document called the **Adriatic Action Plan (AAP) 2020** was adopted at the environmental ministers' meeting in June 2003 in Zadar, Croatia. The Adriatic Action Plan aims to link together the AII Countries in efforts to reduce the negative impacts of human activities in the Adriatic-Ionian basin. Three projects covering the environmental aspect of the AII. The projects initially link three North Adriatic AII member states that are more advanced institutionally, other states have agreed to join and follow the projects in their extended phases or to learn from them in following years.

I. Contingency plan for the Adriatic. *The Governments of the Republic of Croatia, Republic of Italy and Republic of Slovenia* signed the **Agreement on the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Major Marine Pollution Incidents In The Adriatic Sea**, in November, 2005

II. Strategic Environmental Assessment of Maritime Activities Including Ballast Water Issue

III. Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Used sources:

<http://www.unep.org/GC/GCSS-VIII/Slovenia%20IWRM.pdf>

http://www.esteri.it/eng/4_27_57_46.asp?#1

<http://www.uniadrion.net/pdf/founding/ravenna/RavennaDeclaration.pdf>

6. Trilateral Commission for the Protection of the Adriatic

A bilateral commission on the protection of Adriatic Sea was established between Italy and Yugoslavia on 14.2.1974 (Jugoslovansko - italijanski sporazum o sodelovanju pri varstvu voda Jadranskega morja in obalnih območij pred onesnaževanjem). In 1992 this initiative was re-launched in the form of a Trilateral Commission including Italy, Croatia and Slovenia. The PAP/RAC in Split, Croatia (see above under point 2) is

connected with this initiative. The trilateral commission is responsible for the implementation of international research programs between these countries on the northern flanks of the Adriatic Sea. It was the starting point of the political process resulting in the three Adriatic projects that are included in the MSSD action plan.

7. ADRICOSM project

The project builds upon the Italian-Slovenian and Croatian agreement for scientific and technological collaboration in the Adriatic Sea and aims to establish an integrated management model for coasts and river basins. It involves sixteen scientific institutions from three Adriatic riparian Countries (Croatia, Italy and Slovenia) as well as France.

Used sources: <http://www.bo.ingv.it/adricosm/>

8. Dinaric Arc Initiative

WWF, UNESCO-ROSTE, UNDP, IUCN and the Council of Europe are already active in the region with a varied portfolio of projects and initiatives aimed at securing the long-term conservation of this corner of Europe. The Dinaric Arc Initiative will enable the organizations to effectively exchange information, creating synergies and ensuring coordinated approach to environmental protection, and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

http://www.undp.hr/en/areas/environmental/n_07_02_09_2005.html

9. Forum of Cities of the Adriatic and Ionian Region

An International Association of Coastal Municipalities set up in 1999. It includes 46 cities in seven countries. Its goal is "to create and develop the economic, social, cultural and environmental integration among the towns and cities on the Adriatic and Ionian Sea" as well as "to provide a real contribution to the fulfilment of the European integration and enlargement."

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc05/EDOC10563.htm>

10. FAO AdriaMed project

Regional Project "Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea" funded by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Policies (MiPAF) and executed by the FAO. AdriaMed was conceived to contribute to the promotion of co-operative fishery management between the participating countries: Albania, Croatia, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc05/EDOC10563.htm>

V. Preliminary list of potential assistance mechanisms

1. INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme

The general goal of the *Adriatic New Neighbourhood Programme INTERREG/CARDS-PHARE*, is the "promotion of social and economic development and cooperation between the Countries of the Adriatic Area". Two of the four axes are relevant.

Axis 1:

Protection and enhancement of the environment, culture and infrastructures of the cross-border territory: this will regard interventions of predominantly public interest, also having an infrastructural character with regard to the integrated management of the environment, energy, transport, telecommunications and territorial and cultural aspects.

Axis 3:

Actions to strengthen cooperation: this axis concerns system interventions aimed at institution building, system harmonisation, the promotion of democracy, employment, security, social promotion and integration, and the qualification of human resources;

In this context, the relevant interventions will focus on, among others:

1. Qualification of human resources, professional upskilling and innovative social promotion and labour market initiatives;
2. Institution building and cooperation in communications and research between institutions to promote system harmonisation.

http://db.interregadriatico.it/ambienti/interadriatico/unica/allegati/struttura_portal_e/20052251631260.English%20introduction.pdf

2. EU regional policy funding programmes INTERREG III A (Italy-Balkans programme)

The Adriatic region is covered by EU regional policy funding programmes INTERREG III A (Italy-Balkans programme), as well as by the EU Community Initiative Programme for Transnational Co-operation in Spatial Development: CADSES (Central European, Adriatic, Danubian, South-Eastern European Space) – which is part of INTERREG III B. The four priorities of CADSES relate to: (1) spatial development for socio-economic cohesion; (2) transport systems and information society; (3) landscape, natural and cultural heritage; and (4) environment protection, resource management and risk prevention.

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc05/EDOC10563.htm>

3. MEDA program

The existing [MEDA programme](#) is the main financial instrument for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. From 1995 to 2003, MEDA committed € 5,458 million in co-operation programmes, projects and other supporting activities, the regional activities comprising around 15% of this budget. The other important source of funding is the [European Investment Bank](#) that has lent € 14 billion for developing activities in the Euro-Mediterranean Partners since 1974 (€ 3.7 billion in 2002-2003). \ programs within the framework of the MAP.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/

4. GEF Strategic Partnership on the Mediterranean Members and organization

The project proposal for a “Strategic Action Program to address pollution from Land-based sources in the Mediterranean” was adopted by the contracting parties of the MAP, and supported by the [Global Environmental Facility \(GEF\)](#).
<http://www.seerecon.org/infrastructure/sectors/environment/ri/mep.htm>

5. Partnership for the Adriatic

The participating countries are Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania. The overall project will cost \$100 million of which GEF grant will cover \$20-25 million, partnerships are being sought with Greece and Italy. This initiative does not have its own website and contacts have not been identified.

<http://www.seerecon.org/infrastructure/sectors/environment/ri/mep.htm>

6. UNESCO

As done in connection with the Dinaric Arc project, for example, UNESCO has the possibility to fund round tables on particular topics of interest.

7. International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The IMO is already interested in the project on Ballast Water Management Plans (BWMP).

8. NATO

NATO is already reportedly interested in the BWMP project.

9. ENVSEC

This partnership that includes UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, REC and UNECE could help to focus financial assistance to the Adriatic through the SEE element of the program. ENVSEC has attracted substantial donor support including Canadian interest.

www.envsec.org

10. Norway

Norway and the other EEA countries have a mechanism for New Member States that includes Slovenia. Co-financing where governmental institutions support the project is reduced to 10% (from 50%).

11. HELCOM/OSPAR linkages

In the same way that the Alpine Convention is the “sponsor” of the Carpathians Convention, an experienced sea-based commission could be the parent organization for a new body on the Adriatic Sea. Norway, for example, could provide donor support to make links with OSPAR. HELCOM could also be appropriate, and traditional donors to HELCOM could be contacted.

Appendix A. About the REC

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. By 2005, the charter of the REC – its legal basis – was signed by the governments of 28 countries and the European Commission.⁶ Aside from political backing and guidance given the REC, most Signatories voluntarily provide financial or in-kind support to the operations as well, in accordance with their political and economic conditions.

The REC has its head office in Szentendre, Hungary. Country offices, field offices and project offices operate in 16 countries in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, South and Eastern Europe and Turkey: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. For projects involving additional geographical areas, the REC typically partners with appropriate organizations. For the Adriatic Sea Partnership the REC intends to partner with an appropriate Italian organization as a counterpart to its country office network in the other Adriatic countries.

During the past 15 years, the REC has proven to be not only a viable, speedy and transparent mechanism for donor beneficiary interaction for environmental betterment, but also a testing ground for addressing global, regional, national and local environmental challenges. The organisation's flexible, innovative expert team has always been ready to work with, assist and enable the stakeholders in order to jointly achieve set objectives ranging from global environmental policy contributions to local initiatives. During this period of political and economic transition the REC contributed – in line with its mission – to policy development, capacity building, information exchange, facilitation of dialogue and networking.

The strategic goal of REC for the period 2006-2010 is to provide services and products to beneficiaries matching their evolving needs. In particular, assist in:

- Strengthening institutions for sustainable development
- Capacity building of stakeholders and assisting partnerships
- Sustainable management and use of natural resources
- Integration of environmental concerns into the relevant sectors (such as energy, transport, etc.)

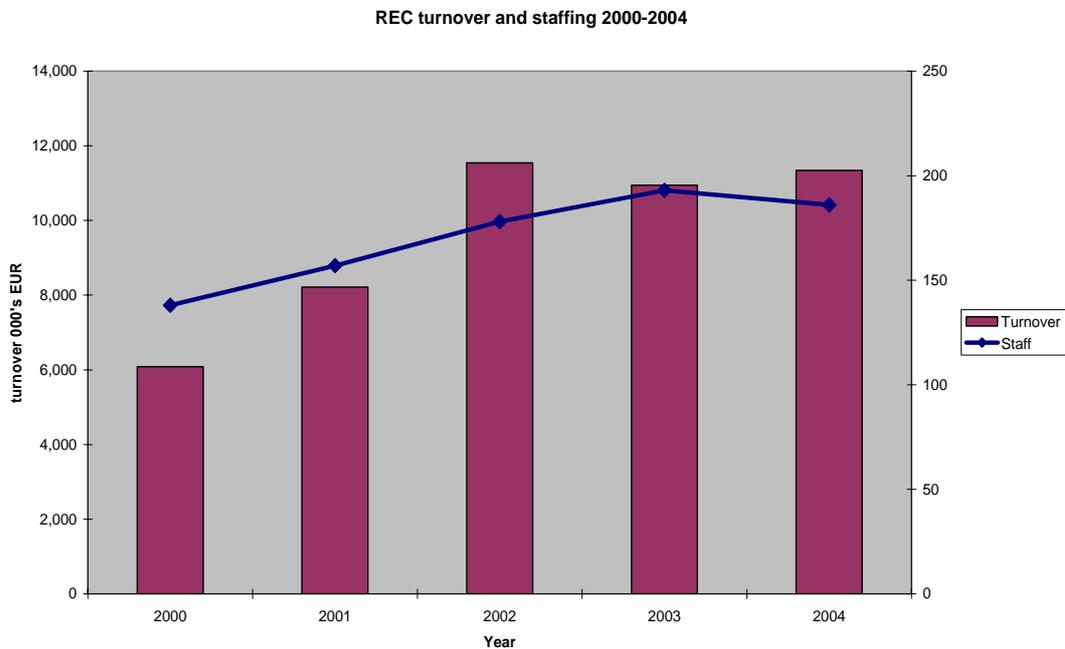
In recent years, the REC has developed high-quality, innovative, demand-driven services to stakeholders and has provided a neutral platform for dialogue, networking and cooperation among stakeholders and partners. The challenge for the next five years

⁶ Signatory to the REC Charter are: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and the US.

is to keep the achieved specialisation of the REC. In parallel, the REC seeks to permanently monitor the demand for services of the beneficiaries so that its activities continue to have the highest benefit for the European and global environment while promoting sustainable development practices

The overall budget of the REC is around 10 million Euro per year, the majority donations or project funds from donor countries, though a small percentage comes from the beneficiary countries. Virtually all funding, however, is tied to the implementation of specific projects. Thus, the REC is a project-based organization.

Currently the REC carries out some 300 projects a year with turnover of approximately EUR 12 million.



A.II REC's Structure

The REC is headquartered in Szentendre, Hungary, with an international staff of over ninety people, most of them from the CEE region. In addition to its headquarters, the Center has offices in the capitals of its beneficiary countries and several additional field offices. All Country Office employees are nationals of that country and each office has a registration in the country it is situated in. The total staff of the REC, including the headquarters and Country Offices, counts approximately 200 people.

At the top of its governance structure is an independent Board of Directors. The seven to nine members are elected by delegates of the Signatory Countries to the Charter of the REC.

The Board, assisted by a 35-member General Assembly, supervises the Executive Director who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Center.

Country Offices are managed by Country Office Directors.

The REC implements its environmental projects within eight basic organisational units, as follows

Business and Environment Programme assists in improving the environmental performance of companies in Central and Eastern Europe.

Capacity Building Programme increases the individual capacity of present and future environmental leaders and supports the development of institutions and programmes for environmental capacity building in Central and Eastern Europe.

Climate Change Programme focuses on assisting countries from Central and Eastern Europe in identifying policies and measures to comply with and respond to opportunities created by the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

Environmental Law Programme contributes to environmental protection and sustainable development through the progressive development of international and domestic environmental law and through support to legal communities in Central and Eastern European countries, including independent environmental lawyers, judges, prosecutors and others.

Environmental Policy and Local Initiatives Programme operates in four main areas: environmental assessment, environmental financing, local and regional development, biodiversity, agriculture and rural development

Information Programme provides free access to regional environmental information and raises environmental awareness, encourages networking and cooperation amongst environmental stakeholders; and assists others in improving access to environmental information.

NGO Support Programme provides support for organisational development and activities of environmental NGOs in CEE as important components of civil society, primarily through various "Support Tools": financial resources, access to information and capacity building assistance. The Programme also assists NGOs in roles pertinent to regional processes affecting the environment, such as: EU Accession, Environment for Europe and the REReP.

Public Participation Programme has as mission to support and facilitate access to information, public participation in environmental decision-making and access to

justice in environmental matters through capacity building, networking, legal and policy analysis and assistance to various stakeholders.

International secretariat unit covers the implementation of the international mandates given to the REC as secretariat of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe and the Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession (ECENA). The unit also deals with integration of environmental concerns into transport policies, including REC contribution to the Clean Fuels and Vehicles Partnership.

In addition at REC are based two funds:

Japan Special Fund established in 1993, is a mechanism through which the Government of Japan supports the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe in its efforts to solve the environmental problems of the Central and Eastern European region

Italian Trust Fund was established in 2001 as a targeted contribution of the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory to the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). Its activities contribute to the REC's mission and complement the work of other REC programmes - sharing the same ambition to strive for solutions to environmental problems.

Appendix B. The Sava River Experience

The experience that led to the development of the International Commission for the Sava River Basin is a model for the Adriatic Sea Partnership. River Basin Management and Integrated Coastal Zone Management involve nearly the same approach – they have the same goal, which is good ecological status of a particular water body, whether it be a river or a sea. The process of political development of an international governance structure for the Sava River Basin is highly relevant to the Adriatic Sea Partnership. Special focus in the Sava process was given to the fact that the main actors were the riparian countries themselves and local ownership over the process was ensured from the very beginning.

The Sava River used to be the biggest national river of the former SFRY, and it was completely within Yugoslav territory. The break-up of the SFRY and the establishment of independent countries in the basin turned the Sava River into an international river, which required new international frameworks of cooperation of the riparian states in accordance with the requirements of contemporary sustainable water resources management.

The Sava River Basin gained European importance after adoption of the EU Water Framework Directive in 2000 and designation of the Sava River Basin as a pilot area for implementation of this Directive.

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe set a solid basis for active cooperation of all stakeholders in the region and a new way of water resources management in the basin was opened. The Sava River Basin Initiative inter alia promoted political cooperation among the Sava riparian states, thus contributing to the maintenance of dialogue, establishment of common goals and joining of the efforts of the states conflicting in the past.

The Sava Initiative was launched as an initiative for establishing a body that would be responsible for coordination of activities in the Sava River Basin among the Parties to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin. The Sava River was the biggest national river of former Yugoslavia, so due to its decay, the need for re-establishing the cooperation in the basin has arisen. Therefore, the main reasons for establishment of the Sava Commission and the Secretariat, as its permanent body, have been (1) the recognition of the vital importance of trans-boundary cooperation aimed at sustainable development of the Sava River Basin; (2) the establishment of navigation, maintenance and marking of the navigable parts of the Sava River and its tributaries; (3) awareness of need to promote the sustainable water management by regulating water utilization, protection, aquatic eco-systems, water pollution protection, and hazardous water impacts; and (4) the fact that Sava River Basin is part of the Danube basin and that several international law regimes apply to water resources of the Danube Basin.

Delegations of four riparian countries of the Sava River Basin - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia - supported by the Stability

Pact for South Eastern Europe, started negotiations regarding establishment of cooperation process in the Sava basin. The official negotiations began on grounds of the Letter of Intent signed by the Parties in November 2001, and were undertaken in order to reach the objectives of the Framework Agreement, considering the great importance of Sava River for the economies and well-being of the citizens in riparian countries. The Letter of Intent presented the "political" grounds for cooperation and establishment of the International Sava River Basin Initiative. Besides its political dimension, the Letter of Intent introduced a framework for establishing the scope of cooperation among the riparian states.

Based on the expressed political willingness stated within the Letter of Intent the four riparian countries formed expert teams, which worked on the preparation of the documents necessary for the establishment of the legal and operative basis for successful cooperation in the Sava River Basin. The preparation of the legal framework for cooperation in the Sava River Basin, namely the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and the Protocol on the Navigation Regime to the Agreement, was undertaken by the Treaty Working Group. The Rehabilitation and Development Working Group was responsible for operative cooperation on the technical level aimed at the development of a Sava River Basin Action Plan for execution of the Framework Agreement. The groups had separate meetings, but the information flow was done through the joint Secretariat, where in every moment all participants had an insight into the work of both Working Groups. The Working Groups involved the collaboration of international partners such as the Stability Pact for SEE, the Office of the High Representative, US Government, OSCE, ICPDR, European Commission, Dutch Government, Hungarian Government, etc. The wide scope of the agreement necessitated a larger number of participants, who formed teams to prepare the agreement's text. Experts contributed to different aspects of sustainable water resources management. The negotiations proceeded quickly, with the final text harmonised after only nine months, a breakneck pace as international frameworks go.

Within the Rehabilitation and Development Working Group, the main interests expressed by the countries were re-establishment of the navigation regime on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries; integrated water management; economic development of the region; environmental protection. Based upon the above-specified interests, 4 sub-working groups were formed, which discussed certain issues of importance for preparation of the Action Plans. In a later phase, the Sub-working group for environmental protection was integrated into the Sub-working group for integrated water management.

The achievement of the Framework Agreement objectives required the parties to conclude protocols for regulating a number of activities. Therefore, the Protocol on the navigation regime was prepared by the Rehabilitation and Development Working Group.

The Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and the Protocol on the Navigation Regime to the Agreement were signed by the Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovenia on December 03, 2002. The scope of the Framework Agreement covered the following areas of sustainable water resources management: (1) utilisation and exploitation of water; (2) water quality and quantity protection; (3) protection from the harmful impacts of water; and (4) water eco-system protection.

The agreement also resulted in an institutional framework for international implementation, as well as a request for the parties to coordinate the activities of their national institutions. The agreement established the International Sava River Basin Commission, which contains an equal number of members of all parties to the agreement. The agreement also stipulated that the commission should make all decisions by consensus, and that the commission should officially commence its work no later than six months after the agreement enters into force.

Later in March 2003, the Meeting of the Interested Parties was held in Brussels with participation of countries' representatives and different relevant national and international stakeholders. At that moment the process of ratification had started and the Seat of the Sava Commission was still under process of negotiations. The Meeting of the Interested Parties was of great importance due to fact that Parties agreed to establish the Interim Commission for Sava River Basin in order to perform preparations for the establishment of the permanent Sava Commission and to fill-in the gap until its set-up and beginning of work. In July 2003, during one of its sessions, the Interim Sava Commission adopted the Indicative Work Plan as basic guideline for realization of the Framework Agreement objectives. Besides this, the Strategic Working Group was established for follow-up of realization of the Action Plan. In order to reach better results and set-up sound grounds for the work of the permanent Sava Commission there was a Meeting held in December 2003, which resulted into formation of two strategic working groups: Strategic Group for sustainable water management and Strategic Group for navigation.

The Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin entered into force on December 29, 2004. The Sava Commission was formally established in June 2005. In January 2006 the Secretariat of the Sava Commission took up its offices as a professional body aimed to serve the Commission in order to implement the Sava Agreement. Through establishment of the Secretariat, the parties have undertaken the functions and duties related to sustainable development of the Sava Region and management of its water resources.

The REC played a significant role in the Sava initiative in several areas. It provided secretariat support to the process of negotiating the framework agreement, and was the Interim Secretariat of the Sava initiative prior to the establishment of the Permanent Commission in 2005 and its taking up work in January 2006. The REC also provided legal support to the establishment of the Commission by drafting the constituent

documents for its operation, including seat agreement, rules of procedure, staff regulations, and financial rules; providing legal opinions on various matters; and drafting four protocols to the framework agreement. Finally, the REC developed various mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in the Sava process, supported specific stakeholder involvement, and drafted documents for potential adoption by the Sava Commission, including a stakeholder engagement strategy.