



The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) Regional Coordination Meeting for South Eastern Europe

June 28–30, 2016
Tirana, Albania

Joint Statement

The ENVSEC Regional Coordination Meeting for South Eastern Europe was co-organised by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), which hosts the ENVSEC Regional Desk Office for South Eastern Europe, and the Ministry of Environment of Albania, in cooperation with the ENVSEC partner organisations OSCE, UNDP, UNECE and UNEP.

The regional coordination meeting served as a launching pad for ENVSEC in South Eastern Europe (SEE) in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It facilitated knowledge sharing regarding the priority areas of the ENVSEC work programme; provided an opportunity for plenary and group discussions about global and regional strategies, present achievements, lessons learned and challenges; and identified synergies and future short- and long-term objectives in SEE.

Representatives of SEE governments; ENVSEC National Focal Points from the Ministry of Environment of Albania, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of Kosovo*, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina; representatives of diplomatic missions in Tirana, the EU and the governments of Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, the United States of America; and other ENVSEC resource partners, Aarhus Centres and other stakeholders, issued the following statement:

We, the participants at the ENVSEC Regional Coordination Meeting for South Eastern Europe,

Being concerned by grave regional environmental challenges such as industrial pollution, especially from the mining sector, urban pollution, agriculture, the lack of water technology and infrastructure, and the lack of instruments and capacities to manage shared natural resources such as biodiversity and water; and *being aware of* the emerging national and regional environment and security challenges resulting from anthropogenic and natural circumstances;

Being determined to use and support to an even greater degree the EU integration process to sustain political will and results;

Highlighting the outcome document of the 2015 UN Summit on Sustainable Development, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Acknowledging the need to jointly reinforce strategic priorities for ENVSEC in the region;

Stressing the importance of closely involving ENVSEC's resource partners in a joint programmatic outlook for 2017–2020 for regional development;

Understanding that ownership of environment and security projects by national stakeholders, as well as their integration into national development frameworks and regional cooperation planning, are essential;

Being determined to cooperate to increase collective and individual capacities and resilience to environment and security threats through prevention and regional dialogue, while engaging relevant stakeholders;

Recognising the need to further support the implementation of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and other relevant MEAs;

Acknowledging the key role played by the ENVSEC National Focal Points in SEE, the contribution made by the Aarhus Centres and the achievements of ENVSEC to date under the programme "Transforming environmental and security risks into cooperation in the SEE region";

Appreciating the vital role of the governments of Austria, Finland and Switzerland and their support to ENVSEC in SEE; and

Expressing gratitude to the Ministry of Environment of Albania for co-organising and hosting this meeting;

Agree as follows:

1. The priority areas for further programme development by ENVSEC in the 2017–2020 work programme are identified as follows:

- **Enhancement of capacities and support for bilateral and regional dialogue and cooperation on environment and security risks**
- **Management and reduction of transboundary risks from hazardous activities**
 - Reinforce general preparedness to tackle industrial and mining risks and support interventions.
 - Strengthen the administrative capacities of environmental authorities at central and local level.
 - Support the implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, the IPPC Directive and the Seveso II Directive.
 - Showcase the benefits of the remediation of industrial and mining hot spots.
 - Provide guidance on the further implementation of the UN Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and share best practices and lessons learned.

- **Management of shared natural resources**
 - Increase cross-border and transboundary activities and cooperation at bilateral and regional level in the fields of water management, protected areas management, illegal logging, forest fires and other environmental challenges.
 - Strengthen compliance with and the enforcement of the EU's nature protection and environmental protection legislation.
 - Increase national and regional efforts in combating environmental crimes by advancing existing knowledge, gathering information, and assessing the threats, risks and impacts of environmental crimes in the SEE through a coordinated approach.

 - **Strengthening regional cooperation in environmental governance through participatory and informed decision-making and implementation processes, and active engagement of the Aarhus Centres**
 - Raise public awareness and involve civil society, in particular through and with the SEE Aarhus Centres Network.
 - Expand assistance and capacity-building support to grassroots organisations.
 - Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement, and strengthen national, regional and cross-regional cooperation and partnerships.
 - Strengthen Aarhus Centers' role in the area of environment and security.
 - Support the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its protocols, and particularly its third pillar on access to justice.
 - Facilitate institutional correspondence between neighbouring countries.

 - **Adaptation to the impacts of climate change to reduce security risks in SEE**
 - Build capacities for quantitative and qualitative vulnerability and adaptation assessments.
 - Mainstream climate change adaptation, increase resilience and raise awareness among stakeholders and the general population.
 - Support long-term country planning on reducing biodiversity loss induced by the impacts of climate change through regional cooperation and dialogue.
 - Support climate diplomacy and commitments under the Paris Agreement.
 - Assist governments and civil society at local and national level to cooperate in developing and strengthening good governance, a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in SEE.
 - Expand the delivery of education on sustainability across the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, and facilitate its integration into national curricula as a mandatory subject.
2. The ENVSEC partner organisations are encouraged to develop, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the ENVSEC work programme for 2017–2020, based on the above priorities.
 3. The international community is invited to consider these priorities in their development assistance programmes and support the process of identifying and mobilising resources for implementing the ENVSEC work programme for 2017–2020.



4. Synergies with regional initiatives and partners should be further strengthened to support political instruments and processes such as the South East Europe 2020 Strategy of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).