The Themis Network is a beneficiary-driven regional cooperation network in South Eastern Europe (SEE) and the Republic of Moldova (which joined in Phase 2), connecting authorities responsible for the environment and justice sectors. Phase 1 of the project, which ran from 2012 to 2014, created a community of like-minded state officials from SEE who were eager for change and who are now working together across borders to improve environmental governance through the rule of law and mutual understanding.
OBJECTIVES

Given the significant vulnerability of the SEE region to the impacts of climate change, emissions of pollutants and biodiversity loss, comprehensive action is needed in order to adapt to environmental threats, including profit-seeking crimes, in the interests of creating a healthier environment and a climate-resilient society and economy. The Themis Network aims to strengthen regional cooperation in SEE through environmental law enforcement mechanisms targeting the environment and justice sectors, in line with the EU accession process. The second project phase also included Moldova, which benefited from the transfer of knowledge and experience from the SEE region, thus strengthening the EU association process.

ACTIVITIES

The Themis Network contributes to the better implementation and enforcement of the EU environmental acquis and to the improvement of inter-institutional and inter-governmental cooperation (between the judiciary, prosecutors’ offices, police, ministries, universities, local governments, NGOs and other regional/international networks) on environmental and other governance issues. The benefits of cooperation transcend the restricted field of environmental crimes, creating the added value of good governance in the region.

Phase 1 of the project resulted in:
- enhanced capacity in the region for nature protection, forest management and combating environmental crime via training activities, including eight regional training events, six national training events, and one technical assistance workshop;
- new and reinforced links among national stakeholders;
- improved regional understanding and cross-border cooperation;
- strengthened international partnerships;
- exchanges of experience with EU countries (mainly Austria, Croatia and Hungary); and
- two publications.

Activities during the second phase of the project were divided into three clusters: management of the Themis Secretariat and organisation of Executive Committee meetings; capacity building in the fields of natural resources protection, forestry and the combating of environmental crimes via on-the-job training and joint law enforcement activities; and the production of publications and practical tools to support national and international institutional networking.

* 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.