

ENVSEC Programme in South Eastern Europe



In South Eastern Europe, the Initiative focuses on two main environment security aspects: improving regional cooperation for risk management from pollution hotspots as well as the management of shared natural resources extending across borders.

ENVSEC South East European consultations in 2004, in Skopje, the FYR of Macedonia, endorsed the priorities of ENVSEC for the region:

- Managing and reducing trans-boundary risks of hazardous activities;
- Management of trans-boundary natural resources;
- Cross-cutting issues (awareness, information, education, etc.)

In 2008, the Initiative started a process on National Consultations for country level demonstration and identification of ENVSEC priorities. Consultations were held in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and will be organized in Albania and Croatia by the end of the year.

Managing and reducing trans-boundary risks of hazardous activities

Poorly operated or abandoned mining sites have already caused severe pollution in the Balkans. Some, like cyanide, heavy metals spills and various other releases into watercourses, are a principal vector of transboundary accidental pollution. Such incidents create additional political tensions while chronic and acute pollution associated with accidents had serious impacts on human health in the past and pose considerable risks in the future. All these problems create - besides their direct environmental impacts - a negative atmosphere for economic investments.

Mining hotspots with potential transboundary risks were highlighted in an ENVSEC assessment based on which, and the “Mining for Closure” concept, ENVSEC is implementing several demonstration projects for rehabilitating mining legacies and building local capacities. Following assessments and study visits recommendations, in 2008 a joint mission to three Northern Albanian Mining sites was accomplished.

Management of trans-boundary natural resources

One of the most beautiful and untouched areas of wilderness in Europe are the mountain ranges on the borders of the South East European countries. Due to unsustainable economic activities in the fields of agriculture, forest management, illegal logging, hunting, husbandry and collection of medicinal plants, as well as uncontrolled construction, biodiversity loss was recognized as posing a security risk to the South East Europe. On the other hand, good technical cooperation in the field of natural resources management would contribute to stability and sustainable development of the region.

Activities include the support to transboundary cooperation in mountain areas, such as the scenic Prokletije/Bjeshket e Nemuna and Shara/Sharr Mountains or work on prevention on transboundary environmental conflicts on Timok river. Longer term objectives of ENVSEC in South Eastern Europe are creating a convention on the conservation and sustainable development of the Balkans mountainous areas to act as a common platform for regional cooperation

Cross-cutting issues (awareness, information, education, etc.)

The activities of this cluster focus on the third pillar of the Aarhus Convention – Access to Justice and Public Environmental Information Centres and enhancing implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in general, as well as ensuring public participation in decision making and fostering transboundary environmental governance in SEE.