



***Regional Roundtable***  
***“Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus***  
***in Southeastern Europe”***

***Zagreb, Croatia***  
***9-10 December 2014***

**Information Note**

*Organized by:*  
**Regional Cooperation Council**  
**Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean**  
**Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe**

In cooperation with:  
**German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety**  
**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**  
**Global Environment Facility IW:LEARN**

In the framework of:  
**South East Europe 2020 Strategy**  
**Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process**  
**UNECE Water Convention**  
**Mediterranean Component of the European Union Water Initiative**  
**Environment and Security Initiative, SEE Region**



## Background

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### ***The South East Europe 2020 Strategy***

The “The South East Europe 2020 (SEE 2020) Strategy – Jobs and Prosperity in European Perspective” is a regional growth strategy developed under the coordination of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat, upon the request of the governments of the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECF) as well as the European Commission.

The main goal of the SEE 2020 Strategy is to help boost competitiveness and job creation, and to underscore the European perspective of the region’s future. The success of the Strategy depends on achieving high and sustained economic growth as well as making progress in catching up with the EU. In this respect, by 2020, the region plans on achieving 11 ambitious headline targets under the 5 main growth pillars of the Strategy: integrated, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, underpinned by good governance.

Following the adoption of the SEE 2020 Strategy by the Governments, the ministers in charge of the economy of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro and Serbia have endorsed the Strategy in Sarajevo in November 2013, entrusting the RCC with a role of coordinating and monitoring its implementation. In this regard, the RCC has initiated activities for the development of regional action plans in all of the policy dimensions of SEE 2020 to convert the recommendations and measures contained therein into actionable items.

#### *Dimension “Environment”*

Environment is one of the four dimensions of the Sustainable Growth Pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy and measures progress towards environmental sustainability, including resource efficiency and climate change adaptation. Its main tasks are to develop and put in place measures: (i) to increase volume of annual forestation; (ii) for advancing the Water, Energy and Food nexus approach at national and trans-boundary levels and investigate opportunities of launching a political process under the RCC for the enhancement of cooperation in the SEE in the field of Transboundary Water Resources Management (TWRM); (iii) to expand the level of SEE’s understanding of the enabling environment for private sector participation in financing water infrastructure and identify key bottlenecks and prospects in the process; (iv) to develop and put in place measures necessary for commencement of the Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement implementation; (v) to increase adaptive capacity through awareness raising and education on climate change adaptation and to develop and put in place measures to increase the share of irrigated agriculture land.

Each of the Policy Dimensions contained in the SEE 2020 Strategy has a Regional Dimension Coordinator (RDC). The Environment Dimension is being coordinated by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) in cooperation with the Global Water Partnership–Mediterranean (GWP-Med), and the Standing Working Group (SWG) on Regional Rural Development.

Further to the Regional Action Plan prepared by the coordinators of the dimension environment and in cooperation with the RCC, the dimension coordinators are working on the development and implementation of a Regional Programme.

### ***The Nexus approach***

The Water-Energy-Food Nexus (Nexus) approach was introduced in the global natural resources management agenda to facilitate the enhancement of water, energy and food security, while preserving ecosystems and their functions, including under conditions of climate variability and change, by increasing efficiency and productivity of resources, reducing trade-offs, shifting towards

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

more sustainable consumption patterns and improving demand management, building synergies and improving governance across sectors.

The Nexus Conference, November 2011, in Bonn, organized by the German government, made a boost in introducing the agenda at the international context, just before the Rio Summit 2012.

With some differences from previous integrated approaches, the Nexus approach starts from a balanced cross-sectoral perspective considering the biophysical, economic and institutional dimensions of natural resource management, analyzing the 'flow' of these resources through different sectors, and detects entry points for reducing inefficiencies and exploiting synergies between sectors. It is often that the Nexus addresses only parts of the Water-Energy-Food 'triangle'; for example, it can be Water-Energy, Water-Food, Energy-Food, as well as their linkages with Environment, Climate, Land, Waste, etc. In a nutshell, the Nexus approach targets to 'integrate the integrated' towards better cross-sectoral policy and decision making.

Among others, the Nexus approach is seen as a way to enhance Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) assisting, for example, in the water sector policies, strategies and actions to harmonize with these of water-using sectors. Resulting from a long term investment on building background and methodology that are widely recognized and reflected in policies, strategies and applications, IWRM is widely accepted and understood being, in a way, 'institutionalized'. However, IWRM implementation remains challenging while countries strive with even greater natural, social and financial issues. In all cases, it is considered that IWRM and the Nexus approaches are fully complementary.

Currently, there is a Nexus 'lead' by the water community that should, however, equally become owned by the energy and food sectors, particularly since the latter sectors hold much stronger roles in the development agenda.

## **The Regional Roundtable on “Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus in Southeastern Europe (SEE)”, 9-10 December 2014 - Zagreb, Croatia**

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The Regional Roundtable on “Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus in SEE” is organized and supported by the RCC, GWP-Med and REC in cooperation with the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), GEF IW:LEARN and UNECE. Additional financial support for the meeting is provided within the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) with funds by the Austrian Development Agency, the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The Roundtable forms integral part of the Regional Programme prepared by REC, GWP-Med and SWG under the auspices of the RCC to operationalize the implementation of the dimension Environment of the SEE 2020 Strategy hence, it contributes in the achievement of the SEE 2020 Strategy objectives. The Roundtable is organized also in the framework of the Petersberg Phase II/Athens Declaration Process, the UNECE Water Convention and MED EUWI.

It is the first step in a process to introduce and catalyze action for the Water, Food, Energy and Ecosystems Nexus approach as means to enhance integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and assist towards climate change adaptation.

The Roundtable will:

- a. Discuss the level of integration of water, land, energy and environmental management and the level of mainstreaming of interrelated climate change considerations in the SEE at national level.
- b. Assist in enhancing capacities of institutions and stakeholders regarding the Nexus approach, including its climate change dimensions, through knowledge exchange and cross-fertilization among participating stakeholders, policy processes, initiatives, projects etc.
- c. Introduce tools for improved transboundary water resources management (TWRM) making use of the Nexus approach and assist in enhancing related capacities of institutions and TWRM stakeholders.
- d. Discuss the Regional Programme under the dimension “Environment”.

Representatives of Ministries from South East Europe responsible for Water, Food, Energy and Environment as well as representatives of other stakeholders in these sectors such as academia, NGOs, private sector, regional and international organizations are invited to participate.

## **The supporting processes (additionally to SEE 2020 Strategy)**

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### ***The 'Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process'***

#### ***Sustaining a Regional Dialogue on Transboundary Water Resources Management (TWRM) in the Southeastern Europe (SEE) since 2005***

The 'Petersberg Process' was initiated in 1998 and its on-going Phase II aims to provide support for translating into action the current developments and opportunities for future cooperation on transboundary river, lake and groundwater management in the Southeastern Europe (SEE). It is supported by the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the World Bank.

The 'Athens Declaration' Process concerning *Shared Water, Shared Future and Shared Knowledge* was launched in 2003 at the Vouliagmeni International Conference (as part of the activities of the Greek Presidency of the European Union) with the primary aim to assist development of Integrated Water Resources Management Plans and related actions in SEE; it is jointly supported by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Bank.

The 'Petersberg Phase II Process' works in synergy since 2005 with the 'Athens Declaration Process' under the joint Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process (Process) to facilitate the enhancement of cooperation in transboundary basins in the SEE region.

The Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) provides administrative support and is the technical facilitator of related activities under the Process.

The Process is strategically linked to the Global Environment Facility International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resources Network (IW:LEARN) on capacity building and sharing of experiences.

#### ***The GEF IW:LEARN***

The GEF supported IW:LEARN programme (2005 - ) represents a cooperative effort of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP), with the involvement of all GEF Agencies.

The IW:LEARN activities in Southeastern Europe aim to demonstrate innovative and feasible approaches to transboundary water resources management, by deepening multi-stakeholder dialogue and experience-sharing.

#### ***Activities since 2005***

Since 2005 a variety of activities including regional roundtables, multi-stakeholders dialogues, targeted capacity building workshops and study visits, preparation of assessments, surveys and policy documents (on issues such as shared lakes basin management; multipurpose water management; shared groundwater management; climate change; stakeholders involvement; water-energy nexus etc.), have been implemented aiming at enhancing cooperation among SEE countries and stakeholders for the management of transboundary water resources. More than 150 stakeholder organizations, governments and other entities have been engaged in these activities.

Overall, the Process has been catalytic in facilitating coordination among key international and national players in the areas of focus and has attracted the interest of beneficiary countries and donors.

### ***UNECE Water Convention***

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. Almost all countries sharing transboundary waters in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are Parties to the Convention.

The Water Convention strengthens transboundary water cooperation and measures for the ecologically-sound management and protection of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Convention fosters the implementation of integrated water resources management, in particular the basin approach. The Convention's implementation contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments on water, environment and sustainable development.

The Water Convention requires Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management. Parties bordering the same transboundary waters have to cooperate by entering into specific agreements and establishing joint bodies. As a framework agreement, the Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific basins or aquifers; instead, it fosters their establishment and implementation, as well as further development. In 2003, the Water Convention was amended to allow accession by countries outside the UNECE region. The amendment entered into force on 6 February 2013, turning the Water Convention into a global legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. It is expected that countries outside the UNECE region will be able to join the Convention as of early 2014.

### ***Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative***

The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) aims to assist developing countries to meet the water-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Johannesburg (WSSD) Targets. Launched in 2003, it constitutes an integral part and one of the four geographic components of the overall EUWI. A MED EUWI post-2015 agenda is in the making.

MED EUWI represents a strategic partnership among stakeholders (national, regional and international) in the Mediterranean region. It seeks to make significant progress in poverty eradication and health and the enhancement of sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development in the developing countries of the Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe. Through its work, MED EUWI aspires to provide a catalyst for peace and security in a region that is particularly vulnerable and susceptible not only to environmental, but also to political distress.

MED EUWI has been led by the Government of Greece (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), since its launching in 2003, providing political, financial and technical support to the MED EUWI activities. The MED EUWI Secretariat, within the GWP-Med Secretariat, provides technical support and day-to-day running.

For more information, please visit: [www.gwpmed.org](http://www.gwpmed.org)

## ***The organizers***

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### ***The Regional Cooperation Council***

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was officially launched at the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) in Sofia, on 27 February 2008, as the successor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Through a regionally owned and led framework, the RCC focuses on promotion and enhancement of regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE) and supports European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. The RCC provides operational capacities to and works under the political guidance of the SEEC.

In line with its Statute and guided by the principles of all-inclusiveness, the main tasks of the RCC are to represent the region, assist the SEEC, monitor regional activities, exert leadership in regional cooperation, provide a regional perspective in donor assistance and support increased involvement of civil society in regional activities. The RCC functions as a focal point for regional cooperation in SEE and its key role is to generate and coordinate developmental projects of a wider, regional character, to the benefit of each individual participant, and create an appropriate political climate susceptible to their implementation.

### ***Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean***

GWP-Med, established in 2002, is the Mediterranean partnership of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). Aiming for a water-secured Mediterranean, GWP-Med promotes action, demo application and knowledge exchange on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and sustainable use of water resources in the region.

GWP-Med facilitates a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together 10 major regional networks of different water disciplines (government, river basins, local authorities, professionals, NGOs, research institutes, irrigators, etc) and over 80 other institutions and organisations from non-EU countries and EU countries.

Working at regional, national, local and transboundary level, GWP-Med provides technical support to policy making; facilitates dialogue on water security and IWRM issues; and, implements demonstration actions. Themes addressed include a range of aspects of governance for IWRM; water financing including private sector participation; adaptation to climate vulnerability and change; river basin/transboundary water management; joint IWRM/Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) planning; non-conventional water resources management including at urban level; water demand management; water-food-energy-environment nexus; integrated groundwater management; stakeholders participation; education; capacity building; and, networking of targeted groups including decision makers, parliamentarians and the media. Furthermore, GWP-Med addresses gender, equity, youth and poverty as cross-cutting issues.

The GWP-Med Secretariat extends its human resources in Athens, Beirut and Tunis. For more information, please visit: [www.gwpmed.org](http://www.gwpmed.org)

### ***Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe***

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is an international organisation with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues. The REC fulfils this mission by promoting cooperation among governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision making.

Established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary today, the REC is legally based on a charter with over 30 signatories and operates via office network in 17 countries.<sup>2</sup> The REC actively participates in key global, regional and local processes and contributes to environmental and sustainability solutions within and beyond its country office network, transferring transitional knowledge and experience to countries and regions.

The REC carries out project activities in specialized Topic Areas<sup>3</sup>, that make use of the expertise available at all organisational levels of the REC (REC HQ and COs). The REC's topic area system provides a flexible framework for putting the knowledge and skills of our international organisation into practice across borders and disciplines. Our aim is to take a proactive approach in serving our regions and the beneficiary and donor communities.

REC is one of the six partner organisations of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)-partnership of OSCE, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP and NATO as an associated partner. Initiative provides an integrated response to environment and security challenges. By hosting the ENVSEC Regional Desk Office for South-Eastern Europe REC contributes to the transformation of environment and security risks into regional cooperation, coordinates activities of the ENVSEC Initiative in the region and technical assistance and expertise to various ENVSEC projects in line with identified priorities of beneficiary and donor countries. Main ones are on: combating illegal logging; facilitation of transboundary water management; contribution to climate change adaptation in SEE; support and capacity building regarding Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol.

More on REC and ENVSEC Initiative you can find on [www.rec.org](http://www.rec.org) and [www.envsec.org](http://www.envsec.org)

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<sup>2</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey. The Head Office is located in Szentendre, Hungary.

<sup>3</sup> Biodiversity; Climate Change and Clean Energy; Educational Tools; Environmental Financing; Environmental Management; Health and Environment; Law Development, Enforcement and Compliance; Local Governance; Participatory Governance; Smart Cities and Mobility; Sustainable Development Academy; Water Management