

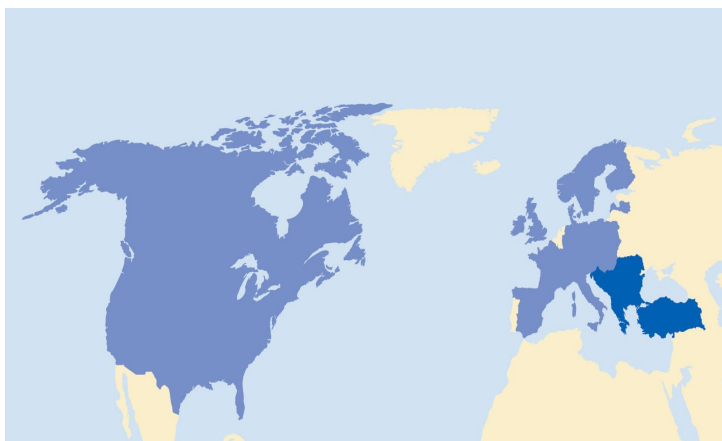
MB IPA Coordination Meeting
Brussels, 26 -27 April 2012

Update on activities of the Regional Cooperation Council

Jelica Minić
Deputy Secretary General of the RCC

Evolving role of the Regional Cooperation Council

- As a **regionally owned organisation** the RCC represents the region, supports and initiates regional cooperation - 13 SEE beneficiaries
- The RCC operates **under the political umbrella of the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECp)**. Its objectives, working methods and priority areas for action are defined by the Statute and other documents adopted at Annual Meetings and endorsed by SEECp Summits.
- As the **main focal point for regional cooperation**, the RCC:
 - a. has a key role in supporting economic and social development and related reforms;
 - b. promotes the region's European and Euro-Atlantic integration of which regional cooperation is an essential part;
 - c. links the region with donor community in areas with a regional dimension



Main achievements of the RCC Secretariat in 2011 - horizontal activities

Assist SEECF

- contribution to different activities in the SEECF framework, in particular in preparing a number of sectorial meetings organized or to be organized by the SEECF C-i-Os and related to the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013.
- consultations held with the high-level representatives of the SEECF

Monitored and streamlined regional activities

- targeted informing
- periodical stock taking (RCC Annual Reports, Survey of RI&TFs, March 2011)
- jointly planned and performed different activities
- managing, monitoring and/or steering role in different bodies or projects of other regional initiatives (CEFTA, eSEE, CeGD, SEETO, RENA, REC, ICAM/RBM, PPII/ADP, UNECE CSE, ISRBC, NALAS, RAI, SELEC, SEEPAG, MARRI, SEPICA, SEDM, SEEC – Forum for Western Balkans Defense Cooperation, US-Adriatic Charter (A5), SEESAC, DPPI, GTF, SEECCEL, RESPA, ERI SEE, RCC TF CS, RCC TF BHC, CPF, RSPC etc.)
- regular bilateral meetings and consultations with a number of well-established RI&TFs, or emerging partners of the RCC SEE Public Private Partnership Network, Regional Network of Investment Promotion Agencies etc.)

The diagram illustrates a complex network of international organizations and forums. The nodes are represented by red dots, and the connections are shown as lines. The network is organized into three main clusters:

- Top Cluster (Forums and Organizations):** Includes RACVIAC, Defense Policy Directors Forum, SEENSA, SEEMIC, SEECIC, SEEI/SEEGROUP (NATO), SEIC, and Balkan Forum of Chiefs of GS.
- Middle Cluster (International Organizations):** Includes WPON, MARRI, RAI, SECI/SELEC, SEPICA, PCC SEE, SEEPAG, WB Prosecutors Network, TREPTAWER Initiative, RAI Integrity Expert Network, SEELS, Risk Analysis Network, ILECU, CEI, Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, Salzburg Forum, Brdo process, EU Western Balkans Ministerial, SEECP, and DPPI.
- Bottom Cluster (Specialized Networks):** Includes RCC, SEEDM, US-Adriatic Charter, SEESAC, and SEEC.

The diagram shows a dense web of connections between these entities, with many lines radiating from a central point on the left, indicating a high degree of interconnectedness.

Iztok Prezelj, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana

Exert strategic leadership in regional cooperation

- development of regional platforms and/or strategies in all priority areas such as: *SEEIC Work Programme, Social Agenda for the Western Balkans 2020, Regional Strategic Document and the Action Plan 2011-2013* in Justice and Home Affairs, SEE Military Intelligence Chiefs Forum (SEEMIC), and Forum of the Heads of SEE National Security Authorities (SEENSA), *Regional Strategy for Research and Development for Innovation for the Western Balkans etc.*
- support in elaborating the proposal on the need to launch regional energy strategy and its forthcoming completion, and others

Provide a regional perspective in donor assistance

- improved communication on regional cooperation activities in the triangle RCC Secretariat and other regional initiatives, NIPAC offices and DG Enlargement
- assisted/co-chaired the MB IPA Strategy Working Groups, Western Balkans Investment Framework Steering Committee Meetings, as well as International Financial Institutions (IFI) Advisory Group meetings
- established or intensified contacts with other DGs in the EC (DG REGIO, DG MOVE, DG International Cooperation, DG Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, DG Research, Innovation and Science, DG Education and Culture, etc), as well as with the specialised units within the External Action Service, for the security cooperation area
- consultations were also held with other donors interested in regional projects (ADA, SIDA, FES, HBS, GIZ, UNDP, USAID, OSCE, World Bank, SDC, BTB etc.)

Support increased involvement of civil society in regional activities

- helping to launch (European Association of Public Service Media in South East Europe, Network of National Councils of the European Movement in SEE, ECO Social Entrepreneurs Network in SEE) and consolidate cooperation with CSO networks
- permanent dialogue and/or common activities were in place with different CSO stakeholders from the region such as TACSO team, ICDT, BFPE, ICPE, ECPD, IENE, BCSDN etc.
- cooperation with think tanks from the region and beyond (LSE Network of SEE researchers, universities and research institutes).

Communication activities

- the RCC Secretariat interacted with the media on a regular basis to increase awareness of RCC activities and generate public interest
- periodically presents the RCC's activities to the COWEB
- organized a Briefing for the diplomatic representatives of the SEECP member-countries in Brussels, as well as briefing for the diplomatic community in Sarajevo presenting the results of implementation of the organization's Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013, as well as the results of the Third RCC Annual meeting
- represents the region at different regional and international fora
- 2,931 articles, interviews and statements on the RCC have been published in South East European and international media since the beginning of operations of the RCC Secretariat and 771,236 hits, 235,092 page views and 19,616 visits of the website were registered
- 17 issues of RCC Newsletter were published and circulated to a wide audience. They focused on the RCC priority areas, Annual Meetings and general political context of the regional cooperation in the SEE

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RCC SECRETARIAT IN 2011 – per Priority Areas

1. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Transfer of the **South East Europe Investment Committee** from the OECD to the RCC Secretariat and start of the operational activities in April 2012.
- Launching a structured dialogue on the **Western Balkans Social Agenda 2020** with the aim of developing a regional response to the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- Launching the project “**Women Entrepreneurship – a job creation engine for SEE**” for which the RCC Secretariat was awarded a three year contract with Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

2. ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- In the framework of the **Sustainable Energy Development Regional Initiative** (SEDRI), jointly launched by the Central European Initiative and RCC Secretariat, the SEDRI Task Force was established and the initial project inventory was prepared.
- Participated in the preparation of final draft project proposal **Expanding air transport links within the region of SEE**
- Initiative for regional strategic action regarding **railway transport and infrastructure development**
- Support to the establishment of **Road Safety Training Centre**
- Initiated mapping of the activities in the area of **Climate Change Adaption** in the SEE.

3. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

- **2011 – 2013 Regional Strategic Document (RSD) and the Action Plan for its implementation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs** endorsed by the SEECP Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs.
- Coordinated the Steering Group for the implementation of the Regional Strategic Document which designed the **Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (M&EM)** to measure the progress and the results of the regional cooperation in justice and home affairs to be functional as of January 2012.
- Established, in cooperation with the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, the **Integrity Experts Network-IEN** as a SEE inter-governmental structure of the national agencies specialized in public officials' assets declaration and incompatibilities regime.
- Established, in cooperation with SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office and MARRI, the **Forum of the Heads of Consular Departments from SEECP Countries**.

4. SECURITY COOPERATION

- Initiated, with full support of the EU Military Intelligence Directorate, a regional cooperation mechanism among the **Chiefs of Military Intelligence - SEEMIC** (three meetings already held).
- Initiated regional cooperation of the **Heads of the South East European National Security Authorities-SEENSA** (the first meeting has been held in Sofia).
- Initiated regional cooperation of the **South East European Counter-Intelligence Chiefs Forum -SEECIC** (preparation for holding the first meeting have been finalised and a draft concept agreed upon).

5. BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL AND PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

- The project **Building Capacity for Structural Reform in Higher Education of Western Balkan Countries (STREW)** has been developed under the auspices of the RCC Secretariat, by the experts from the region and financed by TEMPUS, starting at the end of 2011.
- The project on the **Regional Strategy for Research and Development for Innovation for the Western Balkans (RSRDI)** has been developed under the auspices of the RCC Secretariat, by the experts from the region and EC. The project will be financed from MB IPA and its implementation is expected to start in November 2011.
- Establishment of the **RCC Task Force on Culture and Society** (in the framework of the transition of the Ljubljana Process to RCC), opening of RCC TF Secretariat in Cetinje, Montenegro, appointment of the TFCS Chair and Co-Chair and adoption of its Action Plan.
- Active involvement in development and formulation of the project on the **Parliamentary Cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey - Support to the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum**. The project is expected to start in the second part of 2012 and will be financed from MB IPA.

6. MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- Initiated the establishment of the **European Association of Public Service Media in SEE (EAPSSEE)**
- Facilitated the signing of **the Protocol on Regional Cooperation in Education and Training** among 12 members of the EAPSSEE.

Background

Draft Self-assessment Report on the implementation of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013 (SWP) for the period January–December 2011, presented at the RCC Board Meeting in March 2012. Report will be presented at the Fourth RCC Annual Meeting. Serve as a basis for discussions on the RCC role beyond 2013.

Main beneficiaries of this Report are RCC members from SEE, including SEECP as its political umbrella; EC (primarily DG Enlargement as the main partner and source of political and financial support); other bilateral donors and supporting international organisations; RI&TFs as RCC's partners and stakeholders of regional cooperation; and business and CSO networks from the region as emerging contributors to and promoters of the RCC activities.

Self-assessment process of the SWP implementation aims to:

- **Evaluate the results achieved**
- **Measure their impact**
- **Consider extent of their compliance with the established objectives.**
- **Estimate attitude of main beneficiaries, EC, regional and international partners and donors.**

Self-evaluation mechanism comprises of several measurable indicators:

- Tabular presentation of objectives, activities and achieved results according to the template of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013.
- Background paper with detailed contributions of all RCC Secretariat's units.
- List of events organized or co-organized by the RCC as part of wider regional dynamics.
- List of projects and programmes launched or supported by the RCC with financial effect.
- Survey of Regional Initiatives and Task Forces in South East Europe – Summary Findings, assessment of the main regional partners (March 2011).
- Estimation of its contribution to the improvement of general political climate in South East Europe (SEECF and other political documents).
- Estimations of the donor community – annual EC Enlargement Strategy Reports, programmes and projects approved for financing.
- Evidence of wider consultative process on RCC activities.
- Available publications, surveys and reviews by and about RCC.
- Interviews and other survey methods.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

- **Increased political support**
- **Fulfilment of specific objectives**
- **Communication strategy**
- **Reorganisation of the Secretariat**

- 22 distinct objectives in six main priority areas are to be met by the end of 2013
- 16 have been accomplished between 30% and 70% in 2011, measured against performance and timing planned in the Work Programme 2011-2013. One objective is fully accomplished, one has been dropped due to the lack of interest by SEE countries. Remaining 4 objectives have been accomplished between 10% and 25%
- the overall trend of implementation is showing progress ahead of schedule
- RCC Secretariat has organized or co-organised 58 regional events during 2011 that were attended by approximately 4,000 participants - almost 1/5 of 302 regional events on SEE. This dynamics also made Sarajevo a hub of regional cooperation with 64 regional events taking place in this town in 2011

ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- **Indicators**
- **SWP helping regional cooperation**
- **Importance of institutional consultations**
- **Participation**
- **Alignment with the EU**
- **Expectations**
- **More inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach**
- **Coherence**
- **Focus**
- **Main obstacles**
- **Communication**
- **Expertise**
- **Additional resources needed**
- **RCC administrative and organizational capacity**
- **Internal operational coordination**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Political commitment**
- **Consolidation of cooperation mechanisms**
- **Stronger alignment with enlargement agenda**
- **Longer-term view**
- **Involvement of national policy makers**
- **Improving management mechanisms**
- **Stronger platform for reaching out stakeholders**

RCC BEYOND 2013

- **Developing a new pattern of work**
- **Vision building process**
- **From regional ownership to regional responsibility**
- **Upgraded relationship with SEECF**
- **Stronger alignment with enlargement agenda**
- **Keeping on fundamental principles of regional cooperation**

Table 1. SEE Regional Cooperation Events per Area

Cooperation Area	Organized/ co-organised by RCC	Others	Total
Economic and Social Development	12	51	63
Energy and Infrastructure	9	36	45
Justice and Home Affairs	9	39	48
Security Cooperation	5	32	37
Building Human Capital	5	21	26
Parliamentary Cooperation	2	7	9
Media Cooperation	4	10	14
Cooperation of Local Communities	1	1	2
Civil Society Cooperation	1	8	9
Events of political profile	0	31	31
Horizontal Cooperation	2	8	10
RCC PR	3	0	3
Managing of the RCC	5	0	5
Total	58	244	302

Table 2. SEE Regional Cooperation Meetings/per country

SEE						
Country	Town					Total
Albania	Tirana 7	Duress 2				9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo 64	Banja Luka 4	Mostar 1			69
Bulgaria	Sofia 7	Burgas 1	Pravec 1			9
Croatia	Zagreb 19	Dubrovnik 3 Cavtat 1	Split 2 Zadar 1	Pula 1 Rovinj 1	Opatija 1	29
Greece		Thessaloniki 2				2
Moldova	Chisinau 1					1
Montenegro	Podgorica 3	Cetinje 2	Budva 17	Danilovgrad 2	Milocer 1	25
Romania	Bucharest 4					4
Serbia	Belgrade 32	Novi Sad 1	Palic 1	Kopaonik 3	Viminacium 1 Arandjelovac 1	39
Slovenia	Ljubljana 7	Bled 4	Brdo kod Kranja 1	Maribor 1		13
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Skopje 8	Ohrid 5				13
Turkey	Ankara 1	Istanbul 4	Antalya 1			6
Kosovo*	Pristina 5	Peja 1				6
Subtotal						225

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

Table 2. SEE Regional Cooperation Meetings/per country

<i>Others</i>						
Austria	Vienna					13
Belgium	Brussels 28	Antwerp 1	Brugges 1			30
Cyprus	Limasol					1
Czech Republic	Prague					1
Estonia	Tallin					1
France	Paris 4	Strasbourg 1				5
Germany	Berlin 4	Regensbourg 1	Ingolstadt 1	Garmish 1		7
Hungary	Budapest					5
Italy	Rome 1		Turin 2	Trieste 3		6
Luxembourg	Luxembourg					2
Norway				Hamar		1
Sweden	Stockholm					1
Switzerland		Geneva 1	Zurich 1			2
United States		New York 1		Baltimor 1		2
<i>Subtotal</i>						77
Total						302