

Macro-regional Water Conference in Budapest on 11-12 September 2013

Macro regional **co-operation** in relation to water issues: the experiences of the **Regional Environmental Center**

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REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



Milestones – 1989-...2013...2015.....

- 1989
 - Budapest, July 12 – the historical speech of President Bush at the Marx University
- **1990**
 - The **REC's Foundation Charter is signed** by Hungary, the EC, the US and the Netherlands on June 20.
- 1993
 - Japan special Fund
- **1995**
 - International status in Hungary
- **2000**
 - **10th Anniversary and launch of The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program for South Eastern Europe**
- 2001
 - Italian Trust Fund
- **2005**
 - Declaration of the Signatories to the Charter of the REC on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary
- 2008
 - Opening of the Zero Emission Conference Building
- **2010**
 - 20th Anniversary of the REC
- 2011-
 - **International Status** signed by Albania, Hungary, Latvia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine
 - October 31, 2012 – **fully fledged** international organisation



A Salute to President George Bush
REC founding father



New Conference Center

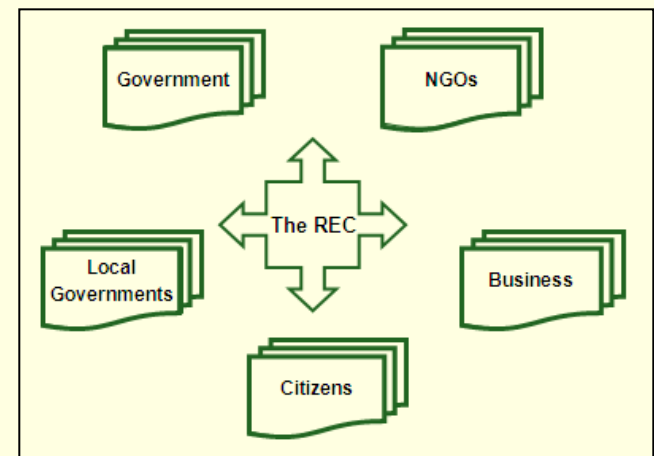
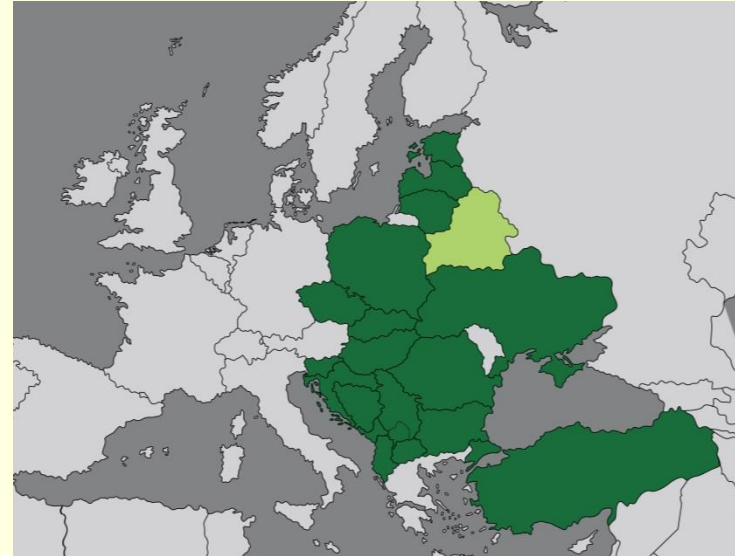


International Status



Regional Environmental Center (REC)

- “... is an international organisation with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues...”
 - The **REC** is legally based on a **charter signed by 31 countries** and the EC
 - Multi-stakeholder international Board
 - **190 staff** (some 30 nationalities)
 - **Offices in 17+ countries**
 - 100% project based organization
 - over **200 running projects**
 - 10 – 12 million € annual turnover
 - Operates in various regions:
 - EU Members of Central and Eastern Europe
 - EU Enlargement countries, candidates and potential candidates
 - Eastern Partnership Countries
 - EU27
 - Operation beyond the REC Country Office Network (REC partnership network)



REC services & competencies

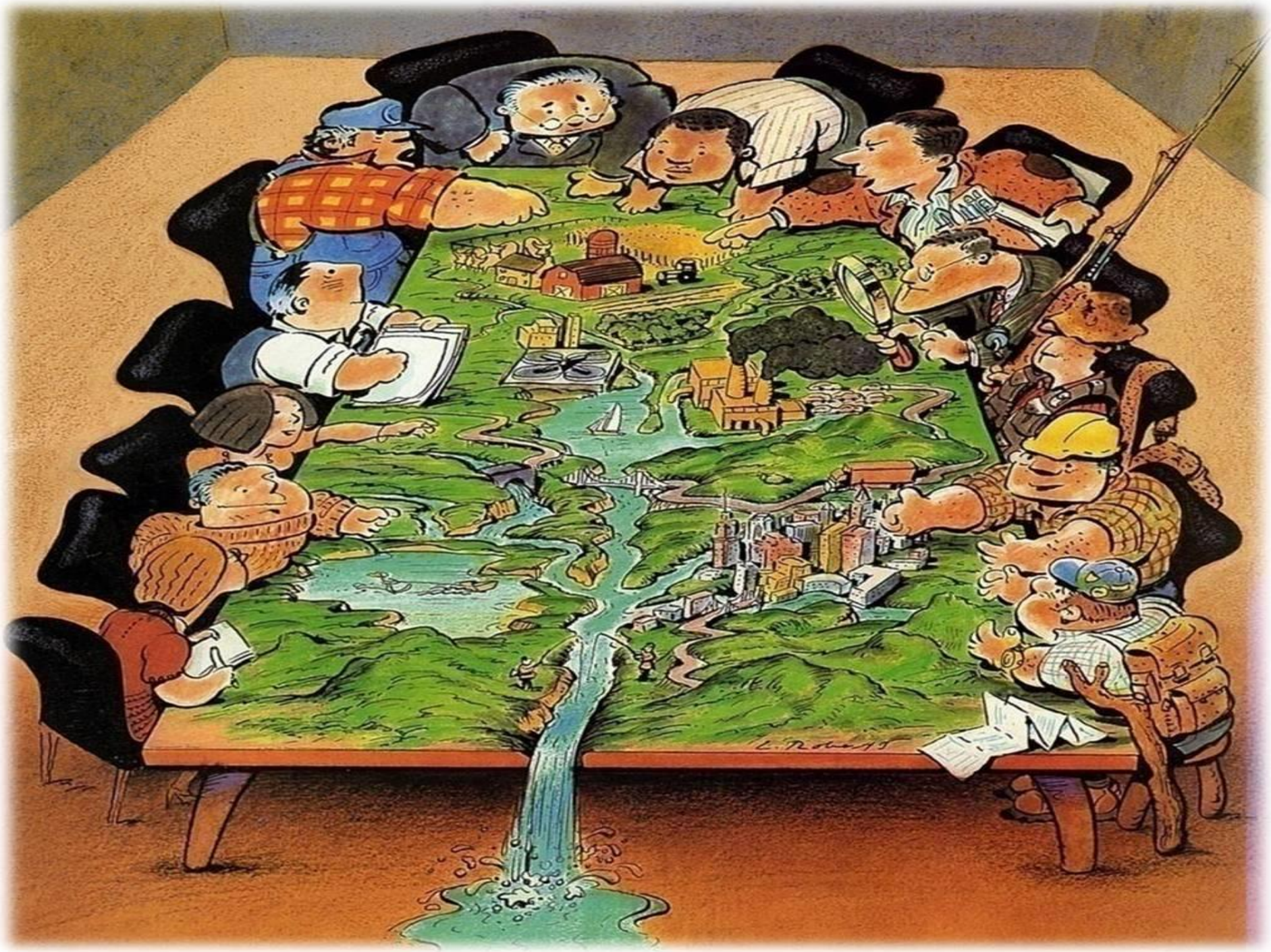
- Coordination and management of complex environmental related projects (including international secretariats)
- Specific support in the drafting of national strategies and programmes for the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- Research
- Civil society support
- Policy briefs; good practices; integrated policy guideline documents
- Capacity building

Lessons learned....

The most successful projects efforts are:

- cross-border / regional activities
- multi-stakeholder approach
- framework-type activities
- involving stakeholders/partners





REC's thinking about water

UN Milestones:

- Recognizing the human right to water and sanitation and
- Acknowledging:
 - Water as the core of sustainable development;
 - Need for progressive realization of access to safe water and sanitation to be achieved for all with full respect of the national independence;
 - Role that ecosystem plays in maintaining the water quality and quality;
 - Measures to be adapted to address floods, droughts and water scarcity;
 - Necessity to reduce water pollution and improve water quality with the help of the international community.



What we learned?

- **Access to good quality water** in sufficient quantity becomes fundamental to the daily lives of every citizen and to most economic activities in the region;
- Larger settlements, industrial centres and arable lands are placed along rivers, **demanding significant amount of good quality water**;
- Significant **consumers** are at the same time considerable **sources of pollution**;
- Over the past thirty years, pressure on water resources has dramatically **increased in variety and intensity**;
- Number of rivers in South Europe are known to becoming **waterless during the dry season**;



Water governance – Beneficiaries' Responses

Projects/Activities:

- Harmonization of water legislation with the EU acquis – projects in Croatia Turkey FYRM, Albania, etc.
 - Contribution to the work of international organizations and initiatives (ICPDR, ISRBC, UN ECE WC);
 - Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project in the Black Sea countries.
 - Implementation of the Water Framework Directive in SEE countries
 - The Danube Regional Project - Access to information and public participation in environmental decision making in Danube countries
- Further support in institutional and legal framework set up and skills to facilitate implementation of the new EU water policy is fundamental;
 - Transparent, flexible implementation builds trust;
 - Access to environmental and water related information is essentials ;
 - Cooperation between neighbouring countries is a necessity.



Sustainable water use

Beneficiaries' Responses

Projects/Activities:

- Support to the EC on the assessment of the Water Framework Directive implementation (BG, EE, FI, HU, LT, LV, RO, SI);
 - Technical Assistance to Jaspers' Beneficiary Countries;
 - Support the development and implementation of EU freshwater policies Project;
 - The DABLAS (Danube and Black Sea) Task Force Secretariat;
 - Priority Environmental Investment Programme in SEE;
- Continue with support in preparing:
 - policy briefs,
 - integrated policy guideline documents,
 - technical assistance
 - Facilitate further involvement of:
 - key stakeholder,
 - business sector;
 - finance community;
 - representatives of civil society and academia and
 - media



Securing water resources

Beneficiaries' Responses

Projects/Activities:

- Promoting Replication of Good Practices for Nutrient Reduction and Joint Collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe (UNDP/GEF)
 - Reducing Transboundary Pollution Risks within the Drina River Basin
 - Preparation of Action Plans for the remediation of three heavily polluted areas (hot spots) in Serbia
 - Compiling a Water Polluters Cadastre in Kosovo
 - Green Pack
- Mission driven approach helps to achieve more;
 - Significant lack in assimilation of the integrated water management approach in other sectors (agriculture, energy, transport, etc.);
 - Back further cross-sectoral dialog between governmental bodies and agencies;
 - Prerequisite is education



Adaptation to climate change – What we learned?

Projects/Activities:

- CarpathCC - Preparatory action on climate in the Carpathian region –in-depth assessments of vulnerability of environmental resources and ecosystem-based adaptation measures
www.carpathcc.eu
 - WATER CoRe - Water scarcity and droughts; coordinated actions in 7 European regions
www.watercore.eu
 - MEDIATION - Methodology for Effective Decision-making on Impacts and AdaptaTION
mediation-project.eu/
- Requirements for research to reduce vulnerability in the most cost-effective way
 - National and regional coordination builds efficiency, effectiveness and cooperation between institutions;
 - Exchange of information and knowledge is crucial;
 - Requests for capacity building by organising complex and comprehensive seminars and workshops at all levels



Cooperation & dialogue

Beneficiaries' Responses

Projects/Activities:

- Cooperation among key stakeholders at river basin levels (Danube, Sava, Tisza, Drina, etc.)
 - Development of the Drasviaty Lake Basin Management Program (ENVSEC)
 - Transboundary management of water resources: the Timok river (ENVSEC)
 - Neretva Delta Forum for the sustainable use of shared natural resources
 - Cross-border cooperation through environmental investment and planning in Western Balkan countries
- Proven importance of neutral platform for cooperation and coordination;
 - Provide knowledge transfer of good practices between regions;
 - Strengthen further involvement of key stakeholders in dialog;
 - Continue supporting public and youth participation in cross-boarder cooperation.



Danube strategy & Macro-region priorities

- Strengthen further cooperation in the region
- Support activities at basin/sub-basin wide levels
- Provide technical assistance to improve access to good quality water
- Build skills and knowledge on sustainable use of water resources
- Assist introduction of water pollution prevention measures
- Encourage research and exchange of knowledge on adaptation measures to climate change, concerning both extremes



Key examples — Rivers in focus

- Danube
 - NGO Participation in the Danube River Basin Management Plans
 - Building Environmental Citizenship to Support Transboundary Pollution Reduction /Pilot Project in Hungary and Slovenia
 - Danube National & Regional Grants
 - Enhancing Access to Information and Public participation in Environmental Decision Making, Danube Regional Project
- Tisza
 - Tisza River Basin Integrated Sustainable Dev. Programme - Planning and Initiation Phase
 - Tisza follow up grants - NGO workshop: response in crisis situation
- Sava / Drina
 - Support to the International Sava Basin Commission Initiative
 - Enhancing cross border cooperation in the Drina River Basin



The Drina river - the way it was ...



An aerial view of a wide river with greenish water. The left bank is rocky and has a path. The right bank is covered in trees. The text "Can we do it?" is overlaid in green at the bottom left.

Can we do it?

Budapest Water Summit

- The high level event will help to better define the pathway towards sustainability, as the Rio+20 outcome document calls for the establishment of universally applicable sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- To move forward the post-Rio water agenda Mr János Áder, the President of Hungary, announced in Rio de Janeiro Hungary's intention to organise an international conference under the auspices of the UN in 2013.
- This conference forms part of the events of the UN International Year of Water Cooperation led by UNESCO
- The REC organises the Civil Forum of the Summit
 - Civil society at large is interested in all of the 5 topics discussed by the Summit



Thank you for your attention!

