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**SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION  
IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE: 2001–2005**

submitted by

Croatia

through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT



UNITED NATIONS



**Category II paper**  
**On**  
**‘Towards Sustainable Consumption and Production in South East Europe’**

prepared by Croatia with assistance from UNEP

## 1. Introduction

Promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption is one of the major ways to address environmental problems including climate change, degradation of natural resources and loss of biodiversity, and negative environmental impacts caused by emissions and waste.

The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) recognised that “fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development”.

Sustainable Consumption and Production is a holistic perspective on how society and economy can better be aligned with the goals of sustainability. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) has been defined as:

*“a holistic approach to minimizing negative environmental impacts from the production-consumption systems in society. SCP aims to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of products, services, and investments so that the needs of society are met without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. (Norwegian Ministry of Environment, Oslo Symposium, 1994)*

SCP is a practical and cross-cutting approach to achieve sustainable development. SCP needs an active involvement of stakeholders and a broad range of locally-adapted policy responses. These can range from the development of holistic policy approaches, introduction of more eco-efficient technologies, development of physical and social infrastructure, improved education and public awareness, and information dissemination. Some key sustainable consumption and production policy challenges currently include achieving decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation, implementing life-cycle thinking, improving quality of life without increasing negative environmental impacts, and preventing the rebound effect, where growing consumption outstrips technological improvements and efficiency gains.

All governments were called upon to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) called for the development of a 10-year framework of programmes. It also called for actions, including developing and implementing necessary policies, measures and activities aimed at promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in all countries by all major groups and at all levels.

The Kiev Declaration (Para 27 and 28) states,

“We will encourage national efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption as well as corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability. We underline the importance of the shift towards sustainable production and consumption patterns and encourage regions, sub-regions and countries, as appropriate, to devise programmes to accelerate this shift. As decided at WSSD, we will encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of this taking them to our next conference. Countries should decide which tools will be of most use to them in these efforts.”

Programmes on SCP are developed and activities are planned or on-going in many parts of the pan-European region. For example, the European Union has already integrated SCP as one of the 7 key challenges in its renewed EU Sustainable Development strategy, and the European Commission is now preparing a SCP action plan to be presented in 2007. Several countries are developing national strategies and action plans for SCP and are supporting activities in other parts of the region. A number of programmes and projects to promote SCP, including cleaner and efficient production, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, better management and reduction of waste, education and public awareness campaigns and sustainable procurement are currently undertaken in partnership between stakeholders.

In South East Europe, the first sub-regional multi-stakeholder SCP workshop was organised by the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Construction of the Republic of Croatia in collaboration with the Centre for Cleaner Production in Croatia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Central European Initiatives. The workshop aimed at the information exchange on countries status and recent changes related to consumption and production patterns, on-going good practices/initiatives including education, facilitating stakeholders dialogues, raising awareness, and providing platform for further information exchanges and joint actions.

## 2. Opportunities and challenges for SCP in SEE

UNEP and European Environment Agency (EEA), in collaboration with national and local authorities, industry, NGOs, and researchers prepared the Category II paper on Sustainable Consumption and Production in South East Europe (SEE) and Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia (EECCA) to support the future implementation of SCP activities in the countries. The report attempts to provide an overall picture of the current state of consumption and production patterns, compiling on-going policy and initiatives in SCP related fields, discussing options SCP including opportunities presented by behaviours and infrastructural characteristic, and reviewing barriers to achieve these opportunities.

Although the situation varies from country to country in SEE, there common SCP related problematic issues are identified. To list a few: there is much room to improve the efficiency of use of resources and energy. Problems of traffic congestions in urban areas and tourism sites are increasingly significant, leading to health, environmental and social problems. Amount of industrial and municipal wastes are growing, and only limited amount of wastes are recycled and reused.

Although the situation varies from country to country in SEE, they share the following common opportunities.

- Some elements of the legacy of the past have a large potential to support a society with more sustainable production and consumption patterns. These include the district heating systems, railway and urban public transport infrastructure, and reuse and recycling systems. All these systems need significant investment and upgrading to realise their sustainability potential.
- Various business opportunities are identified. For example, low use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture create good opportunities for organic food production and their export to Western Europe. The potential economic benefits, not only environmental, of recycling and reuse of industrial, demolition and municipal waste materials are high.
- There is a good potential to increase energy efficiency in industry, households, and public sectors, which would bring both economic and environmental benefits.
- Considering the volume of public procurements (around 5-15% of GDP), Sustainable Public Procurement could bring significant environmental and economic benefits, including reduction of emissions and waste, increase in energy efficiency, development of eco-industry and contribution to job creation.

The following common policy challenges have been identified:

- ***Integrating sectoral issues and environmental/SCP concerns*** is still a distant goal. For example, spatial planning and municipal management are still not well coordinated with environmental and SCP considerations, although they could be used with significant impact in energy supply, building, transport and waste management. Lack of reliable ***data*** (on pollution and resources use, production, consumption, use of public transport, etc.) is a major obstacle to the development of such policies and municipal planning. Even in those sporadic cases where data exists on a local level, not many efforts have been made for the systematic collection of data and making it available to the public.
- Existing ***institutional setting*** does not favour planning and implementation of SCP. Better coordination is required among the various institutions responsible for environmental protection and sectoral policies, and it is necessary to improve ***institutional capacity*** to achieve more sustainable production and consumption.
- ***Mainstreaming*** SCP into national strategies and programmes is required. To ensure compliance with environmental legislation, promote market-based supply of services, and establish financing mechanisms supporting more sustainable production and consumption patterns are important. Despite their relative simplicity and ease of implementation, limited ***economic incentives*** – and technical tools – are in place to stimulate government, businesses and private consumers to conserve water, heat and energy. Policy tools already

exist to promote energy efficiency, public transport, ecological foods, and waste recycling. Framework conditions and genuine political support will be needed to stimulate implementation. Donor support and international financing mechanisms could incorporate SCP issues.

- More efforts are needed to raise ***public awareness*** on SCP and to provide information (e.g. labelling) which will enable consumers to make informed choice and influence governmental policies.
- There are good opportunities for ***regional cooperation*** – thanks, in many cases, to the common language and often, similar problems. Significant number of demonstration programs has been implemented on the local level (in areas such as energy efficiency for the buildings, transport sectors, municipal waste management, etc). Many of these are replicable since many cities in the regions are facing similar problems.

### 3. On-going initiatives and projects

Currently, various SCP related initiatives/projects are undertaken by local, national, regional and international organisations. For example, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (the REC) is implementing several programmes and projects in the subject. On-going programmes include trainings to governmental officials in the subject of sustainability<sup>1</sup>, support to environmental civil society organisations to catalyse the change towards more sustainable development and improved living conditions in urban areas<sup>2</sup>. Other smaller SCP-related projects currently under the implementation include sustainable public transport policies, the improvement of the efficiency of production processes and the management of waste<sup>3</sup>.

### 4. Recommendations

The Ministers may wish to subscribe to the following recommendations and commit themselves to ensure and support their follow up:

i) Establishing SEE platform for the promotion of SCP and joint initiatives

Development and establishment of SEE collaborative framework to support and facilitate the implementation of the programmes within the 10 year framework of programmes on SCP based on sub-regional needs and priorities. The areas in which countries may benefit from regional and sub-regional cooperation, diffusion of good practises and from partnerships may include:

- building strategies and mechanisms for implementation of identified SCP priority areas

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.sustainablecee.net>

<sup>2</sup> SECTOR programme, <http://www.rec.org/sector>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.rec.org>.

- implementation of projects and partnerships, in particular on waste, transport, energy efficiency of industry and buildings/housing, tourism
- sharing practical information, knowledge, experiences, and supporting policy development including national strategies/action plans
- developing general and sectoral indicators and targets
- monitoring and evaluation

ii) Development of national SCP strategies/plans/programmes or incorporate SCP into national Sustainable Development Strategies

Such strategies and plans, reflecting countries' needs and priorities, should be developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.

iii) SCP and Education for sustainable development.

Education, awareness raising and culture shift are paramount for achieving SCP. A stronger link should be facilitated between Education for Sustainable development and sustainable consumption education and awareness raising both in formal, non-formal and informal education. Information campaigns and initiatives targeted at officials from national and local authorities, business sector, youth, and the public should be part of this effort.

iv) Capacity Building/Training and Demonstration projects at national and local levels in SEE countries.

There is a need for up-to-date information and know-how on SCP, on the one hand, and promotion of SCP goals applied locally, on the other, that could be met through capacity-building targeted at government officials, including local administrations, industry, and civil society. The following projects packages are identified as priorities:

- Waste
- Urban transport
- Cleaner Production/life cycle thinking
- Energy efficiency of buildings
- Education/public awareness campaigns
- Sustainable Public Procurement
- Labelling