



Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

**Astana, Kazakhstan
21–23 September 2011**

**The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC):
information note for the “Environment for Europe”
Ministerial Conference 2011**

Submitted by the ENVSEC Secretariat

INFORMATION DOCUMENT



UNITED NATIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY INITIATIVE (ENVSEC)

Information Note for the “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference 2011

I. THE ENVSEC INITIATIVE

1. The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) was established to assess and address environmental problems, which threaten or are perceived to threaten security, societal stability and peace, human health and/or sustainable livelihoods, within and across national borders in conflict prone regions. ENVSEC collaborates closely with Governments, particularly foreign, defense and environment ministries, national experts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. ENVSEC has carried out assessments and published reports, illustrated by maps, for understanding the linkages between environment and security in the political and socioeconomic reality of Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Based on these assessments, ENVSEC develops and implements a programme of work aimed at alleviating and reducing tensions, building confidence among cooperating countries and regions and preventing or avoiding conflicts.

II. THE ENVSEC PARTNERSHIP

3. ENVSEC was established in 2003 and includes: the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an associate member and participates with its Science for Peace and Security Programme.

4. The ENVSEC partners have a joint Secretariat hosted by UNEP (Geneva) and work closely together to coordinate their activities and find synergies where possible. Under the leadership of a Senior Programme Manager, the Secretariat is working to develop new projects, raise funds and enhance the visibility of ENVSEC through improved communication and outreach.

III. INPUT OF UNECE: VALUE-ADDED OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

5. Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) administered by UNECE are an important pillar of ENVSEC’s activities and provide a value-added to the partnership. The number of ENVSEC projects that the partners are engaged in is increasing, highlighting the importance of the MEAs in conflict prevention, preventative diplomacy, confidence-building and regional cooperation to reduce conflicts. ENVSEC-related projects affiliated with ECE Conventions are listed below:

A. ENVSEC projects under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) in cooperation with other agencies:

- (a) Capacity building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia.
- (b) Enhancing Regional Exchange of Water Resource Information in Central Asia, CAREWIB II.
- (c) Transboundary cooperation and sustainable management of the Dniester river.

- (d) Support to a bilateral agreement under the UNECE Water Convention between Azerbaijan and Georgia.
- (e) Bi-/multilateral arrangements for prevention of transboundary environmental conflicts: the Timok River shared by Bulgaria and Serbia.
- (f) Pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins:
1. Testing of the Guidance document developed under the Water Convention - Climate change adaptation and transboundary flood risk management in the Sava River Basin.
 2. Reducing vulnerability to extreme floods and climate change in the Dniester.
 3. Promoting cooperation to adapt to climate change in the Chu-Talas river basin.

B. ENVSEC projects under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA Convention) in cooperation with other agencies:

- (a) Joint research related to activities with transboundary impact in the Danube Delta.
- (b) Development of capacities for application of the EIA Convention in Belarus and Ukraine: pilot project for hydroelectric power plant in Belarus on the Neman River.
- (c) Strengthening Implementation in Azerbaijan of the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.¹
- (d) Capacity Building Workshop on the Espoo Convention, Tbilisi: for Caucasus subregion.²

C. ENVSEC Projects under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA Convention)

- (a) Strengthening national and local capacities to assess and prevent risks from transboundary accidents in Central Asia.
- (b) Trainings and capacity development with Industrial Accidents Convention's Assistance Programme in South Eastern Europe.

D. ENVSEC Projects under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention):

- (a) The establishment of several Aarhus Centres in conflict regions.
- (b) Support to the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutants Release and Transfer Register (PRTR Protocol) to the Aarhus Convention.

E. Other ENVSEC activities on transboundary river basins

- (a) A project on the Kura-Aras river basin shared by Armenia and Georgia to support dialogue on cooperation frameworks on transboundary water management; analysis and identification of existing transboundary water quality monitoring schemes and comparative analysis of the EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) and water sector legislation in Armenia.
- (b) A project on the Chu and Talas rivers shared by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan supports the further broadening of cooperation improve the management of water resources on these rivers.
- (c) A pilot project on the Neman river in the framework of the Water Convention's programme of pilot projects aims to demonstrate transboundary cooperation, river basin management and adaptation to climate change on the Neman, shared by Belarus, Lithuania and the Russian Federation.
- (d) A project on the Drin River, shared by Albania, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Kosovo (UN administered territory under UN Security Council resolution 1244) and Montenegro for improved transboundary cooperation in the basin.

10. A project on the Pripjat river basin shared by Ukraine and Belarus on environmentally safe, economically viable, and mutually acceptable allocations of water of the upper Pripjat river and the Dnieper-Buh canal and monitoring and prevention of cross-border floods.

IV. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVSEC

6. ENVSEC will prioritize regional engagement and continuity in:

- (a) Conducting in-depth vulnerability assessments, early warning and monitoring of environment and security risks.
- (b) Improving awareness on the linkages between environment and security, strengthen environmental policies, and improving the capacities and roles of environmental institutions
- (c) Providing technical expertise and mobilizing financial support for clean-up and remediation.

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