



Government of Italy

Item 5 b) Capacity building - SEE perspectives

Keynote address delivered by
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Sea¹

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since it is the first time that I take the floor, Let me offer to the Serbian Government and People, on behalf of Italy, my sincere gratitude for hosting the sixth Ministerial Conference " Environment for Europe" here in the lovely city of Belgrade. Your hospitality is a mirror of your commitment to the success of the Conference.

I am honored to be allowed to speak in this session on South East Europe perspectives, after having heard so many colleagues from the region and representatives of international organizations and of the European Commission. We consider this invitation to deliver a speech as a sign of appreciation for the strong linkage built among our Countries, going beyond the geographical proximity and

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historical friendship, and encompassing our common commitment in sustainable management of common natural resources and protection of our environment.

This Conference is offering us the unique opportunity to outline the priorities issues for this region demonstrating that the EfE process could still give a valuable response to our common intention to protect the environment.

Besides, the great value that the countries of this region attach to the EfE process is demonstrated by the simple fact that we are holding this Conference here in Belgrade. I also believe that such process can deliver an added value also in the present situation of the region reflecting the progressive expansion of the European Union influence towards East, ranging from EU membership to engagement in an enhanced permanent dialogue process.

In fact, even if major progress have been achieved in strengthening environmental protection, important challenges for the future still remain, in particular challenges linked to the consequences of Climate change to our water resources, ecosystems, forest productivity and marine environment as well as to all economic sectors and public health.

Such priority would request a strong commitment and involvement of all the actors in the region, namely governments, international organizations, financing institutions,

other donors, civil society. The Belgrade SEE Climate Change Initiative aimed at enhancing the subregional cooperation, through a mechanism of coordinated SEE regional planning, would represent a good example of result-based, action - oriented activity in line with the outlined future EfE process.

Italy welcomes the strong commitment of the SEE countries for the implementation SEE/Climate change framework Action Plan (CFAP) and for the establishment of a Sub-regional, Virtual Climate Change related Centre in Belgrade and express its willingness to consider them in the framework of the existing MoU's between Italy and the countries of the region.

Let me briefly describe the on going cooperation programme the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Territory and Sea is undertaking according to the above mentioned MoUs.

The Italian Ministry is present in Serbia with cooperation activities involving the Serbian Ministry of the Environment and the Serbian Ministry of Energy and Mining. Those cooperation activities concern the environmental monitoring and sustainable requalification of the Municipality of Pancevo, considered as the heaviest polluted industrial area in the country, the institutional building to promote CDM projects development and the technical assistance programme in order to facilitate Kyoto Protocol ratification.

On this regard I would like to congratulate Minister Dragin for the recent ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

A fruitful cooperation programme has been developed also with the current **Republic of Montenegro** concerning the assessment of the projects in the fields of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and forest management, in the framework of the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore, we support the groundwork of the first UNFCCC National Communication for the Republic of Montenegro. I would like also mention the ADRICOSM-STAR Project (Integrated river basin and Coastal zone management system) will develop studies on climate change impacts on the Montenegrin coastal areas and the trans boundary river Bojana between Montenegro and Albania. This project is part of the broader ADRICOSM Partnership launched in Johannesburg with the objectives to promote transboundary cooperation between riparian Adriatic-Ionian Countries, and develop the scientific base and technology for the mitigation/adaptation strategy to environmental changes and threats due to anthropogenic pressures and climate changes in the Adriatic-Ionian basin.

A cooperation programme in the field of the Clean development mechanism under article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol in the field of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, waste and forest management has started in 2005 also with the **Republic of Albania**.

A bilateral cooperation programme with the **Republic of Macedonia** focussed on assistance to develop CDM projects is also ongoing since 2005.

To conclude from a donor perspective I believe that the Italian experience in the SEE region demonstrates that SEE countries could be strongly supported through an appropriate combination of bilateral and multilateral cooperation activities covering different environmental issues identified on the basis of specific country needs in the view to ensure a sustainable development and the safeguard of our natural resources.