

# Lessons learned from implementation of Sofia EIA initiative

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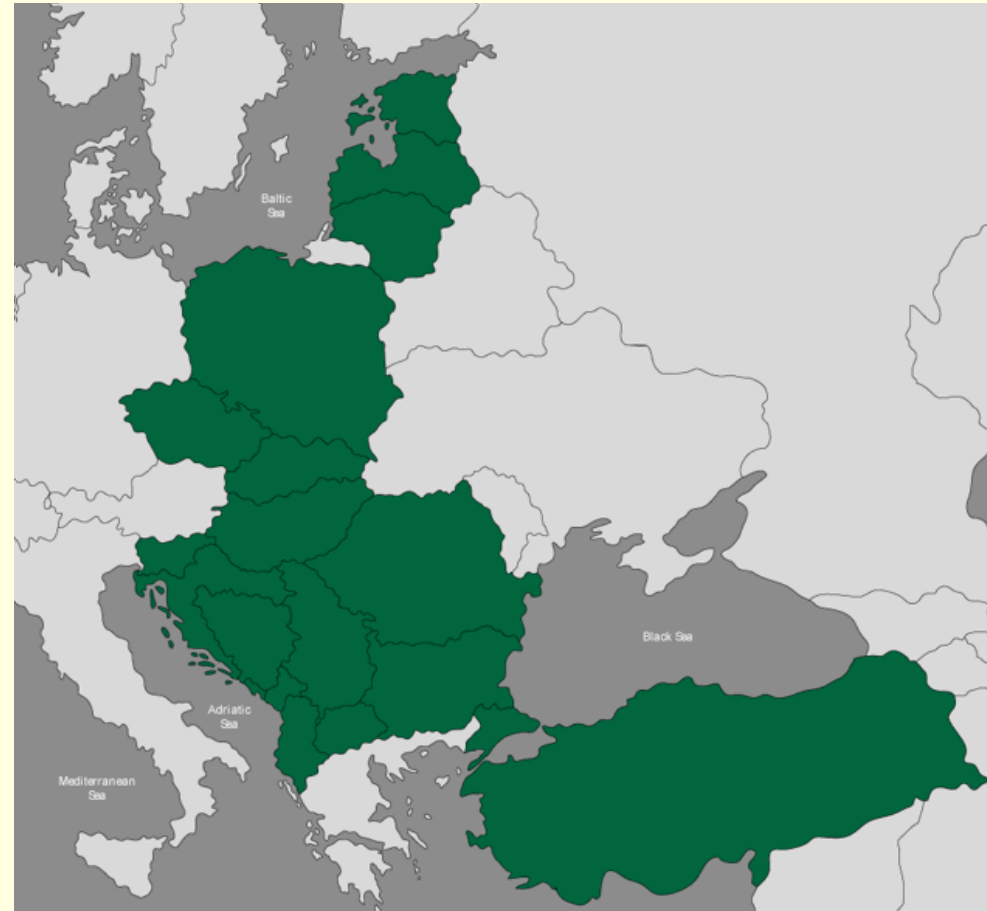
# The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

- “... is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit international organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems (...)”
- The REC is legally based on a charter signed by the governments of 29 countries and the European Commission
  - Head Office in Szentendre, Hungary
  - Offices in 17 countries
  - Operation beyond Central and Eastern Europe!
  - 190+ staff (some 30 nationalities)



# REC: expansion of beneficiary region

- 1990 – Hungary
- 1991 – Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia
- 1992 – Albania
- 1995 – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
- 2003 – Turkey



# The launch of Sofia EIA Initiative

- It was recognized at the Aarhus EfE Ministerial Conference in 1998 by the ministers' Declaration (paragraph 19)
- Initiative was lead by Croatia and the REC provided the Secretariat
- The Ministers at the Aarhus Conference called countries, international financing institutions and organizations to introduce and carry out strategic environmental assessments

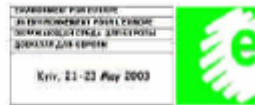


# Key lessons from the Initiative

- The main purpose of SEA should be to assist decision-makers
- SEA is an evolving instrument for sustainable development
- In order to achieve effective integration into planning, SEA may use different tools than those used in traditional EIAs
- The principles and guidelines developed in CEE have demonstrated the potential for application of SEA in other parts of the world



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FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE

KIEV, UKRAINE  
21-23 May 2003

CREATING CONGRUENCE:  
HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REC  
ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE  
UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION  
PROGRAMME

submitted by

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe  
through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

More on the Sofia EIA initiative could be found in the document

**“Creating congruence: highlights and achievements of the REC activities in Central and Eastern Europe under the Environmental Action Programme”**

submitted to the Kiev EfE Ministerial Conference, 2003



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[www.rec.org](http://www.rec.org)

# Key achievements of the Sofia EIA initiative

## (I)

- CEE Priorities for Development of National SEA Systems in CEE
- Contribution to the negotiations of the SEA Protocol to the UNECE Espoo Convention
- 
- The REC and the Czech Academy of Science jointly carried out the first SEA of the Czech National Development Plan





# Key achievements of the Sofia EIA initiative (II)

- The REC led a national expert group to design the official Methodology of the Czech Ministry of Environment for the SEA of Regional Development Strategies
- The REC supported and carried out pilot SEAs in the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia and Hungary





# Useful tools developed by the Sofia EIA Initiative

- SEA in Transitional Countries: Emerging Practices (1998)
- Principles of effective SEA
- Principles of effective public participation in SEA of Development Plans in CEE
- SEA manual for South Eastern Europe (2005, published in 2007)
- Benefits of Strategic Environmental Assessment (2003, Blue Bulletin)
- SEA Protocol: initial capacity development in selected countries of the former Soviet Union (2007, Green Bulletin)



# REC as Secretariat of the Sofia EIA initiative

- has valuable experience in SEA from its work in CEE and SEE
- is transferring best practices from the EU New Member States to SEE and EECCA
- has developed tools to assist SEA implementation in CEE and SEE
- is committed to contribute to the success of Belgrade SEA initiative that will further assist SEA and EIA in SEE and EECCA regions

The Belgrade SEA Initiative could go beyond SEE and EECCA and establish cooperation and transfer the lessons learned to other regions of the world



Thank you for your attention!



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