

Environment and Security: Examples in Central and Eastern Europe

Jernej Stritih, Executive Director
Bled, April 11, 2000



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Origins of REC

- **1989 - Fall of the Berlin Wall**
- **Environmental movement - driver of democratisation**
- **Established in 1990 by US, EC and Hungary**
- **Today 26 signatories, 15 country offices**
- **Mission: cooperation among governments, NGOs and businesses, promoting free access to information and public participation**
- **Programs: NGOs, governments, local gov., business**
- **Environment for Europe → EU Enlargement & SEE Europe**



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Aspects of Environment and Security

- **Environmental problems that can lead to conflict**
- **Conflict causing environmental problems**
- **Environmental cooperation preventing conflict**



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Environmental problems that can lead to conflict

- **Environmental problems rarely cause conflict themselves**
- **Conflict arises in certain circumstance through political amplification**
- **Examples in CEE:**
 - **Cyanide spill in Baia Mare**
 - **Dojran Lake**
 - **Gabcikovo - Nagymaros dams**
 - **Nuclear power plants**



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Conflict causing environmental problems

- **Military actions:**
 - **destroy infrastructure,**
 - **cause emissions of harmful substances,**
 - **prevent environmental activities,**
 - **refugees cause environmental strain at their destination.**



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Environmental dimension of the Kosovo conflict

- **Claims of “ecocide” by Yugoslavia**
- **Studies by REC and UNEP BTF**
- **Severe local pollution around destroyed industrial plants**
- **Background of historic pollution**
- **Uncertainty about depleted uranium**
- **Impact of refugee camps in Albania and Macedonia**
- **Collapse of environmental services in Kosovo**



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Environmental cooperation preventing conflict

- **There is always a common interest in solving a common problem**
- **Examples:**
 - Establishment of the Regional Environmental Centre in 1990
 - “Environment for Europe” process Dobris, Lucerne, Sofia, Aarhus, Kiev...
 - Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for the SEE (within Stability Pact)



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Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (REReP)

- **Agreed by Ministers of Environment of Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Romania in Skopje on March 15**
- **Supported by the EU and other donors**
- **Focusing on long term vision and co -operation among countries**
- **Prepared very quickly based on the experience and good cooperation within the “Environment for Europe” process**



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Lessons From the Advanced Transition Countries

- **Economic and environmental reforms are mutually supportive**
- **Environment sector has been a fast reformer**
- **Most investment comes from within - outside assistance has a catalytic role**
- **Strong institutions are a precondition for environmental investment**
- **Transparency, information and participation are precondition for strong institutions**
- **Donor addiction is not sustainable**



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Priorities for the South East Europe

- **1. Institution building**
- **2. Civil society building**
- **3. War damage remediation**
- **4. Cross border and international cooperation**
- **5. Priority investments**



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