

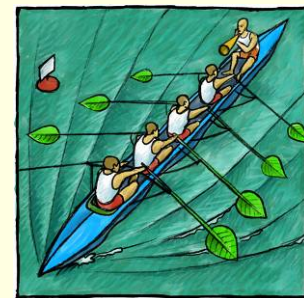
EUROPE-INBO 2013 Conference in Plovdiv, Bulgaria on 13-16 November 2013

Regional **co-operation** in relation to water issues: the experiences of the Regional Environmental Center

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Country Office Director for Bulgaria

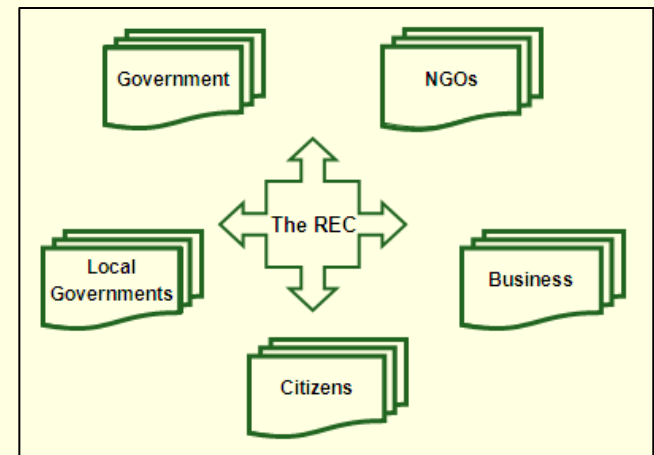
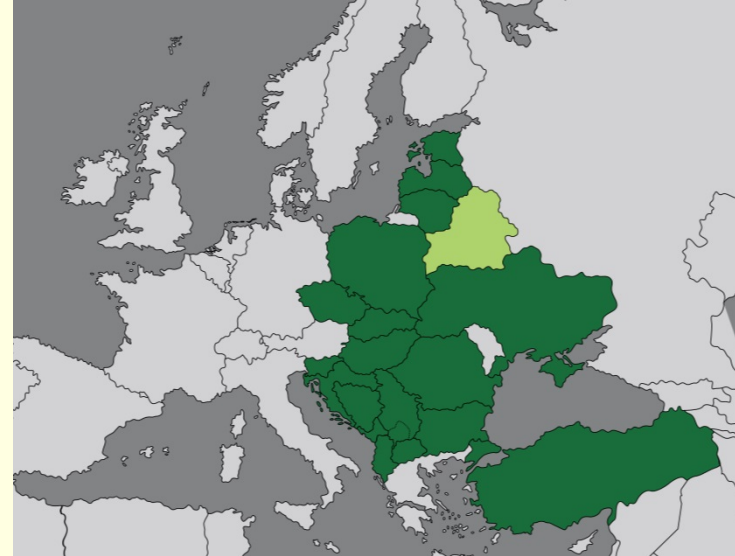


REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



Regional Environmental Center (REC)

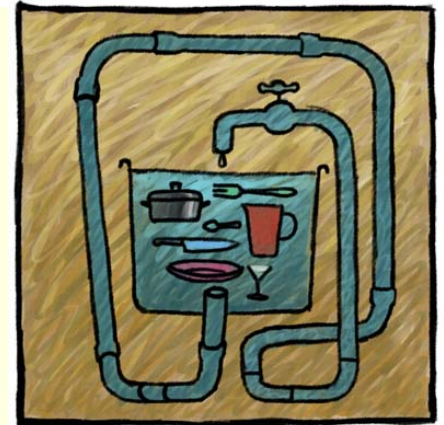
- “... is an international organisation with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues...”
 - The **REC** is legally based on a **charter signed by** 31 countries and the EC
 - Multi-stakeholder international Board
 - **190 staff** (some 30 nationalities)
 - **Offices in 17+ countries**
 - 100% project based organization
 - over **200 running projects**
 - 10 – 12 million € annual turnover
 - Operates in various regions:
 - EU Members of Central and Eastern Europe
 - EU Enlargement countries, candidates and potential candidates
 - Eastern Partnership Countries
 - EU27
 - Operation beyond the REC Country Office Network (REC partnership network)



REC Water Management Topic Area

Transboundary water issues

- Water governance - institutional set up and capacity building in the new MS, WB countries, Ukraine and Belarus
- Sustainable water uses and Securing water resources
- Strengthening water resources monitoring and assessments
- Adaptation to climate change effects
- Water management and other sectors
- **Transboundary and multinational cooperation**



REC Water Management Topic Area

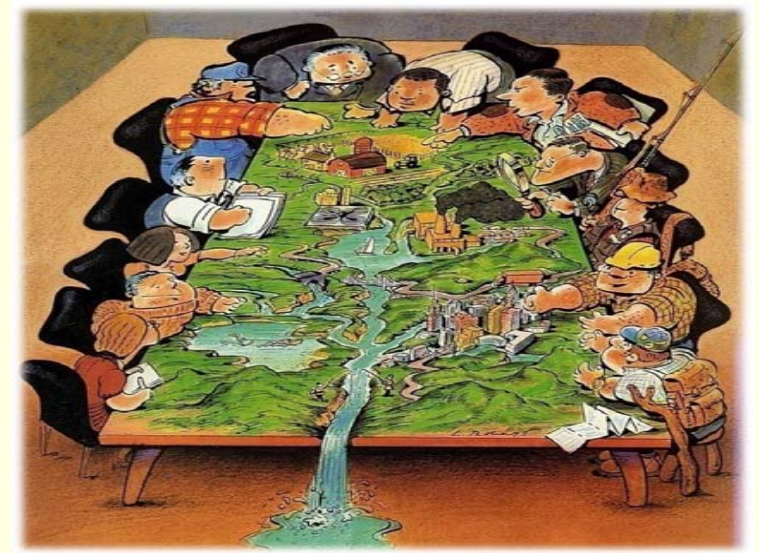
Transboundary water issues

- Introducing river basin management approaches.
- Identifying significant concerns in relation to the management of watercourses that flow through one or more SEE countries and neighbouring states.
- Analyses SEE countries and neighbouring states compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and other water-related directives.
- Strengthening water resources monitoring and assessments.
- Introducing measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change impacts.
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination.
- Reinforcing the incorporation of integrated water resources management into other relevant sectoral policies.



Regional projects and initiatives:

- Harmonization of water legislation with the EU acquis – projects in Croatia, Turkey, FYROM, Albania, etc.
- Contribution to the work of international organizations and initiatives (ICPDR, ISRBC, UN ECE WC);
- The DABLAS (Danube and Black Sea) Task Force Secretariat;
- Environmental Protection of International River Basins Project in the Black Sea countries.
- The Danube Regional Project - Access to information and public participation; Grant scheme; Pilot projects
- Budapest Water Summit 2013



Cooperation for transboundary river basins

- Cooperation among key stakeholders at river basin levels (Danube, Sava, Tisza, Drina, etc.)
- Development of the Drasviaty Lake Basin Management Program (ENVSEC) - transboundary water basin shared by three countries: Belarus, Latvia and Lithuania. Introduction of WFD principles in Belarus; Development of transboundary RBMP
- Transboundary management of water resources: the Timok river (ENVSEC) – Bulgaria and Serbia.
- Neretva Delta Forum for the sustainable use of shared water resources



Transboundary projects: Challenges and lessons learned

- Challenge: data gaps, institutional and methodological differences between EU MSs and neighbouring countries. Opportunity: acceptance of WFD as most advanced water policy and harmonization efforts in candidate and neighbouring countries.
- Initiation of transboundary project / initiative should start with clear and transparent need assessment and fair benefits sharing. Relevant authorities to get involved from the start;
- Proven importance of neutral platforms for cooperation
- Further support in institutional and legal framework set up and skills to facilitate implementation of the new EU water policy is fundamental;
- Access to environmental and water related information is essential both for decision-makers and ;
- Pilot projects = introduction of new approaches and learning by doing;



Adaptation to climate change –

In transboundary context

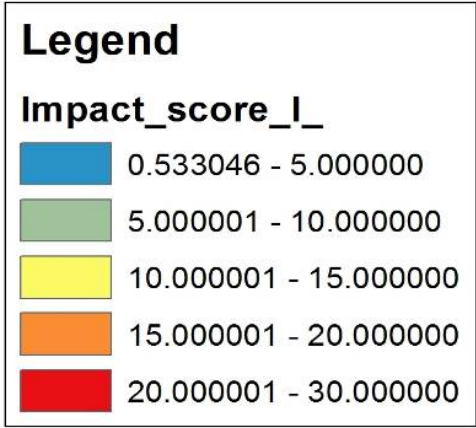
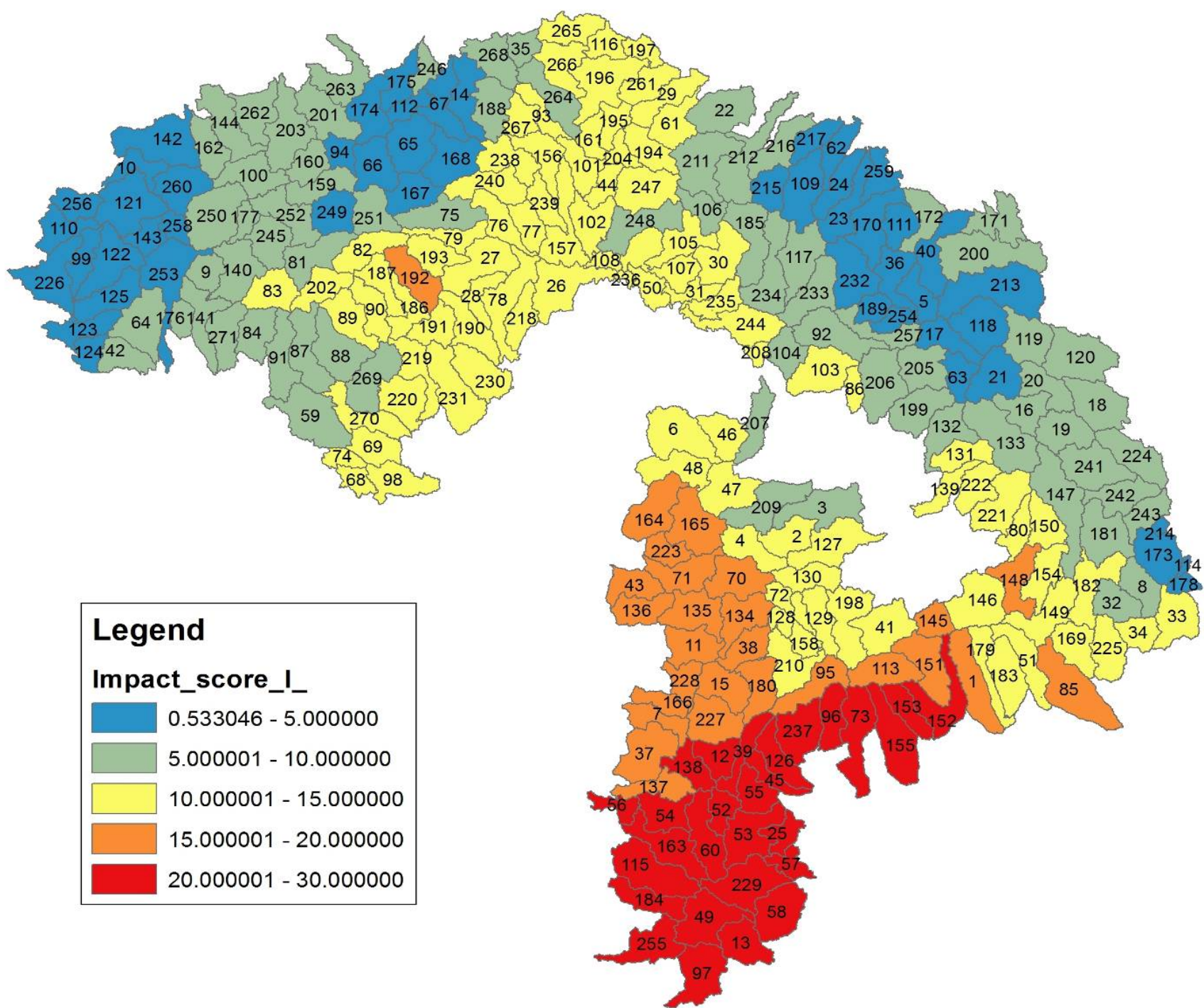
Projects/Activities:

- CarpathCC - Preparatory action on climate in the Carpathian region –in-depth assessments of vulnerability of environmental resources and ecosystem-based adaptation measures www.carpathcc.eu
- WATER CoRe - Water scarcity and droughts; coordinated actions in 7 European regions
www.watercore.eu
- MEDIATION - Methodology for Effective Decision-making on Impacts and AdaptaTION
mediation-project.eu/

Lessons learned

- Needs for research to reduce vulnerability in the most cost-effective way
- Monitoring data is crucial to justify/ calibrate models
- National and regional coordination for effective adaptation;
- Exchange of information and knowledge is crucial;
- Needs for capacity building for successful adaptation strategies





Thank you for your attention!

