



Task Force for Implementation of the  
Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme  
for South Eastern Europe  
(REReP Task Force)

**Report of the eleventh REReP Task Force meeting**

**Note:**

**The 11<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force is the last meeting dealing with coordination of the implementation of the programme. Therefore, the Report is circulated only for written comments and approval.**



These activities have been completed with the financial assistance of the European Commission CARDS Programme

# **Eleventh REReP Task Force Meeting**

## **Meeting report**

Co- chairs:

Mr. Claude ROUAM, Head of Unit for Enlargement and Neighboring Countries, DG Environment, European Commission (EC).

Mrs. Biljana DJUROVIC, Senior Advisor, Department for Environmental Protection, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Montenegro

The Task Force for Implementation of the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP) held its 11th meeting on 20 November, 2008 in Bečići, Montenegro. Representatives of SEE and donor governments, international organisations, international financing institutions and non-governmental organisations were present (see the attached list of participants).

### **1. Opening of the 11<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force meeting**

Mr. Claude ROUAM opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, thanking the host country and REC for efficient organization. He emphasized recently adopted Enlargement Strategy 2008-2009 as a framework for future work and assessment of current circumstances in Progress Reports for 2008. During the last year SEE countries progressed in many respects. As an example, host country of the meeting progressed in horizontal legislation, waste issues, nature protection, chemicals etc. Generally, further efforts are needed, particularly in implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation, as it remains a permanent challenge to all countries. Since the foundation of the REReP in 1999, the programme delivered what was expected and now time has come to focus all efforts on accession processes. The Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) programme will try to continue on the elements of REReP success, and also in bringing together wide stakeholder groups.

Mr. Predrag NENEZIC, Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Montenegro wished a warm welcome and expressed honor to host this meeting. Convinced that all the countries in this part of Europe remain committed to the European path, the regional cooperation process in the field of environment and the mechanisms which will be founded at this Meeting will surely be of assistance in reaching these aims. By assessing the REReP, as the first regional cooperative mechanism established in 1999, it can be observed that SEE countries have made great progress in the regional cooperation. Having under REReP a very successful cooperation in the areas of environmental investment planning and preparation, strengthening the environmental legislation, environmental enforcement and compliance, environmental education and information, protection and management of shared natural resources, we are obliged to continue to build on the previous positive experiences, now when we can say REReP mission is successfully finalized. The REReP programme attracted significant assistance to the region, many professional networks were established and continue operating, capacity building on regional, national and local level was implemented. Now, it is important to put in place a new mechanism that will support activities in the context of the Stabilization and Association process to the EU. In that respect, Montenegro strongly supports RENA to serve as the regional informal environmental dialogue between the EC and the candidate and potential candidate countries.

The meeting Agenda was adopted by the participants.

## **2. Adoption of the Meeting report from the 10<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force**

The draft report was circulated to the task force members after the meeting and no comments have been received by the secretariat. The participants adopted the report of the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the REReP Task Force, held on 27 November, 2007 in Brussels, Belgium.

## **3. Major developments since the 10<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force meeting**

Ms. Slavitsa DOBREVA, DG Environment, European Commission, presented the developments in the EU Enlargement Process, progress achieved in 2008 and the way forward. Main findings of the Enlargement Strategy 2008-2009, adopted on 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2008, were presented. It is possible that Croatia reaches the final stage of accession negotiations by end of 2009. Turkey needs to renew political reforms efforts and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia needs to fulfill outstanding key partnership priorities. In general, progress of Western Balkan Countries towards EU membership can be accelerated provided the potential candidates meet necessary conditions, thus possibly resulting in candidate status. Details were given on progress reports for all countries. Key EU legislative developments in the field of environment since the last REReP TF meeting were presented, including the Directive on ambient air quality, IPPC directive and the proposal for industrial emissions directive. Relevant directives on water quality and marine environmental policy, the revisions of the Waste Framework Directive, Climate action and renewable energy package together with a proposed regulation on illegal logging were presented as well.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

The floor was open for initial discussions and key issues raised are as follows:

- Mrs. Oreola IVANOVA-NACHEVA, REC raised the question concerning when the candidate countries and potential candidates will have to report to progress monitoring as regards to new pieces of EU legislation.
- Ms. Slavitsa DOBREVA replied that Table of Concordance for already published directives will be included in the next assessments. It was concluded that environmental acquis is a moving target.
- Mr. Claude ROUAM stressed the importance of international conventions to be included in the assessments. Climate change is not sufficiently tackled in SEE countries and compliance should additionally be assessed. In all recently adopted directives there is a stronger drive towards enhancement of cross-border and regional cooperation. Achievements under REReP represent a very good start towards those goals.
- Ms. Mira MEDIC, Croatia, informed that Croatia is finalizing a National Programme for EU integration and the question is how to set the environment related targets and cut-off date, also related with the negotiations of accession treaty, considering the acquis as a moving target.
- Mr. Claude ROUAM and Ms. Slavitsa DOBREVA responded that transposition process is ongoing exercise, and transition periods for certain directives and transition dates are to be negotiated taken into account country situation. Cut-off date will be agreed between Croatia and the Commission for all 35 chapters once negotiations are in their final stage.
- Mr. Stoyan BLAGOEV, European Environment Agency (EEA), mentioned the voluntary obligations and reported on the progress of Western Balkan countries in the activities of European Environmental Information and Observation Network (Eionet). Countries are delivering regular priority data flows and data sets for the EEA Core Set of Indicators. The rating is more than 50% and is targeting the 75% level. It should be taken into account when evaluating Western Balkan countries progress towards EU.

Mrs. Oreola IVANOVA-NACHEVA, Deputy Executive Director, REC reported on the progress on financing priority environmental investments in SEE. Selected achievements and developments were presented. In Albania, Reform on water supply and sewerage sector was adopted in July 2008 including the increased budget funds for waste and waste water. Public Investment Programme was adopted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Waste management strategy in Croatia and water financing strategy is in the process of drafting. National environmental investment strategy is adopted in the

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and a Strategy on waste is in the drafting process in Kosovo (under UNCSR 1244). All relevant bodies for IPA coordination are established and operational in Montenegro and IPA list of projects for 2007-2008 is finalized. Serbia initiated the debate on public utility and tariffs reform and reactivated a hazardous waste facility project. General challenges to the environmental investments in SEE on national and local level were summarized. Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP) activities until summer 2009 were presented with possible directions of future work.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

The discussions followed after the presentation and key issues raised are as follows:

- Ms. Jadranka IVANOVA, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia kindly asked for refraining from using acronyms when addressing the country she represents. Ms. Ivanova stressed that capacity on local level is still weak throughout the region and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is working on strengthening capacities of local governments in environmental management.

- Mrs. Nermina SKEJOVIC, Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighted the progress in the country towards preparation of sectoral strategies for environmental infrastructure investment programmes. In the water sector, harmonization with the requirements of the waste water directive is progressing and several projects are ongoing or will start with the help of IPA and GEF/WB and EIB funds, such as IPA 2007 “Construction of the sewerage collectors in Živinice Municipality”, IPA 2008 Waste water treatment project for Medjugorje starting in 2009, IPA IPF - TA 600,000 EUR for feasibility studies for the Plave Vode- Regional Water Supply System project, GEF/EBRD loan with Municipality contribution for sewerage project for Bijeljina and “Water and Sanitation Federation BiH” Project - finance contract signed between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and EIB on July/August 2008 for 15 Municipalities in the FBiH. In the waste sector, 16 regional landfills are planned according the EU PHARE, BiH Solid Waste Management Strategy to be supported with the help of WB loan in two phases. Also, a synergy project through IPA 2008, component II, will focus on technical assistance for preparation of 6-8 feasibility studies and for selection of regional sanitary landfills

- Mr. Claude ROUAM highlighted the difficulties with IPPC directive implementation and the need for investing more efforts in preparing the countries to meet the IPPC requirements.

- Ms. Jadranka IVANOVA pointed out the challenges with investments and lack of capacities on municipal level to deal with permitting processes. Governments should be encouraged to cooperate with municipalities to assure that adequate standards are used.

- Mrs. Biljana DJUROVIC, referred to capacity building activities in the ECENA multiannual programme that provide for exchange of experience and transfer of best practices to the countries concerning IPPC issues.

- Mr. Stoyan BLAGOEV, EEA, highlighted a high number of projects related with waste in the region and questioned how it can be assessed. Data on waste are very limited and mainly estimations based on not well developed methodologies are used. Clear methodology is needed, and proper monitoring and reporting system needs to be developed starting with municipal waste and landfill sites. System of monitoring hazardous waste is missing in the region as well.

- Ms. Mira MEDIC shared the successful experience achieved under the IPPC compliance project under CARDS 2004, especially in establishing bridges between government and industry, the project can be a good example for other countries in the region.

- Ms. Funda YETKIN, Turkey, informed about Turkey's experiences with IPPC transposition and implementation, two projects financially supported by the Netherlands, and a proposal for IPA 2008 funding concerning Regulatory Impact Assessment on IPPC in Turkey that is currently waiting for the final decision.

The possible ways of increasing the investments targeting air pollution issues was discussed. An idea of organizing a special workshop to address the IPPC related investments came forward. The REC agreed to explore the opportunities and discuss the content with the European Commission.

#### 4. Overall progress and achievements of REReP implementation

Mrs. Marta Szigeti Bonifert, Executive Director of the REC, presented major developments in REReP implementation since the 10th REReP Task Force meeting, also providing a short overview of the accomplishments of the programme since its launch. Following the last TF meeting, in the priority area of institution building, Assistance in Environmental Law Drafting, Priority Environmental Investment Programme (PEIP) projects and Local Environmental Action Planning for Sustainability in SEE are successfully continuing. Monitoring transposition and implementation of the EU acquis and support in National Environmental Investment Strategy for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are examples of new projects. The work in the area of civil society development focused on a four year programme “SECTOR: Supporting Environmental Civil Society in South Eastern Europe”, Technical Assistance in Grant Scheme Management in Croatia and Public awareness raising for development of tourism in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the area of cross border cooperation, the programme on cross border cooperation through environmental investment and planning together with cross-border LEAPs: environmental planning for peace and stability in 3 beneficiary countries have been successfully implemented. Bilateral arrangements for Transboundary management of water resources of Timok river has started. In the area of Reducing Environmental Health Threats and Loss of Biodiversity, Preparation of Project Documentation for Construction of Sewerage Systems and Wastewater Treatment in an example of ongoing project, and Healthcare Waste Training System in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been successfully implemented. The REReP Task Force Secretariat activities were introduced. The Secretariat is finalizing the new REReP Highlights Publication that will provide an overview of REReP in recent years and will summarize key messages from overall REReP implementation. Regional meeting on climate change and energy in SEE was held in May 2008 in Brussels, and one regional meeting on cross border cooperation is planned for spring 2009 on Natura 2000 topic. Overall overview of REReP process and support was provided, showing the mechanisms, adaptation process and contributions to the programme.

*(See the presentation and the Progress report in the outcome documents).*

The presentations were followed by a discussion, in which the participants in the Task Force meeting provided their comments. The key issues raised are summarized below:

- Mrs. Biljana DJUROVIC expressed hope that RENA will efficiently build on the success the REReP programme which is running for almost 10 years now.

- Ms Jadranka IVANOVA found Environmental Law Drafting programme very useful, including exchange of experiences with new and old EU member states, and Progress monitoring project with implementation questionnaires used as a road map. Support for development of the Investment Strategy of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was highlighted as well.

- Mr. Miodrag DAKIC, NGO representative, Center for environment, BiH, commented that civil society sector is still weak in the region and encountering problems in following activities within EU accession processes. RENA could offer further opportunities for civil society involvement.

- Mrs. Zumreta JAHIC, Netherlands added that Netherlands is one of the most active partners of Western Balkan countries in the environmental sector. Financial assistance reached more than 23 million Euros in various projects, such as cleaning of hot-spots, capacity building, awareness raising any many other activities. Transformation of REReP into RENA is supported.

- Mr. Pascal HERRY, DG Enlargement, EC, participating for the first time in REReP meeting, expressed positive impressions and highlighted some of the affirmative comments received from the participants. As regards the RENA Roadmap, financial arrangements and amounts indicated are provisional at the moment and will be subject to normal procedures for programming and allocating Community external assistance.

Reflecting key messages from REReP in the draft RENA documents was discussed. If the text on the key messages from REReP could be ready in the beginning of 2009, it could be taken into consideration in the finalization of the RENA documents.

The European Commission very much encouraged comments on the RENA scope and operation by the beneficiary countries by January 2009. Official letters have been sent to the Ministers of the candidate countries and the potential candidates.

## **5. Transformation of REReP into RENA**

Mr. Claude ROUAM presented the process of transformation of REReP into RENA (Regional Environmental Network for Accession) for all Western Balkan countries and Turkey, building on the achievements of REReP but strengthening and reforming its operation in order to better address the challenges of preparing these countries for EU accession. On 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2007, the Ministers of Environment from the candidate countries and the potential candidates met in Brussels and welcomed the initiative to establish RENA, asking the Commission to draft a Road Map. Four thematic Working Groups (WG) are proposed: WG1 Strategic planning and Investment, WG2 Climate Change, WG3 Cross-border cooperation on water, nature, EIA and SEA and WG4 Implementation and Enforcement. The Commission will be assisted by a Consultant to be selected by a tendering procedure. Financing will be provided through IPA multi-beneficiary programme. The split between activities is indicative and will be further fine-tuned, taking into account relevant developments, before the launch of the 1<sup>st</sup> tender. The participants of this meeting have received in advance the draft RENA Road Map. The countries are asked to consolidate their national positions and provide comments in writing to the Commission before 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009. The Road Map is expected to be finalized before March 2009. Ministerial meeting to endorse RENA road map and mandates for the working groups is planned for early summer 2009 and a target date for launch of RENA is September 2009.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

The floor was opened for further clarifications and discussions:

- Ms. Funda YETKIN, Turkey, enquired about the link of the current ECENA programme and the future RENA related working group, if the budget allocations will remain the same in future and if it was further discussed among ECENA members

- Mrs. Zumreta JAHIC, Netherlands, discussed ad hoc assistance of the RENA Secretariat and enquired what kind of activities is foreseen. Criteria how NGOs will be selected have to be developed.

- Ms. Jenny BEHRENDT, Germany, asked about the frequency of the meetings and participation to the working groups or if these will be expert groups.

- Ms. Jadranka IVANOVA, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, suggested that under Model Work Plan of WG2 Climate Change, additional stakeholders could be included, such as industry and energy sector representatives. Also, under specific activities, awareness raising activities for wide stakeholder groups are still needed.

- Mr. Pascal HERRY, DG Enlargement, EC, confirmed that in order to avoid a gap between REReP and RENA, the current REReP project will be extended until the end of August 2009. RENA will most probably be tendered as one single project, not the aggregation of separate projects. Comments were also made as to the need to ensure efficient coordination between actions planned under the cross-border cooperation strand of RENA and any other similar activity undertaken as part of CBC programmes.

- Ms. Mara SILINA, European Environmental Bureau (EEB), thanked EC for a clear presentation and opportunity for NGO representatives to comment. At the moment, Secretariat work includes public participation and it is suggested that selected environmental civil society organizations (ECSO) will have meetings back-to-back with regular RENA meeting. It needs to be further defined and selection process for NGO/ECSO specified. NGO are willing to contribute with concrete work and provide expertise to RENA.

- Ms. Sanja BOJANIC, UNDP Podgorica, stressed that climate change, being a global issue, requires UN involvement. One of the possibilities is as a member of the WG on climate change.

- Ms. Mira MEDIC, Croatia, thanked for allocation of time for comments due to the consultation process with different ministries in the country. It was clarified that one lead Ministry should be

nominated to participate in ministerial meeting, preferably environmental ministry thus promoting integration of environmental aspects into other sectors.

- Ms. Jelena CVETKOVIC, Serbia, asked if still can be considered to split first WG into two WGs, dividing strategic planning from the investments. Development of detailed work plans after establishing WGs should be considered.

- Mrs. Biljana DJUROVIC, informed that Montenegro welcomes RENA initiative and discussed the frequency of the meetings proposing one ministerial meeting per year and two meetings per working group.

## **6. Major developments since the 10<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force meeting – challenges faced by countries in the field of environment and ways to address them through RENA**

The SEE countries presented current challenges in the environmental protection, national and regional aspects, proposed to be addressed by RENA.

Albania has developed the National Strategy for Development and Integration to be implemented until 2013, with the 2007 Environmental Sector and Cross-Cutting Strategy as its integral part. A strategy for further harmonization of environmental legislation with the acquis and its proper implementation is needed, as well as the establishment of a national environmental fund to be fed by income from environmental taxation. The climate change mitigation and adaptation has to be addressed in the national development strategies with strengthening of the institutions and adopting legislation to get advantage of the carbon finance and flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. Cooperation in the cross-border context for nature protection and transposition of the respective EU directives in the national EIA and SEA system with the promotion of cross-border cooperation is a challenge; however certain activities are ongoing in this respect. Albania commits in its National Action Plan for the implementation of SAA (2007) to establish an IPPC unit within Ministry of Environment Forests and Water Administration for 2010 as the authority responsible for issuing permits. There is still a need to strengthen technical and human capacities as well to offer trainings to all relevant staff dealing with IPPC issues.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the SAA in June 2008. Strategy for implementation of the acquis chapter for the environment is a challenge of the accession process. Preparation of sectoral strategies for environmental infrastructure investment programme started. IPA 2008 project “Strengthening BIH environmental institutions, preparation for pre-accession fund” supports environmental infrastructure development. Project Preparation Unit on national level is initiated for coordination and management. Strategy for water management is under preparation in both entities. Implementation of waste issues is currently under a number of strategic documents. 16 new landfills are under construction or planned until 2014. In climate change area, Initial National Communication will be completed by the end of 2009 in cooperation with UNDP. The project “Development of CDM institutional and legal framework” is initiated aiming to help government to create favourable conditions for developing and approval of CDM projects. The country is in a process of ratification of EIA convention, expected by July 2009. SEA and EIA are subjects in entities Laws on Environmental Protection. A number of activities and projects were mentioned as well in water and nature protection area. Support to environmental inspectors and implementation of IPPC is provided through various projects. Implementation plan for Directives on Industrial Emissions and draft of legislation implementing IPPC, Waste Incineration, LCP and VOC Solvents directives are some of the planned results.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

Croatia is finalizing transposition of the acquis and setting up the necessary administrative capacities. Compliance with heavy investment directives which requires significant financial resources and absorption capacity of EU funds is among key challenges. Continuation with the progress monitoring project with inclusion of new acquis and further capacity building activities and transfer of experience is a possible way forward. Key challenges in the climate change area are the establishment of emission

trading system, setting up of GHG registry, capacity building activities and drafting sectoral adaptation strategies. Identification of Natura 2000 sites, implementation of EIA and SEA directives at national and regional level is needed and strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries through EIA convention and protocol on SEA. In enforcement and compliance area, further strengthening is necessary, implementation of ECENA programme for 2007-2010 is foreseen, continuous cooperation with IMPEL and support to ECENA members on their way to EU membership.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the process of decentralization and capacity strengthening is ongoing towards sustainable development and EU approximation. Reorganization of the current administration and development of training profiles is a challenge, together with a planning of long term investments and increasing public participation and stakeholder consultation procedures in decision making processes. In climate change area, another challenge is the preparation process for further commitments as EU member states (reporting and pilot project implementation), also dissemination of recommendations proposed with the second National Communication to different target groups. Public awareness campaign, administrative capacity strengthening and upgrading local environmental plans for development of local Agendas for climate change are possible ways to address challenges. Administrative capacities are weak to strengthen cross-border cooperation and public awareness is low. Specific agreements for joint management of water bodies, nature sites, etc (Prespa, Dojran etc) represents a challenge. Improvement of enforcement and implementation of environmental laws in practice and further focus on environmental risk assessments and data collection is necessary. Experiences from ECENA/IMPEL/GREENFORCE should be further used in capacity building of environmental (central and local) inspectors.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents).*

Montenegro is developing a National Environmental Policy and Action Plan and is in a challenging process of separating policy and legislative responsibilities from executive ones and enhancing capacities to attract external sources of investment funding. Environmental Protection Agency is established just a day before. To achieve a fully operational agency training of staff, continuation of progress monitoring and other activities was proposed. Vulnerability assessment, capacity building, development and information exchange on sectoral adaptation strategies and establishment of GHG inventory represent challenges in climate change area. Implementation of SEE Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Adaptation and further capacity building of administrative structures and training for maintenance and upgrading GHG inventories are anticipated. Regarding cross-border cooperation sector, improvement of quality of EIA and SEA reports, finalization of EMERALD network and preparation for Natura 2000 and implementation of water framework and marine strategy directives are ahead. More efficient implementation and enforcement of aligned legislation through strengthened environmental inspectorate is needed. Exchange of experiences and best practices among ECENA network countries and EU member states is proposed, together with closer cooperation with IMPEL and other networks.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

Serbia presented key challenges and possible solutions in several areas. In the strategic planning and investment sector, including progress monitoring, as well in the climate change sector, administrative capacity, including number of employees and specialized trainings, and strategic documents remain a challenge. Mainly through national and multi-beneficiary IPA projects, further development of legislation and strategic documents is foreseen. Appropriate legislative framework in the water management and nature protection is required; implementation of river basin management needs to be enforced, Natura 2000 introduced, together with strengthening administrative capacity at local and center level for efficient implementation and enforcement. Further capacity building for environmental inspectors and permit writers is considered necessary.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

Turkey has a potential for remarkable level of reduction of environmental impacts of the industry, contributing to the overall investments and environmental status. There is a necessity of a strategic approach in transposition and implementation, transfer of know-how on Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and strategic approach, use of economic instruments, co-financing mechanisms, heavy investment directives, and success stories in PPP etc. Regarding climate change issues, Turkey, as a developing country in Annex I, needs support in achieving sustainable development goals. Capacity building and cooperation is required in the context of adaptation and mitigation, conservation and renewable energy. Cross-border cooperation needs to be further enhanced, also with the improvements in the public participation. In that respect, dissemination of best practices from the Danube river basin and sharing of lessons learned by member states could be very useful. A need of local training when it comes to enforcement and compliance issues was stressed.

*(See the presentation in the outcome documents)*

Following the presentations of the countries the floor was open for further discussions to donors and other stakeholders related to involvement to RENA.

- Mr. Stoyan BLAGOEV, EEA, advised that experiences and results from ongoing projects need to be taken into consideration. EMERALD project outcomes could be connected with the work of RENA WGs and Emerald sites and related data can assist in preparations for Natura 2000 implementation and development of indicators for biodiversity. The currently identified Emerald sites cover above 17% of the territory of the region. Tools like CORINE Land cover updates for the years 2000 and 2006 can now be used to assess the land use patterns, urban sprawl, pressures on biodiversity and coastal zones and many others. Other EEA reporting systems on European level like Water Information System for Europe (WISE) would also be of relevance.

## **7. Conclusions of the meeting with a summary of the key challenges and ways to address them through RENA**

Mr. Claude ROUAM shared the impression of the meeting, summarized as follows:

- Meeting was very good and productive, with a number of valuable inputs and high quality discussions. All countries present on the meeting clearly showed their interest and commitment towards regional cooperation in the field of environment;
- Certain consensus is already reached towards RENA, including the endorsement by the political level. Discussions during this meeting contribute to the development process; a number of relevant questions were put on the table and EC will further consider them;
- Success stories of REReP were presented and RENA will build on it; key messages to be finalized could give a full picture, more valuable if showing shortcomings in order not to repeat them;
- It can be clearly concluded that the momentum should be kept and the work should not be done behind closed doors. The opportunities are offered to all stakeholders to take part in the preparation process for RENA;
- Cooperation with ongoing processes is needed and overlapping with existing initiatives should be avoided in RENA. Subsidiarity principle will be followed;
- We all have to agree that RENA will develop well only if ownership by the countries is strong and it is used as a political driver on the way towards future membership of candidate and potential candidate countries;
- Common challenge ahead is to finalize the RENA Roadmap following the proposed schedule: before 01<sup>st</sup> of January 2009 the countries will consolidate their positions and provide comments in writing. By March 2009 the Road Map should be finalized by EC and formally endorsed by the Ministers of Environment of the candidate countries and the potential candidates by end of June or early July 2009. Election process to the new European Parliament in 2009 might slightly influence the time line;
- Reflecting on the substance of RENA, a number of topics of common interest were identified and RENA will contribute through its Working Groups (strengthening of administrative capacities, climate change issues, public participation and awareness raising activities). Request for assistance and

exchange of experiences in the field of methodologies for strategic planning, inspections and permitting is yet another issue RENA will tackle. A lot of work is to be done as regards to nature protection including Natura 2000 preparations, complexity of SEA, still learning process of EIA, as well as IPPC. Waste issues remain very important, hot spots are identified and needed investments are high. Countries showed great interest for progress monitoring towards harmonization with EU directives;

- EC thanked the REC for many years of service in the region with large responsibilities and expressed satisfaction with the accomplishments. Now, the challenge is in front of RENA to continue with the work done by REReP.

#### **8. Any other business.**

Mr. Claude ROUAM wrapped up the last, 11<sup>th</sup> REReP Task Force meeting by welcoming continuing progress in the region and commitment of the countries to regional cooperation. REC initiative to prepare key messages from REReP programme to RENA was welcomed and it was proposed to be shared with participants of the meeting and focal points to allow comments and reflect their views. Countries were invited once again to consolidate their positions and provide comments to the Commission concerning proposed RENA Roadmap before 01<sup>st</sup> of January 2009.

Note: The outcome documents from the meeting could be found on the REReP website [http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/docs/11th\\_meeting/documentlist.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/docs/11th_meeting/documentlist.html)