

Activity report of Volvox- Electronic Network of Environmental NGO in Serbia and Montenegro for the period March 2002 - September 2003



Introduction:

The Volvox-Electronic Network was initiated within The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program - REReP) under the project REReP 2.3: Environmental NGO Electronic Networking in South Eastern Europe.

Volvox is using resources of portal www.erc.org.yu Environmental Resource Center (ERC). The ERC project was initiated by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, Country Office Yugoslavia. It was financially supported by Government of Japan, through the Japan Special Fund within the REC.

Progress of activities:

1. Capacity building:

1a. Basic computer training

According to conclusions of the Assessment of Internet capacities of environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro, most of local NGOs need additional training in using computer networks. This was the reason to organize basic computer training courses and to provide basic knowledge of **Windows, Excel, Power Point and Internet programs**. Three computer training sessions for beginners were organized in the Scientific Station Petnica and completed in the following periods:

- 29.05-01.06.2002 (Basic Office skills, Internet)
- 28.06-01.07.2002 (Basic Office skills, Internet)
- 30.08-02.09.2002 (Office skills, Internet)

Altogether **56 members**, representatives of environmental NGOs from the whole country, participated in the courses. (Annex 1)

Figure 1: Photos of the participant of the computer training organized in Scientific Station Petnica



1. b Advanced level training course

The advanced training course for publishing on the web was organized in the Scientific Station Petnica from November 6-10 2002. The training was organized in the form of the **web workshop with 20 participants - representatives of environmental NGOs.**

2. Information Exchange

Volvox- Electronic Network is using portal of Environmental Resource Center (ERC) (www.erc.org.yu) encompassing following sections : **news, events, institutions, experts, NGOs database, public media and independent journalist database, environment related project, data on environment quality, forms and discussion groups, questionnaires and electronic catalogue of sorted publications.**

Except NGOs, portal of ERC is used by government officials, experts and every person interested in the environment issues .

Figure 2: Page of the Environmental Resource Center



Volvox- Electronic Network of Environmental NGO's from Serbia and Montenegro uses the major part of News, Events, Questionnaires and Forums on daily basis , as well as electronic distribution list by the name Volvox, as a powerful tool of information exchange (below is the statistic that shows increase of subscribers from the date of foundation till September 2003).

Figure 2: Number of the subscribers of the Volvox- electronic distribution list in the period: November 2002- September 2003

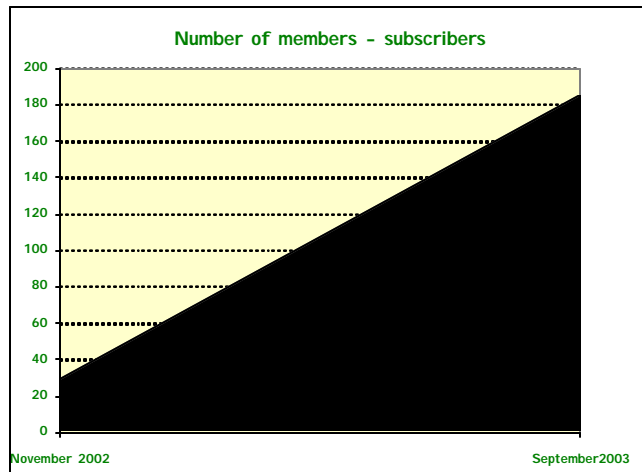
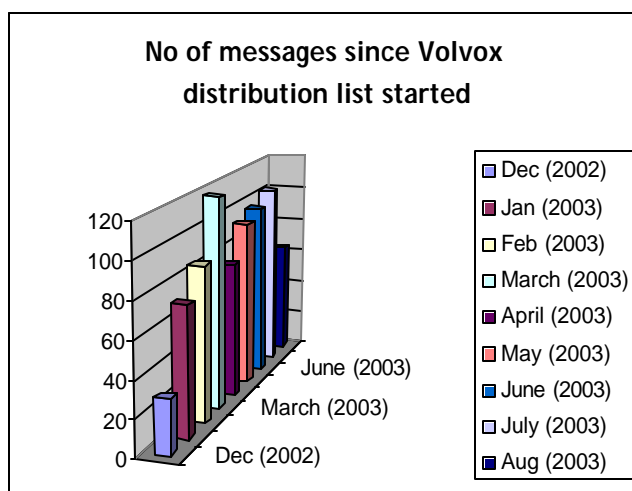


Figure 3 No. of messages per months



3. National meeting

The first National meeting on Electronic Networking of Environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro took place on December 7, 2002 in Belgrade. Representatives of **60 environmental NGOs** were present on the meeting. Participants shared experience with other EI. NGO Networks from the neighboring countries: **BlueLink**-Electronic NGO Network from Bulgaria (Milena Georgieva, Nina Blagoeva), **Strawberry Net** - Electronic NGO Network from Romania (Emilian Burdusel) and **Electronic Networking in the Region** - Gabor Heves, Project manager -Regional Center for Central and Eastern Europe, Szentendre, Hungary. Besides that, **technical possibilities of network tools and utilization of distribution list, forums and news publishing** were presented. Four new members of the Steering committee were elected and two moderators of the Volvox - Electronic Network: Branislava Vasiljevic (Danube Environmental Forum Serbia and Montenegro) and Nikola Bozic (Young Researches of Serbia). Second part of the meeting was organized in the form of the workshop and participants were having a chance to decide on further activities in the network working in following working groups: Regional cooperation, Program of the Network and Network capacity building

Figure 3: First National meeting in Belgrade of the Volvox - Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro



4. Logistic support for NGO e-networking

Volvox -Electronic network of environmental NGO s in Serbia and Montenegro organized an **open competition** for computer equipment. The selection criteria were established on the first National Meeting in December 2002. Advisory board (i.e. Steering committee) took under consideration only applications of those environmental NGOs that are located on the territory of Serbia and Montenegro and satisfy following requirements: NGO is registered to deal with environmental issues, it has its own office or is renting one, has a telephone line and access to internet and employs a person with computer skills. The total of **146 complete applications** was collected during the competition and Steering Committee had a difficult task to distribute available 6 computers. Since large number of applicants met most of the criteria set up during the first National meeting, one of the crucial moment in decision making was regional distribution (see Annex 2)

Five computer working stations were distributed to the NGO s from Serbia and Montenegro and one computer to the administrators of the Network (March 21, 2003), which resulted in establishment of network of local coordinators and news contribution from different parts of the country. In this respect NGO from Bor (Young Researches of Bor) posted 11 news in the period from July to September 2003 and all of them were reports from the city of Bor and the surrounding area (Bor is the largest mining place and recognized environmental HOT-SPOT in Serbia and Montenegro). Society of River Tara Friends, NGO from Montenegro active in the National Park of Canyon Tara (under protection of UNESCO), constantly published news (6 postings in the same period) reporting on derogation of National Park and the activities to put an end on those actions .

On monthly basis, the Network is awarding **free internet hours**. First draw was organized in July 2003, where two NGOs were awarded 20 hours of internet, free of charge. Since that time it has become a practice to award free internet hours every month following these criteria to select the winner:

- Largest number of news published;
- NGO most active on Forums (activated during the awarded month);
- Largest number of log-in on web-portal.

Volvox has its own **logo** now and also a **Codex**, which evolved out of practice in utilizing electronic distribution list (see Annex 3).

Figure 4: Winners meeting on 21 March, 2003 in Hotel Metropol, Belgrade



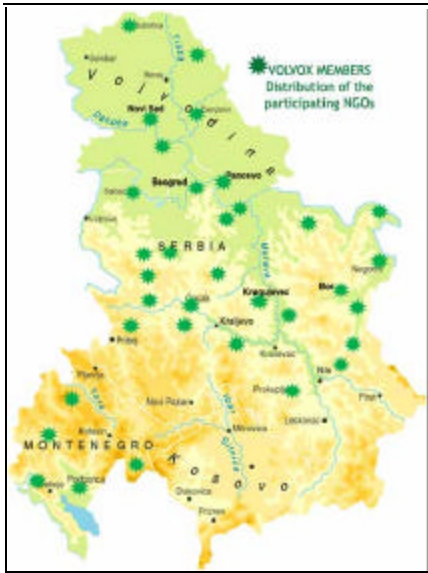
4. Regional cooperation

Representatives from Volvox Network were present on the First Regional Meeting on Electronic Networking in Sofia, Bulgaria as well as on the 2nd Regional Meeting on Electronic Networking in Kosovo Prishtina/Brezovica.

Exchange of the relevant environmental information (relevant meaning interesting, new for the both countries) is set up with the **EkoNet-Macedonian Environmental Information Network** www.eko.net.mk, with the Croatian **Alert-information service for environmental protection** www.alert.zeleni.hr and with EkoForum- Regional environmental Press Center for SEE, Resource point from Serbia and Montenegro www.ekoforum.org.yu

5. Future plans

Activity	Timeline	Implemented by
web-page	Ongoing -deadline October (waiting for the domain name)	Volvox
Volvox e- newsletter	Ongoing-deadline September	Volvox
Capacity building (training seminars, Internet for Advance users- 3 trainings and web publishing - 1 training)	November 2003-Aprill 2004	Volvox, REC
Promotion materials (CD, leaflet)	Ongoing-December 2004	Volvox, REC
2 nd National meeting	December 2004	Volvox
Computer support	September 2003- June 2004	REC
Promotion of the Network to the Media	December 2003-February 2004	Volvox, REC



Annex 1: Distribution of the participants of computer courses



Annex 2: Distribution of the computer equipment

Annex 3: Volvox Network - The Codex of Manners



Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro

VOLVOX NETWORK - THE CODEX OF MANNERS

This Codex regulates the rules of behavior in Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro "Volvox". The Codex is created in order to improve quality of work.

ACCESSING THE NETWORK

•All interested environmental organizations and individuals can become members of mailing list (volvox@recyu.org.)

•All interested environmental organizations and individuals can be registered on ERC portal (www.erc.org.yu).

MANAGING OF NETWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE:

The moderators manage the infrastructure of Electronic Network "Volvox".

THE RULES OF BEHAVIOUR ON MAILING LIST:

- All members of the mailing list can send message on the list
- Only messages that are connected with the environmental issues and work of the members should be sent on the list
- Messages with advertising are strictly forbidden
- Messages with abusive content are forbidden

- Subject of the message need to be connected with the content of the message
- The size of message body and attachment need to be maximum 300 KB.
- List should not be used for bilateral communication between members.

THE RULES OF BEHAVIOUR ON ERC PORTAL:

- All interested environmental organizations and individuals can be registered on ERC portal
- All interested environmental organizations and individuals can ask to change position into higher level of user priority on ERC (to publish own news)
- All information will be published on ERC only with agreement of the moderator.

GENERAL RULES:

Every member of Electronic Network "Volvox" and every user of Network's infrastructure need to improve the work of the Network through mailing list or/and ERC portal, by publishing pieces of information from the domain of their work.

SANCTIONS:

- If someone break the rules, the moderator of the Network can temporary exclude this member from the mailing list or ERC (depend on where the rule is broken)
- If someone again breaks the rule the moderator can permanently exclude this member from this mailing list or ERC.

Nikola Bozic,
Moderator
Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Serbia and Montenegro "Volvox"