

## The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is an inter-agency initiative of international organizations comprising UNEP, UNDP, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe. The ENVSEC partnership aims to reduce tensions and increase cooperation through the joint management of natural resources and environmental threats in Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia.



### Republic of Moldova & Ukraine agree to better manage once-pristine Dniester River basin

In a landmark treaty signed on 29 November the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine agreed to improve the management of the Dniester River basin, home to some 8 million people in Eastern Europe. The treaty is the culmination of eight years of wide collaboration and provides a framework for cooperation on water pollution, water flow regulation, conservation of biodiversity and protection of the environment surrounding the Black Sea. It also addresses data exchange, public participation and cooperation in emergency situations.

The 1,380 km river originates in the Ukraine, runs through Moldova for 400 km, and enters the Ukraine again before flowing into the Black Sea. It supplies drinking water to many areas including the city of Odessa; provides



Signing of the Dniester treaty

hydropower generation; and supports a thriving fishing sector. In recent years, severe problems affecting the river include poor water quality, declining biodiversity and deteriorating ecosystems, along with the impacts of climate change such as increasingly frequent and devastating floods.

The negotiations surrounding the treaty and the drafting of the document were jointly managed by UNECE, OSCE and UNEP. It broadens the existing cooperation agreements to cover the entire river basin and all sectors sharing in its management and benefitting from its services. As a result of the treaty, the bilateral Dniester Commission was established to facilitate sustainable use and protection of the basin and is an important step in the implementation by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine of their obligations under the UNECE Water Convention. The ENVSEC project on Dniester has attracted the participation of representatives from Transnistria and steps have been taken to involve stakeholders from the whole basin in its management.



Dniester river near Chotyn, Ukraine

## Improved monitoring protects against floods in Belarus, Ukraine

The installations of flood monitoring stations was completed during the second half of 2012. As a result the flood monitoring system in Pripjat River Basin has been significantly improved with seven automatic hydro meteorological stations. The stations collect data on water levels, temperature and precipitation, as part of a

project developed by the ENVSEC Initiative and led by NATO. Risks are compounded by radioactive, polluted dredges and nuclear power stations located in the basin. For Ukraine and Belarus, this made flood monitoring, modeling and forecasting a national priority. The data from the stations is published on the internet and has been used by the Oblast Water Management Board for flood protection measures, owners of water reservoirs, and by the administration of the Rivne nuclear power plant.

## Annual regional meeting of ENVSEC in Southeastern Europe

The regional co-ordination meeting for Southeastern Europe was organized in June by the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) in Struga, FYR of Macedonia. ENVSEC partners and stakeholders both national and

international reaffirmed areas of mutual interest and future focus, including transboundary effects of climate change on security, industrial accidents, and mining. Visibility and improved understanding of ENVSEC interventions in the region were helped by a publication portraying ENVSEC projects in the Southern European region and their achievements under REC leadership during 2010-2012.

## CASE makes four grants to NGOs

Four civil society organizations in Azerbaijan received grants following endorsement of their projects by the Civic Action for Security and Environment (CASE). The CASE small grants programme, run by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), issued a call for proposals in February 2012 and received 28 proposals

for projects involving environment and security challenges. It was the fourth such call for proposals under the CASE scheme, implemented within the framework of the ENVSEC Initiative. CASE projects in Azerbaijan focus on efficient use of potable water, protection of water quality, and natural and man-made factors of land degradation. Projects also include introducing a "Green Corps" model in Azerbaijan, with security awareness campaigns aimed at youth.



CASE projects include awareness campaigns aimed at youth

## New study published on the ENVSEC security dimension

The *Study on Advancing the Security Dimension of ENVSEC* was finalized in July. In ensuing months, the ENVSEC partners reviewed and commented on the 14 recommendations provided in the Study. This round of comments allowed the ENVSEC Secretariat to develop a preliminary implementation plan for strengthening the security aspects of ENVSEC programming.

## EU Climate Change Lessons Published for Ukraine's Adaptation to climate change

The report *Experience of the European Union in Adaptation to Climate Change and its Application to Ukraine* was released in September. It offers practical guidance and background information to the government of Ukraine on undertaking adaptation activities. The study provides examples of current adaptation policy measures based on the EU experience and discusses options for financing adaptation activities.

## Towards risk reduction of uranium tailings in Central Asia

On October 24-25, the international conference "Uranium Tailings in Central Asia: joint efforts to reduce risks" was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. More than eighty participants represented governmental institutions, ministries, international organizations, EU/EC, the diplomatic corps, donor agencies, and the scientific and private sectors. It was a forum for reporting developments by all partners, discussing future options and developing plans to progress project proposals and addressing issues of capacity-building, good governance, socio-economic development, and business support.

The ENVSEC Initiative was represented by several participants from partner organizations. It was emphasized that ENVSEC is well-placed to provide the mechanisms necessary to develop, implement and coordinate remediation projects in Central Asia. ENVSEC will continue to seek support for operating projects for a systematic and coherent approach to remediation of legacy sites that address diverse transboundary issues – from public health and environment to socioeconomic and security issues.

## Partners focus on security and climate change at Brussels meeting

More than 50 participants including donors came from international organizations, partner countries and academic institutions to discuss European-wide climate change and security on 3 October at the annual ENVSEC Partners meeting. Held at the UN House in Brussels, participants agreed that climate change impacts the security of nation states, but traditional (military) security tools will not suffice to protect against threats affecting economy, environment and society as a whole. To address them effectively, "soft power" solutions are needed and building climate security entails improving cooperation and reducing competition. Participants also recognized the urgency of turning this understanding into action. It was agreed that the ENVSEC Initiative should develop tools that promote policy change and convince decision-makers to develop preventative and integrated policies.

The ENVSEC Initiative and its partner countries will continue to assess and address the security impacts of climate change. It will promote coordinated adaptation strategies to climate change in transboundary areas - river basins and mountains shared by several countries - and enhance human security and stability.

The event was organized by UNDP office in Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre to conclude the successful ENVSEC project "Strengthening Coordination of Project Formulation and Mobilization of Resources for Sustainable Radioactive Waste Management in Central Asia".



Uranium tailings sites at Mailuu Suu, Kyrgyzstan



ENVSEC meeting in Central Asia

## ENVSEC meets in Central Asia, looks ahead at priorities

The ENVSEC Initiative held its regional cooperation meeting in Central Asia on 8 November in Almaty, Kazakhstan to exchange latest news on current work and agree on future priorities for addressing environment and security risks. More than 40 national focal points of the ENVSEC Initiative from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were joined by donor representatives, experts, and other key stakeholders.

Participants stressed the importance of ENVSEC partners ensuring capacity to integrate results of ENVSEC programmes in national policies and plans and it was agreed that ENVSEC will strengthen its monitoring and measuring of security benefits and long-term impacts

on the ground. The ENVSEC partnership will continue to provide a regional coordination platform, assessing environmental and security factors and devising strategies for minimizing risks and maximizing resilience. For example, a key outcome in 2012 was a system for safety monitoring of the Kirov dam in Kyrgyzstan on the transboundary Talas River that also serves downstream Kazakhstan.

The meeting was organized by UNDP, responsible for ENVSEC coordination in Central Asia, also to prioritise preliminary focus areas for post 2013. These include social and economically responsible mining and uranium waste legacy management; dialogue with Afghanistan in transboundary water management; climate change adaptation with a focus on climate security and risk management; and improved access by civil society to environmental information and justice.

## Regional workshop on transboundary environmental risks arising from mining: 3 years of experience and future planning

UNEP's work regarding environmental risk reduction from sub-standard and abandoned mining sites in South Eastern Europe has evolved from site identification and prioritization to supporting the application and distribution of environmental best practice throughout the region. Waterways are regarded as the main vector for transboundary pollution; at the same time chemical risks arising from mining sites are most likely to occur via the water pathway. Toxic effluents such as acid mine drainage

pose serious risks to human health, environment and economic development of the impacted areas.

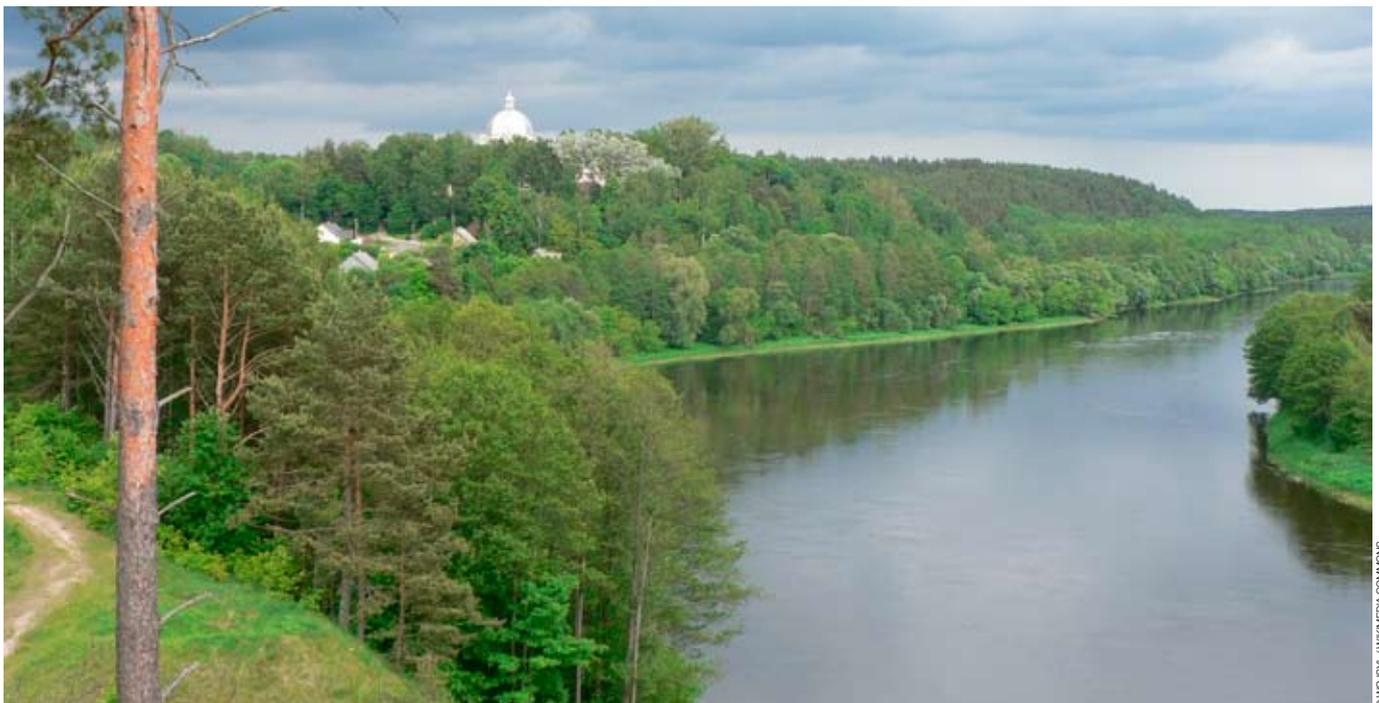
Between 2009 and 2012 ENVSEC partners have planned and implemented mining-related advancing prevention and mitigation of trans-boundary environmental risks arising from abandoned mines in the Western Balkans. Research, engineering design, dam remediation, water treatment, capacity-building, and communication have worked to improve the environment and increasing awareness. During the regional workshop held in Kolasin, Montenegro on 12 - 13 November 2012, the results of the project were presented to 25 representatives from Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Project implementation and results were evaluated and next steps discussed. A field visit to the Zluta Prla mine in Montenegro was organized to familiarize the participants with a UNDP activity for treating acid mine drainage.

## Water reflects impacts of climate change in the Neman river basin

Responding to new findings of the first joint assessment of water resources and climate change impacts in the Neman Basin River, a field trip and seminars were organized along the Neman River Basin in Belarus and Lithuania on 15 to 19 October 2012. Considering impacts of climate change on drinking water as well as supply used by industry, the project looks at not only

further likely impacts on the basin but also sketches some scenarios regarding implications for local people and business.

The report and meetings were organized as part of the project "River basin management and climate change adaptation in the Neman River Basin." The project is carried out by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Belarus, and implemented under the ENVSEC Initiative.



Neman river in Liskiava, Lithuania



Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park

## New protected areas in South Eastern Europe

Two draft laws on the Protected areas 'Bjeshkët e Nemuna' and 'Sharri' were adopted in December 2012 by the assembly of Kosovo (under UNSC resolution 1244). Both Protected areas are transboundary: "Sharri" borders with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

and "Bjeshkët e Nemuna" borders with Montenegro and Albania. The Protected areas are a significant step forward in protection of ecosystems, habitats and viable populations of wildlife in South Eastern Europe and help also to strengthen regional cooperation. Since 2005, UNEP has provided scientific information and technical assistance through the ENVSEC Initiative to support the establishment of protected areas in South Eastern Europe.

## New partnerships with the European Commission and the Austrian Development Agency

December saw confirmation of the creation of two new partnerships for 2013-2015. ENVSEC will collaborate with the European Commission to implement a project

"Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Southern Caucasus" under the Instrument for Stability. Collaboration with the Austrian Development Agency will continue through the ENVSEC projects "Transforming Environmental and Security Risks into Cooperation in the South Eastern European Region (Phase II)", and "Climate Change and Security in Dniester River Basin."

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