

Goals of the Initiative

In fall 2002, OSCE, UNEP and UNDP joined forces with a constellation of UN agencies and NGOs to promote the use of environmental management as a strategy for enhancing cooperation and reducing insecurity, with an initial focus on the regions of South Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Through regional consultations, and under the expert guidance of an international steering committee, this initiative seeks to:

1. Deliver regionally-appropriate definitions of the environment and security linkages of greatest relevance in South Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
2. Map these risks and opportunities in the form of a graphically-rich final report and web site;
3. Present the maps and their conclusions at the Kiev "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Meeting in May 2003, with recommendations for follow-up action; and
4. Mobilize resources and expertise to implement the suggested follow-up activities.

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Participating Organizations

United Nations Environment Programme
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
United Nations Development Programme
International Institute for Sustainable Development
Adelphi Research

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Environment and Security: A Framework for Cooperation in Europe

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Rationale and Focus

Cooperation towards sustainable and equitable management of the environment can build bridges across boundaries and between peoples.

This project seeks to facilitate a collaborative process whereby key public officials and development partners are able to motivate cooperative environmental action to address the links between natural resources and human security, through compelling graphical representations of the links

This initiative will begin by focusing on the regions of South Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Volunteers taking part in an OSCE action to protect the environment in Kazakhstan collect litter in the Charyn Canyon, June 2002 (OSCE)



Links Between Environment and Security

The transition from command to market economies is placing great pressures on the countries in South Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ensuring economic development—and responding to governance challenges in the context of deepening regional integration—will intensify pressure on natural resources unless mechanisms are put in place in advance to manage the transition.

There is growing understanding that rising resource scarcity and degradation of natural systems; problems such as inequitable access to critical resources; and transboundary movement of hazardous materials pose substantial threats to security for the countries of these regions.

Women washing carpets, 2001 (OSCE)



Environmental factors can, in some instances, deepen divides, while the environment itself can be dramatically affected by conflict.

More hopefully, it is now recognized that actions that reduce environmental stress, guarantee access to vital resources and remove economic incentives for conflict present opportunities for enhancing cooperation and building a sustainable peace. Environmental cooperation can strengthen mutual trust and be a basis for deeper peace-building.

Skies over Eastern Europe, 2001 (UNFPA)

