



***REPORT
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE REGIONAL
COOPERATION COUNCIL
SECRETARIAT***

**BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE REGIONAL
COOPERATION COUNCIL**

**SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF THE REGIONAL
COOPERATION COUNCIL IN LINE WITH
ARTICLE 10 OF THE STATUTE OF THE
REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL**

SARAJEVO, 14 May 2009

I. Introduction

This report on the activities of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat is submitted by the Secretary General of the RCC to the RCC Board in line with Article 10 of the Statute of the RCC. It covers the period between 1 March and 8 May 2009.

In the period under consideration the RCC Secretariat continued with the active implementation of the RCC Strategic Work Programme 2008-2009, in particular contributing to the development of regional cooperation in SEE and cooperation with the EU, its institutions and other relevant Brussels – based institutions.

During the reporting period meetings were organized between the RCC Secretary General and two Commissioners, responsible respectively for Enlargement and Science and Research. A Ministerial Conference on Developing Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans was held in Sarajevo on 24 April 2009 jointly organized by the Czech EU Presidency and the RCC Secretariat. Consultations and preparations are undergoing with the representatives of the upcoming Swedish EU Presidency concerning a large-scale development conference for SEE to be held on 9 December 2009 in Brussels organized in cooperation with the RCC and supported by the European Commission and the European Policy Centre. The RCC Secretary General held political consultations with senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Spain, Hungary and Switzerland as well as with the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Close cooperation has been established and meetings held with the Members of European Parliament who are particularly active on issues related to the RCC region. A Project Portfolio containing 18 project ideas was submitted to the Commission in March for initial comments. Based on the initial comments received from the Commission a follow-up Project Portfolio has been submitted to the Commission with elaborated Preliminary Project Ideas.

The RCC Secretariat has received profile and acknowledgement as a place of regional cooperation and ownership by visits (in chronological order) of Minister of State at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Gernot Erler, EU Trio Presidency Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Messrs Bernard Kouchner, Karel Schwarzenberg and Carl Bildt and Croatian President Stjepan Mesić.

A complete list of events attended by the Secretary General of the RCC and the officials of the RCC Secretariat is attached to this Report as Annex I.

II. Political aspects and general framework of the RCC activities

In the reporting period, the RCC Board met on 5 March 2009 and discussed future cooperation with representatives of 18 initiatives/task forces operating under RCC

auspices or having regulated appropriate relationship and coordination of activities through specific arrangements with the RCC Secretariat. The aim was to facilitate, streamline and coordinate the work of the taskforces and initiatives, and provide them with assistance in gaining access to regional and international political, technical and financial support required to fulfil their objectives.

The RCC Board discussed the issue of the implementation of the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of the other SEECP Participating States, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on behalf of Kosovo in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 on the Host Country Arrangements for the Secretariat of the Regional Cooperation Council (Host Country Agreement) at its session on 5 March 2009. The RCC Secretary General urged for responsibility and flexibility in enabling regional cooperation within the RCC framework and stressed the all-inclusive character of regional cooperation processes in South East Europe as well as the importance of active participation and contribution of all RCC members in meeting the priority areas of cooperation. The RCC Secretariat took appropriate steps to ensure the attendance of all the members in its activities and worked with the members of the RCC Board as well as with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina on securing conditions for unhampered and all-inclusive regional cooperation in accordance with its statutory documents. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina gave assurances to find a pragmatic and durable solution to this issues. The proposal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the issuing of visas to holders of Kosovo passports participating at the RCC meetings is currently waiting to be reviewed by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Absence of an RCC member from the discussions, activities and decision-making could have a negative impact on regional cooperation and undermine the overall achievements. Besides the efforts and action by the RCC Secretariat, it should be pointed out that creating conditions for the development of regional cooperation in South East Europe remains an obligation of all RCC members, as outlined in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the RCC and the RCC Statute.

The RCC Secretariat started preparations for the RCC Annual Meeting to be held back-to-back with the SEECP summit on 4 and 5 June 2009 respectively in Chisinau by sending out invitation letters to members of the RCC. In cooperation with the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office currently held by the Republic of Moldova the RCC Secretariat is tackling organisational and substantial issues of the Annual Meeting. Two documents to be discussed and adopted or accepted, respectively, the Draft Strategic Work Programme of the RCC 2009-2010 and the Draft Annual Report of the RCC Secretary General have been distributed to the members of the RCC Board ahead of its meeting on 14 May 2009. Both the Annual Report and Strategic Work Programme of the RCC will be, after their adoption by the RCC Board, submitted for review and endorsement by the RCC Annual Meeting (Chisinau, 4 June 2009). Strategic aspects of the Annual Report will also be presented to the SEECP Summit (Chisinau, 5 June 2009).

When considering possible joint regional action in response to the economic crisis and recession, it became clear that the scope of the crisis calls for innovative, far-reaching and

effective response such as large-scale regional development projects, especially in the field of energy, infrastructure and transport, jointly and in cooperation with the EU and international institutions.

The RCC Secretary General discussed with the incoming Swedish Presidency of the EU Council, the preparation and holding of a conference on the Western Balkans to be organized by the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council and the European Commission in Brussels in December 2009. The conference will address issues related to the impact of financial crisis on the region, on the progress of the enlargement process as well as on regional cooperation, with a particular emphasis on the fields of energy, transport and development of infrastructure. The RCC Secretariat and the European Policy Centre (EPC) shall be actively involved in the organization of this important event.

The RCC also continued cooperation and coordination with the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office of the Republic of Moldova. In the reporting period the RCC Secretary General and other representatives participated in meetings organized by the SEECP – the meeting of the Committee of Political Directors of the SEECP on 7 April 2009 and the Meeting of Heads of Consular Services of the SEECP Participating States on 24 April 2009.

Within the framework of cooperation with other regional organizations and initiatives, further to the Decision of the RCC Board of 12 December 2008, the RCC Secretariat proceeded with negotiations with the CEI-Executive Secretariat (ES) on a draft Memorandum of Understanding regarding cooperation between the the RCC Secretariat and the CEI ES. The two secretariats agreed on a final draft which was distributed to the RCC Board members for comments and approval and was adopted through written procedure on 19 March 2009. The Memorandum of Understanding will be signed on 12 May 2009 in Sarajevo.

III. Cooperation with the EU and Brussels-based institutions

The RCC Secretariat, in particular its Liaison Office in Brussels and Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for the relations with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, established regular contacts and consultations with representatives of European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, particularly European Commission, Council of the European Union, European Parliament and NATO.

In his letter, sent in advance of the European Council meeting of 19 and 20 March 2009 to the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, the RCC Secretary General stressed the necessity of paying adequate attention to South East Europe, as one of the most dynamic emerging markets in Europe, by the EU and its institutions, through providing adequate assistance and support in relation to the efforts undertaken by the governments of South East Europe to counter adverse effects of the current global economic and financial crisis. The RCC Secretary General asked for the support of the President of the European Council in respect of suggesting to the European Commission additional elaboration of financial and other measures that could assist the Governments of South East Europe,

both individually and collectively, in alleviating the crisis consequences or seeking ways to link the region of South East Europe with the sectoral planning as foreseen in the European Recovery Plan, in particular in the areas of energy, infrastructure, economic development and trade.

Within the framework of maintaining open-ended dialogue with the Czech EU Presidency, a meeting was held between the RCC Secretary General and the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the European Union, 23 March 2009. The meeting was a follow up of the discussion between RCC Secretary General and Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra, on the preparation of the Informal Meeting of the EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs (Gymnich), which was an opportunity to assess the present situation and to discuss future cooperation.

The RCC Secretary General held a meeting with the Member of the European Commission responsible for Enlargement Olli Rehn on 24 March 2009 in Brussels. Secretary General Biscevic briefed Commissioner Rehn on the current situation in South East Europe in light of the ongoing financial crisis and economic recession. Furthermore, he informed on active cooperation with the current Czech and incoming Swedish EU Presidencies in developing a strategic concept and projects in the priority areas of energy, infrastructure, transport and electricity, to serve both as a platform to counter crisis effects and an incentive to continue with necessary reforms in South East Europe. Secretary General Bišćević informed Commissioner Rehn of the preparations for the RCC Annual Meeting and the SEECF Summit to be held on 4 and 5 June 2009, respectively, in Chisinau.

Commissioner Rehn informed on the activities and efforts the European Commission and the IFIs have taken together to ensure that measures are taken to respond to current social and economic difficulties in South East Europe, in particular regarding funding of Crisis Response Package under IPA. He encouraged further development of the idea of having South East European countries work together on large-scale development projects that would engage IFIs funding, remedy social consequences of the economic recession and give additional incentive to continued reforms.

On the same occasion, the RCC Secretary General also met with Janez Potočnik, Member of the European Commission responsible for Science and Research, to discuss preparations for the Ministerial Conference on Developing Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans, co-organized by the RCC Secretariat and the Czech Presidency of the EU Council in Sarajevo, on 24 April 2009. The two officials agreed that development of concepts of Trust Based Societies and Knowledge Based Economies was an essential tool for accelerated development and modernization of societies.

Upon invitation of the Czech Presidency of the EU Council, the RCC Secretary General participated at the Informal EU– Western Balkans Forum, which took place on 28 March 2009 in Hluboka nad Vltavou in the framework of the Informal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member States (“Gymnich”). The RCC Secretary General informed the participants on the current and envisaged activities of the RCC. He stressed

the importance of the continuation of assistance of the European Commission and IFIs to the governments of the region in their efforts to address the adverse effects of global economic and financial crisis.

Contacts were established with the officials of the Spanish and Belgian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the two countries assuming the EU Presidency in 2010. As a result, political consultations of the RCC Secretary General with Minister of State for EU of Spain Diego López Garrido were held on 25 March 2009. RCC Secretary General Hido Bišćević elaborated RCC priority areas of cooperation and activities in light of the incoming Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2010. Minister López Garrido expressed full support of his government to the work of the RCC and agreed that development of large-scale regional projects, in the areas such as transport infrastructure, energy and use of inland waterways, would be an important stimulus to the region in countering the crisis effects. Minister López Garrido announced that Spain would build on the conclusions and results of its predecessor, the Swedish EU Presidency, and assured of a continued engagement of his country within South East Europe. Consultations with the officials of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are envisaged for the second half of 2009.

The Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council had a series of separate meetings with all South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) Participating States' Permanent Representatives/Heads of Missions to the EU in Brussels that were used for explaining his mandate and exchanging views on the most important RCC activities and future plans.

Within the framework of regular consultations with the EU Presidency, the RCC Secretary General, Hido Bišćević, met on 14 April 2009 with the First Czech Deputy Foreign Minister, Tomas Pojar, to discuss current situation in South East Europe (SEE) and cooperation between the RCC and the Presidency. The two officials spoke about preparations by the RCC Secretariat and the Moldovan Chairmanship-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) for the RCC Annual Meeting on 4 June and the SEECP Summit on 5 June in Chisinau, especially in view of the situation in Moldova following the recent parliamentary elections. They pointed to a need to show restraint and use diplomatic means in overcoming the difficulties. The two officials highlighted the importance of the Summit, especially at the present moment when the region is very much feeling effects of the economic crisis, which in turn can affect social and political situation in the region. They confirmed that all those interested in permanent stability and development in SEE should work towards diffusing the tensions. Secretary General Bišćević also informed Mr Pojar of the initiative to launch a cooperation process among the countries of SEE on large-scale development projects in the fields of energy, infrastructure and transport. The Czech EU Presidency informed of the calendar of meetings and decisions expected to be taken by the end of June, including those related to the submitted Montenegrin and the expected Albanian applications for EU membership, as well as those linked to a visa liberalization regime for the Western Balkans.

During the visit to Prague, the RCC Secretary General also held a lecture “South East Europe at the Crossroads: Facing Future Challenges Together” at the Institute for International Relations.

In the reporting period notable cooperation was achieved with the current and future EU Presidencies. Both the current Czech and the incoming Swedish EU Presidencies have confirmed that the region of South East Europe and particularly the Western Balkans are and shall be among the priority agenda items during their terms in office and that they will make substantial efforts to support concrete regional cooperation projects and open avenues for accelerating the EU integration process. They have expressed the intention to put the focus on making progress in the implementation of the European perspective and in achieving concrete results in the visa liberalization process and have repeated the message that the final decisions in this regard would depend on individual country performances. All interlocutors have expressed strong interest for an adequate inclusion of UNMIK/Kosovo in concrete regional cooperation activities within the RCC framework.

The Czech EU Presidency has expressed high appreciation for the excellent relations and cooperation established with the RCC Secretary General and other RCC Secretariat representatives, and through concrete activities and steps has confirmed its support for the work of the RCC. Although faced with challenges due to the internal and external unfavorable developments, the Czech EU Presidency continued with its efforts in bringing the countries of the Western Balkans closer to the realization of their European perspective by putting on its agenda for formal approval the EU membership application of Montenegro and by accepting the application of Albania, by assisting the efforts RCC is investing in developing regional cooperation and by pushing forward on the EU agenda some important issues such as the visa liberalization process.

The incoming Swedish EU Presidency has confirmed that South East Europe and, particularly Western Balkans, shall be among the priority items on its Agenda and that it will make substantial efforts in supporting concrete regional cooperation and development projects, as well as for accelerating the EU integration process. The Presidency has also expressed its intention for continuing with the practice of inviting the RCC SG to the important events to be organized during its term-in-office and to provide high-level participation at the most important events organized by SEECP and RCC.

To strengthen the quality of the preparations for MB IPA Preliminary Project Proposals, regular contacts have been established with DG Enlargement, Regional Programmes Unit, in the European Commission. Within close cooperation between RCC and Regional Programmes Unit preliminary comments were received on the RCC Project Portfolio containing 18 Preliminary Project Ideas, which was presented to the Commission in March. The Preliminary Project Ideas have been amended reflecting the comments received and an amended Project Portfolio for MB IPA funding 2010 was presented to the Commission on 7th May.

The RCC Secretariat had an active exchange of views on the preparation of EP Report on the Western Balkans, in the areas related to regional cooperation and coordination of regional initiatives. Through its Liaison Office, the RCC Secretariat continued to maintain regular contacts with Members of European Parliament active in Western Balkans issues.

The Working Group on Western Balkans (COWEB) have increasingly invited initiatives and Task Forces from the Region and the RCC Secretariat Liaison Office has been actively involved and recognized as natural liaison with the Brussels-based institutions. This signifies the importance of continuation of RCC working very closely with the regional initiatives and Task Forces. The Chairman of the Anticorruption initiative – RAI and the Head of the RAI Secretariat were invited by the EU Czech Presidency to present the structure and the activities of the initiatives.

IV. Political consultations with RCC members

The RCC Secretary General continues the dialogue with senior representatives of RCC members in order to maintain their active engagement in regional cooperation within the RCC framework. On 16 April 2009 he held consultations with the State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gabor Szentivanyi, and other ministry officials, on RCC work and Hungarian contribution to the activities of the organization.

Secretary General Bišćević spoke about the need for sharing experience between RCC members from South East Europe (SEE) and those from other parts of Europe, and proposed ways how Hungary, as an EU member, can contribute to keeping the EU attention on the SEE and accelerating the region's European integration. State Secretary Szentivanyi gave his country's full support to the RCC work and stressed three important things for regional development – free movement of people, joint infrastructure projects among the SEE countries to better connect the countries of the region but also the region with the rest of Europe, and establishment of education institutions which would promote regional mobility of students.

Within the framework of engaging international financial institutions active in the RCC framework, the RCC Secretary General met with officials of the Council of Europe Development Bank, including the Bank's Vice Governor Imre Tarafas on 20 April 2009 in order to explore the ways the two institutions can cooperate the best in the future. Mr. Tarafas expressed great interest in the work of the RCC, especially in relation to the networking mechanism and the organization's social agenda in the areas of education and health. He stressed the Bank's readiness for close cooperation with the RCC in these fields.

On 30 April 2009 Secretary General Bišćević held consultations with the Deputy State Secretary of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Helg, on cooperation among RCC members and upcoming projects in the organization's priority

areas of economic and social development, infrastructure and energy, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital, and parliamentary cooperation.

The two officials also discussed the situation in South East Europe. Secretary General Biščević stressed three main messages he is conveying throughout the region: additional urgency that the countries of the region need to apply with reference to the EU integration, greater self-responsibility, and perseverance with reform projects connected to EU accession. Deputy State Secretary Helg commended the work and results of the RCC. He expressed his Government's support to the RCC activities, especially in light of the announced December conference. He added that South East Europe is a priority region for Switzerland.

During his visit to the Swiss capital, the RCC Secretary General also met the Deputy Director General and Head of Department for the Cooperation with Eastern Europe and CIS of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Therese Adam, and presented her with the upcoming and planned RCC projects. Mrs. Adam expressed her full support to the work of the RCC and its Secretariat.

RCC Secretary General Biščević also met Mr. Dimitrios Katsoudas, Secretary General for European Affairs in the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 7 May 2009 in Sarajevo.

V. Outreach activities and visibility

With regard to its outreach activities, a practice of lectures and/or visits of senior officials from the region or from other partner countries and organizations and institutions to the RCC Secretariat was introduced. The lecture of State Minister in the German Foreign Office Gernot Erler held on 10 March in the premises of the RCC Secretariat was the first step in this direction. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and President of the Council of the European Union, Karel Schwarzenberg, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the French Republic, Bernard Kouchner, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden, Carl Bildt, visited the Secretariat of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in Sarajevo on 8 April 2009. Their visit was another confirmation of a great importance the European Union attaches to the RCC, as its key partner in South East Europe, and to regional cooperation as such. President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić was the first official of the region to visit the RCC Secretariat premises and express full support for the RCC framework of regional cooperation on 4 May 2009. The RCC Secretariat will promote other such visits to follow.

It is expected that this practice will raise the visibility of regional cooperation within the RCC framework among the public, not only of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also of South East Europe as a whole. In addition to this, the intention is to promote the RCC Secretariat as ownership of all RCC members which should be used and supported.

As part of his public outreach, the RCC Secretary General participated in the Brussels Forum 2009, organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, which took place in Brussels from 20 to 22 March 2009. On the margins of the event, Secretary General met with Alexandr Vondra, Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of the Czech Republic as well as with Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. The meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Vondra focused on the development of cooperation between the RCC and the current Czech Presidency of the EU Council as well as on the preparation of the Informal EU-eastern Balkans Forum organized in the framework of the Gymnich meeting in Hluboka nad Vltavou on 28 March 2009. With Minister Bildt, the RCC Secretary General discussed the organization of the joint high-level event devoted to the development of regional cooperation in South East Europe which is envisaged to take place in December 2009 in Brussels, during the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council.

VI. Priority areas of the RCC Activities

I. Economic and Social Development

Public Private Partnerships

Following extensive discussions with a wide range of local and international partners (the BiH Ministry of Communications, UNDP, the UNECE, and the World Bank Institute) in the months of January to February, the RCC Secretariat has proceeded to make preparations for a ministerial level regional conference on Public Private Partnerships scheduled to take place in September. During March and April, the RCC Secretariat finalized the conference agenda, secured the participation of most key international actors, successfully raised funds for the conference from a partner organization (UNDP), and developed a follow-up roadmap together with the Croatian Agency for PPPs which the Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development visited in March for extensive discussions on the subject. A co-hosting arrangement with the BiH Ministry of Finance and Treasury is expected to be secured in the near future, and Sarajevo's Faculty of Economics has also been engaged.

Focusing on the prospects for developing strategic infrastructure networks in times of global financial crisis, the conference will explore how PPPs might serve as a framework for attracting FDI in uncertain times. Three outcomes are expected: the garnering of political support for the PPP approach, the launching of a regional PPP expert network, and the promotion of a regional PPP capacity building program.

Private Sector Dialogue

The RCC Secretariat continued to closely follow the work of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) and accompanied its team on their business missions to Tirana and Podgorica in March. The attractiveness of the PPP model for future infrastructure development was clearly communicated at the time by Albanian and Montenegrin

officials, and the RCC Secretariat intends to engage BAC as a private sector spokesperson at its upcoming PPP conference in September, thus helping governments to understand the private sector's requirements vis-à-vis potential entry into PPP arrangements. BAC in turn has assisted the RCC Secretariat in making relevant international contacts necessary for the successful organization of the conference.

Women Entrepreneurship

During a visit to UNECE Geneva in March, the RCC Secretariat conducted preliminary discussions concerning a potential regional project aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship. It has since been agreed to work together with UNECE in organizing a first regional meeting aimed at promoting the project under the auspices of the Venice Chamber of Commerce which has shown an interest in supporting such an endeavor.

ICT

In April, the RCC Secretariat, together with the UNDP and Greece's INA Academy organized a one-day seminar on eGovernance attended by BiH government institutions. The RCC Secretariat has also made arrangements to host a workshop on the role of ICT in harnessing the potentials of SEE's scientific diaspora with Austria's Centre for Social Innovation. This event is scheduled to take place in June. Preparations are under way.

Employment Policy

Having had no substantial response from relevant international partners concerning the joint organization of the next meeting of the SEE Employment Network as well as its operational work plan, the RCC Secretariat has prepared a draft work plan on its own. It will be shared with the Employment Network and relevant international actors at a meeting which the RCC Secretariat plans to organize in June. It is hoped that the work plan can subsequently serve as a road map for this network, and its future meetings as a forum for tracking implementation and sharing best practices.

Social Dialogue

During the month of April, the RCC Secretariat developed the concept and agenda for a regional meeting of trade union and employer associations with a view to encouraging the social partners to develop joint recommendations on a crisis response which the RCC could help to disseminate among the governments of the region. The RCC Secretariat is currently in the process of exploring the social partners' interest in such an event and is also negotiating with a number of international stakeholders concerning possible co-organization arrangements and funding support. There are early indications that both the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency are interested to help.

Health

The pending MoU on the future of the SEE Health Network has now been signed by all parties. This paves the way for the establishment of a regional secretariat for this initiative and the gradual transformation of its projects into long-term programs. The RCC will participate in the selection of the location of the regional secretariat. An MoU concerning the Network's future relationship with the RCC has also been signed.

Though it does not envisage direct fund-raising support by the RCC, the RCC Secretariat may consider including some regional health programs into its portfolio to be shared with interested donors.

II. Energy and Infrastructure

Environment

During the reporting period, the activities of the RCC Secretariat continued to focus on cooperation with the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), UNECE Water Convention Secretariat and UNDP Regional Office in Montenegro. This cooperation primarily related to the preparation of the environmental events with REC within the agreed framework program Roadmap for Environmental Cooperation in SEE comprising three more thematic events that will be co-organized and hosted by the RCC Secretariat, namely: Natura 2000 in SEE, Priority environmental infrastructure investments in SEE and Multilateral cooperation on environmental issues through Multilateral Environmental Agreements in SEE. The Natura 2000 event is tentatively scheduled for the 29 May 2009 and the Priority environmental infrastructure investments in SEE event for the 18 June 2009. Additionally, cooperation with the REC included preparation of Preliminary Project Ideas (PPIs) in relation to ``Inventory of pressures and impacts in the Drina River Basin and transboundary cooperation in the Sava River Basin`` and ``Set up of the accident emergency warning system within the Drina River Basin``. These PPIs are being prepared in accordance with the MB IPA template requirements in order to be eligible for the MB IPA support.

Cooperation with the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat concentrated on the preparation of the Water Conference scheduled for 18-20 May 2009 that would include following parts: (i) a part on strategic issues for whole transboundary waters in the region including three themes (the legal and institutional basis for cooperation; climate change and its impacts on water related sectors; and multipurpose use of transboundary waters - how to reconcile different interests) (ii) a part to work on the second assessment of transboundary waters where participants will be divided in three groups (Adriatic, Black Sea, Aegean Sea) and discuss issues basin by basin and (iii) a concluding part on the way forward with a summary of the workshop and perspectives from European Commission and donors (World Bank, GEF, etc.). While added value of the second part would be to ensure concrete output that would be presented at the fifth meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention in November 2009 and finally at the next Ministerial Conference ``Environment for Europe``, the first and the third part would be primarily important to back regional cooperation and learn more about the position of donor community and IFIs to support regional cooperation and related projects, respectively.

Collaboration with the UNDP Regional Office correlated to the preparation of the PPIs concerning the biodiversity protection and ecosystem services as well as the establishment of the Regional Forum and the implementation of the part of the Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Adaptation which relates to coastal zone and tourism.

As a part of the RCC activities related to the cooperation with the NGOs, representatives of the Regional Education and Information Centre for Sustainable Development in South East Europe were contacted and backed in ensuring the necessary support for some of their planned activities.

Energy

In line with the conclusions of the workshop „Parliaments – Support to Harmonized Energy Reforms in SEE“ held in Sarajevo on 15 December 2008, it was agreed with the Energy Community Secretariat (ECS) representatives to prepare up to 3 events during 2009 that would address specific requirements of parliamentarians from the region concerning the energy sector reforms and social implications of these reforms. Taking into account the schedule of elections in the RCC Members from SEE, the RCC approached Serbian Parliament in order to start the sequence of events.

Additionally, the RCC Secretariat cooperated with the ECS participating in the 12th Permanent High Level Group meeting and discussing further extended cooperation in particular with regard to energy efficiency and renewables (``greening`` the Energy Community).

During the reporting period efforts were made also on the preparation of the energy efficiency project proposal with the representatives of the UN ECE EE21 Project, NALAS, FEDRE and RENEUER, to be supported primarily through the MB IPA. ECS offered project proposal to be presented when fully developed and possibly at the next Energy Efficiency Task Force meeting in May 2009.

GTZ Open Regional Fund for Energy in SEE representatives were contacted in order to support development of preliminary project ideas in the area of energy particularly energy efficiency and renewables that would afterwards be submitted for support to other donors and the MB IPA.

Due to the recent gas crisis the RCC Secretariat was encouraged by a few stakeholders to be a part of the solution. The RCC Secretariat was contacted to share its position on the energy crisis, energy security, energy efficiency and climate change and invited to participate in meetings and other events in order to deliver presentations and contribute in discussions (Regional Energy Security and Energy Efficiency Conference, Energy Crisis and Climate Change – Challenges for Politics and Business in SEE and 63rd Session of the UNECE).

Based on existing CEI infrastructure – an already established network of CEI National Energy Coordinators, continuous cooperation between the RCC Secretariat and the CEI will result in launching the initiative on sustainable energy development in the region after signing of an MoU on cooperation between the two organizations. At the possible next stage of initiative development other relevant stakeholders would be included as well.

Transport

Taking into account EU policy towards inland waterways development and SEETO future plans to increase the role of this transport mode, the RCC Secretariat sustained intensive cooperation with the Sava Commission that would be a significant participant in the scheduled Water Conference as well. In the forthcoming period, it would be very important for the RCC Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the key partners in the transport area (EC DG TREN and SEETO) particularly concerning the RCC Secretariat involvement in the Transport Community Treaty for Western Balkans negotiations, implementation of the ECAA Agreement and implementation of the MoU on establishment of SEE Core Regional Transport Network and Addendum to the MoU on Railway Transport Area.

The RCC Secretariat participated in the Partnership for Improvement of Danube Infrastructure and Navigation - 7th Danube River Technical Meeting with main objectives to overview new developments concerning policies and decisions regarding Danube-wide sustainable development and strategies and to review and update the status of ongoing Danube projects and proposals. During the event the RCC Secretariat stressed the need for promoting an integrated approach when planning and developing Danube infrastructure projects primarily establishing cooperation between ECS, SEETO and REC.

During the reporting period all relevant initiatives, task forces and other partners were offered to cooperate in order to prepare PPIs to be supported through MB IPA or other potential donors explaining the requirements for these applications.

Due to a multidisciplinary character of the infrastructure activities in relation to both preparation of events and relevant preliminary project ideas, a variety of stakeholders have been contacted and included in their elaboration alongside the active participation of the EC.

III. Justice and Home Affairs

During the reporting period, the RCC Secretariat was actively pursuing actions improving the process of cooperation among national authorities, streamlining and raising the visibility of the relevant regional initiatives, enhancing their contribution and performance on judicial cooperation.

The activity of liaison police and customs officers, the prosecutors' networks cooperation has been improved; a holistic approach on enhancing regional cooperation among police and law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges has been addressed; a number of regional project ideas have been drafted in close coordination with national authorities and regional initiatives; consultation are underway aimed at drafting a SEE Multiannual Regional Strategy on JHA.

The RCC Secretariat has been involved in ongoing projects such as: EU - ILECU; Anti-corruption Consultancy and High Level Corruption Survey, both with RAI partnership; the continuation of the implementation of Interpol I-24/7 Border Checking Point as a component of the Bled Stolen Vehicle Process; incorporating the work on Anti-corruption in OECD Investment Reform Index 2009; visa regime in SEEC countries – a project of the Republic of Moldova. Through its partnership in the ILECU Project, the RCC Secretariat becomes an active actor in the process of harmonizing national legislations in the field of criminal law, and synchronising the use of the European and international tools of criminal investigation and prosecution.

Combating organized crime

In promoting the rule of law and cooperation among SEE countries in key areas as criminal justice and fighting transnational organized crime, the RCC Secretariat worked closely with UNODC.

UNODC Regional Programme 2009-2011 “*Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in SEE*”, was launched during the Regional High Level Conference organized in Belgrade, Serbia, from 30-31 March 2009. The UNODC Regional Program states RCC, RAI, SECI Centre, SEPCA and SEEPAG role as strategic partners for the implementation of the activities envisaged in three main thematic areas: organized crime and illicit trafficking; justice and integrity; drugs and HIV. The SEE states participating at the High Level Conference adopted a *Joint Statement* committing to work together and in close partnership with relevant regional and international organizations.

The RCC Secretariat and SECI Centre have finalized the discussions to formalize cooperation and to consolidate bilateral relations in the areas considered of great importance for combating organized crime, such as: cooperation with EUROPOL; strengthening the collaboration with OLAF, as well as with WCO and Interpol; SELEC Convention signature, ratification and implementation; finalization of the Organized Crime Threat Assessment for South East European Region (OCTA SEE); access to EC and other donors' funds.

The SECI Centre identified and sent to RCC for consideration two projects ideas: “*Transforming the SECI Regional Center for Combating Trans-border Crime into the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC)*” – enhancing the capabilities of the centre, ensuring compliance with the protection of personal data, and capacity to form partnerships with other institutions; “*Strengthening the analytical capabilities in order to prepare a Common Threat Assessment on Organized Crime for South East European Region (OCTA-SEE)*”. Both project proposals have been introduced in the RCC Projects Portfolio.

Prosecutors' cooperation

RCC contributed to the organization of the *III. World Summit of Prosecutors General, Attorneys General and Chief Prosecutors*, Bucharest, Romania, from 23 to 25 March 2009. The main theme of the Prosecutors' General World Summit was: “*Prosecutor General – Pillar of the Contemporary Criminal Justice System*”. Due to the fact that the

meeting provided a unique opportunity for Prosecutors General to address, at the highest level, issues of specific interest or concern for criminal justice systems which are in the process of transition and reform, the *Regional Cooperation Council* strongly supported the General Prosecutors of the SEECP countries to attend the World Summit. A permanent Secretariat of the Prosecutors General World Summit, financed by Romania, has been established in Bucharest and will closely cooperate with IAP, UNODC and RCC. On this occasion, the Office of the Romanian Prosecutor General, International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) initiated the consultation with a view to organizing a regional annual meeting (conference or forum) of the SEE Prosecutors General.

The RCC Secretariat is working on the transformation of SEEPAG (South Eastern Europe Prosecutors' Advisory Group) into a more visible, effective and efficient network of experienced prosecutors, able to provide real operational support, legal assistance, advice and guidance to SECI Centre's liaisons officers in the investigation of trans-border organized crime. To avoid overlapping, duplication and fragmentation at regional level, the RCC Secretariat, with the SECI Centre and the Council of Europe's assistance, is facilitating SEEPAG and the Prosecutors' Network in South-eastern Europe (supported by the EC financed PROSECO Project) to extend contacts and to develop regional coordination. On 28 and 29 April 2009, in Zagreb, SEEPAG and RCC JHA representatives attended the 6th *Meeting of the Prosecutors' network* organized by the Council of Europe within the framework of the "*Support to Prosecutors' Network in SEE*" - regional PROSECO project.

Fight against corruption

With respect to the fight against corruption, the RCC Secretariat, the Regional Anticorruption Initiative (RAI) and countries increased their common engagement on prevention and countering corruption. Corruption related to the public and private sector has been addressed, RAI and the RCC Secretariat's experts together with national representatives focused on the tools to detect and investigate corruption in public procurement, especially 'red flags' as a new instrument taken from the practice of international organizations and investment banks.

On 29 April 2009, RAI representatives and RCC Liaison Office were invited by the Czech Presidency to have a presentation in front of COWEB, followed by a session of questions and answers.

In 2009 RCC and RAI started the implementation of the project on the *Survey on Integrity and Resistance to Corruption of the Criminal Judicial System in SEE Countries*, financed by the US Department of State, and approved by RAI Steering Group.

The RCC Secretariat proposal on *Regional network of (independent) specialized anti-corruption agencies*, a project idea developed by RCC and RAI has been included into MB IPA 2010 project cycle.

Migration, asylum and refugees

The 2009 Seminar on “*Citizenship Legislation and Practices-Overview of the state of Affairs in MARRI Member States*” organized in Tirana, attended by the RCC Secretariat and SEPCA representatives, stressed the common interest of the region to harmonize national legislation on citizenship with EU standards, and stated that MARRI activities contribute to the consolidation of regional cooperation in the area of migration.

The Moldovan SEECPC CiO together with the RCC Secretariat and MARRI organized on 24 April 2009, in Chisinau, *the 1st Meeting of the Heads of Consular Services of the SEECPC participating countries*, on “Possibilities of facilitating the visa regime for experts from SEECPC countries”. The meeting identified and discussed the technical possibilities to provide certain facilities at bilateral levels, in order to eliminate the existent barriers for the participation of national representatives/experts in political and specialized meetings within the regional cooperation framework. RCC delegation and the Moldovan RCC National Coordinator have asked Turkey to continue the process and to convene a meeting as soon as possible in the autumn of 2009. The Turkish delegation accepted and promised to continue the good cooperation with the RCC Secretariat, MARRI Center.

MARRI identified and sent to RCC for consideration and further action 4 projects ideas: “*Assessment of Types of Identification Documents in MARRI Member States*”; „*Building a Regionally Integrated Approach of MARRI Member States for Successful Preventing and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)*“; “*MARRI Interactive Migration Map*”, “*Migration and sustainable socio-economic development in the Western Balkans*”. All proposals have been introduced in the RCC Projects Portfolio.

Police and law enforcement cooperation

RCC actively participated at the *VI Ministerial Conference on Border Security Cooperation in Southeast Europe* held in Belgrade from 5-7 March 2009. The Conference, opened by Serbian President Mr. Boris Tadić, was attended by 9 ministers of home affairs and EU high representatives. During the Conference several documents were signed: Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina signed bilateral protocols on organizing joint patrols along their borders; Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina signed an agreement on joint border checks at border crossings; Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signed an agreement on dual citizenship; police representatives from Serbia and Hungary signed an agreement on cooperation between units for fighting organized crime. The Joint Declaration signed by the ministers from the SEE countries envisages achieving till 2012 full compliance with European Union standards and the implementation of best practices of the EU member states.

The RCC Secretariat initiated direct cooperation with the Council of Europe in the field of Cybercrime. The RCC Secretariat's experts attended *OCTOPUS Interface Conference, Cooperation against cybercrime*, organized in Strasbourg from 10 to 11 March 2009. On this occasion RCC and CoE identified complementarities and synergies between the 2nd phase of the CoE Global Project on Cybercrime and the RCC Cybercrime Project Idea.

The RCC Secretariat actively supported the recognition of the SEE Police Cooperation Convention (PCC) as an important legal framework for judicial cooperation. A DCAF-PCC Secretariat, located in Ljubljana has been set up to organize the implementation and to draft guidelines, manuals and model agreements for the Convention to become effective.

Close coordination and periodical exchange of information between SEPCA and RCC JHA Unit has been established, giving SEPCA more visibility and continuous political support. SEPCA plays an important role in police cooperation through projects and actions coordinated at the level of police managers. Organized by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and SEPCA, the April 2009 Stolen Vehicles Crime Conference brought together specialized police and border officers representatives from INTERPOL, EUROPOL, European and international organizations who shared information, exchanged best practices and discussed National Action Plans as well as future steps to be taken to improve national and regional regulations and activities in fighting stolen vehicle crime.

SEPCA identified and sent to RCC for consideration and further action 4 projects ideas: *“SEE forensic science adjustment project”*; *“Police corruption – raising police integrity project”*; *“Traffic safety”*; *“Female police officers network”*.

Based on SEE countries priorities and the inputs received from EC, regional and international organizations, the RCC Secretariat identified the following project ideas: *“SEE e-justice”* (cases and documents management); *“Integration of the law enforcement agencies of Western Balkan countries in the EU counter-terrorism effort”*; *“Combating money laundering and financing terrorism; assets confiscation”*; *“Cyber crime units in SEE”*; *„Setting up the Regional Office of „South East European Drugs Coordination“(SEEDC“)*; *„Regional network of (independent) anti-corruption agencies“*.

IV. Security Cooperation

Disaster preparedness and prevention

On March 16-17, 2009, the World Bank, UN/ISDR and the Regional Cooperation Council organized the first preparatory meeting of future SECE CRIF shareholders. The meeting was held in Sarajevo, in RCC headquarters, and was chaired by Mr. Hido Bišćević, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council. The event was attended by country delegations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. Four more RCC member countries - Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria – have sent letters with the expressions of interest to join the CRIF.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the draft of SECE CRIF Shareholders' Agreement and other essential documents forming the legal foundation of the company operations. The draft legal documents had been sent to all SECE countries that formally expressed interest in becoming CRIF shareholders prior to the meeting.

At the meeting Countries agreed that they will submit their comments on the draft founding legal documents no later than by April 15, 2009 to RCC; undertake all necessary steps to prepare the CRIF founding documents for signature by the designated government representatives at a Global UN Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva on June 17, 2009 and ratify the signed CRIF founding documents within 3-5 months from the date of their signing. The World Bank will look into the possibility of establishing a special lending SECE CRIF regional facility that could help the member countries to finance their equity contributions to the project. Countries interested in borrowing from such a facility should inform the Bank accordingly by May 15, 2009. The World Bank jointly with RCC and UN ISDR will work closely with the EU Commission, DG Enlargement and other donors to identify other potential sources of funding for countries' equity contributions.

As a follow up a letter was sent by the RCC Secretary General to the Prime ministers of the countries that have expressed interest in participating in SECE CRIF. The letter outlined the future framework of expected events and underlined that having realized that severe budgetary constraints had been faced by the countries of the region due to the adverse effects of global financial crisis, RCC in cooperation with the WB and ISDR introduced an important modification to the design of the SECE CRIF, a grace period of up to 12 months between the date of signing the shareholders' agreement and the date by which country capital contributions to the Facility should be made. The proposed grace period will give all countries interested in the project enough time to provide for the capital contributions to the SECE CRIF in their budgets for 2010.

A project on establishing a South East Europe Firefighting Regional Center (SEEFREC) was developed in coordination with the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE) and supported by the World Bank and UNISDR. The project-idea was sent to the RCC National coordinators for consideration by the relevant SEE national authorities. By the end of February responses from three countries were received and a second letter was sent to RCC National coordinators outlining the future planned activities such as – following comments, suggestions and indications of preliminary interest for participation in the SEEFREC project received by the RCC members from South East Europe, the RCC Secretariat will enter the second phase regarding the preparations of the project. The RCC Board will be asked to approve the project and the RCC Board members other than regional ones will be asked for their eventual interest to provide financial contributions to the SEEFREC project. A Draft Agreement on the project will be prepared, with the assistance from independent contracted experts, possibly by the end of May 2009 to be presented to the participants in SEEFREC for their approval and adoption. On the basis of the contributions received from the RCC members from the region, the project will be further developed and discussed in detail at a Regional Conference which will be organized under the RCC auspices in late June 2009. Positive outcome of this Conference will be followed by the Inauguration Conference of SEEFREC. The constitution of the Managing Board and beginning of the appointment procedures for SEEFREC are expected in autumn 2009.

The RCC Secretariat has, in cooperation with DPPI SEE, provided assistance to UNDP in drafting a Regional Program on Disaster Risk Reduction in SEE – a Grant application form to be submitted to EC. The project aims at building capacity in disaster risk reduction through regional cooperation in SEE.

Coordination and streamlining of regional task-forces and initiatives

RCC Senior expert on security issues participated in the 21-st meeting of the Multinational Advisory Group (MAG) of RACVIAC – Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre. MAG adopted a new legal status and structure of RACVIAC placing the organisation out of RCC and TF framework. The adopted documents are offered to MAG member countries and invited to encourage, in their respective States, all necessary activities of the state administration/relevant authorities, in order that the Agreement on RACVIAC is signed.

Consultations with relevant regional and international partners

Upon receiving a letter – proposal from the Ministry of Defence of Bulgaria, Defence Policy and Security Directorate a joint initiative is being undertaken on organising the first meeting of Defence Policy Directors and International Cooperation Directors of the Ministries of Defence of SEE Countries that will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria on the 21-22 May 2009. Representatives of the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, as well as representatives from NATO International Staff will also be invited. This meeting intends to allow networking, building relationships, and strengthening trust as a basis for furthering regional security cooperation in the defense arena. In an informal discussion Delegations will be expected to identify requirements for enhancing transnational /multinational defense cooperation capabilities, to propose initiatives to meet possible expectations, and formulate techniques and capabilities to improve the region-wide transnational defense cooperation efforts. Invitations were sent out in the beginning of April 2009. The Bulgarian RCC NC visited RCC Secretariat in Sarajevo in April to further discuss the event.

Consultations with the COWEB coordinator at the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU and with the Director of Intelligence of the EU Council Military Staff continued through the RCC Liaison Office in Brussels. An outline of the first meeting of the Heads of Military Intelligence Agencies of SEE Countries under the patronage of the Director of Intelligence of the EU Council Military Staff was agreed upon. RCC is in the stage of identifying a SEE Country to be the co-organiser and host of the event. At the next stage the project idea will be offered to the relevant SEE Countries institutions for consideration

V. Building Human Capital and Cross – Cutting Issues

In the field of Building Human Capital (BHC) the RCC Secretariat continued its activities regarding development and promotion of the project - the Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans. Communication with different stakeholders in the field of research has been strengthened and, in that light, an agreement has been made with the

Czech Republic Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the co-organization of the Ministerial conference - Developing the Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans. Conference held on 24 April 2009 in Sarajevo.

The Conference was opened by the RCC Secretary General and the Deputy Minister - Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. The Conference keynote speaker was the European Commissioner for Science and Research and participants were the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Minister of Education and Science of Montenegro, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania, Director of the Directorate for Science, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia and representatives of other RCC members from South Eastern Europe, international organizations and respective stakeholders (DG Enlargement, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank, Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital, Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkans, Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe).

The Ministers adopted a Joint Statement which launched the establishment of a Regional Research and Development Strategy and reaffirmed readiness for cooperation in the fields of research and innovation in a comprehensive manner, moving from a fragmented to an integrated approach in the region, promoting the establishment of competitive regional Centers of Excellence, closely connected with higher education and business sectors, in the fields of strategic interest for the region, thereby facilitating the integration of Western Balkans into the European Research Area. Ministerial Joint Statement promotes development of regional research infrastructures, open access to pan-European research facilities of common interest and considers the development of Western Balkan research infrastructure roadmap, encourages the transfer of knowledge by developing and supporting networks of scientists and engineers from the Western Balkans and the entire SEE region and enhances the potential of young scientists by supporting their career development and opportunities, by creating favorable conditions to sustain their research endeavors and facilitating their training, mobility and cooperation within the region;

A project proposal for multibeneficiary IPA on “Developing a Regional Strategy on Research and Development for the Western Balkans” composed by the Ministries of the Western Balkans countries and with close facilitation of the RCC Secretariat is in the process of development.

Experts of the RCC Secretariat had a number of meetings at the RCC Secretariat premises in Sarajevo as well as abroad with the representatives of different partner organizations with the aim to further advancing cooperation the field of education, science, research, culture and other related areas:

Task Force Fostering & Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council organized Conference on Fostering and Building Human Capital (BHC) for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe, took place in Bucharest, on 6 and 7 March 2009 and was attended by the Head of BHC Unit and LO Adviser. Conference

participants were representatives of the Governments, NGOs and academic community from the Region as well as from the donor community, such as Norway, Austria, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, European Commission and Council of Europe. Conference content provided for in-depth analysis of experience of building of human capital in the region of South East Europe and challenges to be met, from the perspective of EU priorities and beneficiary societies. Special emphasis was given to Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkan Countries and integration of the Western Balkans to the European Research Area. Thematic workshops were held devoted to Human capital contribution to regional development, Effective policies for BHC, Fostering human capital for labour market needs, competitiveness and sustainable development. Challenges for building human capital in a changing society were discussed through experience of Romania.

A two-day visit to Council of Europe (COE) (16-17 March) was organised upon invitation from Sarah Keating-Chetwynd, Co-ordinator for SEE in the DG IV – Education, to establish contacts between RCC and the Council of Europe Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs and Directorate General of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage. With the representatives of three Directorate Generals eight meetings were held, at which RCC presented activities within Building Human Capital and Cross-cutting Issues Unit, such as the Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans, Quality Assurance, Life Long Learning programs, development of Joint History Teaching Materials, Ljubljana Process, Trust Based Society Conference, etc. Excellent contacts were established and the cooperation will follow especially related to issues of education and cultural heritage.

Head of BHC Unit met with Ms. Efka Heder, Director of SEE Center for Entrepreneurial Learning, Judith Novak and Donald M. Sheehan from DG Enlargement, Anthony Gribben from the European Training Foundation, and Ana Bebic, representative of NIPAC from Croatia, to discuss support to SEE Center for Entrepreneurial Learning. At the moment, SEE CEL is attached to the Croatian Chamber of Economy in Zagreb, but planning to become international organization. In this respect advice and leadership from RCC was welcomed, based on the experience of already existing international organizations and their secretariats in the region (i.e. - model of MARRI center) in regard to the legal registration and staff secondments from the Governments from the Region.

The RCC Secretariat representative participated at the ITU Regional Forum on Human Capacity Development in Europe, which was held in Pržno, 30 March – 1 April 2009. Regional ITU Forum was co-organised by the International telecommunication Union and the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services. The event promoted excellence in human capacity and talent development, with a focus on the telecoms and information and communication technology sector. The objective was to share best practices in learning, training and development activities from National Administrations and service providers, with a view to promote human capital building.

The RCC delegation, led by the RCC Deputy Secretary General and the Head of the Expert Pool, attended a two-day Conference on Donor Coordination in Western Balkans and Turkey, held in Tirana, 2-3 April 2009. The event, organised by the Government of Albania and the European Commission – DG Enlargement, brought together representatives of the International Financial Institutions, EU Member States, non-EU donors and countries from Western Balkans and Turkey. The conference focused on recent progress made in enhancing coordination mechanisms at country level and on identifying remaining shortcomings in the process. Working group on Education concluded that both donors and partner countries should implement the Paris Declaration and its five principles on ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for development results and mutual accountability, as well as the Accra Agenda for Action. A programme-based approach is useful for the purpose of strengthening co-ordination, coherence and efficiency in educational development. Donors should support that appropriate regulations, in line with EU standards when relevant, are adopted and that stable administrative capacities are developed in accordance with a coherent national programme.

The reporting period was used for the preparation of parliamentary seminars for MPs and parliamentary staff in cooperation with the European Parliament and the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in SEE. The calendar of events in this constellation was designed whereby until the end of 2009 parliamentary seminars both for MPs and the experts staff in the Parliaments of SEE countries will be organized on the following topics: Visa and border management, Parliamentary budgetary powers, and Free trade and regional internal market.

The 8th meeting of the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum and the Fourth Conference of the European Integration Parliamentary Committees of states participating in the South-Eastern Europe Stabilisation and Association Process (COSAP) was held in Cetinje, Montenegro, on 27 March 2009. The first part of the Forum, opened and chaired by the Speaker of Montenegrin Parliament, Mr. Ranko Kriovokapić, dealt with the role of the EU integration committees in potential candidate and candidate countries. The second part of the event encompassed a lively discussion on the topic of the global crisis and its impact on the region, in which Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Montenegro, Mr. Igor Lukšić, took part. Participants of the Forum encouraged the SAA countries to continue with the progress in the process of European integration and carry out the necessary reforms which will strengthen the democratic and institutional capacity in their countries. Importance of regional parliamentary cooperation was emphasized, and in that light, support was expressed to future activities of the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum.

The European Parliaments' Directorate General-Presidency, Directorate General on Relations with National Parliaments in coordination with the Directorate General for External Policies of the Union, and Committee on Foreign Affairs organised the parliamentary seminar at the European Parliament premises in Brussels on 31 March and 1 April 2009. The topic of discussion was "Visa and Border Management". The target groups at this seminar were the Members of the Western Balkans Parliaments and the

Members of the European Parliament, with Minister of Interior of Serbia Mr. Ivica Dačić being present at the meeting. Delegations from the Western Balkans had a chance to present their achievements and challenges on the road towards visa liberalization mainly focusing on the border management with neighboring countries and visa issue. Most of them reported on the issuance of the biometric passports as one of the criteria specified in the visa liberalization roadmap. All delegations called for more commitment from the EU side on support for abolishing visas for the citizens of Western Balkans countries.

VII. Setting up of the RCC Secretariat

The reporting period was marked by the final stage of recruitment of the officials of the RCC Secretariat.

The interviews with the selected candidates for the post of the Expert on Infrastructure in the RCC Secretariat were held in Sarajevo on 9 March 2009. Following these interviews a decision on the appointment to this position by the RCC Secretary General was made on 23 April 2009 taking into consideration the requirements for the post and the qualifications of candidates and the Expert on Infrastructure will join the RCC Secretariat as of June 2009. By filling the last remaining vacancy the recruitment procedure for the RCC Secretariat has been completed.

Following additional assessment of the scope of work of the Administrator in the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels and the Assistant to the Head of Liaison Office as well as existing budgetary constraints, the RCC Secretary General decided on merging these two positions in the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels. The Administrative Officer/Assistant took position as of 16 March 2009.

As per technical and service staff, the new Receptionist commenced with work in the RCC Secretariat, following the completion of the selection and employment procedure as of 20 April 2009.

Regarding the setting-up of the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels there remains the outstanding question of the application of the privileges and immunities of fiscal nature for the Head and Deputy Head of the Liaison Office. In this view, the RCC Secretary General sent a communication to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in early January 2009, proposing to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Party to and, at the same time, a depositary of the Host Country Agreement to consider the possibility of initiating the process of amending relevant provisions of the Agreement in order to provide for confirmation of taxability of officials of the RCC Secretariat in their countries/places of origin and/or permanent residence. This proposal of the RCC Secretary General is currently under consideration by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Through RCC cooperation with the Balkans Trust Fund and King Baudouin Foundation, one person will join the LO Brussels for a two-month internship, a civil servant from Albania.

VIII. Membership of the RCC and the RCC Board

In the course of the reporting period there were no changes to the membership of the RCC and the RCC Board.

IX. State of the financial contributions to the RCC Secretariat's budget

The Financial Sub-Committee to the RCC Board met in Sarajevo on 19 March 2009. The meeting was devoted to the review of the Financial Report of the RCC Secretary General for the year 2008 and the Report of the External Auditor (KPMG). On the occasion of the meeting the Financial Sub-Committee recommended to the RCC Board the approval of the Financial Report of the RCC Secretary General for the year 2008 which the RCC Board did through written procedure on 20 April 2009.

The RCC Board adopted, on 25 March 2009, through written procedure, and following the recommendation by the Financial Sub-Committee to the RCC Board, the addenda to the Financial Management Manual of the RCC Secretariat related to the Fixed Assets Depreciation Rate and the management of the RCC Secretariat's bank account in Brussels, in particular the definition of its signatory panel.

Until 8 May 2009 the following contributions were made to the RCC Secretariat's Budget:

- Czech Republic	50,000.00 EUR	18 December 2008
- Italy	50,000.00 EUR	17 February 2009
- Bosnia and Herzegovina	30,000.00 EUR	4 March 2009
- Bulgaria	140,000.00 EUR	6 March 2009
- Moldova	40,000.00 EUR	17 March 2009
- Croatia	80,000.00 EUR	30 March 2009
- Latvia	50,000.00 EUR	7 April 2009
- Norway	98,331.83 EUR	7 April 2009
- Sweden	150,000.00 EUR	21 April 2009

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|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| - Romania | 140,000.00 EUR | 27 April 2009 |
| - European Commission | 550,000.00 EUR | 4 May 2009 |

X. Future activities of the RCC Secretariat

Forthcoming events of particular importance in the period until the next RCC Board meeting are the following:

- 12 May 2009, Sarajevo - signing of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding cooperation between the RCC Secretariat and the CEI Executive Secretariat,
- 12 May 2009, Brussels - Conference devoted to increasing scholarships to students from the Western Balkans, organised by the Czech EU Presidency, European Commission, King Baudouin Foundation and RCC,
- 18 – 20 May 2009, Sarajevo - SEE Water Conference,
- 18 May 2009, Pristina – Presentation of RCC and its activities
- 20 May 2009, Ljubljana - Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Regional Partnership and of Western Balkan Countries organized by the Slovenian chairmanship of the Regional Partnership
- 21-22 May 2009, Sofia - meeting of Defence Policy Directors and International Cooperation Directors of the Ministries of Defence of SEE countries,
- 21 May 2009, Vienna - signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the RCC and UNODC,
- 25 May 2009, Brussels – COWEB presentation of the RCC activities
- 28 May 2009, Berlin - consultations of the RCC Secretary General with the officials of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Minister of State H.E. Mr. Erler and the German National Coordinator Ms. Emily Haber,
- 4 June 2009, Chisinau - Annual Meeting of the RCC,
- 5 June 2009, Chisinau - Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the SEECF Participating States,
- 9 - 10 June 2009, Zagreb – Coordination meeting of the Multi-beneficiary IPA Programme, the RCC SG will deliver a presentation on the development of regional cooperation in SEE and MB IPA

- 16 June 2009, Geneva - Global UN Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction, on the margins signing of the SECE CRIF founding documents,
- 17 June 2009, Dubrovnik - The first South-East Europe Aviation Workshop organized by Croatia Airlines and the Association of European Airlines
- 23 June 2009, Brussels - presentation of RCC activities and structure for the public of Brussels-based institutions and media,
- 15 September 2009, Sarajevo - RCC Board meeting,

ANNEX I

LIST OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS ATTENDED BY THE RCC SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE RCC SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS IN THE PERIOD FROM 1 MARCH TO 8 MAY 2009

- Meeting with the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU – Brussels, 2 March 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Meeting with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the United States of America – Sarajevo, 2 March 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting with the Head of Enlargement Strategy Unit, DG ELARG, European Commission – Brussels, 2 March 2009 (Deputy Head of Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the representatives of the UN ECE – Geneva, 2 – 3 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Participation at the Conference organized by the European Economic and Social Committee and the International Labor Organization “Civil Society in the Black sea region” - Brussels, 2 - 3 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office)
- 13th Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency Investment for Climate Change Mitigation – Geneva, 2 – 4 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
- Meeting with the Senior Diplomatic Officer, Centre for International Governance, The Graduate Institute Geneva - Brussels, 3 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for relations with EU Presidency, Advisors in the Liaison Office)
- Participation at the First Meeting of Steering Committee of the CEFTA Secretariat – Brussels, 3 March 2009 (Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Director of the Serbian Institute of Diplomacy Director – Brussels, 4 March 2009 (Deputy Head of Liaison Office)
- Participation at the Conference on preparing the Stockholm Programme: “A Strategic Agenda for Freedom, Security and Justice” - Brugge, 4 - 5 March 2009 (Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- RCC Board Meeting – Sarajevo, 5 March 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Chief of Staff, Head of Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU, Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development, Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Senior Expert on Security Cooperation, Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Spokesperson, Expert on Economic and Social Development, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues, Political Advisors, Junior Political Advisor)

- Sixth Annual Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in the Field of Border Security in South East Europe – Belgrade, 5 – 7 March 2009 (Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)
- Participation at the conference on the role of parliaments in promoting competitiveness and economic growth by improving the business environment in Western Balkan economies organized by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia – Belgrade, 6 March 2009 (Secretary General)
- Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in South Eastern Europe – Bucharest, 6 – 7 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the OECD representative - Brussels, 9 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Visit and lecture of the Minister of State at the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany – Sarajevo, 10 March 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Chief of Staff, Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development, Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Senior Expert on Security Cooperation, Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Spokesperson, Expert on Economic and Social Development, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues, Political Advisors, Junior Political Advisor)
- Meeting with the Director for South-Eastern Europe in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium – Brussels, 10 March 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Meeting with the Head of Unit External Relations and Enlargement, DG Justice, Liberty and Security, European Commission - Brussels, 10 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office, Deputy Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Octopus Interface Conference on Cooperation against Cybercrime – Strasbourg, 10 – 11 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)
- Regional Conference “2009 – European Year of the Balkans?”, organized by the European Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo, 10 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting with the Director of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Employers Association – Sarajevo, 11 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development, Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with the Permanent Representative of Spain to the EU – Brussels, 11 March 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Meetings with the Acting Director of the Department for European Affairs and Foreign Policy in the Office of the Czech Prime Minister; with the Czech National Coordinator for RCC and with the representative of the Czech Institute of International Relations – Prague, 12

March 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)

- National Tempus/Erasmus Mundus Information Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo, 12 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital)
- Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan – Brussels, 12 March 2009 (Deputy Head of Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Head of Section, Annual Management Plan, Budget, Audit, Reporting, European Commission – Brussels, 12 March 2009 (Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Director of CEFTA – Sarajevo, 13 March 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Chief of Staff, Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with the Director of Sarajevo Notebooks – Sarajevo, 13 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Senior Expert on Building Human Capital)
- 20th South-East European Defense Ministerial (SEDM) – CC meeting – Skopje, 13 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Meeting with the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden in charge of the preparation of the Conference devoted to the regional cooperation in South East Europe to be organized during the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council – Brussels, 13 March 2009 (Head of the Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- European Policy Centre Policy Dialogue “The Eastern Partnership: how far, how deep, and how fast?” with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Poland, EU Commissioner for External Relations and Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Seventh Danube River Technical meeting PIDIN – Vienna, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
- Meeting with the Public Private Partnership Agency of the Republic of Croatia – Zagreb, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with the Head of Department DG Education, Culture and Heritage and Co-ordinator for South East Europe in the DG IV, Council of Europe –Strasbourg, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Higher Education and Research Administrator, Council of Europe – Strasbourg, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Head of History Education Division and Deputy Head of History Education Division, Council of Europe –Strasbourg, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)

- Meeting with the Director and Administrator in the Directorate of Political Advice and Co-operation, Council of Europe – Strasbourg, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Head of Regional Co-operation Division of the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe – Strasbourg, 16 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with President of ALDE Group in the European Parliament – Brussels, 17 March 2009 (Deputy Head of Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Head of Division and Programme Coordinator in the Division of NGOs and Civil Society, Council of Europe- Strasbourg, 17 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Programme Coordinator in the Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs, Council of Europe – Strasbourg, 17 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Preparatory Meeting of stakeholders regarding establishment of SECE-CRIF – Sarajevo, 16 – 17 March 2009 (Secretary General, Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Permanent High Level Group meeting of the Energy Community – Vienna, 17 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
- Meeting with the representatives of the Croatian Employers’ Organisation/Adriatic Region Employers’ Center – Zagreb, 17 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with representatives of the World Bank – Sarajevo, 17 March 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Chief of Staff, Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Meetings with Desk Officer, Culture policy and intercultural dialogue and Programme Manager, Culture Programme and Actions, DG Education and Culture – Brussels, 18 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with European Training Foundation Director, representative of NIPAC Croatia, Director of SEE Center for Entrepreneurial Learning – Brussels, 18 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Regional Energy Security and Energy Efficiency Conference – Budva, 18 – 20 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
- Meeting with Director of the Transport Logistics, TEN-T and Co-modality of the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, European Commission – Sarajevo, 19 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Preparatory meeting for Regional Research Strategy Conference with representatives of DG Research, DG Enlargement, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU and

- the Czech Republic Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – Brussels, 19 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Minister for European Affairs of Bulgaria - Brussels, 19 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office)
 - 21st RACVIAC MAG meeting – Zagreb, 19 – 20 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Security Issues)
 - NATO Parliamentary Assembly Rose Roth Seminar – Sarajevo, 20 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
 - Meeting with the Counselor in the Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU- Brussels, 20 March 2009 (Advisor in the Liaison Office)
 - Meeting with the Head of the Croatian Mission to NATO - Brussels, 20 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office, Deputy Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
 - Brussels Forum 2009, a major initiative of the German Marshall Fund of the United States - Brussels, 20 - 22 March 2009 (Secretary General)
 - “The Western Balkans in 2009: One more Casualty of the Global Crisis?”, Tutzing Balkan Talks, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Tutzing, 20 – 22 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
 - Institute for Democracy and Mediation – “Towards Regional Advocacy for Cooperation in the Balkans via European Best Practices” – Tirana, 20 – 21 March 2009 (Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
 - Meeting with the Czech Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs – Brussels, 21 March 2009 (Secretary General)
 - Meeting with the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs – Brussels, 21 March 2009 (Secretary General)
 - Meeting with the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU – Brussels, 23 March 2009 (Secretary General, Head of the Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
 - Meeting with Member of the European Commission responsible for Enlargement - Brussels, 23 March 2009 (Secretary General, Head of Liaison Office, Deputy Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
 - Meeting with the Member of the European Commission responsible for Science and Research - Brussels, 23 March 2009 (Secretary General, Head of Liaison Office, Deputy Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
 - Meeting with the Vice President of the Romanian Supreme Council of Magistracy - Bucharest, 23 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs and Liaison Office Advisor)

- Meeting with the representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Justice and General Prosecutor's Office regarding possible follow-up to the General Prosecutors' Summit for the SEE countries - Bucharest, 23 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Serbia and Team Leader of SEESAC – Belgrade, 23 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Meeting with the representatives of the “DADALOS” NGO – Sarajevo, 23 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
- Business Advisory Council Mission to Montenegro and Albania – Podgorica and Tirana, 23 – 25 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- 3rd World Summit of Prosecutors General, Attorneys General and Chief Prosecutors – Bucharest, 23 – 25 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)
- Meeting with the representatives of the UN ECE - Brussels, 24 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Complutense International Meeting: “The role of Europe in the International Scenario: Visions from the Central and Eastern European Countries” organized by the Complutense Institute for International Studies – Madrid, 24 -25 March 2009 (Secretary General)
- Consultations with the officials of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Madrid, 25 March 2009 (Secretary General, Chief of Staff)
- Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference “Developing Regional Research Strategy for the Western Balkans” – Sarajevo, 25 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
- Meeting with the representatives of the European Training Foundation – Sarajevo, 25 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
- Vienna Economic Talks – Pristina, 25 – 26 March 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Crans Montana Forum in Albania – Tirana, 25 – 26 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting with the Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina on SECE CRIF – Sarajevo, 26 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Meeting with the Military Attache of United States Embassy in Brussels – Brussels, 26 March 2009 (Deputy Head of Liaison Office)
- “Transferring the Experiences of Visegrad Cooperation to the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood in the Context of an Enlarging Europe”, International Centre for

- Democratic Transition – Budapest, 27 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting of the Committees for International Relations and European Integration – Cetinje, 26 – 27 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital)
 - Energy Crisis and Climate Change – Challenges for Politics and Business in South East Europe – Tutzing, 27 – 28 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
 - International Seminar “Participation of the Balkan countries in the European twinning programme” – Sarajevo, 27 March 2009 (Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
 - Informal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and the Western Balkans – Hluboka nad Vltavou, 28 March 2009 (Secretary General, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
 - European Policy Centre Policy Briefing “ EU Enlargement – five years on” by EU Commissioner for Enlargement (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
 - ITU Regional Forum on Human Capacity Development in Europe - Przin, 30 March – 1 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital)
 - UNODC Regional High Level Conference on Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in the South East Europe – Belgrade, 30 – 31 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs Expert, on Justice and Home Affairs)
 - Meeting with IFC representative – Sarajevo, 30 March 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Expert on Economic and Social Development)
 - Participation in a seminar organized by the Belgian Senate and meeting with the Speaker of the Bulgarian Parliament - Brussels, 30 March 2009 (Head of Liaison Office)
 - Parliamentary Seminar “Visa and Border Management” – Brussels, 31 March – 1 April 2009 (Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
 - Sixty – third Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – 31 March 2009 (Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
 - The NATO Shadow Summit organized by several Brussels based think-tanks – Brussels, 31 March and 1 April 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the EU Council)
 - Meeting with the Director of the Office of South Central European Affairs in the US State Department – Brussels, 1 April 2009 (Head of the RCC Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for relations with the EU Council)
 - Meeting with the Director of the Office of South Central European Affairs in the US State Department – Brussels, 1 April 2009 (Head of the RCC Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for relations with the EU Council)

- Participation in the seminar “SEE at the gates of the EU- Enhancing Integration Processes” organised for the military and diplomatic staff from the SEE member countries members of RACVIAC, Zagreb, 1-2 April 2009 (LO Advisor)
- Meeting on Donor Co-ordination Conference in Western Balkans and Turkey, Republic of Albania Council of Ministers and European Commission – Tirana, 2 – 3 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy, Senior Expert on Building Human Capital)
- “Executive Training Workshop on Electronic Government”, INA Academy, CeGD, RCC – Sarajevo, 2 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with Regional Project “Labor relations and social dialogue in SEE” – Belgrade, 3 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia – Belgrade, 3 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with representative of the Department for Harmonization with EU regulations and international cooperation, National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia – Belgrade, 3 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with Deputy Head of Unit & Operational Verifier and Head of Section for Regional Cooperation and Political Criteria, Head of Section, Annual Management Plan, Budget, Audit, Reporting, DG Enlargement, 3 April 2009 (LO Advisor)
- Meeting with First Secretary, Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the EC, LO Brussels, 3 April, (LO Advisor)
- “Social Policy Challenges in the Fight against Poverty in Serbia”, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence and UNDP – Nis, 4 – 5 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with the Ambassador in charge of Economic Diplomacy in the MFA of Belgium – Brussels, 6 April 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Participation at the SEECP Political Directors meeting – Chisinau, 7 April 2009 (Secretary General, Chief of Staff)
- 18th Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for the South East Europe Regional Meeting, DPPI SEE – Sarajevo, 7 April 2009 (Political Advisor)
- 4th Meeting of the South East Europe Investment Committee, Austria, Serbia and OECD, co-chairs of the investment compact in co-operation with the European Commission– Brussels, 7 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool and Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- “V Bled Conference on Stolen Vehicle Crime”, RCC and SEPICA – Sarajevo, 7 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)

- South East Europe Trade Union Forum Meeting, SEE Trade Union Forum , FES Belgrade Office and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Zagreb, 7 – 8 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Consultations with the Romanian Ministry of Defence representatives for the Mil Intel Project and the meeting of the SEE MoD Political Directors, Bucharest, 7-8 April 2009 (LO Advisor)
- Hosting of visit by H.E. Karel Schwarzenberg, MFA Czech Republic H.E. Bernard Kouchner, MFA - France and H.E. Carl Bildt, MFA – Sweden – Sarajevo, 8 April 2009 (Secretary General, staff of the RCC Secretariat in Sarajevo)
- Meeting with US Foundation for the Youth Empowerment – Sarajevo, 8 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General /Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting with Head of Education Department in the Directorate for European Integration, Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Sarajevo 8 April 2009 (Head of Building Human Capital and Cross-Cutting Issues Unit Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
- Meeting with (UNDP) Head of eSEE Secretariat – Sarajevo, 10 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with the First Deputy MFA of the Czech Republic – Prague, 14 April 2009 (RCC Secretary General, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council, RCC Secretariat Spokesperson)
- Public lecture of the RCC Secretary General on “South East Europe at the Crossroads: Facing Future Challenges Together” - Czech Institute of International Affairs in Prague, 14 April 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council, RCC Secretariat Spokesperson)
- Meeting with Expert Advisor in Media of the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo, 14 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)
- Meeting with Head of Unit, Croatia, DG Enlargement, 14 April (LO Advisor)
- “High Level Expert Meeting on Property Crime” , EUROPOL – The Hague, 15 April 2009 (Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)
- Working meeting for the organization of the Conference “Parliamentary Oversight of Intelligence Agencies in South East Europe” – Sarajevo, 15 April 2009 (Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross – Cutting Issues)
- Meeting with Bistra Youth Sports Games representative – Sarajevo, 15 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Building Human Capital and Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues)

- Meeting with the Spokesperson for the EU High Representative for CFSP – Brussels, 15 April 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Political consultations with the State Secretary Mr. Gabor Szentivanyi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungarian Republic – Budapest, 16 April 2009 (Secretary General, Political Advisor)
- Meeting with UNDP Portfolio Manager, UNDP Sarajevo – Sarajevo, 16 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with Experts of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly – Sarajevo, 17 April 2009 (Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross – Cutting Issues and Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy)
- Presentation of RCC activities at the Final Seminar “SEE and the EU” organized by the Tranfuse Association and the College of Europe in CEPS-Brussels, 20 April (Head of the RCC Liaison Office)
- Meeting with Vice-Governor, Central Director for Legal Affairs and Prospective Analysis, Deputy Director, Council of Europe Development Bank, Paris, 20 April 2009 (SG, LO Advisor)
- Participation in workshop entitled “Stabilisation and Integration perspectives for the Western Balkans” - Eastern European undergraduate program of Sciences Po Paris in Dijon – Dijon, 21 April 2009 (Secretary General)
- Meeting with Principal Administrator in the Science and Technology Policy Division and Head of the Country Studies Unit, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, OECD, Paris, 20 April 2009 (LO Advisor)
- Meeting with the Minister-Counselor in the Czech Permanent Representation to EU and current COWEB Chair – Brussels, 20 April 2009 (Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Presentation of the RCC – one year after to German and regional diplomats and experts, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Berlin, 22 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool)
- Meeting with the Ambassador in the Swedish MFA in charge of preparation of the Conference devoted to the regional cooperation in SEE to be organized during the Swedish Presidency with the EU Council – Brussels, 22 April 2009 (Secretary General, Head of the Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- 4th Managerial Conference for the Centre for Public Employment Services in the South East Europe, Labor and Employment Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Centre for Public Employment Services of Southeast European Countries – Sarajevo, 22 – 23 April 2009 (Expert on Economic and Social Development)

- Participation at the 12th Semi-Annual Meeting of the Central- and Eastern European Network (CEEN) Smolenice Castle – Smolenice, 22 – 23 April 2009 (Secretary General)
- Ministerial Conference “Developing regional research strategy for the Western Balkans”, Regional Cooperation Council and EU Presidency Czech Republic – Sarajevo, 23 -24 April 2009 (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues, Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- 1st meeting of the Heads of Consular Services of the SEECP participating countries, Moldovan SEECP Chairmanship – Chisinau, 23 – 24 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs and Advisor in the Liaison Office)
- Meeting with the Director and the head of Unit responsible for the Western Balkans in the GS of the Council – Brussels, 24 April (National Coordinator of Bulgaria, Head of the Liaison Office, Special Envoy of the RCC Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the EU Council)
- Meeting with the desk officer for RCC of DG Enlargement of the EC– Brussels, 24 April (National Coordinator of Bulgaria, Head of the Liaison Office)
- EBRD TAM/BAS Conference “Crisis response through regional cooperation in the Western Balkans” – Podgorica, 28 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Meeting with Bulgarian National Coordinator with reference to the South East Europe Defense Policy Directors Meeting in Sofia – Sarajevo, 27 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Senior Expert on Security Issues)
- Participation in ReSPA Meeting between representatives of EU National Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and the ReSPA Steering Committee Members, Brussels,, 28 April (LO Advisor)
- Meeting with the RAI Chairman in preparation of the meetings with the EU institutions, Brussels, 28 April 2009 (LO Advisor)
- 6th meeting of Prosecutors’ Network, Council of Europe – Zagreb, 28 -29 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs)
- Meeting with UNDP Portfolio Manager, UNDP Sarajevo – Sarajevo, 29 April 2009 (Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development)
- Briefing the COWEB on Regional Anticorruption Initiative - RAI, Brussels, 29 April 2009 (RAI Chairman, Head of RAI Secretariat, RAI Secretariat Expert and LO Advisor)
- Meeting with the Head of the TAIEX JHA department, Brussels, 29 April 2009 (RAI Chairman, Head of RAI Secretariat, RAI Secretariat Expert and LO Advisor)
- Meeting with Director of the Employers Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo, 29 April 2009 (Deputy Secretary General/Head of Expert Pool, Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development and Expert on Economic and Social Development)

- Political consultations with Deputy State Secretary of Swiss Confederation, Mr. Pierre Helg and Consultations with the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency – Bern, 30 April 2009 (Secretary General)
- Meeting with OLAF management, Brussels, 30 April 2009 (RAI Chairman, Head of RAI Secretariat, RAI Secretariat Expert and LO Advisor)
- Meeting with DG Enlargement – Programs Unit – on JHA projects related to anticorruption, Brussels, 30 April 2009 (RAI Chairman, Head of RAI Secretariat, RAI Secretariat Expert and LO Advisor)
- Meeting with RAI delegation, Brussels, 30 April (Head of RCC Liaison Office and LO Advisor)
- Meeting with the desk officer for RCC of the General Secretariat of the Council, Brussels, 30 April (Head of RCC Liaison Office)
- Participation in the Workshop on the Cross-border Disaster eResponse in the eRegion, Skopje, 4-6 May 2009 (LO Advisor)

ANNEX II

LIST OF OFFICIALS OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL (RCC) SECRETARIAT (as on 8 May 2009)

SECRETARY GENERAL

1. Mr. Hido Bišćević- Secretary General of the RCC

EXPERT POOL

1. Ms. Jelica Minić- Deputy Secretary General/ Head of Expert Pool
2. Ms. Emira Tufo- Senior Expert on Economic and Social Development, Head of Economic and Social Development Unit
3. Mr. Miroslav Kukobat- Senior Expert on Infrastructure and Energy, Head of Infrastructure and Energy Unit
4. Mr. Virgil Constantin Ivan Cucu- Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Head of Justice and Home Affairs Unit
5. Mr. Efreem Radev- Senior Expert on Security Cooperation, Head of Security Cooperation Unit
6. Mr. Mladen Dragašević- Senior Expert on Building Human Capital, Head of Building Human Capital and Cross-Cutting Issues Unit
7. Mr. Nand Shani- Expert on Economic and Social Development
8. Mr. Predrag Vujičić- Expert on Justice and Home Affairs
9. Ms. Mimika Loshi- Expert on Parliamentary Cooperation and Cross-Cutting Issues
10. Ms. Maja Taylor- Assistant to the Head of Expert Pool (currently on maternity leave as of beginning of January 2009 – temporarily replaced by Ms. Svjetlana Radulj)
11. Ms. Elvira Ademović- Assistant to the Expert Pool

FRONT OFFICE

1. Mr. Miroslav Papa- Chief of Staff
2. Ms. Dinka Živalj- Head of Media Unit/ Spokesperson
3. Mr. Alphan Solen- Political Advisor
4. Ms. Alenka Hudek- Political Advisor
5. Ms. Jasna Arsić-Đapo, Legal Advisor
6. Mr. Ivan Bojanić- Junior Political Advisor
7. Ms. Jasna Sinančević- Personal Assistant to the Secretary General
8. Ms. Nataša Mitrović- Assistant to the Chief of Staff

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

1. Mr. Alexandru Murzac- Head of Administrative Unit
2. Mr. Sead Filipović- Finance Officer
3. Ms. Mirela Mahić- Administrative Officer
4. Mr. Maid Medunjanin- IT Officer
5. Ms. Alma Gadžić- Accountant
6. Ms. Dijana Kešelj- Translator

LIAISON OFFICE IN BRUSSELS

1. Mr. Stanislav Daskalov- Head of Office
2. Mr. Basil Coronakis- Deputy Head of Office
3. Mr. Sorin Sterie- Advisor
4. Ms. Lidija Topić- Advisor
5. Ms Martine Dell – Office Administrator

SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR RELATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Mr. Jovan Tegovski- Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Relations with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

RCC SECRETARIAT'S TECHNICAL AND SERVICE STAFF

1. Ms. Selma Ahatović- Lihic- Public Affairs Assistant
2. Mr. Siniša Cvetković- Driver/Security
3. Mr. Fikret Kadrić- Driver/ Courier
4. Mr. Denis Sulić- Driver/ Courier
5. Ms. Vanja Vekić- Receptionist