

### RCC participants

Albania  
Austria  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Canada  
Council of Europe  
Council of Europe Development Bank  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
European Investment Bank  
European Union (EU), represented by a representative of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a representative of the European Commission  
Federal Republic of Germany  
Finland  
France  
Greece  
Hungary  
International Organization for Migration  
Ireland  
Italy  
Kosovo\*  
Latvia  
Moldova  
Montenegro  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
Norway  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Poland  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
South East European Co-operative Initiative  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
Turkey  
United Kingdom  
United Nations  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
United Nations Development Programme  
United States of America  
World Bank

— Participants in RCC Board

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Last update: 28 February 2013

### OUR MISSION

The Regional Cooperation Council promotes mutual cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe in order to inspire development in the region to the benefit of its people.



Regional Cooperation Council

### Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat

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cooperation, european and euro-atlantic integration in south east europe



## Cooperation, European and Euro-Atlantic Integration in South East Europe



*“Helping prosperity and growth through regional action in South East Europe, while supporting European and Euro-Atlantic integration, is what the Regional Cooperation Council is all about. We see our region as a place of dialogue, freedom and mobility, rich in cultural heritage, where each person feels safe and protected by the rule of law. Our work reflects the readiness and the ability of the people of South East Europe to take responsibility for their future, and to create conditions for an overall progress in a climate of tolerance and cooperation.”*



**Goran Svilanović**

Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council

### Organization overview

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was launched on 27 February 2008, as the successor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The RCC is an operational arm of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) and functions as a focal point for co-operation in South East Europe (SEE) through a regionally owned and led framework that also supports European and Euro-Atlantic integration. It acts as a forum for the continued involvement of the international community engaged in the region.

The organization encourages SEE countries to better use the support available for regional cooperation, primarily through the EU's Multi-beneficiary Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (MB IPA), by being active participant in MB IPA Strategy Working Groups.

The work of the RCC focuses on the following priority areas:

- economic and social development
- infrastructure and energy
- justice and home affairs
- security cooperation
- building human capital and parliamentary cooperation

In addition, media development activities of the RCC, overarching by nature, seek to foster development of free and professional media in SEE, given their role in shaping democratic, pluralistic and inclusive societies in the region.

The main operational document guiding the RCC work is the Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013, endorsed by the SEEC Summit held in June 2010 in Istanbul.

The RCC participants comprise 46 countries, organizations and international financial institutions. The RCC has a Secretariat based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, headed by Secretary General Goran Svilanović. Apart from the Sarajevo headquarters, the Secretariat has a Liaison Office in Brussels with European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The RCC meeting format consists of the Annual Meeting and meetings of the RCC Board, held thrice a year. The RCC Board provides operational guidance to the organization. It comprises of those RCC participants contributing to the budget of the RCC Secretariat as well as the European Union (EU).

## Economic and social development

The RCC promotes regional economic and social development in SEE through coordinating, facilitating and supporting regional social and economic initiatives and fostering dialogue between inter-dependent regional efforts. Key objectives include:

- enhancing investment climate and business enabling environment in SEE;
- improving access to finance for the private sector in the region;
- mainstreaming employment and social agendas into economic reform deliberations;
- promoting development of an information society in South East Europe.

To achieve these objectives, the RCC Secretariat partners with a number of important regional organisations, initiatives and networks. The CEFTA 2006 has established a free trade area and is working to deepen it further. The RCC-managed SEE Investment Committee (SEEIC) is the main regional forum for deliberating investment related reform and disseminating policy analysis and advice. The Business Advisory Council for Southeast Europe, as the private sector arm of the RCC, helps articulate the voice of the private sector in the process of economic development in SEE. The Electronic South East Europe Initiative (eSEE) supports development of the Information Society in the region. Other initiatives and networks cover areas of commerce, agriculture, investment promotion, public private partnerships, women entrepreneurship, employment and social policy, trade unions and public health.



The RCC supports these and other initiatives in joint efforts to develop sustainable and competitive market economies in SEE underpinned by fair and inclusive social systems.

## Infrastructure and energy

The RCC focuses on energy and infrastructure as prerequisites for the overall economic, social and environmentally sustainable development, stability and prosperity. It works to:

- support implementation of the Treaty establishing the Energy Community;
- promote sustainable energy development in the region and transfer of knowledge from EU member States on sustainable energy projects;
- contribute to the preparation and implementation of Danube Region Strategy promoting the ‘bottom-up’ approach, cooperating with local authorities, civil society and media;
- promote a multi-sector approach in addressing road safety issues;
- contribute to the development of air traffic links within the region;
- explore the potential to support inter-modality and interoperability of transport infrastructure;
- support Danube Cooperation Process and International Sava River Basin Commission. It also works with Regional Environmental Centre and focuses on Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) activities.



Participation in the International Financial Institutions (IFI) Advisory Group enables the RCC to serve as an interface between policy-makers, IFIs, business community and social partners. As an observer in the Steering Committee of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), the RCC plays an important role in identifying projects eligible for the WBIF support and its subsequent implementation.

## Justice and home affairs

The RCC supports, promotes and coordinates the work of regional initiatives active in justice and home affairs throughout SEE, ensuring that their efforts are mutually reinforcing, not overlapping, and complementary to the region’s EU integration goals. Strategic objectives include:

- guiding and monitoring regional cooperation through the Regional Strategic Document and Action Plan on Justice and Home Affairs 2011-2013, which pursues an integrated, coherent and transparent regional cooperation, facilitating harmonization of donors’ activities;

- combating organized crime (economic and financial), smuggling of drugs and trafficking in human beings. Attention is also given to the regional dimension of anti-terrorism. Key role is played by South East European Cooperation Initiative Centre for Combating Trans-Border Crime, Police Cooperation Convention Secretariat, Southeast Europe Police Chief Association, South East European Prosecutors Advisory Group and Western Balkans Prosecutor’s Network, with RCC support;
- fight against corruption, supporting activities of the Regional Anti Corruption Initiative;
- building capacity of the Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative;
- protection of fundamental rights as well as cooperation in private and civil law matters, including right to liberty and security, access to justice, right to fair trial and due process, free legal aid, alternative dispute resolutions, assistance and redress mechanisms for crime victims.



The RCC closely cooperates with relevant institutions such as EU agencies, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Council of Europe, INTERPOL and EUROPOL.

## Security cooperation

In promoting security cooperation in South East Europe, the RCC is mandated to:

- establish sustainable, integrated, transparent, regionally-owned cooperation mechanisms among relevant governmental institutions;
- preserve and streamline effective initiatives and task forces which prove their capability to deliver tangible results in security area;
- initiate new low-cost activities, with high impact on confidence building and transparency.

The RCC cooperates with regional initiatives which have developed relevant security cooperation projects and mechanisms. The membership of each initiative includes several SEECP participating states as well as countries outside of the SEECP area, depending on the format of the initiative and the region covered.

The RCC has identified the following priorities for the region:

- enhancing regional dialogue and cooperation mechanisms on security and defence issues, including development of common strategies, planning and coordination;
- developing regional approach to disaster risk reduction, through participation in the European Commission’s Disaster Risk Reduction and Civil Protection programmes, developing networks to fight forest fires, reducing fiscal liability to natural disasters, and enhancing regional cooperation in dealing with hazardous materials.

## Building human capital and parliamentary cooperation

Building human capital is a fundamental factor of long-term competitiveness of South East Europe and successful European integration, in line with objectives of Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020 strategy, which is why the RCC:



- assists the regional Higher Education Structural Reform project. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring synergy and avoiding overlap with EU education programmes, to further integrate it with the European Higher Education Area;
- contributes to development of Regional Strategy for Research and Development for Innovation for the Western Balkans, to identify existing research capacities and improve interconnections among Western Balkan institutes and researchers;
- coordinates the new phase of Ljubljana Process as of 2011. The RCC Task Force on Culture and Society has been established with a Secretariat in Cetinje, Montenegro, to undertake project management, fund-raising activities and act as a counterpart to related national task forces.

In reaching the set objectives, the RCC fosters networking among civil society and youth organisations, by including them in its projects.

### Parliamentary cooperation

The RCC assists the SEECP in developing the parliamentary dimension of its work. It contributes to the preparation of SEECP Speakers of Parliament meetings, helps establish a network of national coordinators at the level of Members of Parliament and supports implementation of relevant documents. The RCC also works to developing Cetinje Parliamentary Forum into a hub for enhanced coordination of parliamentary activities related to EU acquis in the Western Balkans, through its institutionalisation and establishment of a sustainable Secretariat.