

**POLITICAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL PLANNING  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA  
CAVTAT, CROATIA, 1-6.06.2004**

Mr. Chairman, my colleague Ministers, Heads of Delegations,

It is my great honor, in the capacity of Minister in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, responsible for the environment and physical planning and head of the delegation, to express my appreciation to the organizers of the third meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in Transboundary context (EIA-Espoo-1991) - the Croatian Ministry of Environment Protection and Physical Planning, the Secretariat of the Convention and all those who helped in the realization of this meeting.

The Republic of Macedonia has been a rightful member of the EIA Convention since 1999. In the five-year period, as well as before that, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning had taken active part in the meetings of the Convention's Working Group, not forgetting the specific subgroups which prepared documents in various areas aimed to facilitate the implementation of the Convention or to contribute to its upgrading taking into consideration the shortages or problems observed during the 13 years of implementation.

I could say that the work on the material we are going to review and adopt during this Conference will be precious experience for us and for those who prepared it. On this occasion I can not but show my respect and gratitude to all who incorporated part of their knowledge and experience in what is now before us. My estimation is that the Secretariat of the Convention, the Working Group and its Executive Bureau had a very subtle task to initiate

and incorporate in the prepared documents the experience and needs of the western countries, EU member and non-member countries and the experience and needs of the CEE and NIS countries in order to ensure undisturbed communication between the countries and smooth implementation of the Convention.

The Guidelines on good practices and bilateral/multilateral agreements, strengthening sub-regional cooperation, exchange of information through the Web site of the Convention, the Guidelines on public participation in the environmental impact assessment in transboundary context and the second amendment to the Convention, which includes the "scoping" procedure in transboundary EIA and revises and updates Appendix I of the Convention, all these are powerful instruments in the hands of competent bodies in the countries for quality implementation of Espoo Convention, providing at the same time a basis for protection of the environment on the whole, better quality of living and protection of people's health. They will provide a basis for us, the politicians, who make the decisions, to apply methods of preventive protection and include the public in decision-making, in our own country, and in countries likely to have been affected.

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Where is the Republic of Macedonia on the way of fulfilling its obligations as Party to the Espoo Convention I believe that my country shares the same problems with the other countries in the Region, and those undergoing the process of integration with the European Union. At this period of time, when we have signed the Agreement of Stabilization and Association and submitted the application for EU membership, our priority is to adopt the entire package of laws related to environment. I can say that the laws have been prepared and are now in Parliamentary procedure. They have been fully approximated to the European directives and include the principles of transboundary cooperation with our neighbors, in compliance with the requirements of international

agreements on specific issues. The principles of EIA and SEA, both in national and transboundary context, have been placed under separate chapters in the basic Law on Environment. The adoption of these laws will facilitate the implementation of the international agreements which are also part of our legal system.

We are now putting efforts to make EIA procedures and SEA become first thought of decision-makers and those who are to implement them. This, you must agree, will require time and, before all, training of the personnel to be making and implementing the decisions, at the same time informing the public and including it in the procedures. To realize this, the countries, members of the Convention, especially the ones from Central-Eastern Europe and NIS, need institutional strengthening. The exchange of experience between the developed and less developed countries is a good precondition to surpass the differences and ensure harmonized and unified approach. In addition, a need imposes that the economically developed countries should assist the countries in need in order to be able to build the basis required for successful implementation of the obligations taken on.

The Espoo Convention has had success in the realization of its activities so far, that is, there have always been countries among its members that were ready to offer support. In future, we need to consider new mechanisms for realization of the activities and seek new financial instruments to provide strong and constant flow of funds in the Secretariat, which supported by additional donations will facilitate the realization of the ambitious work plan proposed until the next meeting of the Parties.

I have already mentioned the work plan which I consider to be comprehensive and if fully implemented, it will not only guarantee successful work of the Secretariat of the Convention and of the other bodies, but also benefits for the Parties to the Convention. I

sincerely believe that together we shall reach the desired results of the work plan.

It is my honor to give my vote for the Declaration to be derived from this meeting, because I am fully aware that it will be a document leading towards more successful implementation of the Convention in the period ahead.

Finally, I feel safe in promising that the Republic of Macedonia will follow the principles set in the Convention and will be zealous to implement them in the frames of its objective technical and personnel potential.

At the end, wishing you further successful work, I thank you for your attention.

Ljubomir Janev  
Minister