

**Third Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention
1 – 4 June, 2004, Cavtat, Croatia**

**Statement of His Excellency Mr. IOAN JELEV
Secretary of State
Ministry of Environment and Water Management
ROMANIA**

**Ms. Chairman,
Excellencies, Ministers, distinguished delegates, Convention Secretary, Ladies and
Gentlemen**

Allow me first to express, on behalf of the Romanian Government, our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Croatia – personally to Mrs. Marina Matulović Dropulić – Minister of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction for the wonderful arrangements and hospitality showed here, to the officials of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for all the work they have done on the many preparatory meetings and for the completion of all documents that will be adopted here, and to the delegates to this Meeting for their contributions.

**PANEL 1- Integrated approaches to decision-making and the relative benefits of
SEA and Sustainability Appraisal**

Strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment are obligations already introduced in Romanian legislation by laws of ratification and by transposition of the EU directives.

Romania has signed the SEA Protocol in Kiev and now formal requirements for SEA are going to be in force, after the approval, during this year, of the Governmental Decision that transposes the SEA Directive.

Until now we have gained experience in applying the concept of EIA (environmental impact assessment) to spatial and territorial planning.

Romania has good examples of implementation of the EIA in a transboundary context and a fruitful cooperation in this respect with Republic of Bulgaria for the Calafat- Vidin Bridge over Danube (Joint EIA project), for the Romanian project Nuclear Power Plant –Unit 2 Cernavoda and for the Bulgarian project Nuclear Power Plant- Belene.

We would also want to mention the notifications that Romania sent to Ukraine, for the maritime platform Pescarus project on the Black Sea continental plateau and to Hungary for a National Transport Gas Pipeline.

Both EIA and SEA instruments are focused on the environmental performances, but they help to balance the environment with the social-economic aspects of a certain

project, plan or programme. In this regard, SEA concept represents a better example, because it requires that the environmental assessment shall be carried out during the preparation of a plan or programme.

The Espoo Convention and the SEA Protocol are decision-aiding tools in promoting the sustainable development because they realize a balance between the economic and social aspect and the environmental protection.

In this context, the Bastroe Canal does not represent a sustainable development project. We are worried by the beginning construction of Bastroe Canal in a strict protected area of the Ukrainian Danube Delta, without being taken into consideration several requests of involvement of the Romanian authorities and public. That is why we have circulated for the distinguished participants to this meeting a detailed document on the significant effects that this project might have on the Delta environment.

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation (both Romanian and Ukrainian part) falls under the provisions of several international instruments, out of which we mention: Ramsar Convention on wetlands (1971), Espoo Convention (1991), UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris 1972), Convention on cooperation for the protection and sustainable use of the Danube river (Sofia 1994) and Convention on the conservation of the European wildlife and natural habitats (Berna 1979).

Taking into account the context and the importance of the present Meeting and the fact that both Romania and Ukraine are Parties to the Espoo Convention, we would like to underline once more Romania's request that the EIA procedure in a transboundary context should be applied as it is provided by this Convention.

In Romania, the environmental protection is an important objective of public interest that takes into consideration the principles and the strategic elements that lead to sustainable development.

In our opinion, the implementation of the EIA (environmental impact assessment) and SEA (strategic environmental assessment) in Romanian legislation will represent a step forward in achieving the objective of integration the environmental effects in strategic decision-making in order to contribute to sustainable development. Nevertheless, we think that by combining different means for environmental protection (for example: taxes, environmental audits, the mechanisms provided by the Kyoto Protocol) we are on the right track to accomplish the sustainable development

Before concluding, let me state that Romania is prepared to host the 4th Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention, in Bucharest and to contribute financially to the activities under the work plan for the period up to the 4th Meeting of the Parties.

Thank you for your attention.