

**REPORT**

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

**For the period 1 October – 31 December 2015**

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

**SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL IN LINE WITH ARTICLE 15  
OF THE STATUTE OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL**

Sarajevo, 3 February 2016

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The Report on the activities of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat is submitted by the RCC Secretary General to the RCC Board in line with Article 15 of the Statute of the RCC. It covers the period from 1 October and 31 December 2015.

## **1. Summary of activities**

The report presents the progress made by the RCC Secretariat in implementing the RCC Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) for the period 2014-2016, with an emphasis on its key pillars - the South East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy and Stability and Rule of Law. The report reflects on the synergy between RCC and SEECP, as well as informs on the participation of RCC at the events of the Bulgarian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office. Key aspects of the dialogue of the RCC Secretary General with the RCC participants are presented, as well as the consultations held with European Union (EU) institutions, regional organisations and initiatives and other stakeholders actively engaged in the regional cooperation process in South East Europe (SEE).

The RCC Secretariat continued with its multifaceted activities in implementing the RCC SWP 2014-2016. The last quarter of the year 2015 saw an upsurge in activities as the RCC Secretariat was preparing for the last phase (2016) of the implementation of the organisation's SWP 2014-2016.

In this regard operational guidance and supervision was provided by the RCC Board, which held its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting on 15 October 2015 in Sarajevo. The RCC Secretary General informed the participants of the Board on the activities of the RCC Secretariat and, together with the Bulgarian SEECP C-i-O, summarised the outcomes of the Coordination Meeting between the SEECP Troika, the RCC Secretariat and the EU. In its conclusions, the RCC Board, inter alia, accepted the Report on the activities of the RCC Secretariat for the period April-September 2015 and on the implementation of the RCC SWP 2014-2016, and adopted the Budget of the RCC Secretariat for the year 2016. The RCC Board tasked the RCC to engage in those themes of the Berlin Process that are within its mandate and are being implemented by RCC through its SWP 2014-2016. Further, the RCC Board accepted the presentation of the RCC Secretary General on the main outlines of RCC's forthcoming SWP for the period 2017-2019. The first draft of the SWP 2017-2019 will be presented at the next RCC Board Meeting in February 2016. The RCC Board also accepted the Concept and Work Plan of the Regional Cooperation Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in South East Europe.

Held back-to-back with the meeting of the RCC Board, on 14 October 2015 in Sarajevo, the Coordination Meeting between the SEECP Troika<sup>1</sup>, the RCC Secretariat and the EU provided a framework for further harmonising the priorities of the Bulgarian SEECP C-i-O and RCC's SWP 2014-2016. The conclusion of the meeting noted the excellent cooperation between the Bulgarian SEECP C-i-O and the RCC, and welcomed the intention of the RCC Secretary General to brief the RCC Board on the role of the RCC in some activities related to the Berlin Process, which are in line with the RCC SWP 2014-2016.

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<sup>1</sup> The SEECP Troika includes the former SEECP C-i-O Albania, the current SEECP C-i-O Bulgaria and the incoming SEECP C-i-O Croatia.

The Bulgarian SEEC C-i-O 2015-2016 continued to implement its programme and calendar of events. In this context a presentation on global and regional cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism and preparations for the draft SEEC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Declaration were some of the key themes addressed by SEEC Political Directors at their meeting on 23 November 2015 in Sofia. On the occasion the RCC Secretary General informed the SEEC Participants on the implementation process of the SWP 2014-2016 and unveiled the main features that will be at the centre of RCC's forthcoming SWP for the period 2017-2019. The RCC Secretary General presented the first steps undertaken by the RCC in the implementation of the Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in SEE and invited the SEEC Participants to speed up the process of appointment of their national focal points.

A better alignment of priorities and actions and continuous support for the RCC are the key outcomes of the dialogue of the RCC Secretary General with RCC participants, particularly with the EU institutions, USA, Germany and Moldova.

Moreover, in the reporting period, the RCC Secretary General participated at a number of high-level events and international meetings with a regional dimension, including the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Centre for Security Cooperation - RACVIAC (22 October 2015, Dubrovnik); OSCE Security Days: Conference on Climate Change and Security (28 October 2015, Vienna); OSCE Permanent Council Meeting (29 October 2015, Vienna); Ministerial Meeting of the Visegrad Group and Western Balkans (13 November 2015, Prague); CEFTA Week (24 November 2015, Chisinau); and the OSCE Ministerial Meeting (3-4 December 2015, Belgrade). The engagement of the RCC in high-level events, with a regional dimension, is a pertinent contribution to its mission of developing and maintaining a regional climate of dialogue and openness towards regional cooperation, stimulating economic and social development and strengthening stability and rule of law.

At the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, the RCC Secretary General presented, alongside the MFA of Bulgaria, in its capacity as the SEEC C-i-O, the activities of the RCC, with a particular focus on those areas where the RCC and OSCE's missions converge, namely economic and environmental activities, good governance and security. Improving effective public services, building institutional capacities on anticorruption and regional cooperation in the area of justice were identified as areas in which the RCC and OSCE can deepen their cooperation.

Equally important was the participation of the RCC Secretary General at the CEFTA Week on 24 November 2015 in Chisinau, which provided an opportunity to participants to present the achievements of regional cooperation in the areas of trade, investments, infrastructure and priority sectors of the economies from SEE, but also to address the challenges of making the SEE region and individual economies more competitive both internally and towards the global community.

Moreover, the RCC Secretary General presented the latest regional security trends in SEE and RCC's role in regional security cooperation to the South East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group (SEEGROUP), at ambassadorial level, on 17 December 2015 at NATO Headquarters.

Particularly noteworthy in the reporting period was also the Regional Cooperation Day organised by the RCC with civil society representatives and media in order to discuss challenges that are in focus in the region, including economic stagnation, migrant/refugee crisis and potential terrorist threats, as well as other challenges that present obstacles to the EU accession of the economies from the

region. In addition to the gathering of civil society representatives, journalists from the region discussed the ways of reporting about regional issues and how to improve mutual and regional cooperation in the field of media.

RCC's cooperation with EU institutions and bodies, in particular the EC, EEAS and EP has been maintained and further strengthened following comprehensive exchanges of views with EU institutions and EU high-level representatives. As a result, the work of RCC and SEECIP is recognised and fully supported in the EU Enlargement Strategy from November 2015.

On the **programming** side, the meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SEE 2020 Strategy Programming Committee and the consultations with the governments of the beneficiaries concluded with the approval of the Programming Document 2016-2018. The next steps related to the programming cycle are: (1) the Programming Document 2016-2018 will be shared with all stakeholders, and (2) the start of the preparations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting on Donor Coordination, initially planned to be held by mid-March 2016.

On the **monitoring** side, following the two meetings of the ad-hoc SEE 2020 Monitoring Task Force that discussed and approved the proposed amendments of the 11 headline targets (adopted by the June 2015 meeting of the Governing Board), the RCC organised the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the SEE 2020 Strategy Monitoring Committee on 17 December 2015. The meeting marked the setting up of the permanent structure that will programme and implement the monitoring cycle, as well as oversee the entire monitoring process of the SEE 2020 Strategy. This meeting of the Monitoring Committee decided on the modalities of the next monitoring cycle to start at the beginning of February 2016.

To complement the 2015 monitoring cycle, during the last quarter of 2015 the RCC initiated the second cycle of data collection for the perception-based indicators (Balkan Barometer). The process included the preparation and approval of the questionnaires, the interviews with people and businesses in the seven economies of the Western Balkans and the collection of data. The analysis of the data will be concluded by the first quarter of 2016, with the publication of the Balkan Barometer 2016 by spring 2016.

The **small grants programme** that the RCC launched during the second quarter of 2015 to support the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy and the dissemination of results achieved under this framework was finalised on 31 December 2015.

In addition to the developments related to the programming and monitoring cycles, **the implementation of the RCC Annual Work Plan 2015 continued with normal pace**. The activities implemented during this reporting period are described in further detail in the next section and summarised as follows:

- Within the **Integrated Growth** pillar, RCC completed the year with a finalised investment cooperation agenda (SEEIC in cooperation with CEFTA Secretariat) to complement trade integration in the region. In addition, in cooperation with the CEFTA and the World Bank, the RCC continued discussions on project financing with the EC. The finalisation of the proposal and the decision on IPA MB financing are expected to be concluded during the first half of 2016 and commencement of the project is expected by the end of 2016. Furthermore, the SEE Investment Committee has received the mandate to start conducting the legal base analysis for development of prospective regional agreement (or protocols) on investments.

Another important development during the reporting period was the backing of the Competitiveness Flagship initiative by the SEE Investment Committee plenary on 17 November 2015, followed by the political support and mandate given by the ministers of the SEE economies during the SEEIC annual ministerial (Montenegro, 9 December 2015), paving the way for future activities in the area of regional investment integration and industrial development with an all-inclusive approach for all of its participants. This meeting marked also the confirmation of the integration of the SEE Investment Committee as a permanent structure into the RCC.

The only remaining challenge to the Investment dimension remains the implementation of the Regional Investment Policy Review in cooperation with UNCTAD. While initially endorsed by the SEE Investment Committee, the inconsistencies in legal possibilities for formalising cooperation between the RCC and UNCTAD and the inability of UNCTAD to comply with the RCC's procurement rules are not resolved.

- In the area of **Smart Growth**, the signing of the ERISSEE host country agreement opened the way for starting the selection procedures for the position of the Director of the Secretariat and the preparations of the premises of the Secretariat in Belgrade. Furthermore, a seminar on automatic recognition of qualifications organised jointly by the RCC, ERISSEE and Croatian Ministry of Science and Education built on the recommendations adopted by the ministers of education at the Bologna Ministerial Conference in May 2015, as well as on the conclusions of the ERI SEE seminar held in Zagreb in September 2014. The concept of automatic recognition of qualifications will be further explored within the joint project proposal application for ERASMUS+ coordinated by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of Croatia and supported by the RCC.

With regard to the **culture and creative sectors**: as the RCC would not be able to continue funding the operation of the TFCS Secretariat, the office in Cetinje was closed in December 2015. Still, the RCC will continue to finance the implementation of actions in the area of culture and creative sectors and it will support the operation of the TFCS through the Secretariat in Sarajevo.

Following the ICT Ministerial Meeting on 30 September in Pržno, a stock-taking meeting of the e-SEE Initiative took place on 21-22 December 2015. The meeting reviewed the developments in the **digital society** area and worked on planning the annual monitoring cycle. The e-SEE Initiative meeting was backed by a capacity building workshop focused on the exchange of experiences and discussion on challenges related to the new e-signature regulation e-IDAS. The workshop was supported by experts from Austria, Croatia and Romania, as well as by an independent expert who provided a more WB-regionally contextualised overview.

With respect to the **roaming reduction initiative**, RCC has developed the Terms of Reference for technical assistance needed to conduct the market impact study and the sustainability of the initiative. The ToR will be consulted with the representatives of the national administrations, regulators and respective EU services.

Discussions have also commenced on a potential regional proposal on **broadband infrastructure development**, as a contribution towards furthering the connectivity agenda in the ICT sector.

- In **Sustainable Growth, Environment** dimension, RCC continued supporting the Regional Working Group on Environment and the Standing Working Group on Regional Rural Development in providing a regional overview on environmental policy developments in SEE, intended to provide an in-depth comprehensive analysis and overview of the policy qualitative, quantitative and outcome indicators related to Dimension J – Environment of the SEE 2020.

In the **Transport** dimension, the last quarter of 2015 saw the finalisation of the Western Balkans Intermodal Study, which has assessed the region's main logistic corridors, identified the short-term measures to recover the intermodal transport chains within the existing capacities, as well as the long-term measures and recommendations for strategic development of intermodal transport in SEE region. RCC provided technical assistance to analyse the potential impact on improved intermodal transport and logistics of the extended TEN-T core transport network to WB, as well as of the selected sections for WBIF/IPA MB 2015 funding.

In addition, the RCC continued providing technical assistance to drafting the transport policy questionnaires and check-lists of the SEETO's policy assessment and monitoring mechanism. The check-lists address aspects such as co-modality, use of ITS, energy efficiency in transport, environmental aspects, local sustainability, etc. They will help track the progress in all these sectors as well as identify and streamline additional assistance needs.

Further, the RCC Secretariat participated in the SEETO Ministerial Meeting in December and in the first meeting of the Transport Facilitation Working Group (TFWG). The meeting of TFWG reviewed progress of the Vienna Summit soft connectivity policy reform agenda and referred to the RCC's planned work on the economic corridors the concept of which the RCC has started to develop. The concept is to be further consulted and developed together with SEETO and CEFTA and the inputs will be presented at the upcoming Board's meetings and the Paris Summit.

On the **competitiveness** side, the meetings of the Expert Group on Food and Beverages Processing and that on Tourism decided on the joint regional activities to be implemented in these priority sector areas. With regard to tourism, it has been agreed to develop a joint regional offer for international tourists, while in the food and beverages processing it was decided to develop a joint regional supply chain that would be promoted to the international supply networks. Another important topic discussed during these meetings was the need to address the skills gaps barrier in both of the sectors.

Furthermore, in cooperation with TEPAV, RCC has successfully completed a comprehensive analysis providing recommendations on increasing the business synergies between the SEE economies and Turkey. The study was finalised and published in December 2015. The proposals coming out of the study will not only serve the development of SEE-Turkey

cooperation but will also contribute to the industrial development efforts in the SEE in the context of developing viable economic corridors.

Finally, the SEE Investment Committee has taken a decision to establish a new body – the Industrial Working Group – consisted of region’s officials in charge of industrial policies.

- Within **the Inclusive Growth pillar**, during this reporting period RCC worked with the EC to finalise the grant application form for the IPA MB 2015 funding of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP). The Employment and Social Affairs Platform, implemented jointly by the RCC and ILO, is envisioned to be one of the key platforms for implementing the SEE 2020 Inclusive Growth pillar objectives. It places special emphasis on establishing and strengthening regional cooperation regarding labour market and social reforms; enhancing the capacities of the relevant administrations to plan, implement and monitor these reforms through exchange of experience, good practices, utilisation of methodological and analytical tools available at the EU level; strengthening the existing Public Employment Services Network with a view to facilitating the SEE 2020 labour mobility objective and preparations for future participation in EURES (European Employment Services).

Within this reporting period, RCC continued to promote its regional **social economy** agenda and strived to multiply its impact and sustainability also in the course of the project on social economy, implemented through the direct grant awarded from RCC’s operational budget.

In the area of **health**: full operationalisation of the SEEHN network with its functional and fully staffed Secretariat remains a challenge as the Network participants have not yet agreed on the appointment of the director of the Secretariat.

- In the **Governance and Rule of Law**: the last quarter of 2015 was marked by the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Justice (October 2015) that assessed the implementation of activities in the Justice dimension for the period October 2014-October 2015, discussed the next steps and approved the Work Plan for 2016.

With regard to the capacity building measures, following the recommendation of the WGJ participants, RCC started the development of the Study on the assessment of the training needs for judges and prosecutors. The Study will be presented at the kick-off event for the establishment of the SEE network of the judicial training institutions, planned for April 2016.

Further, the RCC conducted bilateral consultations with the stakeholders with the aim to establish the Associations of Mediators in SEE, planned for 2016.

With regard to anticorruption, in December 2015 the RCC organised the Regional Meeting of the Oversight Bodies for Conflict of Interest and Asset Disclosure as the first step to develop a network and hold regular meetings of these bodies, which is a tool for exchanging experience and capacity building.

The **stability and rule of law pillar** of the RCC SWP for 2014-2016 witnessed several trends which have the potential to rekindle the role of the RCC in this important sector for the SEE region. On security in particular, the RCC continued supporting, guiding and coordinating the activities of regional cooperation initiatives in security area with the organisation of the

SEEMIC meeting. Significant efforts in security policy area are devoted to the implementation of the Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in SEE. In this context, the RCC Secretariat has been focusing on the steps pertinent to the establishment of the National Focal Points Group and the organisation of the first meeting of the National Focal Points Group on Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism on 27 January 2016 in Sarajevo.

- On the **cross-cutting side**, the RCC continued consultations with the EC and Open Society Foundation on the design and launch of the “Roma Integration 2020 Initiative”. In this context the Contract with the EC was signed, while the contract with OSF is yet to be signed.

With regard to **gender related issues**, RCC has successfully finalised the project titled Women Entrepreneurship – A Job Creation Engine in South East Europe, which was implemented from 2011 until the end of 2015. The project implemented systematic actions to harmonise women entrepreneurship policies in accordance with the EU Small Business Act principles, enhance capacities of women entrepreneurs’ networks and associations, promote policy dialogue, and initiate the improvements in policy making and planning amongst all stakeholders involved: public, private and civil sector. This 2.2 million EUR project covered nine RCC participants from SEE: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Financially supported by the Kingdom of Sweden, the project was carried out under the coordination of the RCC and executed by two implementing partners: Gender Task Force (GTF) and the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECCEL).

At the end of the project, the subject of women entrepreneurship has been recognised either by individual economy-level strategies (like in Croatia and Montenegro) or in other cases this subject has become a part of the competitiveness or SME strategies. Furthermore, women entrepreneurship is annually assessed through the SBA reports, hence becoming part of the pre-accession process in the region. Ultimately, the project initiated a discussion among the Parliaments in the region on the progress made in legislative improvements relating to women entrepreneurship and promotion of best practices.

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\* 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

## 2. Update on progress in implementing SWP 2014-16

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
<b>Component 1: Horizontal activities</b>				
<b>Cooperation between RCC and SEECP</b>	<i>SEECP Troika, RCC - EU meeting, 14 October 2015, Sarajevo</i>	Briefing on cooperation between Bulgarian SEECP C-i-O and RCC; support for RCC's efforts to sustain Moldova's participation in RCC Board and information on future consultations.	Support of the SEECP participants for the RCC Secretariat and its activities.	Finalised
	<i>RCC Board Meeting, 15 October 2015, Sarajevo</i>	Exchange of views on RCC activities, including on those related to the Berlin Process in line with the RCC Strategy and Work Programme; presentation of RCC budgetary issues; briefing on Concept and Work Plan of the Regional Cooperation Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in SEE.	Adoption of the budget for the RCC Secretariat for 2016; approval of Concept and Work Plan of the Regional Cooperation Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in SEE.	Finalised
	<i>SEECP Political Directors meeting, 23 November 2015, Sofia</i>	Briefing on SEECP C-i-O's and RCC's activities, including the drafting process of the new SWP; discussion on declarations on migration and on SEECP Anniversary Summit; exchange of views on migration flows, security and counter-terrorism efforts.	Agreement on the adoption of a SEECP Ministerial Declaration on Migration and the SEECP 20th Anniversary Summit Declaration; reaffirmed commitment to the SEE CVE-FTF Cooperation Platform.	Finalised
	<i>Conference on "Facing the demographic challenges experienced by the SEECP participants, within the Programme of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process", 6-9 October 2015, Sofia</i>	SEECP participants' representatives and international organisations discussion on demographic challenges and opportunities of mobility in SEE.	Input to the drafting of the Joint Declaration to be adopted by the Ministers of SEECP participants at the Sofia Conference in 2016.	Finalised
<b>Consultations of the</b>	<i>Consultations with US Deputy</i>	Briefing on current political situation in SEE and	Continued support of the State	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
<b>Secretary General with SEECP and RCC participants</b>	<i>Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs and senior State Department officials, 2 October 2015, Washington</i>	state of region's Euro-Atlantic integration process. Exchange of views on RCC's activities in anti-corruption, rule of law, security, civil society and Regional Cooperation Platform on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization and US support for the Platform and its activities.	Department for the work of the RCC, including for RCC's activities in countering violent extremism.	
	<i>Consultations with Special Envoy for the Western Balkans and the RCC National Coordinator, German Federal Foreign Office, 19 October 2015, Berlin</i>	Discussions on challenges in SEE, WB and opportunities within the Berlin Process; briefing on the flagship approach of SEE 2020 Strategy and RCC's donor coordination and programming.	Reaffirmed commitment to regional cooperation, the Berlin Process and the activities of RCC.	Finalised
	<i>Consultations with Deputy MFA and high-level officials from Moldova, 24-25 November 2015, Chisinau</i>	Briefing on RCC activities related to security, SWP 2014-2016 and SEE 2020 Strategy, stability and rule of law; exchange of views on current challenges and advancement of regional cooperation in SEE.	Continuous support of Moldova's engagement in the work of RCC, including the SWP and SEE 2020, with a focus on health and security.	Finalised
<b>Regular consultations of SG and senior RCC officials with European Union institutions and services; dialogue with the EU macro strategies</b>	<i>Consultations with EEAS Director for WB and Turkey, and with EC DG NEAR Western Balkans Director, 26 October 2015, Brussels</i>	Presentation of RCC's activities planned for 2017-2019: flagships on skills and mobility, competitiveness, connectivity and governance and monitoring of SEE 2020 Strategy; exchange of views on funding issues, Roma initiative contracting and SEE CVE-FTF Cooperation Platform.	EEAS strong support for RCC's role and activities; EC support for regional investment agreement, economic corridors and reduction of roaming fees.	Finalised
	<i>Annual Forum of EUSDR, 29-30 October 2015, Ulm</i>	Exchange of views and proposals on "Smart, Social, Sustainable – Innovation for the Danube Region", particularly on labour mobility and demography.	Invitation by Slovakia to the next EUSDR Annual Forum in Bratislava.	Finalised
	<i>Conference on "The EUSDR and Its Potential to Tackle Crises in the Danube Region", 11 November, 2015, Krems</i>	Debate on opportunities offered by the EUSDR to tackle the current political, economic and social crises in the Danube region and SEE.	Improved exchange of information and coordination between actors in charge of strategy and programmes; streamlined projects' selection; greater	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
			awareness for strategy-related calls; strengthened Danube region-wide exchange of experience and development of joint solutions.	
<b>Participation of SG in high-level events</b>	<i>OSCE Security Days conference on Climate Change and Security, 28 October 2015, Vienna</i>	Discussion on security risks associated with climate change and security benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation.	Identified successful approaches to integrating security considerations into climate change policies.	Finalised
	<i>OSCE Permanent Council, 29 October 2015, Vienna</i>	Briefing on challenges in SEE, the RCC's SWP 2014-16 and SEE 2020 Strategy implementation, specifically on economic, environmental issues, security and rule of law.	Greater awareness, support and recognition for RCC's work within the OSCE; strengthened synergy between RCC and SEECP through joint briefing.	Finalised
	<i>CEFTA Week, 24-25 November 2015, Chisinau</i>	Presentation of achievements of regional cooperation in trade, investments and infrastructure; presentation of RCC's work on the SEE 2020 Strategy Integrated Growth and Competitiveness objectives.	Draft proposal on the continuation of cooperation between the RCC and CEFTA Secretariats; dissemination of information on the work and priorities of the RCC regarding regional investment and connectivity.	Finalised
	<i>Ministerial Meeting of the Visegrad Group and WB economies, 13 November 2015, Prague</i>	Presentation of RCC's activities related to the SEE 2020 Strategy implementation, as well as the flagship initiatives and their link to the Berlin Process.	Greater awareness of RCC's forthcoming SWP activities.	Finalised
	<i>OSCE Ministerial, 3 December 2015, Belgrade</i>	Exchange of views on regional cooperation promoting stability in the region.	Agreement on the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism.	Finalised
<b>Communication</b>	<i>Literary evening with Zijah Sokolovic: "An actor... is an actor... is an actor",</i>	Supported by RCC, a theatrical-literary evening of the Bosnia and Herzegovina's actor, writer and	Contribution to promoting regional cooperation in arts and culture; raising	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>1 December 2015, Pristina</i>	director, underlined the value of cultural dialogue in SEE.	the profile of the RCC.	
	<i>Theatre play “Balkan Spy in Sarajevo” performed in Zvezdara Theatre, 11 December 2015, Belgrade</i>	Supported by RCC, theatre play of the Sarajevo National Theatre illustrated the problems of daily life in SEE.	Contribution to promoting regional cooperation in arts and culture; raising the profile of the RCC.	Finalised
	<i>Regional Cooperation Day: End of a Tough Year, What Will 2016 Be Like , 18-19 December 2015, Sarajevo</i>	Discussion between the representatives of the regional Civil Society Organisations (CSO) on existing regional and global challenges, with the focus on CSOs role in the regional cooperation and the EU integration process. The side event titled “Reporting on the Region in the Region” brought together journalists from SEE who exchanged their views on the state of media in the region and brought into attention the need for better coverage of regional cooperation by media, as well as improving networking among SEE journalists.	Greater awareness on regional cooperation in civil society and media sectors, contribution to networking among think-tanks and journalists from SEE; media development.	Finalised
	<i>Interviews with Secretary General</i>	Interviews for regional media and article by RCC Secretary General for <i>Europe’s World</i> journal on EU enlargement.	Raising awareness about the RCC activities.	Finalised
	<i>Meetings with media representatives</i>	Regular dialogue with SEE media representatives which fosters better media coverage of regional cooperation.	Maximise the media coverage of RCC activities.	Finalised
<b>SEE 2020 Horizontal Activities – Coordination, Programming and Monitoring of SEE 2020</b>				
<b>Coordination, Programming, Monitoring</b>	<i>Preparation of three flagship themes: Connectivity, Competitiveness, Skills and Mobility</i>	Finalisation of the three flagship initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connectivity - To widen access to markets and make the private sectors and societies at large in SEE better integrated regionally and with the EU;</li> <li>- Competitiveness - To merge the trade,</li> </ul>	Improved and better integrated approach in implementing SEE 2020 Strategy	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
		investment and industrial policy together with innovation and SME development; - Skills and Mobility - To address underdeveloped capacity in the public and private sector, and severely restricted mobility in the region.		
	<i>Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SEE 2020 Programming Committee, 26 November 2015, in Sarajevo</i>	Three year rolling Programming Document 2016-2018 discussed and adopted by all beneficiaries; the RCC action plan with the donor community discussed and agreed	Programme of action for the period 2016-2018 with indicated funding adopted by all beneficiaries	Finalised
	<i>Meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee, 17 December 2015, Vienna</i>	The Monitoring Committee start of operation, rules and procedures for the Monitoring Committee discussed and adopted, the list of indicators for the annual monitoring cycle discussed and agreed.	Monitoring structures and procedures in place, agreed by all beneficiaries and regional partners	Finalised
	<i>The Balkan Barometer 2016</i>	Questionnaires for Balkan Barometer 2016 prepared, interviews conducted, data collected and its analysis started.	Complementing the SEE 2020 Strategy monitoring process with public and business perception based indicators and analysis. Publication of the Balkan Barometer 2016 by spring 2016.	On-track
<b>Component 2: Implementing the SEE 2020 and the Stability and Rule of Law priorities</b>				
<b>Integrated Growth:</b> Free trade; Competitiveness; Integration into the global economy	<i>Regional Benchmark Study: Regional Investment Policy Review</i>	RCC engaged with UNCTAD to prepare the adequate legal basis for cooperation on this activity	No outcomes in the reporting period	Postponed
	<i>Regional Programme; Investment Policy and Regional Integration</i>	Programme finalisation underway with comments received from the EC to be integrated in the final document	No outcomes in the reporting period	On-track

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>Meeting of the Joint Investment Working Group of SEE Investment Committee and CEFTA Meeting, 6-8 October 2015, Besci</i>	Regular meeting of SEE ministries in charge of investment policies, investment promotion agencies, and CEFTA contact points to review the respective SEE 2020 pillar monitoring results (OECD Competitiveness Outlook), discuss prospects for regional investment agreements, and programme on regional investment policy and promotion integration.	Contributions to the final version of SEE 2020 monitoring - qualitative and quantitative (OECD Competitiveness Outlook);  Improved draft programme on regional investment policy and promotion integration.	Finalised
	<i>SEE Investment Committee (SEEIC) plenary session, 17 November 2015, Podgorica</i>	A regional meeting of SEE Economic Teams to review and endorse the SEE 2020 Competitiveness Flagship; review the work of the regional expert groups on SEE 2020 sectors of priorities and endorse future activities; establish a working group on industrial policy; and start preparations for the SEEIC Ministerial Conference.	Verified and endorsed actions in support to food and beverages processing and tourism industry under the SEE 2020 Flagship: Sector Competitiveness and Industrial Development in SEE; established regional industrial policy working group; proposed date for the SEEIC ministerial conference (4 December 2015).	Finalised
	<i>SEE Investment Committee Ministerial Meeting, 9 December 2015, Besci</i>	Ministerial Declaration of the SEE Investment Committee 2015	Endorsed Ministerial Declaration of the SEE Investment Committee 2015 and SEE 2020 Flagship on Competitiveness and Actions stipulated under the Flagship	Finalised
<b>Smart growth:</b> Education and competences; R&D and Innovation;	<i>ERISEE Governing Board meeting, 10 December 2015, Belgrade</i>	25 participants were present at this meeting to discuss the process of ERI SEE establishment, the selection process for the ERI SEE Director, adopt the Work Programme and Budget for 2016, the	ERI SEE Secretariat/Centre for Education Policy establishment process agreed, including the criteria and procedures for	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
Digital Society; Culture and creative sectors		narrative and financial report on the implementation of the 2015 Work Programme.	the selection of personnel.  The annual narrative and financial report of the implementation adopted.  The Work Programme and the Budget for 2016 adopted.	
	<i>Regional Workshop on Fundraising in Cultural Heritage, 3-4 November 2015, Jahorina</i>	A total of 20 representatives of SEE economies participated in creating fundraising strategies for 6 prioritised cultural heritage sites and completed training of trainers in the area of fundraising in a workshop led by the UK International Fundraising Consultancy (IFC) expert. Participants received training on techniques and processes in fundraising, examples of best practices, and useful addresses and links.	National level administrative and fundraising capacities strengthened.	Finalised
	<i>ERI SEE seminar on removing obstacles to recognition of qualifications, 5-6 November 2015, Zagreb</i>	25 representatives of SEE economies participated in the seminar on standardisation of qualifications and removal of obstacles to their recognition, discussing national legislative framework on removing obstacles to recognition, building on the tools of the Bologna framework as a long-term goal.	An informal agreement for joint preparation of Erasmus+ project proposal on capacity building to be submitted in 2016 based on the recommendation from the Bologna Ministerial Conference.	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>Analyses and assessments of mutual recognition of qualifications</i>	Start of the procurement procedure for consulting services “Mapping and Assessment Study” to identify the sectors and professions of interest for agreements on mutual recognition of professional qualifications in SEE to feed into the work of the Joint WG on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications and serve as the basis for a decision in which profession/s mutual recognition agreements would be negotiated.	No outcomes in the reporting period	On track
	<i>Ministerial Conference on Digital Society, 30 September 2015, Przno</i>	Renew the political commitment to SEE 2020 Digital Society dimension and e-SEE Agenda Plus. Ensure support to the RCC’s Regional Roaming Reduction Initiative through a comprehensive Market Impact Study.	Endorsed Ministerial Statement, reconfirming political commitment to regional cooperation in ICT and on the roaming charges reduction initiative	Finalised
	<i>Meeting of the e-SEE Initiative, 21-22 December 2015, Vienna</i>	Reviewed progress in meeting the SEE 2020 Digital dimension and e-SEE Agenda Plus targets.  Capacity building workshop organised on the new e-signature regulation e-IDAS	Strengthened ICT administration capacities on e-IDAS Regulation	Finalised
<b>Sustainable Growth:</b> Energy; Transport; Environment; Competitiveness	<i>The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment, 8 October 2015, Budva</i>	Coordination of efforts at national and regional level on environment-related issues in SEE.	Continued dialogue on regional environmental cooperation in SEE.	Finalised
	<i>Preparation of the Assessment of Environmental Policy Developments in South East Europe and of the Background Report in SEE.</i>	Overview of national legal and institutional frameworks in SEE 2020 economies and regional environmental organisations and initiatives, covering Chapter 27: Environment and climate	Report to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis and overview of the policy qualitative, quantitative and outcome indicators related to	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
		change of the <i>acquis</i> . Identification and elaboration of key priority regional cooperation areas, including a set of priority environmental actions under the Connectivity Flagship.	Dimension J – Environment of the SEE 2020 Strategy	
	<i>Conference: “Modern Rural Policy: Competitiveness, investment and well-being in rural regions of South East Europe”, 14–15 October 2015, Pravets</i>	Exchange of information on integrated economic development in rural cross-border areas in SEE and rural development via natural resource management in SEE. Exchange of information and analysis of agriculture and rural development policies in SEE.	Established platform for international dialogue on policy settings and perspectives of common interest to agricultural policy makers and stakeholders, addressing implementation of EU agricultural/rural development policies and reflection towards SEE economies.	Finalised
	<i>Finalisation of the Study on Intermodal Transport in Western Balkans (ongoing contract)</i>	The Interim and Final reports were prepared, submitted and approved by RCC and SEETO.	Comprehensive overview and assessment of region’s main logistic corridors, with identification of short-term measures to recover the intermodal transport chains with the existing capacities, identification of the long-term measures and policy input recommendations for strategic development of intermodality in SEE.  Assessment of potential impact on improved intermodality and logistics of the extended TEN-T core transport network to WB, as well as of the selected sections for WBIF/IPA MB 2015 funding.	Finalised
	<i>The 13<sup>th</sup> JSPAI Preparatory Team, 17 November 2015, Skopje</i>	Discussion on the Regional Programme by fifteen participants of the Working Group from Civil Aviation Authorities and Air Navigation Service Providers.	National administrations’ capacities on project cycle management increased. Improved projects proposed within the Regional Programme.	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>Study/Analysis (contribution to): Designing policy questionnaires for the transport modes and cross-sectoral policy areas (trade, energy, environment, R&amp;D)</i>	Transport policy questionnaires and check-lists prepared as part of SEETO's policy assessment and monitoring mechanism related to transport co-modality, use of ITS, energy efficiency, environmental aspects, local sustainability, etc.	Enhanced assessment of transport policies, progress tracking mechanisms and tools for identifying further assistance needs.	Finalised
	<i>Capacity building: Experts' technical visit on QMS system for Border Crossing Points Management</i>	In the reporting period, RCC supported carrying out of experts' technical visit on QMS system for Border Crossing Points Management.	Best practices in improving corridors' performance efficiency identified as a basis for further work in the area of improving BCP management.	Finalised
	<i>SEEIC Food and Beverages Expert Working Group meeting, 5 October 2015, Becici</i>	Regular regional meeting of relevant ministries in charge of food and beverages processing and private sector representatives in order to finalise the OECD Next Generation Competitiveness Initiative and the regional programme actions under the SEE 2020 Flagship on Competitiveness.	SEE 2020 Flagship on Sector Competitiveness with activities pertaining to food and beverages processing industry (addressing the sector barriers and developing the joint regional supply chain).	Finalised
	<i>SEEIC Tourism Expert Group meeting, 26 October 2015, Ohrid</i>	Regular regional meeting of relevant ministries in charge of tourism industry, national tourism boards and private sector representatives in order to finalise the OECD Next Generation Competitiveness Initiative and the regional programme actions under the SEE 2020 Flagship on Competitiveness.	SEE 2020 Flagship on Sector Competitiveness with activities pertaining to tourism (addressing the sector barriers and developing the joint regional tourist offer).	Finalised
	<i>SEE Industrial Policy Working Group Meeting</i>	No results during the reporting period; working group just recently established and meeting postponed for Fall 2015.	No outcomes during reporting period; working group just recently established and meeting postponed for Fall 2015.	Delayed for 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2016
<b>Inclusive Growth:</b>	<i>36<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the South</i>	A total of 18 representatives of the SEE	Preparatory work for the next, 4 <sup>th</sup> SEE	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
Employment; Health	<i>East European Health Network, 11-12 December 2015, Tirana</i>	economies took part at the SEEHN meeting to share the national challenges, needs and ideas for potential regional actions in the framework of the Network, including in the context of migration, and health security needs and challenges.	Ministerial Forum in 2016 to be held in Chisinau.	
	<i>Establishment of the IPA MC proposal on Employment Platform</i>	ToR for the personnel prepared and vacancies launched	No outcomes in the reporting period	On track
<b>Governance for Growth:</b> Effective public services	<i>No activities in the reporting period</i>	No outputs in the reporting period	No outcomes in the reporting period	
Justice dimension	<i>Study/Report on best practices in training of judiciaries in the EU MS, assessment of the training needs, and evaluation of results</i>	Developing regionally applicable processes for training of judges and prosecutors in line with EU practices. The draft report shared with the stakeholders.	No outcomes in the reporting period	On track
	<i>4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the WGJ: Evaluation of the implementation of activities throughout 2015, approval of the Work Plan for 2016, 29 October 2015, Zagreb</i>	The internal Implementation Report for 2015 and the Work Plan for 2016 approved by WGJ participants.	Useful input supporting the judicial reforms	Finalised
	<i>Preparatory meeting, 9 December 2015, Belgrade</i>	The preparatory process for the establishment of the association of mediators is launched.	Contribution to future reduction of court backlog on the base of alternative dispute resolution/mediation.	Finalised
Anticorruption	<i>Southeast Europe Coalition on</i>	Forming the Coalition as a platform to support	Contribution to improving the legal	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>Whistle-blower Protection, 9-10 November 2015, Belgrade</i>	improvement of national laws and practices on whistle-blower protection in SEE and enhance cooperation with Governments.	framework protecting whistle-blowers in the SEE region.	
	<i>Regional meeting of the anticorruption agencies/ bodies in SEE, 15-16 December 2015, Zagreb</i>	Strengthening the capacities of national anticorruption agencies/bodies through regular contacts, exchange of experiences, best practices and information at regional level (peer support and networking).	Strengthened institutional capacities of anticorruption agencies/bodies. More efficient action to counter corruption at national level and across the borders.	Finalised
<b>Promoting Stability and Rule of Law - JHA and Security Cooperation</b>				
<b>Justice and Home Affairs</b>	<i>No activities in the reporting period</i>	No outputs in the reporting period	No outcomes in the reporting period	
<b>Security cooperation:</b> Consultations of the RCC Secretary General, as well as support, coordination and monitoring of the activities related to security cooperation	<i>OSCE Expert Workshop, 7-8 October 2015, Bucharest</i>	Debate on various aspects of reconciling the respect for the freedom of media with countering violent extremist propaganda.	Enhanced knowledge of good practices and challenges for effectively countering violent extremist propaganda, while not endangering the freedom of media.	Finalised
	<i>Meeting of the Western Balkans Counter-terrorism Initiative (WBCTI) Informal Working Group, 20 October 2015, Brussels</i>	Inputs for the WBCTI Integrative Plan of Action; RCC presented its Regional Platform for countering violent extremism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters.	Better coordination of the current and planned activities in the field of countering terrorism and violent extremism in the region.	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
in SEE	<i>15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation, 22 October 2015, Dubrovnik</i>	Assessment of the activities of RACVIAC.	Handover between the outgoing and new RACVIAC Director.	Finalised
	<i>Comprehensive Regional Defence Ministerial Meeting (CRM), 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of the RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation Multinational Advisory Group-MAG, 21-23 October 2015, Dubrovnik</i>	Comprehensive debates on the current state of defence and security cooperation in SEE, planning of future activities of Southeast European Defence Ministerial process (SEDM), U.S.-Adriatic Charter, and RACVIAC.	Enhanced coordination of planned defence and security sector cooperation activities in SEE.	Finalised
	<i>5<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting of SALW Commissions, 3-4 November 2015, Skopje</i>	Assessing the progress achieved in SALW control; exchange of experience and information on the implementation of national strategies within the EU funded project.	Contribution to the efforts to combat proliferation and secure increased control of small arms and light weapons.	Finalised
	<i>7<sup>th</sup> Southeast Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs forum (SEEMIC), 5<sup>th</sup> Western Balkans Defence Intelligence Chiefs forum (WEBADIC), 5-6 November 2015, Thessaloniki</i>	Exchange of views on the current main security threats and challenges SEE is facing. SEEMIC was co-organised and co-chaired by the RCC. Open Sources Intelligence Assessment jointly adopted at the SEEMIC forum and the topic for the next one agreed. Ways of enhanced communication in SEEMIC discussed. WEBADIC discussed ways of practical cooperation in education and training.	Enhanced cooperation of military intelligence services in SEE and their out-of-region partners in order to find more efficient and coordinated responses to the security threats and challenges the region is faced with.	Finalised
	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Meeting of South East European Firearms Expert Network (SEEFEN), 26-27 November 2015, Przno</i>	Exchange of information and views between the leading customs and police officers and prosecutors from the region regarding the control of firearms (small arms and light weapons; registration, tracing, curbing of illegal trade, etc.).	Development of regional cooperation in firearms registration and tracing, and suppression of illegal firearms trade.	Finalised
	<i>South East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group</i>	RCC SG gave a comprehensive review of the security developments in SEE, ongoing and	Deeper understanding of the current security environment of SEE and	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>(SEEGROUP) meeting, 17 December 2015, Brussels</i>	planned security cooperation activities, with an emphasis on the RCC's engagement, in particular in countering violent extremism.	enhanced regional security cooperation, including in NATO context.	
	<i>"Migration on the Balkan route - donor coordination and humanitarian challenges" conference, 18 December 2015, Skopje</i>	Discussions focused on the migrant challenge for the regional donor cooperation, as well as dealing with the humanitarian challenge.	Contribution to efforts related to regional coordination of the migration-related developments.	Finalised
<b>Extending Participation, Widening Partnerships – Cross-cutting Issues</b>				
<b>Gender Mainstreaming</b>	<i>International Conference "Women in Entrepreneurship: A South East European Response", 13-15 October 2015, Opatija</i>	Conference of women entrepreneurs and relevant government representatives, in discussion about achievements of the Project and sharing knowledge and experiences, and ultimately creating new business opportunities.	Project conclusions (part 1)	Finalised
	<i>Final Conference "The Future of Women Entrepreneurship in South East Europe 2015-2020", 12-14 November 2015, Split</i>	Conference of women entrepreneurs and relevant government representatives, promoting best policy practices in women entrepreneurship in line with the Small Business Act for Europe and capacity building of national and regional women entrepreneurs' networks and associations.	Project conclusions (part 2) and proposals for future steps	Finalised
<b>Parliamentary cooperation</b>	<i>Conference on "Economic governance and job creation in the EU and in Enlargement countries" co-organised by the European Parliament, RCC and the Parliament of B&amp;H, 15 October 2015, Sarajevo</i>	Discussions among MPs from WB economies and MEPs on economic governance and job creation.	Continuous support for the WB parliaments on structural reforms processes.	Finalised

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTPUTS</b> /deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main <b>OUTCOMES</b> of the achieved results	Status of completion
	<i>Annual Coordinators Meeting: European Parliament and National Correspondents of the Enlargement Parliaments, 22 October 2015, Brussels</i>	Assessment of the 2015 activities of the EP Pre-Accession Support Programme and presentation by the Bulgarian SEECP C-i-O of its 2015-2016 priorities.	Commitment reaffirmed by the RCC Secretariat to observe parliamentary activities under the upcoming 2016 EP Pre-Accession Support Programme for the Parliaments of Enlargement countries.	Finalised
	<i>Conference "South East Europe Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly – Regional Synergies, Strategic Cooperation and Parliamentary Diplomacy", 5-6 November 2015, Sofia</i>	Exchange of views on the role of SEECP PA in implementing regional priorities, expansion of cooperation between SEECP PA and the EP on regional and EU issues, and streamlining of activities between SEECP PA and other inter-parliamentary formats that include participants from SEE region.	Greater focus on infrastructure, transport and energy as priorities of the SEECP participants.	Finalised

### 3. Management and operations

A remaining open issue related to the set-up of the RCC Secretariat concerns the implementation of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat, which regulates the status of the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels.

The Kingdom of Belgium has conditioned the implementation of relevant provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat providing for the fiscal privileges and immunities of the Head and Deputy Head of the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels with the issuing of an official authentic interpretation concerning the implementation of Article 17.1.(d) of the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of other SEECP Participating States, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on behalf of Kosovo<sup>\*</sup> in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, on the Host Country Arrangements for the Secretariat of the RCC (Host Country Agreement) by the Parties to this Agreement in which the principle of taxability of the officials of the RCC Secretariat in their countries/places of origin and/or permanent residence would be explicitly confirmed. After a consultation procedure initiated by the RCC Secretary General in August 2008 it became evident that the adoption of an interpretative declaration amending the Agreement would not be acceptable to some of the Parties to the Host Country Agreement, as they consider that such declaration would run counter to the spirit of the current provisions of the Agreement and would lead to its de facto amendment. In light of the principles of general international law, the only recourse in this situation would be to proceed with amending the Host Country Agreement accordingly, in light of the request from the Kingdom of Belgium. This, however, remains subject to the will of the Parties to the Host Country Agreement. 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 requested confirmation of taxability. This proposal of the RCC Secretary General is still under consideration by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The RCC Liaison Office keeps regular contact with the Protocol of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the ratification process of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat (signed in 2008).

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<sup>\*</sup> 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.

During the reporting period, a new staff member joined the RCC Secretariat: Ms. Ivana Petricevic, as the Senior Advisor in the LO Brussels.

The RCC Secretariat has published a new vacancy for the following position:

1. Monitoring Officer (Economic Policy Researcher) - deadline for submission of applications 25 January 2016.

#### **4. Key challenges in the reporting period**

The key challenges that we have noted before still persist, among them the following could be highlighted as critical:

- In relation to the commencement of the Regional Investment Policy Review, the RCC Secretariat has been facing a challenge in setting legal grounds for cooperation with UNCTAD regarding the existing rules of the UN in terms of signing legal agreements, which are not subject to the rules stipulated by the RCC Rules and Procedures. The solution is being sought, and will be subject to a request from the RCC to the EC for a special permission for entering into a legal agreement with UNCTAD.

## 5. State of financial contributions to the RCC Secretariat's budget for 2015

Contribution	Commitments	Roll Over	Contributions	Contributions net of bank charges, including roll over	Date Received	Percent
<b>Contributing Countries (Donors)</b>						
Austria	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	26-Jun-15	100,00%
Czech Republic	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	31-Mar-15	100,00%
Federal Republic of Germany	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	18-Sep-15	100,00%
Finland	50.000,00			-		0,00%
France	50.000,00			-		0,00%
Hungary	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	27-Mar-15	100,00%
Italy	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	8-Jun-15	100,00%
Ireland	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	7-Jul-15	100,00%
Latvia	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	25-Mar-15	100,00%
Norway	50.000,00		47.247,73	47.247,73	27-Oct-15	94,50%
Sweden	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	16-Dec-15	100,00%
Switzerland	50.000,00		50.000,00	50.000,00	25-Jun-15	100,00%
United States of America	60.000,00		71.481,63	71.481,63	30-Apr-15	119,14%
<b>Total contributing countries donors:</b>	<b>660.000,00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>568.729,36</b>	<b>568.729,36</b>		<b>86,17%</b>
<b>European Commission contract</b>	<b>3.575.000,00</b>		<b>3.196.301,27</b>	<b>3.196.301,27</b>	<b>9-Dec-14</b>	<b>89,41%</b>
<b>South East Europe Contributors</b>						
Albania	60.000,00		60.000,00	60.000,00	24-Apr-15	100,00%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	60.000,00		60.000,00	60.000,00	3-Jun-15	100,00%
Bulgaria	140.000,00		140.000,00	140.000,00	22-Jan-15	100,00%
Croatia	80.000,00		60.000,00	60.000,00	12.03. & 22.10.	75,00%
Greece	140.000,00		140.000,00	140.000,00	11-Jun-15	100,00%
Kosovo*	40.000,00			-		0,00%
Moldova	40.000,00		40.000,00	40.000,00	12-Jun-15	100,00%
Montenegro	40.000,00		40.000,00	40.000,00	26-Mar-15	100,00%
Romania	140.000,00		140.000,00	140.000,00	29-May-15	100,00%
Serbia	80.000,00		80.000,00	80.000,00	27-Mar-15	100,00%
Slovenia	80.000,00		80.000,00	80.000,00	17-Mar-15	100,00%
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	60.000,00			-		0,00%
Turkey	140.000,00		140.000,00	140.000,00	13-Apr-15	100,00%
South East Europe Contributors set aside funding**	200.000,00		200.000,00	200.000,00	1-Jan-15	100,00%
<b>Total South East Europe Contributors:</b>	<b>1.300.000,00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1.180.000,00</b>	<b>1.180.000,00</b>		<b>90,77%</b>
<b>Total Committed Funds</b>	<b>5.535.000,00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4.945.030,63</b>	<b>4.945.030,63</b>		<b>89,34%</b>

\*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.

\*\* balance of set aside funds is EUR448,929

## Annex: RCC Annual Work Plan for 2015

<b>Component 1:</b>	Horizontal activities, including political activities, coordination of SWP 2014-2016 and SEE 2020 Strategy implementation, monitoring and programming, communications					
	<i>Objective: Position RCC as the main focal point and the leading resource for governments, donors, civil sector and others engaging in regional cooperation</i>					
PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				EXPECTED OUTPUTS/ DELIVERABLES	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<i>Meetings of the RCC Board (three meetings)</i>	x	x		x	<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Establish or maintain functioning coordination mechanisms with the governments, private sector, business community and civil society; Finalise the first programming cycle; Complete the annual monitoring cycle. Establish an understanding and awareness of what the RCC does, to raise and maintain support, including political and financial, based on its mission to promote mutual cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe</i>
<i>RCC Annual Meeting (one meeting)</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Coordination Meetings between the SEECP Troika, RCC Secretariat and EU (four meetings)</i>	x	x		x	<i>Meetings</i>	
<i>SEECP support: Political Directors meetings (three meetings)</i>	x	x		x	<i>Meetings</i>	
<i>SEECP support: Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (three meetings)</i>	x	x	x		<i>Meetings</i>	
<i>SEECP support: SEECP Summit (one meeting)</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>SEECP support: Parliamentary cooperation (two meetings)</i>	x	x			<i>Meetings</i>	
<i>SEECP support: consultations with SEECP participants (six events)</i>	x	x	x	x	<i>Political consultations</i>	
<i>Annual briefings for Ambassadors in Brussels</i>			x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Regular consultations of SG with European Union institutions and services</i>	x	x	x	x	<i>Meetings</i>	
<i>Briefing of SG in COWEB</i>		x			<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Participation of SG in the high level conference on the Balkans, organised by Friends of Europe</i>				x	<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Coordination meeting of the regional organisations</i>		x			<i>Regional meeting</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Podgorica</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Tirana</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Belgrade</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	

<i>Organisation of the first meeting of the SEE 2020 Monitoring Task Force</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Pristina</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Skopje</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>Organising the first meeting of the Programming Committee of SEE 2020 to start the programming process for 2015</i>	x				<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Donor Coordination Meeting</i>	x				<i>Conference</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 National Roundtable in Sarajevo</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>First Meeting of the RCC Business Forum</i>	x				<i>Conference</i>	
<i>RCC Advisory Council</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>SEE 2020 Governing Board</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Second meeting of the Programming Committee</i>				x	<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Support to coordination of the economic agenda - consultant</i>		x			<i>Tool/toolkit</i>	
<i>PR: Follow the most relevant activities of the Secretary General, the Programme and the Political Departments</i>	x	x	x	x	<i>Outreach events</i>	

<b>Component 2:</b>	Implementing the SEE 2020 and the Stability and Rule of Law priorities						
	<i>Objective: Improve connectivity, mobility and industrial development of SEE while complementing national efforts to improve public administration and strengthen the rule of law</i>						
PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				EXPECTED OUTPUTS/ DELIVERABLES	EXPECTED OUTCOME	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
<b>Integrated Growth</b>							
<i>Regional Investment Policy Review</i>				x	<i>Study</i>	<i>A regional roadmap established in the area of investment policy and promotion to support further regional investment integration</i>	
<i>SEE Investment Committee and CEFTA Investment Working Group</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>		
<i>SEE Investment Committee plenary session</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>		
<i>SEE Investment Committee and CEFTA Investment Working Group</i>				x	<i>Workshop</i>		
<i>SEE Investment Committee plenary session</i>				x	<i>Meeting</i>		
<i>SEE Investment Committee ministerial (high-level) meeting</i>				x	<i>Conference</i>		
<b>Smart Growth</b>							
<i>Regional workshop on Networks of Excellence</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Two regional programmes on networks of excellence and early stage start-ups developed to promote institutional and policy reforms and facilitate strategic investments;  Enable establishment of WISE and its Secretariat as implementer of the Regional R&amp;D Strategy for Innovation and R&amp;D and Innovation Dimension Coordinator for SEE 2020</i>	
<i>Existing contract - consultant on Networks of Excellence</i>	x				<i>Report</i>		
<i>SEECF format Networks of Excellence- exchanging best practices from SEE</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>		
<i>Regional workshop "Early Stage Start-up Programme"</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>		
<i>Develop a regional programme on early stage start-ups as one of the four main objectives of the Regional R&amp;D Strategy for Innovation</i>		x			<i>Study</i>		
<i>WISE Steering Committee meeting (goals objectives of the R&amp;D sector in SEE)</i>			x		<i>Meeting</i>		
<i>Regional Scientific Forum (deliberations of WISE statutory documents)</i>	x				<i>Conference</i>		
<i>Regional workshop on Teacher Education and Training</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>		

Completion of existing contract - consultant on Teacher Education and Training	x				Study	Regional expert pool expanded, promoting further linkages in CCS; Increase contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to economic development
ERISEE Governing Board meeting	x				Meeting	
Two Coordination Meetings of the Task Force on Culture and Society	x		x		Meeting	
Expand and rename the Ljubljana Process Regional Expert Pool in a way to have 3 categories covering Cultural and Creative Sectors (include experts on audio-visual, design and heritage);-inauguration conference and workshop and creation of online database		x			Conference	
Prepare marketing and promotional materials for the purpose of fundraising activities for the programmes developed under CCS Dimension (with a focus on heritage)	x				Promotional material	
Organise a regional training on indicators in culture in cooperation with UNESCO and OECD			x		Training package	
Organise innovative on-site learning training activity targeted to history, heritage and citizenship educators in cooperation with EUROCLIO			x		Workshop	
Regional coordination (workshops/working group meetings)	x		x		Meeting	
Ministerial conference		x			Conference	
Study in the identified Digital Society priorities of the SEE 2020 Strategy		x			Study	
<b>Sustainable Growth</b>						
Establishment of Working Group/Forum on Infrastructure and first meeting		x			Meeting	Optimisation of individual transport modes and promotion of green & energy efficient transport; attracting international transport flows and increasing the mobility in the region through further development of the SEE Comprehensive Network; contribute to the elimination of transport non-physical barriers; encourage public sector participation in the financing of transport infrastructure and promote the PPP model; explore and identify airspace utilisation possibilities; further implement the Single European Sky (SES)
Finalisation of the Intermodal Study (existing contract)				x	Study	
Meeting with SEE 2020 key transport stakeholders: National Coordinators and key users				x	Meeting	
SEECF format - Expert Meeting on Railway Network, 'Upgrading Railway as Growth Engine for SEE'	x				Meeting	
Hiring consultants to design policy questionnaires for every transport mode and for cross-cutting issues with other dimensions (trade, energy, environment, R&D)		x			Other	
RCC/SEETO meetings and consultations	x	x		x	Meeting	
Congress on Railways			x		Meeting	

<i>Working Group on Regional Programme on Air Transport</i>	x				<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Meetings of the Working Group on NSA Expert Pool Projects</i>		x		x	<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>RCC/JSPAI Preparatory Team meeting</i>			x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Preparation of an analytical review of the existing activities with regards to the Studies on Free Route Airspace, Performance-based Navigation and Wide-area Multilateration</i>		x			<i>Assessment</i>	
<i>RCC/JSPAI Consultation meeting</i>	x			x	<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Regional assessment of the status of irrigation and potentials for increasing agricultural irrigated land;</i>			x		<i>Study</i>	
<i>Regional baseline report on the status of forestation on annual level (last 3 years);</i>			x		<i>Study</i>	
<i>Regional Forestry Cooperation</i>			x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Regional Roundtable on the Nexus as means to raise awareness on the issue and discuss actions to foster implementation of the Nexus approach at the national level</i>			x		<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>National Nexus dialogue in one economy to assess current inter-linkages among sectors at the policy and management levels and identify actions to address trade-offs as means towards sustainable utilisation of resources and sustainable growth</i>			x		<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>Regional Roundtable on Private Sector Participation in South East Europe (SEE)</i>				x	<i>Roundtable</i>	
<i>SEEIC Tourism Expert Group meeting</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEEIC Industrial Policy Working Group meeting</i>	x				<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>Analysis of Business Synergies and Connectivity between South East European Economies and Turkey</i>			x		<i>Study</i>	
<i>SEEIC Food and Beverages Expert Group meeting</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEEIC Tourism Expert Group meeting</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEEIC Industrial Policy Working Group meeting</i>			x		<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEEIC Food and Beverages Expert Group meeting</i>			x		<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>SEEIC Tourism Expert Group meeting</i>				x	<i>Meeting</i>	
<b>Inclusive Growth</b>						

<i>In-country consultations on social economy</i>	x				<i>Roundtable</i>	<i>Increased commitment to promote social economy; roadmap established and progress made towards the goal of mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and increased awareness and engagement for youth employment</i>
<i>Ministerial Conference on Social Economy</i>		x			<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Social Agenda Working Group meetings</i>	x		x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Joint working group meetings on mutual recognition of professional qualifications</i>	x		x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Analyses and assessments of mutual recognition of qualifications</i>		x			<i>Assessment</i>	
<i>Youth unemployment conference (EXIT festival)</i>		x			<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Visibility (printing)</i>	x				<i>Report</i>	
<i>SEEHN consultations with other regional initiatives</i>	x				<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Situation analysis provided with respect to cross-border public health perspectives and health as an entry point for investment; established working relationships with other regional structures in the framework of health in all policies</i>
<i>Feasibility study on opportunities for investment in health in the framework of inclusive growth</i>			x		<i>Study</i>	
<i>Review of legislation, regulations, standards and procedures related to border control of people movement and trade with importance for human health</i>		x			<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Working group meetings of the SEEHN</i>	x		x		<i>Meeting</i>	
<i>Visibility (printing)</i>			x		<i>Report</i>	
<b>Governance for Growth</b>						
<i>Upgrading Policy and Regulatory Capacity: Study on Regulatory Impact Assessment</i>	x				<i>Study</i>	<i>Provide a roadmap for increasing regulatory quality in all SEE2020 dimensions, particularly those directly linked to competitiveness and economic growth; help increase efficiency by advocating allocation of resources locally, closer to costumers, allowing the regional and municipal governments to come up with tailor-made initiatives that best fit local economic potential</i>
<i>Upgrading Policy and Regulatory Capacity: Kick-off conference on study results; publication of the Study</i>			x		<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Subsidiarity and Multi-level Governance: Study on Decentralisation Observatory for SEE</i>	x				<i>Study</i>	
<i>Decentralisation Observatory for SEE: Kick-off Conference</i>			x		<i>Conference</i>	
<i>Translation of the Methodology on CPL and Methodology on CRA and its publishing in 5 languages</i>		x			<i>Tool/toolkit</i>	<i>Disseminated the work on corruption risk assessment (CRA) and corruption proofing of legislation (CPL) and developed tools to help utilisation; Developed regional cooperation on data</i>
<i>Training on Performing CPL and using IT tool (3 trainings x7 participants with interpretation in local language)</i>				x	<i>Training package</i>	
<i>Training on Performing CRA and using IT tool (3 trainings x7</i>				x	<i>Training</i>	

<i>participants with interpretation in local language)</i>					<i>package</i>	<i>exchange in asset disclosure and conflict of interest and regional legal instrument</i>	
<i>Consultancy to develop and maintain resource centre, IT tools based on CPL and CRA Regional Methodology, and to deliver trainings (60 days for company +45 days for CPL consultant +45 days for CRA consultant)</i>		x	x	x	<i>Tool/toolkit</i>		
<i>Regional Workshop and Conference of the Integrity Expert Network to develop Regional Legal Instrument on Data Exchange in Asset Disclosure (Workshop 25 people x2 days, Conference 35x1 day)</i>		x		x	<i>Other</i>		
<i>Consultancy to develop Regional Legal Instrument on Data Exchange in Asset Disclosure (2 consultants each 20 days)</i>		x	x	x	<i>Other</i>		
<i>3rd Meeting of the Working Group on Justice (discussion on the Regional Programme and the Reports on E-enforcement, Mediation and Backlog Reduction Programmes), Zagreb</i>	x				<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Developed regionally applicable mechanisms to address backlog reduction, e-enforcement and mediation, as well as networking of judicial and prosecutorial councils and judicial training institutions to produce common training modules and curricula in EU law and Ethics in Judiciary</i>	
<i>Conference on E-enforcement - presentation of Study, Zagreb</i>	x				<i>Conference</i>		
<i>Regional Programme finalised and reported to WGJ</i>	x				<i>Other</i>		
<i>Tender "Report on the Training Institutions in judiciary in SEE countries and Report on comparative overview of various training models for presidents of courts and court administration", 15 working days</i>	x				<i>Report</i>		
<i>Completion of the existing three assessments on e-enforcement, mediation and backlog reduction</i>	x				<i>Report</i>		
<i>Kick-off event "Establishment of the network of associations of mediators", Belgrade</i>		x			<i>Other</i>		
<i>Regional Conference "Court backlogs reduction programmes and practices - presentation of Study", Split</i>		x			<i>Conference</i>		
<i>Kick-off event "Establishment of the network of judicial and prosecutorial councils", Budva</i>		x			<i>Other</i>		
<i>Kick-off event "Establishment of the SEE training institutions network", Tirana</i>		x			<i>Other</i>		
<b>Stability and Rule of Law</b>							
<i>Mapping of all regional activities in the field of fighting serious and organised crime</i>	x				<i>Report</i>		<i>Help in prioritising, in particular due to the fact that many of those crime areas are of horizontal nature. Mapping is seen only as one part of the process, the second step</i>
<i>Workshop with donors and regional strategic partners to contribute to the gap analysis</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>		

<i>Workshop to present to the WB economies the results and updated list of needs, where priorities would be indicated</i>		x			<i>Workshop</i>	<i>should be highlighting (or prioritising) the areas of needed intervention to regional donors and strategic partners active in the region.</i>
<i>Setting-up an ad hoc Task Force which would develop a draft 'Plan of activities needed in the WB region', based on a revision of gap analysis recommendations</i>			x	x	<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>a) Consultations with relevant national security institutions on planning and implementation of the RCC Secretariat activities in the security cooperation area</i>			x		<i>Meeting</i>	<i>It is expected that enhanced inter and intra cooperation mechanisms will provide an improved information sharing means achievable through the RIs deepened cooperation. Developed operational links amongst RIs will provide space for mutual benefits in information exchange. The activities envisaged within the project will promote and achieve confidence within the Balkans, representing a unique framework in the security area.</i>
<i>b) Organising and supporting one conference of SEEMIC, SEENSA, SEECIC, DPD, DPrD</i>			x		<i>Conference</i>	
<i>c) Organising two WG meetings of experts in preparation and implementation of decisions of SEEMIC, SEENSA, SEECIC, DPD, and DPrD</i>			x		<i>Workshop</i>	
<i>d) Monitor the activities of the RI&amp;TF in SEE, namely SEDM, WBDPD, A5, RACVIAC, SEESAC, DPPI, RCM</i>			x		<i>Other</i>	
<i>e) Assessment of the lessons learned, best practices and difficulties encountered after two year of RCC WP implementation</i>			x		<i>Assessment</i>	
<i>Balkan Opinion Barometer/Balkan Business Barometer</i>				x	<i>Report</i>	