



The BERCEN mission
 To improve the implementation of environmental law by increasing the effectiveness of enforcement agencies and promoting compliance with environmental requirements



■ BERCEN participant states
 ■ BERCEN observer states

THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (REC) is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit international organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The REC fulfils this mission by promoting cooperation among non-governmental organisations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision making.

The REC was established in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. Today, the REC is legally based on a charter signed by the governments of 28 countries and the European Commission, and on an international agreement with the government of Hungary. The REC has its head office in Szentendre, Hungary, and country offices and field offices in 16 beneficiary countries which are:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the FYR of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

Recent donors are the European Commission and the governments of Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as other inter-governmental and private institutions.



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Making the Law Matter

The Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network



THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
 for Central and Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

The Balkan Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement Network (BERCEN) is an informal, country-driven network of authorities responsible for the enforcement of environmental laws. A component of the Stabilisation and Association Process South Eastern Europe, it covers the states of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. In addition, Romania and Bulgaria are involved as observer countries. BERCEN works in cooperation with similar networks in Europe and around the world.

BERCEN provides technical assistance and facilitates the exchange of experience and information among people involved in environmental inspection, permitting and implementation of environmental law.

The network was established at a meeting of high officials from environmental ministries and enforcement agencies from South Eastern Europe in December 2001, in Tirana, Albania.



BERCEN helps train environmental inspectors, organises exchange programmes, and provides funding for inspectors to take part in international events

DONORS

Activities are funded by the European Commission assistance programme PHARE/OBNOVA, EC CARDS Programme, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning of Croatia.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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See our web site at www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REREP/BERCEN.



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OBJECTIVES

The BERCEN network aims to:

- foster regional cooperation and promote mutual understanding among environmental authorities;
- provide a forum for discussions for common and shared regional problems and gaining advice from colleagues in Europe and the rest of the world;
- facilitate the transposition of European Community laws into national laws as part of the EU's Stabilisation and Association Process; and
- develop and implement regional activities of mutual interest, with concrete, measurable and transparent results.

SELF-DRIVEN

The key to BERCEN's success is country ownership. This ensures that participants will respect project results and accept their responsibility to donors. The main platform for decision making on activities and review of project results is the plenary meeting. Countries meet at least once a year to assess progress on projects, to agree on work plans and to present advances made at the national level. The plenary meetings are co-chaired by the European Commission and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). The REC serves as secretariat to the network and implements projects of the work programme.

ACTIVITIES

BERCEN helps train environmental inspectors, organises exchange programmes and study tours, and supports the participation of BERCEN-trained inspectors in international events and projects organised by other networks. BERCEN's activities target the fields of site inspection, management of inspection, human resources in inspectorates, the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) directive, the European Parliament's recommendation on minimum criteria for environmental inspections, risk assessment and the Seveso II directive.

Specific activities include:

- "train the trainers" programmes, the curricula of which include a BERCEN training manual for environmental inspectors;
- exchange programmes for environmental inspectors on the IPPC directive and European Parliament's minimum criteria for environmental inspectorates;
- programmes on on-site inspections and risk assessment;
- trainings on applications for IPPC permits; and
- the provision of IT and monitoring equipment and vehicles to regional inspectorates.



In addition to the above work, BERCEN activities have resulted in:

- a report on national and regional needs;
- national project proposals on the most urgent needs in environmental enforcement and compliance;
- a network recommendation for preparatory activities for introduction of the IPPC Directive in member countries; and
- a network recommendation for implementation of the European Parliament's minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the member states.