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Secretariat**

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Conference Services

**Fifteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum - Part 2:
“Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the
OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management”
Prague, 21 - 23 May 2007**

Please find attached the contribution by Southeast European Cooperative Initiative - SECI
Office of the Coordinator – Vienna, Annual Activity Report 2006.

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative - SECI Office of the Coordinator – Vienna Annual Activity Report 2006

1. Introduction

2006 was marked for SECI as the Danube dedicated year. The necessity to upgrade the status of the Danube to that of an international and European inland waterway that it deserves was one of the main objectives for SECI during the last year. Nonetheless, SECI's usual policy coordination and cooperation activities with the other European, regional and national bodies in the areas of its interest certainly did not fall far behind. SECI's activities within the region show that much has been achieved in Southeast Europe, but that there is still a lot to be done.

2. 2006 Activities and Achievements

2.1. Policy support and coordination

In accordance with its inherent function and working methods, the SECI Vienna office in 2006 has continued to support the activities of its already established and affiliated regional structures such as the BAC for SEE, the SECI PRO and the SECI Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime. Advice on relevant policy issues concerning ongoing trade, transport and energy policies with the region as well as rising related concerns, as environmental protection, have been regularly provided by the SECI Coordinator. In the case of the SECI Centre valuable support has been given with respect to its cooperation with the Stability Pact Office for Organised Crime as well as with respect to the ongoing discussions on the signing of a Regional Convention on Organised Crime and the fine-tuning of the activities of the Centre with European and international operational communication standards especially with those of Europol, in view of improvement of the cooperation of the Centre with other relevant bodies on European level.

Additionally in terms of policy coordination and development the SECI Vienna Office continued to liaise with the relevant actors within and without the SEE region concerning the ongoing processes of integration of the countries from the region in the wider regional, European and global processes concerning energy, trade and transport and the protection of the environment. Thus, during 2006 close contacts and consultations have been maintained and undertaken with the OSCE, and especially with its Office for Economic and Environmental Activities, the Central European Initiative - CEI, the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative - AI, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation - BSEC a/o. SECI has been also following closely the development of regional

intergovernmental processes from the region themselves, such as the South East European Cooperation Process – SEECP and the Danube Cooperation Process – DCP.

Taking into consideration the nature and the rationale of the Initiative as a regional mechanism which wishes to act as a catalyser of new communication channels among the countries, the various stakeholders from the region and the relevant European and international structures, due attention to the maintenance and observation of the above mentioned policy-making processes has been given by the SECI Coordinator and its supporting staff during 2006 as well.

2.2. Increasing the importance of the Danube

Beside the above mentioned policy coordination and consultation activities, SECI has actively followed the developments of the relevant regional and European structures concerning the improvement of the status of the Danube River Basin as an international and European inland waterway in the framework of its Danube River Basin Project, realised in cooperation with the Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment – TINA Office from Vienna and the Stability Pact for SEE.

The objective of the activities undertaken in 2006 in the framework of the project was to stimulate concrete action in the area of Danube technical infrastructure projects which shall help to solve technical difficulties concerning navigation, transport and trade issues i.e. which shall facilitate higher level of use of the Danube from an economical point of view. Adopting a regional perspective, the project foresaw also an environmental dimension i.e. it aimed at insuring that all technical infrastructure projects shall respect the environmental requirement standards and concerns established by the International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube – ICPDR and other relevant European structures and shall be environmentally friendly. More specifically, the activities undertaken under this project have aimed at contributing to the improvement of the economical dimension of the Danube River without neglecting its other dimensions, through improving the cooperation among the Danube countries on regional level, involving all the concerned stakeholders and facilitating information exchange.

Thus, in view of the objectives and the particular aims of the project, on the policy coordination level, close consultations and coordination have been conducted with representatives from the Danube Cooperation Process as the intergovernmental body establishing policy guidelines in this respect, as well as with the ICPDR, the International Commission for the Danube, the EC - Corridor VII Steering Committee, Via Donau, the Working Community of the Danube Regions, relevant private sector representatives, local and national

authorities etc. Various stakeholders and interested structures were invited and participated in the three meetings organised during 2006 on the:

06th of February 2006

28th of April 2006

14th of November 2006

All the meetings took place in Vienna on OSCE premises and had the aim of identifying the issues that are of regional importance on the Danube in terms of its technical infrastructure relevant and important for a better economic development of the Danube region, but also in terms of regional cooperation facilitation. Having the form of public debates the meetings brought together experts from governmental institutions together with other relevant stakeholders from the region and discussed how the status of the Danube can be improved through exchanging experiences and reviewing existing standards and regulations.

During the three meetings several issues have been clearly identified as problematic:

- From the point of view of Navigation there are several bottlenecks that prevent free navigability on the Danube from its beginning till the Black Sea, mainly in Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia and on the border between Romania and Bulgaria;
- There is a problem with technical infrastructure standards that require the restoration of the old ones and the building of new ports, modernisation of the fleets, introduction and usage of modern communication and transport technologies etc.;
- There are problems concerning the transport of goods since there exist a number of non-tariff barriers for goods passing through several countries since there is lack of harmonised legislation;
- There is no harmonised regional approach as to environmental issues such as water management and water quality, flood protection etc.
- A number of projects have been undertaken by certain countries, but there is no regional overview of the ongoing projects and of the mechanisms used for their funding, and consequently there is no regional investment framework; additionally, private sector representatives have expressed willingness to contribute with financial means to technical infrastructure projects (e.g. construction of bridges, power plants, ports etc), but there is no regional public private partnership scheme or framework that shall enable the usage of those funds or in any way facilitate their participation in this kind of activities.

In 2007 SECI shall continue with the activities within the Danube River Project in a more specific and streamlined framework, under the name of Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum. More information on the activities planned to be undertaken in the framework of this project you shall find in Annex II.

2.3. Celebrating 10 Years of Activity

2006 had an additional importance for SECI, since this was the year in which SECI celebrated its ten years of activity within the region. In order to officially mark this event, on the 27th of October 2006, SECI organised the 10th Anniversary Conference in Vienna. The Conference gathered many of the pioneers of SECI, its founders and long term collaborators and through the key-note speeches of invitees that have been with SECI since its very beginnings allowed to all those who were present to take a look back and draw a balance of what has been achieved in the last 10 years. Through comparisons of the situation within the Southeast European region in the moment in which SECI was founded (1996) and that of today the speeches gave clear evidence that the innovative approach adopted by SECI since its very inception has been a success story. Just to name a few, key note speeches on the conference were made by Ambassador Richard Schifter, Mr. Tom Adams - Coordinator of US Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, US Department of State, Mr. Ives Berthelot - Former Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Nikos Efthymiadis - Former Chairman of the SECI Business Advisory Council, Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut - Secretary General of the OSCE a/o.

The Anniversary Conference also witnessed the launching of the SECI Anniversary publication *10 Years Southeast European Cooperative Initiative. From Dayton to Brussels* edited by the SECI Coordinator. Dr. Erhard Busek. In his words, the SECI Book represents a compendium of relevant documents, agreements, analyses and essays by the founders of SECI and its collaborators throughout the years, giving a comprehensive and coherent overview of what SECI stands for. The contributions of people that directly participated in the policy and decision-making processes described in the SECI book, make it a valuable document relevant for political, economic and other actors from Southeast Europe and wider, since it provides a first hand analyses on the manner in which policy making within the region and wider develops.

In this sense, the SECI Book represents an insight of its rationale and working methods. The Minutes of the SECI Anniversary Conference as well as more detailed information on the SECI Book can be found on the SECI website.

3. Budget

The budget of SECI is based on voluntary contributions from interested Donor countries. In 2006 the SECI Vienna Office received donations from the USA, Czech Republic, Romania, Greece and Austria in a total amount of 112 405 EUR. This amount does not include the donations for the SECI affiliated structures such as SECI PRO and BAC for SEE.¹

¹ SECI would like to use this opportunity to thank the donors of 2006 for their valuable contributions.

In 2006 the budget of the SECI office has been disbursed as follows:²

	Description	Amount (EUR)
1.	Administrative expenditures	40 166.31
2.	Policy support and coordination	8612.64
3.	Project related and research	40585.03
	TOTAL	89363.98

Individual and detailed reports on disbursement of each share of the budget of the SECI office are available for the donors upon request, unless otherwise specified.

For 2007 the budget of the SECI Office is fixed to about 120 000 EUR out of which up to 80 000 EUR are expenditures for project related activities.

4. Challenges for 2007

Keeping in mind what has been achieved in 2006 and the ongoing transformation processes within the Southeast European region and wider, 2007 poses several challenges for SECI.

The advancement of the process of regional ownership of the development and integration processes by the countries from the region and the establishment and creation of visible regional cooperation and coordination structures such as the SEECP and its future counterpart the Regional Cooperation Council – RCC, which is foreseen to overtake the regional cooperation activities initiated in the framework of the Stability Pact for SEE in 2008, require a redefinition of the activities of SECI and the adoption of new working methods. Therefore, SECI initiated 2007 with a new networking approach, adopting a looser coordination structure of its activities through its already established affiliated structures and its network of collaborators. The overall objective shall remain the contribution to the sustainable development and further integration of the SEE region. Thus, it shall continue to work on the creation of alternative communication channels among all the relevant stakeholders within the region, not only among the respective governmental representatives from the SEE countries, with the aim of creating a suitable framework for wider public participation in the development processes within the region. Thus it shall continue giving added value to the economic development of the region in the already established areas of trade, transport, energy and environment through regular cooperation with the relevant regional bodies and structures.

² Due to changes in the disbursement period of some of the expected donations the remaining funds are to be disbursed in the first part of 2007.

In this context, for 2007 continuation of the activities concerning the Danube has been foreseen as well as activities for joining the EC public awareness campaign for promotion of the sustainable energy sources i.e. on the use of alternative and renewable energy sources. The sustainable energy campaign is also in line with the activities that SECI has foreseen in 2007 with respect to a number of activities concerning the energy efficiency within SEE that may grow into a specific project in 2008. 2007 shall also witness the extension of the activities of SECI to the social sphere through the initiation of activities within the Health and Social Affairs field within SEE, within which special focus shall be given to the Pharmaceuticals industry and the relation between the economic and social development within the SEE in this field in terms of developing common standards and bringing together various stakeholder perspectives concerning social health issues.

As before, an inherent characteristic of all the activities that SECI shall undertake in 2007 shall be the maintenance and the improvement of the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, it shall continue its commitment to the creation of a viable communication between the governmental and the non-governmental sectors of SEE societies as well as of a viable regional framework for their interaction.

More details of the activities foreseen in 2007 can be found in the Activity Plan for 2007, Annex I, or by contacting the SECI Vienna Office.

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Enclosures:

Annex I – *Activity Plan 2007*

Annex II – *Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum*

ANNEX I – SECI Activity Plan for 2007

Overall objective	Priorities	Planned Activities	Implementing or concerned bodies and structures	Implementation timeframe
Policy coordination and support	Policy coordination support – policies harmonisation and streamlining	Liaising with relevant institutions and organisation from the region and wider in the fields of concern to the Initiative (energy, transport and environment). Networking and contact making activities	SECI Coordinator with the support of the relevant SECI Network structures and representatives	January - December 2007
	Logistical and administrative support	Organisation of meetings and promotion activities for and on behalf of the SECI Network members (meeting rooms facilitation and meeting organisation support) in cooperation with the OSCE	SECI Vienna office	January - December 2007

	Wider policy coordination	Coordination and cooperation activities with other regional, European and International, governmental and non governmental bodies, organisations and initiatives (SEECF, Danube Cooperation Process, Stability Pact for SEE, OSCE, CEI, AII, BSEC, ICPDR a/o)	SECI Coordinator with the support of the relevant SECI Network structures and representatives	January – December 2007
Promotion and PR	Website update	Update of the website of the SECI Vienna office with new information on its ongoing and future activities	SECI Vienna Office	till end of March 2007
	Promotion material publishing	Preparation and printing of a small leaflet / brochure containing information on the activities of the SECI Vienna and the SECI Network in general	SECI Vienna Office	till mid-end of April 2007

	SECI Anniversary book promotion	<p>Promotion of the SECI Anniversary book "10 years SECI Initiative. From Brussels to Dayton" through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special focus on the book on the SECI Vienna Website; - special focus on the book in the brochure; - organising a special book promotion within in SEE region and possibly in Brussels; <p>These activities shall be aimed on the overall awareness raising of the public on the role of the SECI Initiative and network in general for the transformation of the SEE region as much as to re establish the connection between the different SECI structures and their connection to the SECI Initiative and its Vienna Office</p> <p>Book reviews to be added to the above mentioned promotion activities.</p>	SECI Vienna Office in coordination with the SECI Network	for book promotion: till end of March 2007 for the other activities: January – December 2007
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	List of compulsory presence of SECI representatives for purposes of networking, promotion and streamlining activities	<p>SEECF Ministerial Stability Pact / RT- WT II meetings and relevant Stability Pact transformation activities Danube Cooperation Process Ministerial Danube Partner activities/ meetings SECI PRO meetings BAC for SEE meetings OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum Activities Activities and relevant meetings of: UN ECE Central European Initiative Adriatic and Ionian Initiative Black Sea Economic Cooperation</p>	Relevant SECI Network representatives and structures	January – December 2007
Danube River Project follow up – Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum	Promotion of concrete infrastructure activities within the Danube area as a concrete action platform for the activities of the DCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4th Danube River meeting (06th of March 2007, Bucharest, Romania); - DCP Ministerial (18th of April 2007, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia); - Danube follow up meeting on the conclusions of the DCP ministerial and future steps to be taken (July 2007; <p>5th Danube River meeting (September /October 2007)</p>	SECI Network in partnership with Stability Pact for SEE and TINA Vienna	January – December 2007

SEE Sustainable Energy and Energy Efficiency Awareness Raising Campaign	Promotion of sustainable energy infrastructure within the SEE - raising awareness activities on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of relevant stakeholders and interests in SEE – identification of a suitable partner for SECI; - Application for participation in the EC Sustainable Energy Campaign 2005-2008 and foreseen activities in view of promotion of the objectives of the campaign; - Identification of issues that need to be tackled; - Preparation of a project plan for 2007/2008 on energy efficiency; 	SECI Network in cooperation with a suitable partner	June – December 2007
Health and Social Affairs Regional Partnership	Promoting a regional approach on Health and Social Affairs with a focus on Public private-partnerships in this area and on increased participation of relevant non-governmental stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situation analysis and regional stakeholders and issues of regional importance identification; - Preparation of a project/cooperation proposal for 2008; 	SECI Vienna office with relevant partners	To be launched: June – December 2007

Annex II

Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum

Basic information

Name of mission or institution: **South East European Cooperative Initiative**

Thematic area: **Inland Waterways, Transport, Energy and Environment**

Geographical location: **Vienna, Austria**

Duration of project: one year with possibility of extension

Starting date – ending date: 01.01.2007 – 31.12.2007

Cost of project: 40 000 EUR

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Project summary:

In line with the Mission and Vision of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) the overall aim of the Danube River Infrastructure Cooperation Forum is to promote closer cooperation among all the relevant stakeholders from the Danube River Basin as well with and among those that have interest in the improvement of the capacity of the River Danube as an Inland Waterway.

More specifically the platform wishes to create new channels of communication between the relevant stakeholders, be they public, private or of other nature, and thereby contribute to the creation of a suitable forum within which concrete transport and energy infrastructure projects, with an embedded environmental protection component, shall be brought forward, promoted and proposed for funding to relevant international financial bodies.

The platform is intended to supplement already existing mechanisms active within the Danube River Basin area and not overlap with such mechanisms. In such a context its main focus shall be on promoting the creation of concrete projects on the river Danube which shall show concrete actions on the river in the domains of transport and energy, in the overall framework in the DCP Indicative Working Programme and other political processes of region-wide importance. The forum shall encourage the elaboration and the implementation of infrastructure projects that shall contribute to the improvement of the situation of the Danube river as an Inland Waterway as a whole, i.e. that are of importance not for one or two countries, but for the whole Danube River Basin area.

1. Background

The Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum represents another of the efforts of SECI to promote and support region-wide approach to economic development. Involving directly 10 of its 12 Member states as well as 3 supporting states, it brings forward the importance of regional and international cooperation in areas such as the Danube River for which physical borders are of little importance and for which an integrated and coordinated regional approach is a must, if one is to use to the maximum the potential and the resources of this international river.

The Danube River is not an East European river, but it is first of all a European river which, with the creation of the Rhine-Maine canal, offers an opportunity of connecting Rotterdam with the Black Sea and thus creating a two mouth inland waterway that shall run in the midst of Europe from one of its end to the other.

Nonetheless, the crisis in Eastern Europe following the 1989 events led to a great fall in the usage of the Danube as a useful and viable waterway for transport of goods as much as for persons. Here one can mention physical as much as political obstacles such as the navigation restrictions, shipwrecks, variable water levels, variable technical specifications for the construction of bridges, different legal frameworks and jurisdictions within the countries of the Basin, lack of common (Danube-wide) trade and transport policy a/o.

The above mentioned situation hindered the possibility of efficiently using the Danube as part of a wider economic growth and sustainable development policy of its area and subsequently to the lack of appropriate physical infrastructure for the promotion of such policies within the Danube area.

The need of an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated approach for an efficient use of the Danube for economic growth and sustainable development is more than obvious. Such an approach needs to involve all relevant stakeholders and connect and make use of all necessary resources. Therefore, feeding and pushing forward political processes with input, insights

and resources from the private, scientific and other social groups is the first step to upgrading the status of the Danube to the international Inland Waterway that it is, through a region-wide dialogue.

From an economic and sustainable development perspective in order to improve the situation activities within the following trade, transport and energy specific areas need to be undertaken:

- Physical infrastructure improvement: removing shipwrecks, modernizing ports, introducing modern technologies for container shipment, modernising fleets and introducing new jet propulsion technology, creating tri-modal transport facilities, introducing new goods loading techniques, removing bottlenecks (such as low water levels areas or bridges with low passage clearance) etc.
- Navigation dimension: improving the navigation conditions, ensuring fairway passage, introduce international navigation regime, modernize and harmonise the River Information Services (RIS);
- Promote the use of Inland Waterway transport for the support of SMEs (as it costs less, is more efficient and safer as well as more environmentally friendly), promote the elimination of tariff and trade barriers and the partnership between the public and the private sector;
- Encourage environmentally friendly solutions to the above mentioned physical infrastructure issues that shall ensure the protection of the unique ecosystems and biodiversity, sustainable water management and protection against pollution of the Danube River Basin area, i.e. water and surrounding land areas equally etc. ;
- Harmonizing legal provisions and regulations for trade facilitation and the use of Inland Waterways for transport of goods.

The solution of the above-mentioned issues requires the involvement of the several layers of stakeholders on national as much as on region level. At present besides the national Political and Governmental bodies of the Danube countries, there are several other regional institutions and organizations dealing with one or another aspect of the Danube River Basin. Here one should mention Danube Cooperation Process (DCP), International Danube Commission, ARGE Dounaulander, International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube, EU Corridor VII Steering Committee, CEI, Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, BSEC, SEECP a/o. Nonetheless, although some activities have been undertaken on the level of political cooperation through the signature of some memorandums of understanding and the creation of the Danube Cooperation Process as an intergovernmental body for the development and support of area-wide policies and approaches, activities within the area of technical trade and transport infrastructure have remained declarative, especially due to the elevated costs of the undertaking of such projects as well as due to lack of coordination and constructive dialogue between the various stakeholders.

2. Approach and Methodology

2.1. Project objectives

Taking into consideration its regional area of action and the contextual institutional and regional circumstances described above, the overall objective of the Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum shall be reinforcing and supporting cooperation between the Danube countries, through contributing to the elaboration and the implementation of regional policies and legislation as well as of regional priority actions regarding transport, trade and energy infrastructure projects within the Danube River Basin, with an integrated environmental protection component, in view of improving its position as an international and crucial European Inland Waterway.

The Forum shall aim at increasing the involvement of the private and other relevant stakeholders in the development of region-wide policies and infrastructure needs through creating a dialogue between them and experts from the public sector in view of creation new channels of communication and a wider public debate on the needs and the possibilities offered by the Danube to all the relevant stakeholders.

The activities undertaken during 2006 in the framework of the Danube River meetings, jointly organised by the SECI, TINA Vienna and the Stability Pact for SEE, have shown a high level of willingness on the part of the private sector representatives to contribute even financially to the creation of a suitable technical infrastructure for the improvement of the trade and transport situation on the Danube and a higher use of its energetic potential. This was also confirmed by concrete infrastructure proposals that could become viable and useful infrastructure projects on the Danube within a suitable Danube River Basin sustainable development policy and expert level cooperation.

Having in mind the above mentioned, in view of achieving the overall objective stated above, the Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum shall adopt a multi-dimensional approach, with a political and economic dimension, whose main feature shall be the coordination of these two dimension so that the political one establishes priorities of action within the broader process of Danube cooperation, which will consequently provide the necessary impetus for the implementation of various concrete forms of coordinated trade, transport and energy infrastructure cooperation on regional level within the area of the Basin. Under this umbrella the Forum shall have the following broader objectives:

In terms of regional policy-making processes it shall:

- aim at broadening and deepening the present cooperation among the Danube countries especially in terms of its political and economic dimensions;
- identify and address issues of region-wide concern and interest;
- emphasise issues that bound the development of the Danube to Europe and the relevant EU integration processes, such as EU Inland Waterways, trade and transport and energy policies, standards, regulations, procedures etc.;
- support the development of the various Danube cooperation initiatives already launched in various fields within the region, keeping in mind the regional objectives and policies being pursued by the European Union and the Stability Pact for SEE in view of bringing greater value, pragmatism and added value to them;

In terms of its more specific objectives, the Forum shall:

- encourage and promote the development of Danube National Action Plans that shall take into consideration regional necessities and shall include concrete activities concerning infrastructure projects identified as a priority from a regional point of view;
- promote the dialogue between the public and the private and other relevant stakeholders within the Danube River Basin area;
- promote and support the development and the implementation of relevant infrastructure projects on the River Danube, important for the development of the trade, transport and the energy sector within the region;
- ensure that relevant environmental protection requirements are an integrated component of the above mentioned infrastructure projects and that they comply with regional and European environmental standards;

2.2. Activities/input(s)

The above mentioned broader and more specific objectives of the Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum shall be pursued through the following activities:

- organisation of meetings of relevant regional stakeholders from the private and civil society sectors with experts from the relevant national and regional public bodies;
- close monitoring, support and participation in the initiatives undertaken by the other regional bodies, organisations and institutions active within the Danube River Basin area see next section for more details;
- encouraging the elaboration of the regional infrastructure projects on the river Danube relevant for the trade, transport and energy sectors and for the broader economic development of the region, their

- promotion and mediation with relevant international financing institutions for their prompt implementation;
- undertaking other activities relevant for the improvement of the status of the river Danube as an Inland Waterway and for the broadening of the cooperation between the Danube countries;

The activities within the framework of the Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum also foresee the active promotion of the objectives and the aims of the Forum through the publication of the relevant promotion materials (leaflets, informational brochures, publication of relevant information on the Website of SECI a/o)

2.3. Coordination and cooperation with other regional Danube initiatives

In view of its overall and its more specific objectives concerning the Danube River Basin the SECI and its Partners are committed to closely coordinate and cooperate with all the initiatives, organisations, institutions and other stakeholders in view of contributing to a more sustainable and more integrated approach to the management of the resources and the capacities of the river Danube and thereof taking advantage of its potential without harming its ecosystem, biodiversity and the water quality.

Thus, even during the last year, the work and the priorities of the Danube Cooperation Process have been closely followed. In addition, close attention has been paid to the transport programmes and priorities established by the EU, DG Trade and Transport and especially of the Corridor VII Steering committee. Close cooperation is also undertaken with the International Danube River Commission, the ICPDR, the International Sava River Basin Commission, as well other SECI collaborators such as BSEC, CEI etc.

Last but not least, coordination with relevant experts from the Ministries of Transport from the region as much as from other specialised entities with relevant expertise concerning the issues at hand, from the region as much as outside of is permanently maintained and continuously developed. Here we can mention Via Donau, ARGE Donaulander, relevant Chambers of Commerce, relevant Port Authorities and energy companies, relevant representatives from the private sector etc.

3. Implementation arrangements

For 2007 the following activities have been fixed by the partners of the Project

1. Core meetings:
 - 4th Danube River meeting – 06th of March 2007 in Bucharest, Romania, hosted by the Romanian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

- 5th Danube River meeting – beginning of July 2007, Vienna
 - 6th Danube River meeting – October 2007, Vienna
2. Coordination activities
- DCP Ministerial Meeting – 18th of April 2007, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia and other related meetings;
 - ICPDR Process on Development of Joint Statement on Navigation:
 - Workshop 1 – 25-27th of April Austria
 - Workshop 2 – 25-27th of June, Bucharest
 - Workshop 3 – October 2007
 - Presentation of the Joint Statement – December 2007
 - EC Corridor VII Steering Committee meetings

The participation to the above mentioned and other relevant activities is jointly agreed by the Project partners. The Danube River meetings are usually organised by the SECI Office in Vienna, unless otherwise established. Already existing resources in terms of staff and implementation structures are used for the implementation of the planned activities and the promotion of the project objectives.

5. Budget

The budget of the Danube River Basin Infrastructure Cooperation Forum is part of the overall budget of the SECI Office in Vienna which for the year 2007 has been fixed to 120 000 EUR. For the Danube Project Activities are planned to be spent up to 40 000 EUR for the following cost categories:

	Cost Description	Amount (EUR)
1.	Honorarium for the person in Charge (1500 x 12)	18000
2.	Travel costs and accommodation for the person in charge (app. 700 EUR per mission for 10 missions)	7000
3.	Meeting costs (meeting materials, relevant organisational costs, buffet/luncheons etc.)	6000
4.	Administrative costs for the SECI Office (mail, phone, fax, office supplies a/o)	4000
5.	Publications and promotional materials	5000
	TOTAL	40000

Adjustments within the different categories are possible in view of the developments and the necessities of the activities undertaken within the framework of the Project.