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**EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR SPATIAL/REGIONAL PLANNING**

**CEMAT/CoE**

**COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS (CSO)**

**86<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
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**Message to CEMAT  
European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning**

*from ECNC on behalf of the participants of the European Seminar on “Balancing regional planning and ecological networks in the South-East European and Black Sea region”*

*Document by the Secretariat General prepared by the Spatial Planning and Landscape Division  
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Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage / Direction de la Culture et du Patrimoine culturel et naturel*

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## **Message to CEMAT – European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning**

From ECNC on behalf of the participants of the European seminar on ‘Balancing regional planning and ecological networks in the South-East European and Black Sea region’.

**Tilburg, Strasbourg, 8 December 2006**

On 11-12 October 2006 a seminar on European regional planning and ecological networks took place in Strasbourg. The seminar was organized by ECNC–European Centre for Nature Conservation in the framework of the South and East European Ecological Network Programme (SEENET). This capacity-building seminar, entitled ‘Balancing regional planning and ecological networks in the South-East European and Black Sea region’ brought together regional planners, NGOs and stakeholders from different sectors to exchange views and experiences about the situation in this region with regard to regional planning and ecological networks. Speakers at the seminar included Mrs Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, the Head of CEMAT’s Secretariat in the Council of Europe, and Mr Jan-Willem Sneep, President of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts for the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN).

The seminar was one of the activities aimed at assisting in the development and implementation of the PEEN. As part of the Ministerial Environment for Europe process, European governments decided to establish the European Ecological Network in the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy. During the Ministerial Conference in Kyiv, 2005, European governments decided to increase efforts in developing the European Network. As one of their decisions, Ministers agreed to conserve all core areas of the Pan-European Ecological Network adequately by 2008.

As an outcome of the seminar, a set of recommendations was formulated. The participants of the seminar requested the seminar organizers to convey the recommendations to CEMAT for information and consideration. You will find these recommendations below.

### **Recommendations**

The set of recommendations is as follows:

- For the realization of the European Ecological Network in Europe, and South-East Europe in particular, it is vital to ensure a good balance between regional development and the requirement of ecological network and protected areas. Ministers responsible for physical and regional planning and ministers responsible for establishing ecological networks should therefore increase cooperation and decide on joint actions. In order to facilitate the cooperation, the Secretariats of CEMAT and of the Committee of Experts for PEEN should be in close contact, and the Committee of Experts and CEMAT may wish to develop joint plans in order to communicate the need for balancing regional planning and ecological networks to all governments and stakeholders at geographical levels.

- In South-East Europe and the Black Sea area, there is low awareness about the importance of ecological networks and nature protection. Campaigns to promote the value of ecological networks and nature conservation in general among stakeholders and to encourage public participation in these issues would be essential, and regional planners should be involved in developing and implementing such campaigns.
- When developing a regional and spatial plan, all relevant stakeholders should be involved in the process from the very beginning so that nature conservation and ecological networks are taken into account. In South-East Europe and the Black Sea area, cooperation with the transport infrastructure sector is of high priority.
- In order to ensure the involvement of stakeholders in regional planning, a national coordination planning body could be established, which would also assume responsibility as regards balancing ecological network requirements with spatial demands of other land uses.
- Relevant stakeholders are not sufficiently aware of the existing instruments of the Council of Europe and recommendations of CEMAT relating to regional development/planning/sustainable development, and more efforts should be put into communicating relevant information to local and regional stakeholders and NGOs.
- Coastal and marine areas are under severe threat due to urbanization, tourism and other land uses. Governments should be advised to step up efforts as regards balancing ecological and landscape demands and demands of other land uses, including the introduction of higher tax rates for building on the coast. The requirements for ecological networks should be a vital part of planning for coastal and marine areas.