

South-East Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is a regional initiative initiated by the USA as a support to the implementation of the Dayton Accords. SECI was established in December 1996 at the inaugural session at Geneva on the basis of "Final Points of Common EU-USA Understanding", with the purpose of developing sustainable economic strategy in the region. SECI is focused on trans-border cooperation programs and projects in the fields of development of infrastructure, trade and traffic issues, security, energy, environment and development of private sector..

All SECI programs and projects are being implemented by experts from the member states and states supporting this Initiative with the technical support of the European Commission, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, World Customs Organization and, to certain extent, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Also, SEECI closely cooperates with the Stability Pact, Central European Initiative, Organization of the Black Sea Economic cooperation, specialized UN agencies and programs and other organizations.

SECI member states are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey and Montenegro.

The principal SECI goals are: elimination of administrative and other obstacles with a view to increasing efficiency in the flow of goods and improved trade, identification of bottlenecks at main international traffic corridors, creation of networks and zones of energy efficiency, investing in the promotion of networks of pipelines and their connections with the international pipelines, provision of funds for the promotion of entrepreneurship, primarily through projects of small and medium-sized enterprises, etc.

As part of the overall activities in regulating normal functioning of cross-border cooperation, cooperation in the field of combating trans-border crime was also developed within SECI. To that end, an "Agreement on Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Trans-Border Crime" was signed in Bucharest on 26 May 1999. At the same time, the "Charter on Regional SECI Center for Fighting Trans-Border Crime" was also signed. The Agreement provides for cooperation between the member states in preventing, discovering, investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning the trans-border crime. In that context, forms of special cooperation between the bodies of the member states are envisaged (information, data exchange, protection of personal data, submission of requests, etc.) Mutual Cooperation Committee has been established as the main body for the implementation of the Agreement. In addition to the representatives of the Member Countries, the representatives of Interpol and World Customs Organization (WCO) are also included in the Committee as "permanent advisors". Each country in the Committee is represented by two officials: one representative of the customs and one of the police.

The principal body within the SECI initiative is the Programme Committee comprising national coordinators of the Member Countries. The Programme Committee defines priorities of its activity on the basis of the established methods of work adopted on 29 January 1997.

The SECI Initiative Coordinator is the former Austrian Vice-Chancellor, Dr Erhard Busek.

Web site: www.secinet.org .