

Report



Kick-off Meeting

5 December 2014, Vienna, Austria

A1. Main outputs and outcomes

- Statement of Commitment of the participants of the Themis Network phase 2 kick off meeting (Annex 1);
- Integration of Moldova in the Themis Network;
- Reaffirmation of the Themis Network terms of reference (Annex 2);
- Update on policy, legal and institutional frameworks developments of the member countries (Annex 3).

A2. Follow up actions

- Define an operational plan with the ILECU Network to implement joint activities and create shared outputs;
- Continue to work on regional synergies with other regional initiatives in SEE, and towards the long-term sustainability of the network creating positive impact on natural resources management and a regional strategy to combat environmental crimes;
- Take measures to increase the level of institutionalization of the Themis trainings.

B. Session by session

Session 1 – Opening, by Gordana Kozhuharova and Aniko Nemeth (REC), Hubert Neuwirth (ADA)

Gordana Kozhuharova welcomed the participants and opened the meeting with a contextualization of Themis. She also expressed gratitude to ADA for its renewed commitment to fund the Themis Network.

Hubert Neuwirth (ADA) said that the Themis Network is an impressive and effective cooperation instrument. Its focus, larger than just environmental crimes, encourages cooperation between institutions and a multiagency approach.

Aniko Nemeth then briefly recapitulated the achievements of the MAP 2012-2014 and the goals for 2014-2017 as a general frame for the rest of the meeting.

Session 2 – Opening statement by the countries, by the country representatives

Each country delivered a pre-prepared statement in which they approached the institutional reforms relevant to the Themis Network that took place in 2014, the main legal changes and acquis transposition landmarks in the field of environment, current action priorities for environmental governance and enforcement of environmental laws, and challenges in the EU approximation process environment. The seven statements are made available as an annex.

The partners and observers present also had the opportunity to share their views, and all wished success to the network.

Session 3 – Secretariat report on start-up of phase 2, by Aniko Nemeth and Bruno Mesquita (REC)

The Secretariat gave an overview of the objectives, planned activities, and desired outcomes and reported on the back office activities that the Secretariat is undertaking to prepare the implementation of MAP 2014-2017. It was also highlighted what are the key areas for country involvement in the first year of the MAP 2014-2017 and how partnerships will contribute to the MAP outcomes.

In the discussions that followed, Albania stated that state police is an emerging stakeholder in environmental crimes and that both judges and prosecutors should be included in national level activities. Kosovo supported the claim and also stated that the police is an interested party. Croatia highlighted the importance of involving normal police in environmental law enforcement efforts.

ADA expressed the importance of creating systemic change with the MAP 2014-2017 and working towards result sustainability.

Montenegro pointed out the existence of a Network for SEE prosecutors that might be worth contacting to ensure synergies in the SEE region.

Session 4 – Discussion on a statement of commitment

The Secretariat proposed a draft statement that was discussed line by line by the assembled participants. Several phrasing changes were agreed and an extra bullet point was added. The final statement is available as an annex to this document.

Session 5 – Closing, by Gordana Kozhuharova and Aniko Nemeth (REC)

Gordana Kozhuharova wrapped up the meeting by pointing out the main conclusions and thanking all those present for their work.

C. Annexes

Annex 1 – Statement of commitment

Annex 2 – Themis Network terms of reference

Annex 3 - Country opening statements (session 2)