

**Statement from Marta Szigeti Bonifert, Executive Director of the Regional
Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
COP 16, Cancun, Mexico
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Madam President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

How can we speed up cooperation against climate change in Central and Eastern Europe and other regions?

What mechanisms can be strengthened for mitigation and adaptation efforts?

The transition towards clean energy and low-carbon industries on both the demand and supply sides are the two major mitigation challenges in Central and South Eastern Europe. With respect to adaptation, our region is very vulnerable to floods, droughts and heat waves.

Based on its 20 years' experience, our international organisation, the **Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe**, has learned that cooperation and partnership at regional level can catalyse solutions in response to climate change.

With the support of donors including **Finland, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United States** and the **European Commission**, the Regional Environmental Center has initiated regional partnerships such as the **Virtual Climate Change Center for South East Europe** and the **Turkish Business Platform**. Such regional cooperation is a strategic tool for awareness raising and climate education – which is why the Regional Environmental Center has volunteered to act as **Regional Focal Point for Article 6** of the convention.

Projects such as **trainings for negotiators**; the **Sustainable Development Academy** for senior governmental officials; and the **Green Pack**, an educational toolkit for young children are examples of successful regional cooperation with many stakeholders.

But how can we share our lessons learned with other regions?

I am pleased to inform you of two recent initiatives: the **Resource Efficiency Initiative** among partnerships in Europe; and the **Europe China Clean Energy Centre**, combining different continents' experience.

All these efforts can further the transition to a green economy in harmony with the goals of the forthcoming **Hungarian and Polish EU presidencies**.

The Regional Environmental Center is ready to cooperate via mechanisms such as **fast-start financing** with donor and recipient countries in Southern Europe and beyond. We are prepared to transfer our experience to regions such as **East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia** and beyond.

The Regional Environmental Center is committed to working in global and regional partnerships with other regional organisations on climate change policies, capacity building and other cross-sectoral issues. We believe that these **international partnerships** significantly contribute to efforts to combat climate change.

Thank you for your attention.