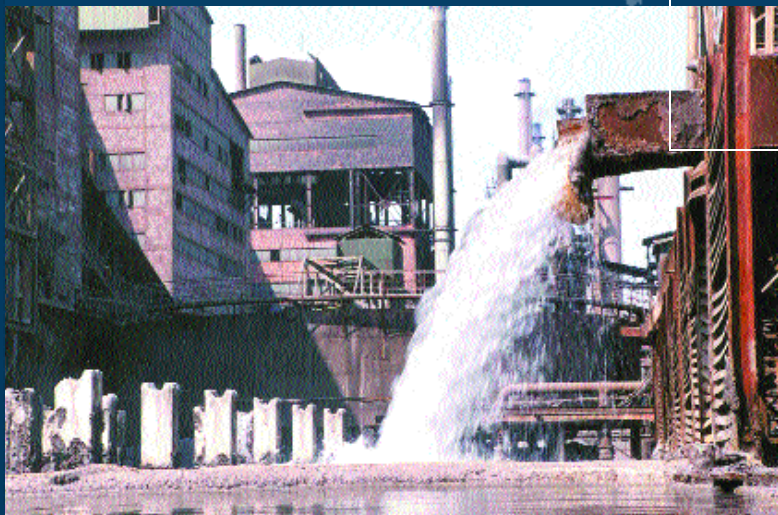




Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment— FYR of Macedonia



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Foreword

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR of Macedonia) has been undergoing a profound transition during the past decade. Economic and civil reforms have been accompanied by rising environmental awareness and the creation of a Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. The Kosovo conflict added a new and urgent dimension to humanitarian challenges and efforts.



This report continues the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) investigation of the impacts of the Kosovo conflict. It extends the body of knowledge about the environmental impacts of the conflict, and about the urgent environmental challenges facing FYR of Macedonia. The report should provide a useful tool for international community members seeking to assess FYR of Macedonia's needs and assist the country. It also underscores the importance of environmental management during humanitarian assistance efforts.

To conduct the assessment, UNEP drew on the skills of international experts from various scientific and environmental policy disciplines. During a field mission to FYR of Macedonia, the team visited refugee camps and environmental 'hot spots', including neglected industrial sites. The team also took samples and analyzed various environmental and human settlement data. I would like to thank this dedicated and highly skilled team for their hard work.

UNEP is committed to assessing areas of the world suffering from acute environmental degradation caused by human conflicts or natural disasters. This work began following last year's Kosovo conflict, when the Joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Balkans Task Force (BTF) was established. The BTF conducted a rapid assessment that culminated in the publication of *The Kosovo Conflict: Consequences for the Environment and Human Settlements*. Since that time, UNEP has implemented humanitarian projects to mitigate pollution at environmental 'hot spots' identified by the report.

This UNEP report, *Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment—FYR of Macedonia*, was made possible through generous support provided by The Netherlands, and with the close cooperation of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. My thanks go to the Dutch government and these partner organizations for their contributions and invaluable in-kind support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Toepfer'.

Klaus Toepfer
Under-Secretary General of the United Nations
Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

Introduction

During the past ten years, Southeastern Europe has experienced upheaval and instability. Conflicts were fought, and communities divided. Many fled their homes and their countries to escape danger. As attention focused on other issues, the region's rich natural environment, already under pressure from decades of urban and industrial pollution, became increasingly degraded.

Fortunately, the momentum in the Balkans has shifted. Peace, democracy and stability are taking hold. Cooperation is growing within the region and across Europe. Reconstruction efforts are underway, and protection of the environment is an emerging priority.

This assessment examines FYR of Macedonia's environmental needs in the context of these regional developments. As the country undergoes broad transformation of its democratic institutions, environmental protection is evolving alongside economic development. There is now an opportunity for FYR of Macedonia to stop the degradation of its precious environment and, at the same time, create a strong economy and prosperity for its citizens.

This report is not intended to be a comprehensive environmental survey. It is instead a rapid, strategic assessment aimed at identifying the most urgent environmental needs of FYR of Macedonia in order to prioritize rehabilitation funding. Accordingly, the report focuses on the country's severely polluted, 'hot spot' sites requiring immediate attention; the environmental consequences of refugee influxes from the Kosovo conflict; and the actions that can strengthen FYR of Macedonia's environmental institutions and policies.

Ultimately, the responsibility for environmental protection and enhancement rests with the people of FYR of Macedonia. The international community can play a valuable role in helping FYR of Macedonia to implement its environmental agenda. That agenda, however, must be set at the national and local levels.

UNEP hopes that the recommendations contained in this report will catalyze action. In particular, UNEP urges the international community to provide immediate assistance for remedial actions at the environmental 'hot spot' sites identified.

This assessment was developed at the request of FYR of Macedonia and within the framework of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. It complements *The Kosovo Conflict: Consequences for the Environment & Human Settlements* (1999) and *Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment—Albania* (2000).



UNEP post-conflict assessments analyze environmental conditions with a view toward emergency prevention and preparedness as much as emergency mitigation and response. This requires addressing the broader context of a country's pre-existing environmental conditions and capacities. Assessments, therefore, entail extensive analyses of relevant environmental issues, meetings with key stakeholders, field missions, the publication of reports, and efforts to catalyze concrete environmental remediation action.

UNEP's environmental assessment of FYR of Macedonia was made with the close cooperation and support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning (MEPP). The assessment process began with a systematic review of the available literature and data concerning FYR of Macedonia's environment. A preliminary UNEP field mission met with environmental leaders from the Government of FYR of Macedonia (the Government), the non-governmental community and academia. Based on this research, UNEP identified three core areas of concern:

- industrial 'hot spots' of urgent environmental concern;
- environmental impacts of the refugee influx; and
- measures needed to strengthen institutional capacities for environmental protection.

During the week of 10-17 September 2000, a UNEP-led mission, hosted by MEPP, investigated environmental conditions in FYR of Macedonia. The mission team was composed of specialists in chemical and technological processes, solid waste management, biodiversity, drinking water, waste water, air quality, soil, land use planning, law, government, humanitarian assistance, emergency management, environmental economics, environmental information, and communications. National experts from FYR of Macedonia accompanied the team and provided valuable information.

The team divided into three subgroups that focused on industrial 'hot spots', refugee impacts and institutional capacity, respectively. Throughout the week, the

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