Dealing with the past in the context of joint environmental emergency management in the cross border region - overview of Serbian experience

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Introduction

One major and highly complex issue in global society is the impact of the environmental emergencies in cross border region which caused significant environmental degradation. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that increasing problems had been compounded by insecurity as well as impact of climate change. It is interesting to mention here a prediction that especially, Natech disasters which combine etiological elements of both: natural and technological disasters are likely to become of increased relevance in the future due to an increased frequency and severity of extreme natural phenomena and an increased complexity and interdependencies of industrial technological systems (EEA, 2010; Jovanović and Radović, 2015). Water pollution caused by environmental emergencies (Natech disasters), whether major or minor in scale, was common place throughout the South-eastern European region. Since in this region the many transit rivers dissect it environmental emergencies with cross border consequences are inevitable and should be

analyse with particular reference to Serbian arrangement with some of its neighbours.¹

The current year, 2018 is recognized as a year of uncertainty, challenge, and opportunity on matters relating to international cooperation and global development in the race against time to meet ambitious UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UNGA, 2015). Therefore, it is a critical requirement for the society development that organizes social resources to effectively prevent and control the occurrence or spreading of all types of emergencies, as well as pay attention to scientific research on emergency management (Cao et al., 2018). Cooperation and coordination of efforts are the most valuable factors of adequate response in disasters which do not recognize borders. Some of the cases which gain the great attention of the world public are the environmental disasters like Baia Mare cyanide spill in 2000, Red Sludge Spill in Hungary in 2010, and the less in scope, but also very dangerous due to its toxicity the one which happened in the Serbian mine

¹ Numerous documents from legal framework in this area are not a main part of this paper and therefore is not presented, excepts in few needed occasions.

'Stolice' near the town of Krupanj in 2014. In these disasters, the direct damage to society has been enormous in terms of death, injuries, and property losses and environmental damage. Every one of these disasters were followed by inadequate preparedness measures in companies despite the expectation and sometimes even directly warning of influential environmental organization like Greenpeace (for red sludge in Ajka), and many others (Serbian Government 2014; Radovic, 2017).

Using Serbian experience from the past environmental emergencies as a key example, this article initiated the issue whether a level of experience gained in the region for preventing and managing environmental emergencies with cross border effects, particularly those involving cross border water pollution could be improved with some additional, let's tell novel actions. The current bilateral, multilateral and international cooperation among countries in the region could not be valued as adequate because there are some boarder issues which still stay unsolved, as well as complex issue of normalisations relations between the Republic of Serbia and Kosovo, and some acute boarder issues which frequently rise between the countries in the region remains a significant challenge. Some of them are ongoing border demarcation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The disputed areas are those in the lower course of the river Drina around hydroelectric power plants "Zvornik" i "Bajina Bašta." The problem of Serbian territory definition requires nothing less than the best efforts of policy makers because the possession of territory is the necessary basis for all modern states.

Therefore, the need to pace a new path of neighbour collaboration in environmental emergency management in the cross border area is an urgent need if we wish to solve boarder issue and heal still fresh scars from the recent history of conflicts. One of the main research questions that this article envisions to answer is: "How to enforce Serbian policy makers to enhance capacities to deal with environmental emergency in cross border region, and how efforts of protecting national boarder (based on the national security policy) can gain also more human security note, and initiate changes in current emergency management and diplomatic efforts to normalize relation with neighbours." With using of the new, more innovative tools Serbian policy makers will have a chance to provide long lasting peaceful and sustainable development for society, and especially for local communities in cross border area, and in a whole region?

The hypothesis of this article is that the environmental security in Serbia and neighbours countries could be provide with more efficient joint emergency response on environmental emergencies, especially putting efforts in solving territorial issues and removing some existing misunderstanding when we face with emergency. This article also addresses specific value of environmental diplomacy, increasing the level of environmental governance and awareness and involving a novel form of citizenship - environmental citizenship. Methodology used during the article preparation process is in accordance with those used in social scientific research suitable for social sciences and objectives of the desk top study. Data analysis is based on the qualitative content analysis method. The official publications of the relevant authorities in Serbia, from the

European Union, NATO, UN and broader international community were examined. Relevant scientific literature was also searched from numerous libraries and trough different websites. The documents were also collected from electronic sources: Literature Resource Centre like Go Gale Group EBSCOHost, Academic OneFile, e Library, and printing material (books, journals, official documents).

The article is helpful for all interested parties in the area of environmental and overall emergency management and international relations, and present initial idea for those who has to create the new policies and instruments in accordance with the European Union legislative. Hence, the article outcome is aimed to improve national emergency capacities to handle situations of environmental emergency, and bridge existing gap between countries which are faced with different view in solving political burden from the past. Following Nijenhuis (2014) view environmental emergencies should be fully integrated in the overall humanitarian response planning, rather than seeing a parallel response system developed after it has happened.

Serbia and neighbours need to 'step up' collaboration in environmental emergency

The global and European community has fully recognized the immense humanitarian, political, and economic problems facing the countries in the South East Europe. Despite all negative circumstances, and some temporary clashes in communication among politicians in power, all countries create national security policy which is mostly in a function of making good neighbouring relation and cooperation in emergencies with international community. The specific importance to foster stabilisation, security and prosperity in this region has the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) with over EUR 15 billion for 2014-2020. It is the financial instrument, towards countries, includes some who seek to one day become either a member state of the European Union, or more closely integrated with the European Union. Among the six ENI targets for the purpose of this article authors highlight the importance of the 4th and 6th. The forth is aimed for "encouraging development, poverty reduction, internal economic, social and territorial cohesion, rural development, climate action and disaster resilience; and the sixth is devoted to the "enhancing sub-regional, regional and Neighborhood wide collaboration as well as Cross-Border Cooperation" (ENP, 2016).

The Republic of Serbia is fully committed to regional cooperation in areas of joint training and engagement of security system in multinational operation, crises management and boarder management, in countering terrorism, organized crime and corruption,..., in the protection against natural disasters and technical and technological accidents and in the protection of environment, natural resources and health of citizens (International Business Publication, 2014: 95).

In the international community and European Union (EU) there are a lot of documents that outline the addressed policies about environmental security, emergency management, environmental governance, and also about mobilization of resources for the activities on prevention

consequences of environmental emergencies on human wellbeing. Serbia and its neighbours in last two decade accept the number of document and adapt existing legal framework in a process of seeking full membership in EU.

The water is crucial to our existence, and it is in the centre of every human activity. Water pollution in disasters is common issues. A natural hazard can trigger a chemical release, which, when the result of a technological accident, is called a 'Natech' (natural-hazard-triggered technological) event. Natech events can exacerbate the impact of a natural disaster on the environment and on human health because of the release of hazardous materials, fires and explosions (WHO, 2018). This release in cross border waters is extremely dangerous and its impact could be a long lasting.

Serbia wants to protect its water resources and it is starting to accept responsibility in the sustainable management of trans-boundary watercourses at bilateral and multilateral levels. Serbia has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, although the effect of implementing these agreements has varied from country to country. Serbia has not signed bilateral agreements governing the sustainable management of transit waters with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Serbia enhances international cooperation on the detection and monitoring of the environmental threats related to the Danube protection, disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation and response capacities in broader Black Sea region. It is extremely important because approximately 92% of all Serbia's accessible water originates from outside its territory. The Danube River flows about 588 km through Serbia. Coming from Hungary it continues at kilometre 1433 as a border-river with Croatia through Serbia. Serbia shares the Sava River, a tributary of the Danube, with Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Tisa River with Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia; and the Tamiš River with Romania. The West Morava and Great Morava rivers, (both parts of the major Morava river system in Serbia), is the only one of the five major rivers not crossing Serbia's borders (Radović, Andrejević, 2012).

For the purpose of this article authors choose to present briefly the joint cooperation between Serbia and Hungary, without neglecting of numerous kind of cooperation with other countries in neighbourhood. The catastrophic floods in 2014 and continual cooperation in ICPDR Danube and Sava Commission, and different regional initiative proved the Serbian efforts to contribute in regional environmental security. Politician from Serbia and Hungary insist that bilateral relations have never been better. The harmonious relations between two countries have been a source of pride for both countries, particularly in the area of water management. The Serbian Hungarian Joint Commission has provided a mechanism for cooperative environmental management of cross border waters more than six decade (the first agreement signed in 1956). This cooperation focuses on the implications of the legal and technical cooperation of a water management issues between the two countries which arises and revolves around the consequences of environmental emergencies, and a joint water management of cross border waters.

Reasons for close cooperation include increasing populations and industry on river banks (and industry),

climate warming and protection from extreme weather events caused with that changes (flood, ice protection, and etc.), poor agricultural practices and poor prevention of water pollution and watershed modification in the past. While catastrophic environmental emergencies mentioned before are relatively infrequent, lesser emergencies are more common in cross border region. Environmental emergency prevention is the best approach, but response preparation also is necessary for both big and small emergencies. An important component of environmental emergency response preparation is the ability to perform quick assessment of environmental risk resulting from accidental spills or intentional acts of sabotage. Such assessment requires the ability to estimate the movement of released contaminants through the environment to human populations and other valued environmental components (protected area) as well as the impacts of those contaminants.

After the breakup of Yugoslavia, regional and cross-border co-operation between Serbia and Hungary was reactivated with the creation of the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT) Euroregion in 1997. The region covers Vojvodina, as well as four Hungarian municipalities: Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Csongrád, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok; and four counties in Romania: Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara and Timiş. It's important to address that Serbia, Hungary and Romania established a trilateral Neighbourhood programme of co-operation. For the first time organisations in Serbia had the opportunity to submit projects themselves, thus to apply for funding. In Serbia, the territory covered by the Neighbourhood Programme was the Autonomous province of Vojvodina and the City of Belgrade, and in Hungary Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun. In the framework of this programme 46 projects worth 4 million Euros were implemented (2004-2006).

The establishment of the Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA) for the EU budget period 2007-2013, that became also available to the potential candidate countries, was another important step in the fostering of cross-border co-operation. However, out of the five components, potential candidate countries could avail only of components 1 and 2 – support for transition and institution-building and cross border cooperation. The indicative Community funding adopted by The European Commission for Serbian-Hungarian cross border programme amounts to €50.1 million over a seven years period (2007-2013). The Programme has two priorities: Infrastructure and Environment (the so called hard topics and measures) and Economy, Education and Culture (the so called soft topics and measures).

The programme has five specific objectives: reducing the isolation of border areas by improving cross-border accessibility; environmental sustainability and safety in the border zone; economic synergies and co-operation; managing the common cultural heritage to promote cultural values, traditions and to develop tourism; intense interaction in culture, education and research.

Regarding emergency management cooperation in cross border region is worth to mentioned that one among numerous useful experience was the exercise "Šajka 2008,,". The initiative for this exercise was to share the experiences gathered in disastrous floods in 2005 and 2006 in the territories of Hungary, Romania and Serbia, especially along

the rivers Danube, Kris, Moris and Tisa. It was necessary to coordinate a prompt and adequate response to the jeopardy threatening to the population, and material and cultural goods. Within the regional cooperation Danube-Kris-Moris-Tisa, which has been developing in Vojvodina for years, the three countries established collaboration and created a specific experts team to react in case of flood (DKMT RESQUE TEAM). The team members were selected from the staff of institutions competent in area of emergency management, academic community, and enterprises in charge for water management. This exercise was specific because it was the first time in Serbia and Vojvodina to practise in accordance with the INSARAG instructions,² and all exercise was based on guideline of the EU and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (Radović and Stamenić, 2008).

IPA cross-border projects between Serbia and Hungary will continue in the next EU budgetary period 2014-2020. During 2012, the European Commission determined the funds available for the IPA projects in the forthcoming EU budgetary period, amounting €14,110 million (EC, 2011).

Human and economic losses due to natural disasters continue to increase and remain an obstacle to sustainable development in the South Eastern Europe (SEE). In 2000 countries decide to establish the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI) for SEE. Thus, DPPI SEE became and has ever since been fully regionally owned and coordinated mechanism functioning under the political umbrella of the Regional Cooperation Council of the South-East European Cooperation Process -SEEC (https://rcc.int/). The overall goal of the DPPI SEE is to foster regional co-operation across the region in disaster preparedness and prevention. (http://www.dppei.info/dppei-see/background)

The international cooperation in the area of emergency management Serbia is very active in few regional international initiatives; as well in the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is NATO's principal civil emergency response mechanism in the Euro-Atlantic area.³ The 18th EADRCC consequence management field exercise, called "SRBIJA 2018" will be jointly organized by the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia. The consequence management field exercise will be conducted from 8th to 11th October 2018 in and around Mladenovac, Serbia. The aim of the exercise is to improve interoperability in international disaster response operations. Even Mr Vulin, minister of Defence neglected this news recently, the exercise will be held and draft scenario is prepared. The scenario for this year's EADRCC exercise "SRBIJA 2018" provides an opportunity to practice international cooperation and strengthen the ability of teams from different nations to work effectively together across a wide range of relief operations. These include urban search and rescue, medical/paramedical teams, Chemical Biological

Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) protection, as well as decontamination teams and water rescue teams⁴.

Serbia had to accept the international environmental disaster help few time in the last decade. The Joint United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Environment Unit (JEU) helped Serbia to mitigate the consequences of this environmental disaster in the 'Stolice' mine near the town of Krupanj (Reeves, 2014). The incident at the 'Stolice' mine tailing in Kostajnik (Krupanj) is one of the main stand-alone environmental problems caused by extreme weather event and floods (Radovic, 2017). During the flood in 2014 international help from all neighbour countries and many others was significant and Serbian citizens showed the great gratefulness for those help. It was almost unbelievable to see people in cross border area between Serbian and Croatian in joint efforts to provide safety in affected population.

Furthermore, environmental emergencies are a reality for Serbian citizen in the future and therefore policy makers have to move forward and prevent environmental contamination. Following the goals of the Agenda 2030 Serbian stakeholders have to be more devoted, particularly in the achievement of the SDG 11 Therefore, the world leaders recognition materialized through the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to adjust to climate-related hazards and impacts to natural resources. Its target 11.5 stated: "by 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations." This goal is extremely important on human settlements across the border who share the same risk, and cannot wait the response of central government in time of emergency.

The environmental diplomacy and environmental citizenship as a tool for improving environmental emergency response

The twenty-first century challenge is different from any other that humanity has faced. The planetary nature of the challenge is unique, and demands a global-scale solution that transcends national boundaries and cultural divides (Svedin, 1998). The EU has become a key player in global environmental matters, and thus must be taken into account when analyzing international environmental policy making (Lidskog, 2016). For the Republic of Serbia this issue is from the paramount importance in the process of open Chapter regarding the environment as well the process of achievement full membership in the future. At the same time, it is not a simple task to describe and implement obligation in the area of environmental protection having in mind budget shortfall. Researchers, Henrik Selin (Boston

² https://www.insarag.org/

³ EADRCC Consequence Management Exercise « SRBIJA 2018 » https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_10/20180215_1810-eadrcc-srbija2018-scenario.pdf

⁴ EADRCC consequence management field exercise "SRBIJA 2018"

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_152120.htm?

University) and Stacy D. Van Deveer (University of New Hampshire) shed light on the European Union's environmental and sustainable development policies (2015).

In the last decade a lot of results from various research and reports have been published with the objective to explain how to prevent and mitigate consequences of the environmental emergency related to water courses and two other environmental media (air and soil). Yet the future of water quality given expected changes in climate and other environmental drivers uncertain. In the area of risk management is important to understand the linkage among different kind of risk and its internal relations [WHO]. In the area of environmental security this interconnection is visible and therefore there is no one solution which could be implied. The adequate solution should be considered environmental, socio economic and policy changes.

Environmental diplomacy becomes a necessity in modern world faced with numerous global environmental risks. It is an integral part of diplomatic history (Clark, 1997). It is worth to mention the event from the spring of 1972. Russell E. Train, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality under President Richard Nixon, invited Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to lunch at Washington's tony Metropolitan Club. Train had already developed a friendly relationship with the powerful diplomat but this was no casual social call. Train had an agenda that his own boss, John Ehrlichman, one of Nixon's top advisers, had cleared prior to the meeting. The United States and the Soviet Union, Train suggested, should work together to improve environmental quality (Flippen, (2008). Today environmental diplomacy is engaged in different international activities over the world. In the 2017 Russian and Norwegian environmentalists and politicians gathering in the industrial town of Nikel to tote up advances in cross-border pollution for once had something positive to report: the joint efforts seems to be working (Bellona, 2017). Meanwhile, the United States State Department is wading into environmental waters to address British Columbia mining pollution that affects a watershed in north-western Montana, after a waste water treatment plant intended to remove water pollution appears to have worsened the existed problem. Two governors wrote the letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson seeking State Department help They addressed "a strong bilateral water quality standards, developed with British Columbia, is the first step in communicating and protecting Montana s water quality need (ERN, 2018, p.10).

In July 2015 Ambassadors Macharia Kamau of Kenya and Csaba Kőrösi of Hungary receive Elizabeth Haub Award for Environmental Diplomacy in recognition of their exemplary leadership in drafting the United Nations' "Sustainable Development Goals." on July 28 at the University Club in New York City. 5 The Elizabeth Haub Award for Environmental Diplomacy is the premier international recognition for extraordinary diplomatic achievements in shaping international environmental law and policy for sustainable development. Key diplomatic

accomplishments have been honoured in such sectors as desertification, biodiversity, small island developing states, forests, mountains, climate change, energy, and oceans. Pace University and the International Council of Environmental Law established the award in memory of the distinguished German environmentalist Elizabeth Haub, a philanthropist devoted to the sound stewardship of nature and natural resources International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. ⁶

Serbia after so called "democratic revolution" in 2000 faced with many hidden issues of "new democracy." It looks like all that citizens paid a high price for some idea of politician without any useful meaning. The program of economic diplomacy is recognized as one of the similar idea. A total of 28 economic ambassadors were sent to 25 countries in 2010, upon the initiative of the Ministry for the Economy, headed by Mladjan Dinkic at that time. Their task was to promote Serbia as an investment destination and to promote the exports of Serbian goods. After the six years, since the economic diplomats were sent out to the world, nine million Euros has been spent from the Serbian budget on that program. According to information obtained from the Ministry for Trade, their contribution to Serbia's economy was almost negligible (Insajder, 2016). Due to all mentioned above it looks that Serbian diplomacy missed many opportunities in the past.

Minister Dačić statement during the celebration of Serbian Diplomatic Day is that "Serbia's realistic review of the security and political challenges facing it, as well as its firm determination to resolve all disagreements and problems, through dialogue and other diplomatic means, basically aimed at preservation of regional peace and stability - have demonstrated, once again, its capacities to act in a pragmatic and responsible way."⁷ Environmental diplomacy today helps to reshape the world of public international law, creating a new regime for environmental stewardship around the world. Therefore it would be useful that Serbian diplomacy, as well as all stakeholder consider strengthening so called "environmental diplomacy," which would certainly gain more benefits for Serbian society than previously known "trade diplomacy."

Environmental diplomacy has certainly had a mixed record during this period: states have managed to negotiate hundreds of agreements and protocols, but too often these agreements fail to genuinely improve the myriad problems that beset our planet (Sussking and Ali, 2015). Therefore is needed to address one more important issue - environmental education. Environmental education is charged to create an environmentally literate population equipped with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills necessary to "work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones" (Tbilisi Declaration, 1977). In the area of environmental emergency management in cross border area

⁶<http://law.pace.edu/elizabeth-haub-award-environmental-diplomacy>; and www.elizabeth_haub.com).

⁷ Serbian Diplomacy Day solemnly observed. 29 May 2017. <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/press-service/statements/16545-serbian-diplomacy-day-solemnly-observed>

⁵ [https://newswire.blogs.pace.edu/2015/07/29/presentation-of-the-elizabeth-haub-award-for-environmental-diplomacy/Presentation of the Elizabeth Haub Award for Environmental Diplomacy](https://newswire.blogs.pace.edu/2015/07/29/presentation-of-the-elizabeth-haub-award-for-environmental-diplomacy/Presentation%20of%20the%20Elizabeth%20Haub%20Award%20for%20Environmental%20Diplomacy)

this issue is one among the most important. Border population share the troubles after emergencies and after it stayed far from audience. The media attention so intense in emergencies after some period decreased and therefore citizens who are educated are able to participate more in the rebuilding phase. The concept of environmental citizenship could be a new tool which can help the border population without waiting the response of political elite in strictly centralized state as Serbia is as well its neighbour countries.

From historical perspective is well known that all countries established after dissolution of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia missed engagement of an environmental citizenship conceived along the civic republican tradition and civic environmentalism tradition, whereby individuals participate in working collectively toward the common good. The Cost Action number 16229 European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) aims to improve understanding and assessment of environmental citizenship in European societies and participating countries. Environmental Citizenship is a key factor in EU's growth strategy (Europe 2020) and its vision for Sustainable Development, Green and Cycle economy and Low-carbon society (EU-roadmap 2050).

"Environmental Citizenship" is defined as the responsible pro-environmental behaviour of citizens who act and participate in society as agents of change in the private and public sphere, on a local, national and global scale, through individual and collective actions, in the direction of solving contemporary environmental problems, preventing the creation of new environmental problems, achieving sustainability as well as developing a healthy relationship with nature (<http://enec-cost.eu/our-approach/>).

In the future environmental emergency is need to have integrated and collaborative cooperation at national and regional level, and this issue having in mind unsolved territorial issues between countries has to be incorporated in the future diplomatic actions. The importance of environmental education in creation of democratic states in which citizens will have active participation role has to become a part of all policies of stakeholders. Political elite has to be more aware of issues which bother "ordinary citizens." This expression which they refer in many statement consider even greater worries because ordinary citizens seek for their own decisions and long express their will to cooperate in decision of emergency management system. They want their right to create joint decision and joint action and withdraw their approval that someone else will bring the decision for themselves in 2000. It looks that Serbian society still has to go on long pace to achieve it in practise of environmental emergency management in cross border area.

Conclusion

The cross-border cooperation represents a very important topic in the EU because of the fact that approximately 30% of the EU territory is a part of border regions and around 40% of EU population lives in these areas. The importance could be observed through the constant rise of the allocations of the EU funds for the promotion of the cross border cooperation among the EU

member states and its neighbours. The predominant issue on the agenda of diplomats and politicians engaged in global environmental diplomacy over the past 20 is the effort by nation states to reach UN Agenda 2030 and some other documents which will shape future of human civilization.

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