

---

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION AND SOCIOPOLITICAL TRANSITION - NOT JUST A 'BALKAN' PROBLEM**

*Marija Anterić and Richard Clarke\**

*King's College, University of London, UK*

*\*Centre for European Protected Area Research, University of London  
Birkbeck College, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ UK*

Prolonged armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, culminating in the Nato bombing of Serbia and Kosovo, have had major environmental repercussions on the whole Balkan region. International support for environmental remediation as manifest in Stability Pact arrangements is predicated on an explicit model for transition towards political pluralism and a market economy. The Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme (REReP, now formally embedded in the Stability Pact for the region) emphasises institutional strengthening, capacity building, and the growth of civil society with particular emphasis on the role of NGOs.

However resources committed to date by the 'international community' are limited and remediation programmes fail to address primary environmental consequences of recent conflicts, including territorial fragmentation and the displacement of large numbers of people. They may even undermine local initiatives. Moreover, the dominant liberal consensus, expressed in the rhetoric of democratisation, political pluralism, conflict resolution and consensus building, civil society and capacity building and ecological modernisation represents the imposition of models which may not be appropriate for the region. Specific and diverging trajectories of political transition are contingent on particular geographical and historic factors which cannot be subsumed into one general model of 'modernisation'. Proper resources must be committed to environmental reconstruction, particularly by those nations who took part in the bombing; this must be combined with respect for Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and support for collaborative