

**BELGIUM STILL SEES AN ADDED VALUE OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE  
MINISTERIAL PROCESS AND WISHES A STRENGTHENED AND EFFICIENT ONE**

## **1. Issues**

The EfE process should maintain and develop its essential core elements from the Belgrade agenda, implement existing commitments and ensure a steady political will from its member States.

The EfE process must deliver commitments through the most appropriate instruments for instance legal instrument, programs and projects with differentiated approaches linked with the relevant financial instruments.

The political situation in the UN-ECE region has changed with the enlargement of the EU to 27 countries, but the European region as a whole still need more environmental convergence and harmonization.

**BELGIUM DOES NOT AGREE TO LIMIT THE EfE PROCESS TO POLICIES AND PROGRAMS “UNTOUCHED” BY THE E.U OR BASED ON A BILATERAL OR ‘NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY’ TYPE.**

Several areas remain indeed useful, or even crucial, to keep on the agenda of the EFE process for a multiyear review at political level.

Having environmental status reports has shown to be very useful. Not only is there a role for the regular state of the environment (through the EEA). We also consider that sectoral assessments such as the extensive report on trans-boundary waters for the whole UNECE region, submitted in Belgrade, are unique sources of information and political evaluation. A more in depth view into air pollution trends in the region is another relevant agenda item; we have therefore regretted the absence of an agenda item “LRTAP” on the Belgrade agenda.

An area, which has clear potential for staying on the EFE agenda, is sustainable consumption and production patterns. The Marrakech process will surely continue beyond 2012, and remains in need of regional imputes.

Furthermore - and obviously - sustainable energy is an issue that will remain very high on the agenda in this region.

Finally, the subject of environment and security (programme between UNDP, OSCE, UNEP, NATO, UNECE) is also by its nature a subject that will stay on the pan-european agenda. Several areas in the wider ECE region, either know problems concerning natural resources that could become an element of insecurity and instability, or vice versa are in a post conflict phase, where environmental cooperation is an element of building up stability and trans-boundary cooperation.

## **2. Integration and other horizontal issues or instruments**

The EfE needs to be a tool that help the environmental policy of the countries in the region and demonstrate the costs of inaction for the whole region.

We should therefore promote integration of policies, environmental and social corporate responsibility and accountability, environmental standards.

We consider it vital, that the process keeps an overview of the financial streams, bilateral or multilateral, governmental or private, dedicated to environmental reform in particular in the EECCA part of the UNECE region. The EAP task Force is one of the instruments to achieve this. Their reports on the financial streams in this region are very useful.

### **3. Structures**

- We should rejuvenate the process owing to a strong political will. To generate it a key-role should be devolved at key moments to the Ministers of Environment. Firstly, the period of four to five years between the conferences is definitely too long, some high level mid-term political assessment should be established, it could take place in Geneva or be hosted by a member State.
- Secondly, the CEP should devolve a part of its yearly meeting to the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the commitments taken. The CEP could proceed to that assessment in an enlarged setting ensuring the participation of all the stakeholders.
- Thirdly, we should reflect of the role of the CEP and the WGSO in preparing the conferences, such a dual structure is still needed or not, we think that the CEP could probably deal with everything provided it either meets more than once a year or longer than 2 days, merging its current back to back sessions with the WGSO.
- Fourthly, improving synergies with the other pan-european processes could be on the agenda of the next EFE conference.
- Fifthly, we agree with those, who are of the opinion that negotiating ministerial positions on global issues to be inserted in the ministerial declarations of future EFE ministerials, are structurally out of place in the EFE process, has little added value.
- Sixthly, the process should be very attentive to the fact that in the framework of the strengthening of international environment governance (through reforms in NY and Nairobi) one of the elements on the reform agenda is the strengthening of the regional presence of UNEP, which might lead to a stronger and more central role of UNEP-Europe in the EFE in the future.
- Finally, the conducting of the pan-european ministerial conferences would profit very much from the methodology for interactivity used with success, for instance by UNCSD or the ministerial conferences Environment and Health of WHO Europe, such as round table discussions, ministerial panel sessions, official sessions with major groups...