

Kiev Ministerial Conference  
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Statement on the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment  
by  
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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The REC would like to congratulate those member states of UN/ECE that decided to sign the new SEA Protocol. We regard this new international legal instrument as extremely important for several reasons.

The Protocol brings the EU SEA requirements for plans and programs to pan-European level. It clarifies the role of health authorities in SEA process and provides guidance on strengthening of public participation in SEA for plans and programs.

Protocol also contains an important guidance on establishment of national SEA systems for policies and legislation. All recent international debates on integration of environment and development reveal that countries need to design effective SEA systems at this level of decision-making in order to move forward in sustainable development agenda. We regard Art. 13 of the Protocol as an important step forward in this direction and congratulate UN/ECE Ad Hoc Working Group for addressing this challenging issue.

The last and not the least important benefit of the Protocol can be found in the fact that it started large pan-Europe policy debate on SEA.

Having said all that, we would like to stress that the Protocol may not reach its all intended benefits unless countries build adequate capacity to effectively implement its provisions. When doing so, signatories of the Protocol may wish to organise national consultative forums to review the proposed SEA systems with their future users – regions and municipalities, planners and environmental professionals and environmental NGOs. Signatories may also wish to initiate pilot projects to test and improve the proposed SEA procedures or may organise targeted training programs for the key future actors in SEA.

From our experience gained from the Sofia EIA Initiative, we foresee that such capacity building will require considerable efforts and commitments.

Let me use this opportunity to pledge REC support for such capacity building efforts. We are prepared to make our experience from SEA capacity-building in CEE available for institutions that will be involved in capacity-building for the SEA Protocol.

Thank you.