

Summary of outcomes of the work of and decisions made by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its nineteenth session, 22–25 October 2013

(as approved by the Committee on 25 October 2013)

At its nineteenth meeting, the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP):

(a) Adopted the agenda of the nineteenth session (as presented in document ECE/CEP/2013/1), taking into account the proposed timetable and changes as presented in information paper No. 1/Rev.1;

(b) Elected, by acclamation, the Chair and other members of its Bureau, as follows:

Chair: Ms. Elisabete Quintas da Silva (Portugal)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium)

Mr. Nicolas Fairise (France)

Ms. Nino Tkhilava (Georgia)

Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan)

Ms. Maria Nagornii (Republic of Moldova)

Mr. Miroslav Tadic (Serbia)

Ms. Martine Rohn Brossard (Switzerland)

and expressed its appreciation to the work done by the Bureau members who stepped down;

(c) Expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its good work and for efficiently fulfilling the mandates assigned to it by CEP at its eighteenth and expressed appreciation to the ECE secretariat for the efficient and high quality support provided to the Bureau;

(d) Took note of the information provided regarding developments in the ECE activities in follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference);

(e) Took note of the information provided about the outcome of the review of the 2005 ECE reform;

(f) Took note of the information on strengthening national implementation and compliance provided by the chairs of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and:

(i) Welcomed the progress achieved with regard to further ratifications of the MEAs and their implementation, and praised the work of the MEAs;

(ii) Invited those countries that were not yet Parties to ECE MEAs to consider joining, and expressed the wish for all countries to continue to actively implement the MEAs;

(iii) Took note of the information on the recent developments under the informal joint meetings between the representatives of the governing bodies of the ECE MEAs and CEP;

(iv) Welcomed the activities to continue enhancing synergies to promote and implement the MEAs;

(v) Invited the secretariat to prepare for the CEP session in 2014 a report on the status of and activities relating to the opening of ECE MEAs and other instruments under ECE to accession by States outside the ECE region;

(g) Carried out the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes, and:

(i) Welcomed the report prepared by the ECE secretariat on “Assisting countries in joining and implementing the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements” (ECE/CEP/2013/8), and:

a. Acknowledged that interdepartmental coordination between MEAs and national focal points in countries will enhance both national implementation and multilateral activities;

b. Agreed that more efforts should be made to ensure adequate political support to implementation of the MEAs;

c. Recognized the need to strengthen the secretariats of the MEAs and underlined in that regard that more resources should be allocated from the United Nations regular budget for this purpose;

(ii) Welcomed the report prepared by the ECE secretariat on “Implementation of the Astana Water Action: fostering progress towards improved water management” (ECE/CEP/2013/9), appreciated the overall progress achieved in implementing the Astana Water Action (AWA), and:

a. Welcomed the information provided by the panellists on the implementation of AWA actions to which their country or organization had committed;

b. Invited the AWA stakeholders to continue with the implementation of those actions which were still in progress, with a view to reporting to CEP on their progress in implementing them at its session in 2015 or 2016. The report might be also considered at the next EfE Ministerial Conference, as appropriate;

c. Underlined the importance of promoting the AWA and requested the secretariat to disseminate the AWA commitments and results, e.g., through a brochure or on the ECE website;

d. Encouraged the AWA stakeholders and other interested countries and organizations to continue using AWA as a useful framework for advancing a sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems;

(iii) Welcomed the report prepared by the ECE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) secretariats on “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: progress and future prospects” (ECE/CEP/2013/10), in particular the comprehensive overview of the numerous activities on greening the economies that were carried out in the ECE region, and:

a. Welcomed the information provided by the panellists on the developments in greening the economies, including on the Green Bridge Partnership Programme;

b. Invited the ECE and UNEP secretariats, in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, including ministries, business and civil society, to prepare for the CEP session in 2014 an updated report on the progress and future prospects in greening the economy in the pan-European region and to include in the report additional chapters on the identification of priorities for greening the economy in the region and possible modalities and options to achieve that;

c. Encouraged the delegations to continue the work towards greening their economies;

(iv) Welcomed the report prepared by the ECE secretariat on “Environmental performance reviews: progress made in preparation for the third cycle” (ECE/CEP/2013/12), took note of the progress achieved thus far since the Astana Conference, and:

a. Supported the detailed structure proposed by the ECE secretariat for the third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) and agreed to revisit it in the future in the light of experience gained in its practical application;

b. Welcomed the preparedness of Montenegro and Serbia to undergo a third EPR in 2014;

c. Took note of the invitation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to ECE to undertake in close cooperation an EPR of Tunisia, and invited the ECE secretariat to undertake such review if the conditions for ECE review outside the ECE region were met (see ECE/CEP/S/2011/2, annex II);

d. Invited ECE countries that were not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to inform the secretariat of their interest in undergoing a third EPR;

e. Invited delegations to provide in-kind (experts) and financial support, to the EPR Programme, in line with the resources assessment needs presented by the ECE secretariat;

f. welcomed the offer of the European Environment Agency (EEA), UNEP and OECD to contribute their in-kind support or expertise to the EPR Programme;

(v) Welcomed the report by EEA “A review of Shared Environment Information System-related developments with an impact on environmental assessment and reporting since the Seventh ‘Environment for Europe’ Ministerial Conference” (ECE/CEP/2013/18), as well as other documents relating to the Astana outcomes on environmental assessment and reporting (i.e., ECE/CEP/2013/15, ECE/CEP/2013/13 and ECE/CEP/2013/23), took note of the progress achieved thus far in the implementation of the Shared Environment Information System (SEIS) in the region, and:

a. Following recommendations by the CEP Bureau, decided to establish a coordination mechanism for the development of SEIS in the form of a group of “Friends of SEIS” and approved the terms of reference for such a group as presented in the annex to the current report [*the annex to the CEP-19 report will contain the revised terms of reference as approved by CEP-19*], pending formal approval by the ECE Executive Committee and provided that there are necessary resources in the ECE secretariat to service the work of the “Friends of SEIS” group;

b. Welcomed the information provided by the Chair of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) regarding the plans to apply SEIS principles to the future assessments to be prepared within the framework of the Water Convention, beginning with a pilot application to an ongoing thematic assessment of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, as well as regarding the ongoing examination of a possible reporting mechanism under the Water Convention, which should also incorporate the SEIS principles;

c. Encouraged other MEAs to consider whether their reporting mechanisms were aligned with SEIS principles and to revise them as necessary to incorporate SEIS principles, and to provide information in that regard to the next session of the CEP;

d. Invited countries and other SEIS stakeholders to engage more actively in the establishment of SEIS both at the national and regional levels;

(vi) Welcomed the report prepared by the OECD Environmental Action Programme (EAP) Task Force secretariat on “Progress since the Seventh ‘Environment for Europe’ Ministerial Conference within the framework of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force: promoting better policies and tools for water resources management and green growth” (ECE/CEP/2013/19), as well as the joint report prepared by the Regional Environmental Centres on “Promoting green economy and governance for sustainability” (ECE/CEP/2013/14), and:

a. Appreciated the progress achieved in the work of the EAP Task Force;

- b. Welcomed the information on the progress achieved in the work of Regional Environmental Centres;
- (vii) Welcomed the document prepared by the ECE secretariat on the “Results of the survey on the promotion of the ‘Environment for Europe’ process and the outcomes of its ministerial conferences” (ECE/CEP/2013/21), and:
 - a. Expressed its appreciation to those countries that actively participated in the EfE survey;
 - b. Requested the Bureau and the ECE secretariat to follow up and assess the lessons learned;
 - c. Expressed satisfaction with the level of organization, the quality of documents and the outcomes of the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference outcomes;
- (h) Welcomed the documents prepared by the ECE secretariat regarding the organization of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2013/16 and ECE/CEP/2013/17), and:
 - (i) Agreed with the CEP Bureau recommendation to organize the Eighth EfE Conference in 2016;
 - (ii) Mandated the CEP Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare for the CEP session in 2014 an updated proposal for a possible framework for the next conference, taking into account the comments made by delegations at the nineteenth session;
 - (iii) Requested the secretariat to prepare other documents that might be recommended by the CEP Bureau for consideration by CEP at its twentieth session;
 - (iv) Welcomed the information provided by Georgia regarding the possibility of Georgia’s hosting the next EfE conference, pending further internal Governmental consultations;
 - (v) Invited the CEP Bureau, with support from the ECE secretariat, to explore possible synergies between the EfE and the Environment and Health Ministerial Conferences;
- (i) Adopted the recommendations in the Second EPR of Croatia (as presented in Information paper No. 4);
- (j) Adopted the recommendations in the Third EPR of the Republic of Moldova (as presented in Information paper No. 5);
- (k) Adopted the recommendations in the EPR of Morocco (as presented in Information paper No. 6)
- (l) Appreciated highly the work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and requested them to also support the activities of the “Friends of SEIS” group in pursuing the implementation of their mandates;
- (m) Adopted the Guidelines for developing national strategies to use biodiversity monitoring as an environmental policy tool for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as interested South-Eastern European countries (ECE/CEP/2013/7) and invited the target countries to implement the Guidelines;
- (n) Took note of the information provided and welcomed the progress of work under the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, and supported the proposal presented by the secretariat to organize a high level meeting of education and environment ministries in the framework of the next EfE Conference, as appropriate, in order to assess 10 years of education for sustainable development (ESD) implementation and to consider the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD;
- (o) Took note of the information provided and welcomed the progress of work under the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP),

and invited countries to consider an active participation in the upcoming Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Paris, 14–16 April 2014);

(p) Took note of and welcomed the information provided with regard to the Environment and Security Initiative;

(q) Took note of the Report of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board to the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Europe and CEP (EUR/RC63/10), the “Report on the European Environment and Health Process (2010–2013) — Background document”, and:

(i) Took note of the information provided on the progress of work of the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB);

(ii) Requested the ECE secretariat to follow up with the necessary actions with a view to appointing the four ministers from the environment sector to the third term of the EHMB (2015–2016);

(iii) Agreed to hold a panel discussion on the Environment and Health process at the next CEP meeting and to invite the Chairs of the EHMB and the Environment and Health Task Force;

(iv) Requested the CEP Bureau and the ECE secretariat to explore the WHO proposal to hold a CEP Bureau and EHMB alternates’ joint meeting to discuss issues of the common interest;

(r) Took note of the information provided on the activities of the ECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry, in particular on the progress of work on green building, and requested the secretariat to circulate the information on the Green Economy Action Plan under development by the Committee on Forests and Forest Industry;

(s) Approved the programme performance in the biennium 2012–2013, with one revision made upon the proposal of Lithuania on behalf of the European Union and its member States, which would be reflected in the text of the present report;

(t) Adopted the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2014–2015 (ECE/CEP/2013/3);

(u) Approved the biennial evaluation plan for the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme (2014–2015) (ECE/CEP/2013/4), with the two amendments proposed by Lithuania on behalf of the European Union and its member States, and requested the secretariat to reissue the amended document presenting the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme (2014–2015) for the twentieth session of CEP;

(v) Approved the draft Strategic Framework 2016–2017 for the Environment subprogramme (information paper No. 12);

(w) Approved the list of publications for 2014–2015 proposed by the Environment subprogramme (ECE/CEP/2013/6);

(x) Took note of the assessment of criteria for providing financial support for participation in meetings and events (ECE/CEP/2013/20), and approved the recommendations contained therein (see paras. 20 and 21);

(y) Approved the list of countries eligible for financial support (information paper No. 9), which would enter into force immediately after the conclusion of the nineteenth session of CEP and included as an annex to the report of the session;

(z) Requested the CEP Bureau to consider the request from Belarus to be included on the list of countries eligible for financial support and mandated the Bureau to take a decision on that request;

(aa) Welcomed the information provided by the secretariat on the status of resources in the biennium 2012–2013 (information paper No. 8 and Add.1) and requested the secretariat to provide similar information on status of resources in the Environment subprogramme for the biennium 2014–2015 at the next relevant session of the Committee (i.e., in two years’ time);

(bb) Took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the introduction by ECE of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) Standard 23 on Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions (Taxes and Transfers) (as presented in information paper No. 8) and mandated the CEP Bureau to consider the wording of a relevant decision by CEP to be included in the present list of decisions with a view to streamlining the procedures for financial contributions by donors;

(cc) Took note of the information provided on mainstreaming a gender perspective into environmental activities, and:

(i) Recognized the importance of including a gender perspective in the preparation for activities/events and policy discussions within the ECE environmental governance framework, in line with the ECE gender action plan;

(ii) Welcomed the gender mainstreaming efforts already being made in the framework of several activities carried out under the auspices of the ECE Environment subprogramme;

(dd) Approved the proposed schedule of CEP and CEP Bureau meetings for the period 2014–2016 (information paper No. 10), with one revision regarding the CEP Bureau meeting in 2014, and agreed to organize the twentieth session of the Committee from 28 to 31 October 2014;

(ee) Took note of the draft rules of procedure prepared by the CEP Bureau with support from the secretariat (ECE/CEP/2013/L.1) and the comments received from the European Union and its member States, which were circulated to CEP, as well as other comments made by the delegations during the nineteenth session. Requested the Bureau and the secretariat to continue working on the rules, with a view to providing recommendations to CEP at its twentieth session;

(ff) Requested its Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on the CEP decisions, including by preparing the documents and reports necessary for the work of the CEP at its 2014 session;

(gg) Expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for an excellent organization of the meeting.
