

The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes



Survey for reporting on promoting the “Environment for Europe” process and the outcomes of its ministerial conferences*

I. Introduction

1. At its eighteenth session in April 2012 the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) invited the secretariat to organize consultations (in the form of a survey) with UNECE member States to collect information on how countries have been promoting objectives and priorities of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process and strengthening implementation of outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.
2. The secretariat will prepare a summary report on the basis of responses received to the survey. The report will support the discussion during the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes which is being organized during the nineteenth session of CEP (Geneva, 22–25 October 2013).
3. The survey, contained in section V of the current document, was developed by the secretariat in consultation with the CEP Bureau. In addition, an overview of main achievements of the EfE process is provided in section II. Section III focusses on outcomes of Astana Ministerial Conference, and section IV includes background information on the mid-term review of relevance to the survey. For convenience, the Reform Plan of the EfE process is provided in the annex to this document.

II. Overview of the “Environment for Europe” process: main achievements

4. Since its launch in 1991 the EfE process supports countries efforts to advance in environmental governance. The EfE process is a unique partnership of member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations System represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations and bodies, Regional Environmental Centres, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other major groups. UNECE, which has been closely associated with the EfE process since its inception, serves as its secretariat.

* This document has not been formally edited.

5. The process and its ministerial conferences provide an effective high-level platform for stakeholders to discuss, decide and join efforts in addressing environmental priorities across the 56 countries of the UNECE region, and is a regional pillar of sustainable development.
6. At the same time, the process focuses on supporting the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and of South-Eastern Europe in their efforts to raise environmental standards and comply with international commitments.
7. The EfE process provided the framework for the development of governance policies and initiatives, legal instruments, policies and practical actions and tools that promote and improve environmental governance and strengthen sustainable development at the regional level, as well as contribute to enhancing the global sustainability. The main achievements of the EfE process include:
 - (a) Four assessments on the state of the environment in the pan-European region (Dobris, Aarhus, Kyiv and Belgrade assessments) and an assessment of environmental assessments (Astana).
 - (b) Setting up institutional mechanisms for cooperation (establishing the Environmental Action Programme Task Force, the Project Preparation Committee and the Regional Environmental Centres).
 - (c) Acting as a driving force for developing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other environmental policy instruments, and promoting their implementation.¹
 - (d) Launching the UNECE Environmental Performance Review Programme for member countries that are non-OECD members.
 - (e) Promoting cross-sectoral activities and policy integration (energy efficiency, education for sustainable development (ESD) and greening the economy).
 - (f) Enhancing cooperation between Governments and civil society organizations.
8. Following a decision by Ministers in Belgrade in 2007, CEP reformed the EfE process in 2009 to ensure that it remains relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness.

III. Main features of and lessons learned from the Astana Ministerial Conference

9. The seventh EfE Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011) was the first EfE Conference organized in accordance with the Reform Plan of the EfE process. The Astana Ministerial Conference gathered more than 1,500 participants from Governments, the international community, civil society, business and the media throughout the UNECE region to discuss two main themes: sustainable management of water and water-related

¹ The UNECE Programme on Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs); the UNECE Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment; the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS); the Aarhus Convention; the Protocols on Heavy Metals and Persistent Organic Pollutants to the Air Pollution Convention; the Pan-European Strategy to Phase-out Leaded Petrol; the UNECE Strategy for ESD; the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention; the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention; the Protocol on Civil Liability to the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions; the Environment Strategy for Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries; the Carpathian Convention; and a series of guidelines and recommendations to Governments.

ecosystems; and greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

10. The event was organized in an interactive format, including nine high-level multi-stakeholder round tables. To support multi-stakeholder discussions during the Conference and to facilitate decision-making, substantive documents on each of the two main themes were prepared by UNECE jointly with EfE partners. For the first time, the EfE Ministerial Conference was a paper-smart event.

11. The EfE partners organized 43 side events on issues related to the two main themes of the Conference. The Conference gathered business and industry representatives, who also participated in a Green Innovations, Technologies and Ecoservices Fair, organized on the margins of the Conference. Representatives of media attended the Conference, preceded by a capacity-building workshop for journalists.

12. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Astana Ministerial Declaration — a concise and comprehensive document — in which ministers confirmed their commitment to improving environmental protection and promoting sustainable development in the UNECE region through the EfE process, as well as decided on a number of follow up and further actions under the two themes of the Conference.

13. At its eighteenth session in April 2012, CEP assessed the effectiveness of the Astana Ministerial Conference. Delegations highly appreciated the organization and the outcomes of the Conference, structured in a new format according to the EfE Reform Plan. The success of the Conference was attributed to its two main themes, which were of importance for the entire region, its interactive format and its good outcomes, as well as its efficient preparatory process².

14. Meeting participants observed that the Astana Conference had demonstrated once again that the EfE process provided a unique high-level platform for addressing environmental concerns across the region and should be continued. Delegations expressed the wish for the future EfE conferences to be prepared in the same manner, including an even higher interactivity during the conference.

15. At the same time, some delegations observed that the biggest challenge for future conferences was to provide new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, given the ongoing economic crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region.

16. Future conferences should also be better streamlined, in particular in terms of side events. Concerning identification of themes for the next conferences, delegates stressed the need to find the right balance between established and emerging themes, including enhancing the work related to green economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development.

IV. The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes

17. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan and following a decision by the Astana Ministerial Conference, CEP is convening a mid-term review in 2013 to assess the progress in implementation of the Conference’s main outcomes. The mid-term review would provide

² The preparatory process for the Astana Ministerial Conference commenced in 2009 and included four meetings of CEP (October 2009, November 2010, May and September 2011), two meetings of CEP Extended Bureau (May 2009 and March 2010), and one joint meeting of the Bureaux of CEP and of the Water Convention (January 2010).

renewed impetus to the process and its findings would be taken into account in the preparatory process for the next conference.

18. The EfE Reform Plan stipulates that particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

19. Furthermore, the Reform Plan stipulates that active participation by and input of all interested UNECE countries, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process. Also, countries taking the lead for one or more issues were encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process’ objectives and priorities.

20. The Astana Conference main outcomes include: (a) ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); (b) implementing the Astana Water Action; (c) promoting a green economy in the region and the Green Bridge Partnership Programme; (d) conducting a third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs); (e) establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS); and (f) continuing the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force) and strengthening the work of the Regional Environmental Centres (see ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1).³

V. Survey

21. The purpose of the survey is to collect information (in accordance with the request by CEP) from the UNECE member States about the promotion of the EfE objectives and priorities in general, as well as strengthening implementation of the outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference in particular, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

22. Following to the EfE Reform Plan, which stipulates in paragraph 16 that “member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process”, the survey aims at assessing the progress made by countries in implementing the EfE objectives and priorities as set out in the 2009 EfE Reform Plan (paragraphs 6 and 7). The EfE priorities adopted in 2009 cover most of activities carried out at present by the UNECE Environment subprogramme, as well as a number of activities carried out by the EfE partners. These activities are included in sections 2 and 3 of the survey.

23. In addition, following up on paragraph 16 of the EfE Reform Plan stipulating that “member States should strengthen the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences”, the survey aims at assessing the progress in implementation of the main outcome activities of the 2011 Astana EfE Ministerial Conference (refer to paragraph 20 of the present document). These activities are included in section 4 of the survey.

24. Furthermore, the survey seeks to identify country views on environmental priorities and themes that could be addressed at the next ministerial conference, as well as on possible efficient interactive modes for conducting discussions at ministerial level. These issues are included in sections 5 and 6 of the survey.

³ The Astana Ministerial Declaration and other Conference documents are available on the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/astana/welcome.html>).

25. It is recognized that countries may engage in a particular issue, treaty or process without the direct attribution of that engagement to the EfE process. Therefore it is recommended that the responses to the survey questions also explain the extent to which the EfE process has influenced the attention and priority given to an issue, process or treaty. If the response to a question is “not applicable”, “disagree” or “not foreseen”, but the particular issue is nonetheless important for the country, it could be explained that the issue is addressed primarily through means other than the EfE process or UNECE activities.

26. The target group of the survey comprises the representatives of national Governments of the UNECE region.

27. The structure of the survey has been developed to be user-friendly, mostly using a “tick box” approach, which is complemented by an explanatory section to allow respondents to elaborate on their choice. Such an approach is expected to facilitate the process of filling in the survey.

28. On the basis of responses received the UNECE secretariat will prepare an analysis for consideration by the nineteenth session of CEP. The analysis along with the responses received from countries will be posted on the CEP website.

29. UNECE member States are invited to complete the survey below and submit it to the secretariat (efe@unece.org) **by Friday, 28 June 2013**, at the latest.

1. Contact information

Please indicate the name, title, organization and country, as well as the contact data of the person who filled in the survey

First name:	Detelina
Last name:	Peicheva
Title:	State expert, International Cooperation Department
Organization:	Ministry of Environment and Water
Country:	BULGARIA
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E-mail:	dpeycheva@moew.government.bg
Website:	www.moew.government.bg
Date:	25 June 2013

2. Progress in promoting the objectives of the “Environment for Europe” process

In the table below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate. The boxes can be ticked by double-clicking on the box and choosing “checked” under the “default value” from the popping up window. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The EfE process continues to serve as a mechanism to:

(a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The EfE process continues to be a strong impetus to improving the environment throughout the pan-European region and thus contributing to achieving sustainable development and eradication of poverty, especially with its focus on supporting the countries of eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe in their efforts to raise environmental standards and comply with international commitments.

(b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The EfE process, especially through the MEAs, EPR programme, etc. continues to provide the framework for the development and implementation of national environmental policies.

(c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The EfE continues to serve as a unique platform integrating different environmental policies and approaches to long existing and emerging policy issues.

(d) Encourage the participation of civil society

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The “Environment for Europe” process and the ministerial conferences have been and continue to be a forum for encouraging the participation of civil society in the decision-making process on environmental matters.

(e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Promoting horizontal environmental cooperation has been one of the original goals of the “Environment for Europe” process”, which continues to be very relevant.

3. Progress in promoting the political priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in promoting the EfE political priorities, based on commitments already made under the EfE process, including through national policies and relevant partnerships. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The progress (in your country) on EfE political priorities may include:

<p>(a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments <i>(by your country)</i></p> <p>– improvement of environmental governance:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>There is a well established environmental governance framework in Bulgaria. The environmental policy is implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Water with its structures – Executive Environment Agency, 16 Regional Inspectorates on Environment and Water, 4 River Basin Directorates and 3 National Park Directorates.</p> <p>– strengthening environmental institutions:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Ministry of Environment and Water and its structures have the necessary capacity to fulfil their tasks.</p> <p>– implementation of policy instruments:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria implements its environmental policy through different policy instruments – legal, economic, administrative, etc.</p>	<p>(b) Streamlining the implementation by your Government of commitments made to existing UNECE legally-binding and legally non-binding instruments</p> <p>Overall assessment:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>All ratified by Bulgaria UNECE legally binding are implemented.</p>
<p>Air Pollution Convention and its Protocols</p>	<p>– Status <i>(more than one box can be ticked)</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria has signed and ratified the Convention and all its protocols.</p>

	<p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Convention and the Protocols are implemented.</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
Water Convention	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the Water Convention on 18 March 1992 in Helsinki. The Bulgarian Parliament ratified it on 17 September 2003.</p> <p>Bulgaria is also a Party to the Amendments of Art. 25 and 26 ratified on 12 September 2013.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Water Convention provides a fundamental legal framework for transboundary water cooperation and contributes to the establishment of bilateral and multilateral water agreements and to improving water resources management in the pan-European region. Following the principles of the Water Convention and because of its geographical location, Bulgaria has an active role as party to the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution and to the Danube River Protection Convention. Bulgaria has signed bilateral agreements and declarations with some of its riparian countries on water management issues.</p> <p>Bulgaria took part in the preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters through providing the necessary national information for the purposes of the assessment.</p> <p>Bulgaria has committed an action in the framework of the Astana Water Action and is in process of implementation of the commitment.</p> <p>Water Convention has significant role for the transboundary cooperation in the field of water management in the region of the South-Eastern Europe.</p> <p>The provisions of the convention are transposed in the Environment Protection Act and the Water Act. It is implemented Permits, control, sanctions, environmental impact assessment, Monitoring.</p>

<p>Protocol on Water and Health</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the Protocol on Water and Health on 17 June 1999 in London during in the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. It is not ratified.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
<p>Industrial Accidents Convention</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the Convention on 18 March 1992 in Helsinki. The Bulgarian Parliament ratified it in 1995.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The provisions of the Convention are transposed in the Environment Protection Act and the Regulation on prevention of major accidents with hazardous substances and mitigation their consequences.</p> <p>Instruments for implementation are permits under Article 104 of the Environment Protection Act, issued by the Ministry of Environment and Water; control on the enterprises under Article 157a of the Environment Protection Act; documentation in accordance with the Regulation, prepared by the enterprises.</p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria submitted reports for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th reporting periods</p>
<p>Protocol on Civil Liability</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the Protocol on Civil Liability on 21 May 2003 in Kiev. It is not ratified. Since this Protocol has only 24 Signatories and 1 Party, it is obvious that this is not working instrument.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
Espoo Convention	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the Convention on 21 February 1991 in Espoo and ratified it in 1995. The two amendments were ratified in 2007.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The provisions of the Convention are fully transposed in Bulgarian legislation. It is implemented through the Environmental Protection Act and the EIA Ordinance.</p> <p>Bulgaria is also Party to the Multilateral Agreement among the countries of South-East Europe for implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.</p> <p>Bulgaria has a long lasting well established experience in the EIA in a transboundary context, especially with Romania.</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria submitted completed questionnaires for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th review periods, thus fulfilling all reporting commitments.</p>
Protocol on SEA	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Protocol was signed on 21 May 2003 in Kiev and was ratified in 2006.</p>

	<p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The provisions of the Protocol are transposed in the Environmental Protection Act and the Regulation on the conditions and procedures for environmental assessment for plans and programmes.</p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria submitted the completed questionnaire for the 1st review period.</p>
Aarhus Convention	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Republic of Bulgaria has signed the Convention on 25 June 1998 in Aarhus at the 4th Ministerial conference “environment for Europe”. It was ratified by the Bulgarian Parliament on 2 October 2003. In force for Bulgaria since 16 March 2004.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Convention is effectively implemented in Bulgaria, which contributes to the development of civil society, leads to greater transparency in decision-making at national and local level, and to fuller taking into account of environmental considerations in the development and implementation of sector policies, strategies, action plans, programmes and projects.</p> <p>The ratification of the convention contributed to legislative and institutional measures to ensure effective access to information and public participation in decision making in environmental matters. All provisions of the Convention are transposed in the national legislation. Among the basin legislative acts are the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Access to Public Information Act, the Administrative Procedure Code, the Civil Procedure Code and the Criminal Code.</p> <p>The administrative and institutional capacity to implement the Convention is also in place. The Ministry of Environment and Water and its territorial structures have information centres where every citizen can obtain information on the environment. “One stop shop” is introduced for administrative services, including for applications for access to environmental information. Public hearings are held (by publishing draft legislative and policy documents, workshops, round tables, etc..) and information campaigns, etc</p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p>

“Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana main outcomes: survey

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria submitted implementation reports for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings of the Parties, thus fulfilling all reporting commitments.</p>
Protocol on PRTRs	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria signed the PRTR Protocol on 21 May 2003 during the extraordinary meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Kiev, Ukraine. The PRTR Protocol was ratified in December 2009 and came into force in Bulgaria on 15 April 2010.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Protocol requirements are in accordance with Regulation (EC) 166/2006 of the European Parliament and Council establishing the European Pollutant Release and Transportation Register (EPRT), which was introduced into the national legislation through Chapter II of the Environmental Protection Act (amendment, SG 52/2008). In accordance with its requirements in 2009 a public register on a national level was created.</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>According to Article 17, paragraph 2, of the PRTR Protocol and decision I/5 the Meeting of the Parties at its first session the first national implementation report should be prepared for the second ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties and the deadline to submit the report to the Secretariat is 30 January 2014.</p>
Strategy for ESD	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> adopted / <input type="checkbox"/> actively participating / <input type="checkbox"/> not engaged / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria has adopted the UNECE Education for Sustainable Development at the High-Level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries, Vilnius, Lithuania, 17-18 March 2005.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria has not adopted yet national strategy on education for sustainable development</p>

	<p>but some initial steps has been made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal reporting (national implementation reports) <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria submitted national reports in 2007 and 2010.</p>
<p>THE PEP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>) <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> adopted / <input type="checkbox"/> actively participating / <input type="checkbox"/> not engaged / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting (responding to THE PEP survey on progress in the attainment of the Amsterdam Goals) <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>(c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Monitoring and Control and access of municipalities to the data in real time; • Monitoring based on quality control on all biological elements of surface water; • Brought into use the soil characteristics, comparable with WBR; • Strengthening the National Greenhouse Gases Inventory System, updating the archive and data and specific sectorial QA/QC procedure; • Maintaining public registers for registration of persons who put on the market products, after which use widespread waste is generated; • Assessment of the state of biological species, based on real time monitoring data; • Updating the National Automatic Monitoring System for Radiation Gamma Background. 	
<p>Production of indicator-based state-of-the-environment reports</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> never produced / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> producing occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> producing regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>

“Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana main outcomes: survey

	<p>The Annual National State of Environment Report is indicator-based and contains data corresponding to EEA standards. The environmental assessments are based on European core set of indicators, and overall accepted methodological approaches are applied. The relationship between National statistics and other state organizations and institutions has been substantially improved.</p>
Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Pursuant to EU regulations and directives, environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises is implemented in Bulgaria for more than 10 years. It is implemented in the field of air quality, water management, noise protection, etc and among the implementing instruments are the integrated permits, water use permits, water discharge permits, GHG emissions permits, EIA decisions, and other instruments.</p>
<p>(d) Ensuring implementation of the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme</p> <p>Overall assessment of your country’s role:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not active / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> active as donor / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> active as reviewed country / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria was reviewed twice – 1st EPR mission was carried out in 1995; 2nd EPR mission took place in 2000.</p> <p>For many years Bulgaria pays voluntary contribution to the EPR programme and participates in the EPR Expert Group.</p>	
Participation in the EPR process as a reviewed country in the future	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
Participation in the EPR process as a donor country (in-kind and/or providing financial support)	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> on-going / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>In-kind contribution: Bulgaria is among the very few countries represented at the EPR Expert Group since its establishment in December 1997. Ms. Vanya Grigorova, currently Executive Director of the Executive Environment Agency at the MoEW, is still a member of the Group.</p> <p>Annual voluntary financial support to the EPR Programme: USD 5000</p>
Implementation of EPR recommendations by the reviewed country	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The recommendations from the 1st and 2nd EPR were accomplished.</p>
<p>(e) Raising public awareness on environmental issues</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p>	

<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Please elaborate (up to 250 words): The policy of Bulgaria for raising public awareness and culture on environmental matters and sustainable development is directed towards achieving conscious transformation in the behaviour of different social groups and making informed choices by everyone in daily life. Different national campaigns are conducted annually on the occasion of the World Wetlands Day, the World Water Day, the Earth Hour, the International Forrest Week, the International Biodiversity Day, the World Environment Day, the Danube Day, the Mobility Week, the Black Sea Day, and the Right to Know Day etc. these campaigns include open lessons, competitions, exhibitions, cleaning and reforestation activities, forums, training seminars, roundtables and conferences for pupils, teachers, business, NGOs, and officials from municipal and state administration. Other initiatives include: Competition "For a cleaner environment" – funding of environmental projects of municipalities, schools, kindregatnes. Eligible projects envisage claning and planting trees, creating recreation and sports areas etc. “I love nature and I am involved” – contest for children and teenagers for drawings, short stories and articles made of recycled materials. National Campaign "Green Bulgaria" – awards for the “greenest” business, the most active municipalities with EU funded projects, the “greenest” city.	
Ensuring public access to environmental information	<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Please elaborate (up to 250 words): The information centres of the Ministry of Environment and Water and its territorial structures disseminate information on environment and sustainable development among pupils, students, NGOs, academia and business. The centres provide to citizens and organizations free informational materials and free access to specialized literature in the filed of environmental protection, scientific research, information from international sources, video materials, etc. possibilities for group visits of the centres are secured. Special attention is given to the electronic means for provision of reliable and timely information – the webpages of the Ministry of Environment and Water and its structures are constantly updated, public databases and registries are created (more than 250 public registries maintained currently). National electronic catalogue of environmental sources is published. Public access is ensured to a raising number of services, provided by the informational systems for monitoring of environmental components. Bulgaria is an active participant in SEIS, INSPIRE and GMES. Civil society, business and media can exchange information in Internet through the Channels of the Ministry of Environment and Water in Twitter, You Tube and Facebook. Pursuant to the Environment Protection Act, everyone has access to available environmental information and there is not a need to prove any specific interest.
Ensuring public participation in	<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

<p>environmental- decision making</p>	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Public participation in decision making for certain activities listed in Annex I of the Aarhus Convention.</p> <p>The Environment Protection Act provides obligatory EIA for investment proposals for construction, activities and technologies in Annex № 1 thereto (full compliance with Annex I of the Convention).</p> <p>The EIA procedure envisages the project developer shall inform in written the competent authorities and the public concerned for the investment proposal at the earliest possible stage. The developer shall consult the competent authorities, other specialized agencies and the affected public.</p> <p>Public discussion of the EIA report shall be organized jointly with concerned municipalities. The discussion is open to all interested to all individuals and legal, including representatives of the competent authority, the territorial administration of the executive authorities, public organizations and citizens.</p> <p>2. Public participation in decision making for plans, programmes and policies related to the environment.</p> <p>Pursuant to the Environment Protection Act, the Ecological Assessment procedure envisages the developer of a plan or programme shall organize public consultations with stakeholders.</p> <p>3. Public participation in the development of legislation.</p> <p>All drafts of strategic documents and legislative acts are published on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the centralized web gateway for public consultation of the Council of Ministers, which serves the entire public administration, for comments and suggestions from the public. Separately discussions are held with the participation of the public in the form of workshops, conferences, round tables, etc.</p>
<p>Ensuring public access to environmental justice</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Pursuant to the Access to Public Information Act the decision for provision or denial to access to information or shall be subject to court appeal. Bulgarian legislation is in full compliance with the Aarhus Convention and allows anybody who considers that their request for access to information is not considered in accordance with Article 4 of the Convention, to have access to a review procedure. Courts implement effectively these provisions and there is established court practice.</p> <p>The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria sets the right to clean environment, thus providing the material reasons for everyone to participate in the process of appealing any decision, action or inaction in court. Court practice shows that legal entities, including NGOs that meet the criteria of national legislation, namely, are duly registered, have the opportunity to participate in the trial.</p>
<p>(f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p>	

<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i> <p>At present, there is no unified and comprehensive strategic framework at national level for transition to green economy.</p> <p>Some initiatives are implemented that contribute to integrating environmental considerations, to green economic growth and to increasing resource efficiency in a number of sector policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting green jobs – this measure envisages for each opened green job, the employer to receive grants for the time during which a person is at work, but for no more than 12 months. The definition of green jobs is based on a list of economic activities for which the creation of green jobs is supported , as well as certification and registration of employers under environmental management schemes and systems (ISO Standard 14001, eco-labelling, EMAS, etc.). - National Action Plan for the promotion of green procurement (2012-2014) was adopted. The plan sets obligatory objectives for all governmental institutions for the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services (for local authorities the objectives are advisable) 	
Mainstreaming the environment into economic development	<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i> <p>At present, there is no unified and comprehensive strategic framework at national level for transition to green economy.</p> <p>Some initiatives are implemented that contribute to integrating environmental considerations, to green economic growth and to increasing resource efficiency in a number of sector policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting green jobs – this measure envisages for each opened green job, the employer to receive grants for the time during which a person is at work, but for no more than 12 months. The definition of green jobs is based on a list of economic activities for which the creation of green jobs is supported , as well as certification and registration of employers under environmental management schemes and systems (ISO Standard 14001, eco-labelling, EMAS, etc.). - National Action Plan for the promotion of green procurement (2012-2014) was adopted. The plan sets obligatory objectives for all governmental institutions for the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services (for local authorities the objectives are advisable)
Implementing environmental policies through economic/market instruments (e.g. phasing out subsidies, introducing environmental taxation, payment	<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i> <p>The following main economic/market-based instruments are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - taxes and fees aiming to environmental protection and resource efficiency by implementing the principles "polluter pays" and "producer responsibility": collaterals and charges required for the disposal of waste; product fees - collected from those who do not fulfil their obligations for separate waste collection, reuse, recycling and recovery; eco-fee for the registration of motor vehicles, 50% tax rebate for vehicles (trucks and buses) equipped with eco-engines corresponding to standards Euro 2, 3, 4

“Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana main outcomes: survey

<p>for ecosystems services, etc.)</p>	<p>and 5; electric cars are tax exempted; tax exemption for buildings with high energy efficiency class;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeted subsidies and grants from EU funds and national budget for the construction of water and waste infrastructure and for conservation biodiversity, as well as for promoting green technologies and business models of enterprises, agro-ecological practices and organic farming, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, eco-innovation and research, etc. - direct price regulation and preferential tariffs - for the production of renewable energy. - Emission trading scheme – Bulgaria participates successfully in the third phase of the European Emission Trading Scheme 2013-2020. The country implements National Green Investment Scheme and Joint Implementation mechanism according to the Kyoto Protocol. Funds generated are used for energy efficiency projects in schools and kindergartens, as well as support to systems for biomass, biogas and other renewable energy.
<p>Implementing environmental policies through regulatory/normative instruments (e.g. norms, standards, bans, etc.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>As EU Member State and Party to all major Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Bulgaria has a well-developed national environmental legislation with the relevant normative objectives, standards, etc for all components of the environment. The country has functioning implementing authorities at national, regional and local level in all</p>
<p>Implementing environmental policies through information based/voluntary instruments (e.g. labelling, etc.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria implements European voluntary schemes – Eco Label and EMAS, according to the Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Eco label and the Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organizations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS).</p>

4. Progress in strengthening the implementation of outcomes of the Astana Efe Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in implementing the commitments made at the Astana Conference. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The main outcomes of the Astana Conference include:

<p>(a) Ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (by your country)</p> <p><i>Please provide additional information, as relevant, that was not provided under section 3(b) (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Bulgaria has ratified and implements most of the UNECE MEAs long before the 7th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. This conference has given a strong impetus to ratify the amendments to Art. 24 and 25 of</p>
--

the Water Convention. The amendments were ratified in September 2012.

(b) Implementing the Astana Water Action *(by your country)*

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

In Astana Water Action Bulgaria committed to invest in environmentally friendly sanitation and wastewater treatment, appropriate operation and maintenance.

At this stage there are 7 projects completed with grant EU funds in amount of BGN 78 million (around € 39 million).

81 projects for a total of BGN 2.8 billion (around €1.4 billion) in process of implementation.

(c) Promoting a green economy *(by your country)*

...

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

At present, there is no unified and comprehensive strategic framework at national level for transition to green economy.

Nevertheless, some initiatives are implemented that contribute to integrating environmental considerations, to green economic growth and to increasing resource efficiency in a number of sector policies:

Promoting green jobs – this measure envisages for each opened green job, the employer to receive grants for the time during which a person is at work, but for no more than 12 months. The definition of green jobs is based on a list of economic activities for which the creation of green jobs is supported, as well as certification and registration of employers under environmental management schemes and systems (ISO Standard 14001, eco-labelling, EMAS, etc.).

National Action Plan for the promotion of green procurement (2012-2014) was adopted. The plan sets obligatory objectives for all governmental institutions for the procurement of environmentally friendly goods and services (for local authorities the objectives are advisable)

Promoting the Green Bridge Partnership Programme *(by your country)*

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Bulgaria has not joined the Green Bridge Programme and this is not foreseen.

(d) Ensuring implementation of the third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) *(by your country)*

not foreseen / active as donor / active as reviewed country / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

(e) Establishing a regular process of environmental assessment (RPEA), including developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) (by your country)

not started / initiated / in progress / SEIS developed / RPEA established

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

A regular process of environmental assessment in Bulgaria has been established more than two decades ago. Expert teams of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Executive Environment Agency (ExEA) together with other institutions – Ministry of Economy and Energy, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, National Statistical Institute and others, develop annual National State of the Environment Report.

The data for the report is provided by the National System for Environmental Monitoring (NSEM), which is established and operated in accordance with the Bulgarian Environmental Protection Act. The system provides timely and reliable information on the elements of the environment and the factors affecting it. NSEM is managed by the Minister of Environment and Water through ExEA, which provides material-technical, methodological and software-information resources, necessary for its operation and development. Bulgaria participates in the on-going European and global initiatives, contributing to the implementation of SEIS. In 2010 ExEA, together with the European Environment Agency (EEA), organised ‘SEIS Country Visit’ in Bulgaria. ExEA is one of the responsible organisations in Bulgaria for the implementation of the EU directive “INSPIRE” and produces various web-based map viewers. The agency participates in the European Copernicus programme and the creation of the land cover product for 2012 and the land cover change product between 2006 and 2012. ExEA is one of the participants in the recent EEA success story with SEIS – the SENSE project, and established an automated process for online reporting of state of environment information from the national website to the EEA’s web pages.

(f) Participation in the continued work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force), including on the sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development (by your country)

not foreseen / active as donor / active as beneficiary / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

Participation in strengthening the contribution of Regional Environmental Centres (RECs) in both promoting green economy and better environmental governance at the local, national, subregional and regional levels (by your country)

not foreseen / active as donor / active as beneficiary / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Bulgaria participates in the REC for SEE but we are not very active at present. In our view, the REC for SEE should focus their efforts at the countries from the Western Balkans to support them in the EU integration process. Due to some financial constraints, Bulgaria does not have the possibility to be active as donor of the REC.

5. Thematic priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process for the Eighth Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please indicate thematic priorities that might be addressed at the Eighth Efe Ministerial Conference, including a brief justification note for each proposed priorities. Please also indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the proposed several themes, as well as organising a high-level segment on MEAs and the proposed

theme. Please kindly note that the idea to organize a high-level segment on MEAs emerged from the discussion at the informal meeting of representatives of governing bodies of MEAs and CEP (Geneva, 27 February 2013).

<p>First thematic priority (an “established” theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addressed the “established” theme sustainable management of water and water related ecosystems)</p> <p><i>Please propose a theme: ...</i></p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
<p>Second thematic priority (an “emerging” theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addresses the “emerging” theme greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development)</p> <p><i>Please propose a theme: ...</i></p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
<p>Enhancing the work on greening the economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Astana EfE and Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>It will be useful to follow up the implementation of the commitments from the Astana EfE and Rio+20 Conferences</p>
<p>Promoting a sustainable consumption and production</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>It should be taken into account that the elaboration of the five programmes under the 10YFPSCP is at a very initial phase. It is necessary to fulfil the whole the 5-steps model for consultation and elaboration of the programmes.</p>
<p>“Greening” International Financial Institutions (IFIs) policies</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>This is a theme beyond the competences of ministers to some extent and it should be taken into account that EfE is a regional process, while IFIs are global.</p>
<p>Resilience and Change</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to encompass the need for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness and</p>

	<p>contingency planning to be ready for both environmental and demographic change in the coming years, i.e., the expected increase in extreme weather events due to global warming, but also to the foreseen changes in demographics (aging populations and south-north migration), in particular in urban areas)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>This is a very interesting and topical theme and but thus formulated it is too broad and goes significantly beyond the competences of ministers of environment.</p>
<p>Organizing a high-level segment on assessing the progress in establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing the SEIS across the region</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The establishment and development of the SEIS in the pan-European region was one of the priorities of the 7th Ministerial Conference and it will be good the Ministers to assess the progress made at the 8th EfE Conference</p>	
<p>Organizing a high-level segment on UNECE MEAs</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Such a segment will be very useful Ministers to exchange information on the progress of ratification and implementation of MEAs.</p>	
<p>Role of public participation in effective implementation of MEAs</p>	<p>A possible theme for a possible high-level segment on UNECE MEAs (of relevance to all UNECE MEAs)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>This theme would confirm and strengthen the leading role of the UNECE region in asserting public participation on environmental matters</p>
<p>Need to develop new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, giving the on-going crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>In current period of financial and economic difficulties in Europe and globally, the principal position of Bulgaria is that any proposals for creating and establishing new bodies and mechanisms should be carefully evaluated in terms of efficiency and added value. Efforts should be directed to the use and improvement of existing mechanisms to avoid the creation of parallel structures and additional layers of bureaucracy to the existing very complicated and heavy system at regional and global level.</p>	
<p>Greening the economies</p>	<p>Elaboration of subregional roadmaps (e.g. EU, SEE, Central Asia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p>

	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Elaboration of such maps is a good idea but should be made at subregional level, not in the framework of the EfE process.</p> <p>Elaboration/harmonization of regional eco-standards for products and production processes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>There already exist such standards. A better choice is to discuss their introduction and implementation at national level.</p> <p><i>Other (please suggest demand-driven frameworks/structures)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Strengthening implementation of ESD</p>	<p>Mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational training to meet future labour market demand</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational education will lead to the creation and growth of qualified staff working for the development of green economy. This will greatly help to meet the future needs of the labour market.</p> <p>Mainstreaming ESD into teachers/educators’ training</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Mainstreaming ESD into teachers/educators training will contribute to the training of personnel who can adequately teach complex issues related to ESD, through initial training and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Implementing an ESD school plan in every school (i.e. addressing campus management, curricula and community interaction)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The introduction of ESD school plans would contribute to raising environmental awareness and to positive environmentally sound behaviour.</p>
<p>Strengthening environmental considerations in other social and economic sectors</p>	<p>Sustainable urban development (e.g. bringing together the relevant activities under THE PEP, Environment and Health process, and green building)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Integrated approaches to urban planning, in which long-term environmental considerations</p>

	<p>are fully taken into account along with the economic and social challenges that are essential to ensure that urban communities are sustainable, efficient and healthy places to live and work. However, it should be noted that regional and local authorities alone decide on the development of urban areas, according to the principle of subsidiarity. Therefore, the promotion of integrated approaches should be pursued by soft measures like: effective and efficient coordination between different levels of administration; promoting systematic involvement of regional and local authorities in the planning, formulation and development of policies that affect quality of the urban environment; providing access to regional and local authorities to environment data collection and management systems; strengthening their administrative capacity (especially with regard to the implementation of environmental legislation and absorption of various financing sources); facilitating the exchange of information and best practices etc.</p>
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6. Format of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please, indicate/propose an interactive format for the next Conference. Provide an explanation, as appropriate.

<p>Interactive format for the Conference (for a more productive ministerial participation)</p> <p><i>Please propose an interactive format(s) to stimulate the work of the Conference:</i></p> <p>Parallel thematic round tables, panel discussion, question and answer sessions</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
Parallel thematic round-tables	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate:</i></p> <p>...</p>
Interactive discussions e.g. similar to “BBC Question Time”	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate:</i></p> <p>...</p>
[please propose an interactive format]	<p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate:</i></p> <p>...</p>

7. Any other issues you consider important

<p><i>[please include any issues relevant to the scope of this survey that you may wish to address ...]</i></p> <p><i>Please elaborate:</i></p> <p>...</p>
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Annex

Reform of the “Environment for Europe” process: Reform Plan

*Excerpt from the report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its special session
(Geneva, 27–29 January 2009)*

I. Background

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) recognized the important value of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the UNECE region. The EfE process was considered to be an important framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. The added value of the EfE process was recognized in its close links with other regional and subregional initiatives and processes, which help to integrate environmental and sectoral policies.

2. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process, initiated in 1991, needed to be reformed. They committed themselves to continuing a focused and needs-based EfE process concentrated on results-based, action-oriented activities that improve the environment and advance sustainable development in the region and to actively seeking partnerships with civil society, including the private sector. The purpose of the reform was to strengthen its effectiveness and to ensure that it remained appropriate for, and fully aligned with, the growing needs of the UNECE region and the evolving political and economic landscape, as well as the environmental priorities of the region.

3. The Belgrade Ministerial Declaration stated that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

- (a) The format, focus and priorities of the process and Ministerial Conferences;
- (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the process;
- (c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;
- (d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;
- (e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;
- (f) Assessing ways and means to promote more effectively the UNECE region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;
- (g) The full cost of the process and the effective allocation of available resources;
- (g) Future secretariat arrangements.

4. In order to address the above issues in depth and with due consideration, the ministers invited the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) to develop, in consultation with EfE partners a plan for EfE reform so that it could be endorsed at the political level by UNECE in spring 2009.

5. The ministers further decided that the next EfE Ministerial Conference would be organized on the basis of the agreed reform.

II. Objectives and priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process

6. The EfE process should continue to serve as a mechanism to:
 - (a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world;
 - (b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies;
 - (c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives;
 - (d) Encourage the participation of civil society;
 - (e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation.
7. The political priorities should be based on commitments already taken under the EfE process. These priorities may include:
 - (a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments;
 - (b) Streamlining the implementation by Governments of commitments they have made to existing UNECE legally binding and legally non-binding instruments;
 - (c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring;
 - (d) Ensuring implementation of the Environmental Performance Review programme;
 - (e) Raising public awareness of environmental issues;
 - (f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness.
8. Furthermore, thematic priorities of the EfE process would be identified in line with current needs, national circumstances and in respect to future emerging issues.
9. In the future, the EfE process will be based on general principles and agreements on the operational modalities, as described below.

III. General principles

10. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process should:
 - (a) Keep its UNECE region-wide dimension and be open for all interested countries of the region;
 - (b) Engage all stakeholders, including the private sector, to strengthen the work in partnership;
 - (c) Maintain close links with other regional and subregional initiatives, and focus on specific needs that are not entirely addressed by other cooperative frameworks, instruments or processes in the region and its subregions;
 - (d) Concentrate on results-based, action-oriented activities;
 - (e) Be kept open to issues on which the process can provide added value;
 - (f) Use delivery as a major criterion of its effectiveness. CEP should regularly consider and assess progress achieved under the process.

11. To complement the above principles, a consensus emerged from CEP in relation to the EfE process and the Conference:

- (a) On the one hand, the EfE process-related principles are as follows:
 - (i) Broader engagement from the Governments to achieve long-term policy integration of environmental considerations into other sectors;
 - (ii) Stronger focus on implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences by relevant responsible actors in the period between Conferences;
 - (iii) Encouragement of and support to subregional activities including stronger involvement of relevant subregional structures in the implementation process, including RECs;
 - (iv) Enhanced cooperation between the regional and subregional partners in the region;
 - (v) Identification of ways to strengthen linkages between the activities under the EfE process and those of relevant international processes.
 - (vi) Enhancement of relevant Governments’ implementation and compliance with their commitments under multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (vii) Utilization of the Environmental Performance Reviews as an important instrument for protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development.
- (b) On the other hand, the Conference-related principles are:
 - (i) The ministerial level of the Conferences should be maintained;
 - (ii) Specific mechanisms for attracting high-level participation, including those from the private sector, should be developed;
 - (iii) A limited number of themes, not more than two, to be identified in advance and addressed by each Conference;
 - (iv) Within the identified themes there should be a focus on specific needs of the subregions, in order to contribute to better cooperation and more substantive and action-oriented outcomes of the Conference;
 - (v) An effective communication strategy, including broad mass-media coverage, as appropriate, should be further developed, comprising, inter alia, special events for journalists, circulation of electronic newsletters and maintaining a dedicated website;
 - (vi) The outcome documents, in all forms, should be focused and action-oriented;
 - (vii) Carbon neutrality of the Conferences based on the voluntary contributions available.

IV. The “Environment for Europe” Conference

Preparatory process

12. Materializing the above-mentioned principles calls for streamlining and improving the preparatory process for the Conferences. In this spirit, the following measures should be taken:

(a) Not later than 18 months before the Conference the CEP at its regular session will decide on not more than two themes and discuss the outline of the agenda of the Conference. When deciding on the themes preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment should be taken into consideration. A decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the CEP approximately 12 months prior to the Conference and further preparatory work would commence. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released 6 weeks before the Conference;

(b) CEP would act as the convening body for the preparatory process. To maintain the open nature of the preparatory process and the engagement of all stakeholders, representatives of major groups will be invited to participate in meetings of the CEP in preparation of the Conference, as appropriate, in accordance with the existing UN rules and procedures. Furthermore, CEP would consider and approve the official documents for submission to the Conference. Special sessions of the CEP could be scheduled, if needed, in the year prior to the Conference;

(c) Particular efforts would be made to involve private-sector representatives in the preparatory process and the Conference;

(d) To reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the UNECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation would thus comprise the pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports;

(e) Interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders could produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which would be circulated as information documents;

(f) The preparatory process would be serviced by the UNECE secretariat;

(g) For the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources would have to continue to be provided to UNECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources;

(h) The host country should assume relevant financial commitments.

Format

13. The periodicity, duration and the organization of discussions at the Conference should be as follows:

(a) The Conferences should be held every four to five years, with each Conference lasting two-and-a-half to three days maximum;

(b) Based on the previous experience, the Conference should start with a short opening event. The host country would be given an opportunity to organize events highlighting its special features in addition to the official Conference agenda;

(c) The discussions at the Conference should be arranged in an interactive manner and combine various types of sessions, e.g. plenary sessions, roundtables and moderated panel discussions, with a limited number of main speakers from different stakeholders (e.g. UNECE member States, EfE partners and major groups). When possible, interactive sessions, such as roundtables, could be run in parallel;

(d) The Conference could be structured around the following main clusters (all of them focusing on the agreed priorities):

(i) Plenary sessions for the presentation and discussion of the priority topics;

- (ii) Sessions on ongoing cooperation and partnerships in the UNECE region and its subregions with different stakeholders, including the private sector;
 - (iii) A session of environmental NGOs and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (iv) A session of private sector representatives and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (v) Sessions dedicated to announcing new partnerships and initiatives by stakeholders;
 - (vi) A brief concluding session with the presentation (and adoption, if appropriate) of the main outcomes of the Conference;
- (e) To address issues relevant to the agenda of the Conference in more detail, side-events should be organized by interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and relevant stakeholders;
- (f) To attract the attention of the private sector, opportunities should be provided for the organization of promotional events such as poster exhibitions, trade fairs, roundtables and environmental award initiatives.

Outcomes

14. Conference outcomes might include:
- (a) A chairperson’s summary;
 - (b) Statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions;
 - (c) An agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference;
 - (d) Policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference;
 - (e) Assessment reports used in preparation of or presented to the Conference that are important for the implementation of the Conference’s outcomes.

V. Implementation

15. Particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences.
16. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.
17. A mid-term review to be convened by the CEP to assess progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and provide renewed impetus to the process. The review should be based on existing information. The findings of the review should be taken into account in the preparatory process of the next conference.
18. Active participation by and input of all interested countries of the UNECE, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process.

19. The RECs network should continue to play a role in the preparatory process for the Conference and should be encouraged to play a greater role in the achievement of the overall EfE process’ objectives and priorities.
 20. Other EfE partners should continue to be actively involved in the preparatory process and implementation of the EfE process.
 21. Countries and/or organizations taking the lead for one or more issues are encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process’ objectives and priorities.
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