

Summary of outcomes of the work of and decisions made by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twentieth session, 28–31 October 2014

(as approved by the Committee on 31 October 2014)

At its twentieth session, the CEP:

(a) Adopted the agenda of the twentieth session (ECE/CEP/2014/1), taking into account the proposed timetable as presented in information paper No. 1;

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

Chair:

Ms. Elisabete Quintas da Silva (Portugal)

Vice-Chairs:

Ms. Martine Rohn Brossard (Switzerland)

Ms. Caroline Broun (United States of America)

Ms. Marie-Charlotte Delvaux (Belgium)

Mr. Nicolas Fairise (France)

Ms. Maria Nagornii (Republic of Moldova)

Ms. Gordana Petkovic (Serbia)

Mr. Lukáš Pokorný (Czech Republic)

Ms. Nino Tkhilava (Georgia)

Mr. Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan)

and decided to allocate an eleventh seat to a representative of an ECE member State from the Caucasus, Central Asia, or Eastern Europe (the nomination should be submitted to the CEP Bureau, via the secretariat, by 17 November 2014), as well as 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, and 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 ECE activities in follow-up to the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, as well as the regional contribution to the post-2015 development agenda;

(e) Took note of the information provided concerning the preparations for the sixty-sixth session of ECE in April 2015, including on the preparations for the high-level panel on sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources which will be organized during the sixty-sixth session of ECE;

(f) Expressed appreciation to UNEP for organizing a side event on the activities of UNEP in the pan-European region, in particular in follow-up to the first session of UNEA;

(g) Took note of the information on the progress made under each of the ECE MEAs, including on national implementation reporting, promotion of the benefits of MEAs beyond the region and continuing progress in opening the MEAs to global accession, provided by the chairs of the ECE MEAs, and:

(i) Welcomed the document on the opening of the ECE environmental instruments and their promotion beyond the region (ECE/CEP/2014/6) prepared by the secretariat;

- (ii) Welcomed the progress in promoting the benefits of the ECE MEAs beyond the region and continuing progress in opening several ECE MEAs to global accession;
 - (iii) Reaffirmed that the ECE MEAs were unique instruments for international environmental governance and, as such, were the flagships of ECE;
 - (iv) Welcomed the interest from non-ECE countries in ECE MEAs;
 - (v) Acknowledged the promotion of activities under the MEAs as an effective means of sharing positive experiences gained within the ECE region and offering possibilities to learn from those experiences;
 - (vi) Recognized the importance of the allocation of sufficient resources for the promotion of activities, and acknowledged the need to explore opportunities for mobilizing such resources through national funding, bilateral cooperation or other appropriate means;
 - (vii) Reiterated in that regard the request for a reallocation of financial resources within the ECE budget for the ECE Environment subprogramme and, in particular, for the secretariats of the MEAs;
 - (viii) Recognized also the importance of cooperation with other United Nations regional commissions, as well as other international organizations, with respect to the promotion and opening of the ECE environmental instruments, with a view to ensuring synergies with other instruments and processes;
 - (ix) Welcomed also initiatives by other regions aimed at replicating the content and objectives of ECE instruments;
 - (x) Welcomed the document on “MEAs: overview of national implementation reporting” (ECE/CEP/2014/16) prepared by the secretariat;
 - (xi) Recognized national implementation reporting as a valuable tool for monitoring implementation of the MEAs;
 - (xii) Welcomed the fulfilment of the reporting obligations by the majority of Parties;
 - (xiii) Noted with concern the failure by some Parties to meet their reporting obligations;
 - (xiv) Acknowledged challenges in relation to preparing good quality and timely national implementation reports, and the need to address those challenges;
 - (xv) Invited those countries that had not submitted a national implementation report or had not submitted one by the deadline for submission to address that matter at the national level, as appropriate, so as to improve their reporting in the future;
- (h) Took note of the work carried out by the informal group of chairs and vice-chairs of the ECE MEAs and CEP, and encouraged future concrete outcomes in order to take advantage of synergies and possible common undertakings for cross-cutting issues;
- (i) Welcomed the information provided by UNEP on key developments under the UNEP MEAs, and the potential for synergies with the ECE MEAs, as well as on the INFORMEA information network that also encompasses the ECE MEAs;
 - (j) Appreciated highly the work of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, and adopted the renewed mandate of the Working

Group as presented in the annex to the document ECE/CEP/2014/11, with the following amendments:

- (i) The mandate is renewed for one year until the twenty-first session of CEP in October 2015;
- (ii) In paragraph 2 of the terms of reference an additional mandate is given to the Working Group, i.e., to review the progress in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) based on the targets and performance indicators (ECE/CEP/2014/8) adopted by CEP at its current session;

and requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate, as amended, to the Executive Committee for approval;

(k) Adopted the Guidelines for developing national strategies to use soil contamination monitoring as an environmental policy tool (ECE/CEP/2014/14), and invited the intended target countries¹ to implement the Guidelines;

(l) Appreciated highly the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators, and adopted the renewed mandate of the Task Force for one year until the twenty-first session of CEP in 2015, as presented in the annex to document ECE/CEP/2014/12, and requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate, as amended, to the Executive Committee for approval;

(m) Requested the secretariat to prepare for the twenty-first session of the CEP a proposal for possible ways to streamline the work of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators, as a well as potentially incorporating the responsibilities of the Group of Friends of SEIS, with a view to enhancing the coordination of activities and reinforcing the work on environmental monitoring and assessment. The proposal should take into account comments made by delegates at the twentieth session of CEP, including the request to consider the pros and cons of merging these two bodies;

(n) Invited member States and organizations to provide in-kind and financial support to the environmental monitoring and assessment programme, and in particular thanked the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation and Switzerland for their financial support;

(o) Welcomed the information provided by UNEP on preparations for the next Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6), as well as its invitation to work in a collaborative manner with ECE and EEA on regional environmental assessments, and emphasized the importance of a close cooperation between the GEO and Efe processes with a view to ensuring synergies and forging mutual benefits in the area of environmental assessments in support of informed decision-making;

(p) Took note of information provided and welcomed progress in the work under the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, and supported the request by the Steering Committee on ESD to organize a high-level meeting of education and environment ministries in the framework of the Eighth Efe Ministerial Conference with a view to assess progress during the first 10 years of the Strategy for ESD, and to consider the future implementation of the Strategy;

(q) Took note of information provided and welcomed the progress of work under THE PEP and invited countries to consider hosting a THE PEP Relay Race Workshop in 2015;

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

¹ Countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

(s) Welcomed the information provided during the panel discussion on the European Environment and Health Process (EHP), and expressed appreciation to the panellist for their contributions, and:

(i) Acknowledged the importance of the effective cooperation between the environment and the health sectors, also within the framework of the EHP;

(ii) Underscored the role of MEAs in achieving environment and health goals;

(iii) Acknowledged the role, and welcomed the participation, of civil society organizations and other non-governmental stakeholders in the process;

(iv) Encouraged both CEP and EHP to continue to organize joint meetings, possibly including a tripartite meeting of the CEP Bureau, the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB) Alternates and the ECE MEA Chairs, as well as to extend invitations to participate in each other's meetings;

(v) Agreed to allocate time in the CEP agenda to discuss environment and health issues;

(vi) Agreed to contribute to the Mid-term Review High-level Meeting of EHP (Tel Aviv, Israel, March 2015) as well as to the Sixth Environment and Health Ministerial Conference (2017);

(vii) Took note of the progress report on the European Environment and Health process (EUR/RC64/24 Rev.1);

(t) Thanked outgoing members of EHMB for their contribution to the process;

(u) Appointed new members to the EHMB, as follows:

(i) Mr. Sergey Donskoy, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Russian Federation (for 2015–2016);

(ii) Mr. Aramays Grigoryan, Minister of Nature Protection, Armenia (for 2015–2016);

(iii) Mr. Branimir Gvozdenović, Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro (for 2015);

(iv) Mr. Nurhan Izairi, Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (for 2016);

(v) Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Minister for Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy, Portugal (for 2015–2016);

(v) Took note of information provided on activities of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, in particular on the progress of work on green building and the work on greening the forestry sector;

(w) Adopted the recommendations in the Third Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Montenegro (information paper No. 4);

(x) Adopted the recommendations in the Third EPR of Serbia (information paper No. 5);

(y) Welcomed the information provided on activities under the ECE EPR Programme, and invited ECE countries that were not members of OECD to inform the secretariat of their interest in undergoing a third EPR;

(z) Invited delegations to provide in-kind (experts) and financial support, to the EPR Programme, in line with the resource needs presented by the ECE

secretariat, and in particular thanked Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland for their financial support and France, the Netherlands, Portugal and UNEP for providing expertise;

(aa) Welcomed the offer of Belarus to undergo a third EPR in 2015;

(bb) Noted with appreciation Montenegro's application to the EPR Expert Group;

(cc) Appreciated highly the work of the ECE Expert Group on EPRs, adopted the renewed mandate of the Expert Group for 2015–2018 contained in the annex to document ECE/CEP/2014/13 and requested the secretariat to submit the renewed mandate to the Executive Committee for approval;

(dd) Welcomed the document presenting the lessons learned from the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes (ECE/CEP/2014/10), prepared by the CEP Bureau with support from the secretariat, and agreed to take into account the lessons learned and challenges identified during the organization of the next mid-term review;

(ee) Welcomed the overall progress in preparing the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference and, in the framework of the EfE process:

(i) Welcomed the AWA promotional leaflet and web portal (www.unece.org/env/awa), and invited countries to make use of those promotional tools, including for broadly promoting AWA at the national level;

(ii) Agreed with the CEP Bureau recommendation that the AWA stakeholders should report on AWA progress to the CEP special session in February 2016;

(iii) Welcomed the document on “Greening the economy in the pan-European region: progress, priorities, modalities and options” (ECE/CEP/2014/5) prepared by the ECE and UNEP secretariats, in consultation with other organizations;

(iv) Welcomed the fruitful cooperation between the ECE and UNEP secretariats with regard to activities to green economies, and invited the two organizations to continue working together to support countries' efforts in greening the economy at both the pan-European and national levels;

(v) Invited ECE and UNEP, in cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations and other stakeholders working on green economy, to elaborate a proposal for a pan-European strategic framework for greening the economy for consideration by CEP at its twenty-first session in October 2015. The proposed strategic framework should include practical examples, good practices and tools to be used for accelerating the transition to a green economy, while promoting a bottom-up approach. It should also build upon existing knowledge products and platforms, and annex a proposal for a “Green Economy Action” similar to the Astana Water Action. The issue of including or not including goals and targets will be considered at the next CEP session;

(vi) Welcomed the information provided on the main outcomes of the first Eastern European Meeting on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), organized by UNEP on 27 October 2014, which will serve as a contribution to the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference;

(vii) Welcomed the information presented by the regional commissions, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA, and acknowledged the developments and progress towards greening the economy in those regions;

(ff) Welcomed the work of the Group of Friends of SEIS accomplished thus far (ECE/CEP/2014/7) and:

(i) Invited the Group of Friends of SEIS to continue working on fulfilling the second part of the mandate given to the Group by the CEP at its nineteenth session, i.e., to answer the question, “how should the regular assessment process be organized and shaped, taking into consideration the benefits of SEIS?”;

(ii) Adopted the targets and performance indicators as presented in document ECE/CEP/2014/8, and expressed its gratitude to the Friends of SEIS and to the secretariat for the excellent document;

(iii) Mandated the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, in accordance with its renewed amended mandate for 2015, to review the progress in developing SEIS based on the targets and performance indicators adopted by CEP at its current session, with a view to preparing an evaluation report on progress made in developing SEIS in the pan-European region for the next EfE Ministerial Conference. A first report on that activity should be presented to CEP at its next session;

(gg) Welcomed the progress in organizing the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference and, in that regard:

(i) Expressed gratitude to Georgia for offering to host the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference in Batumi, Georgia in June 2016, and welcomed the preparations by the host country;

(ii) Decided to organize the Conference in Batumi, Georgia, from 8 to 10 June 2016;

(iii) Adopted the organizational procedures for the Conference as presented in document ECE/CEP/2014/15;

(iv) Requested the secretariat to proceed with the necessary arrangements for the organization of the Conference in consultation with the host country, in accordance with the provisions in the EfE Reform Plan and based on the decisions by CEP;

(v) Invited countries and other stakeholders to consider the need for resource mobilization to assist the host country and the secretariat preparations (information paper No. 6 and addendum), and, in particular, thanked Norway for its financial contribution to support the ECE secretariat’s activities under the EfE process, as well as asked the host country and the secretariat to keep the CEP and its Bureau informed on the progress in that regard;

(vi) Welcomed the document on the proposed framework for preparing the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2014/9) prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the CEP Bureau, and information paper No. 9 on possible options for the format of group discussions, prepared by the secretariat;

(vii) Welcomed the recommendation by the CEP Bureau on the two themes for the Batumi EfE Ministerial Conference, and agreed on the following two themes for the Conference:

- a. Greening the economy in the pan-European region;
- b. Improving air quality for a better environment and human health;

(viii) Mandated the Bureau with support from the secretariat to prepare by 21 November 2014 a first proposal of not more than four questions for ministerial discussion under each of the two themes, taking into account the

comments made by delegations during the current session, and requested that the proposal be circulated to CEP members and observers by e-mail;

(ix) Invited CEP members and observers to consider the Bureau proposal on the questions for discussion and to send their comments (keeping within the limit of up to four questions for discussion) as soon as possible, but by no later than 31 December 2014, to the Bureau via the secretariat;

(x) Invited the CEP Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to consider the comments received and prepare, by 30 January 2015, a second proposal regarding questions for discussion, to be circulated to CEP members and observers for approval by e-mail (as soon as possible, but by 23 February 2015 at the latest), with a view to enabling the preparation of the drafts of the two thematic background papers (one for each of the two themes);

(xi) Invited the CEP Bureau, with support from the secretariat and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to proceed with the preparation of the Eighth Efe Ministerial Conference, including preparing for the next session of CEP:

a. The first drafts of the two background thematic documents based on the questions for discussion to be agreed by the CEP Bureau;

b. A first draft of the provisional annotated agenda for the Conference;

c. Other documents that might be recommended by the Bureau;

(xii) Invited UNEP and other stakeholders to contribute to preparations of the next Efe Conference;

(hh) Expressed appreciation to the CEP Bureau and the secretariat for the work on the draft rules of procedure of CEP (ECE/CEP/2014/L.1), and took note of the comments provided by delegations during the current meeting, including those circulated by e-mail, and mandated the CEP Bureau with support from the secretariat to prepare a further revised draft, taking into account the comments received, for the next session of CEP. And also agreed to send any possible future comments to the draft prepared by the Bureau, at least one week before the next CEP session, i.e. by 19 October 2015;

(ii) Agreed with the recommendation by the CEP Bureau and decided to keep the criteria for financial support as adopted by CEP at its nineteenth session (ECE/CEP/2013/2, annex);

(jj) Agreed to continue with the biennial performance assessment of the Environment subprogramme for another cycle, at least, and approved the biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015 (ECE/CEP/2014/4), which contains the following amendments to document ECE/CEP/2013/4 previously approved in 2013:

(i) The new title of the document is “Biennial performance plan of the Environment subprogramme for 2014–2015”;

(ii) It includes two additional indicators of achievement under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) cluster of activities. The indicators were proposed by Lithuania (on behalf of the European Union member States) at the last session of CEP;

(kk) Approved the proposed schedule of CEP and CEP Bureau meetings for the period 2014–2017 (information paper No. 8), with one revision regarding the CEP Bureau meeting in 2015, and agreed to organize the twenty-first session of the Committee from 27 to 30 October 2015;

(ll) Took note of the information provided with respect to gender mainstreaming in environmental activities carried out by the Environment Division since the last session of CEP;

(mm) 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 twenty-first session;

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