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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Thirteenth session
Geneva, 9–11 October 2006

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

Executive Summary

At its thirteenth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy:

- Reviewed the environmental performance of Ukraine and adopted the related recommendations. It took note of the interim reports of Montenegro and Serbia and welcomed the launch of the Environmental Performance Review reports of Moldova and Belarus. It noted the interest expressed by the delegations of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan in having second reviews conducted for those countries. The Committee approved the outline of the discussion paper to be submitted to the Belgrade Conference and agreed on its further development.
- Welcomed the achievements of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and its expected contributions to the Belgrade Conference, and favoured further strengthening the monitoring and assessment activities, in particular capacity-building in EECCA.
- Acknowledged the progress achieved under the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and their protocols and emphasized the importance of strengthening activities related to their implementation. It welcomed the draft outline for a document on their implementation for the Belgrade Conference and provided guidance for the preparation of the document.
- Expressed its appreciation for the work of the Regional Adviser on Environment in the EECCA region and its contribution to the Committee's programme of work.
- Welcomed the background paper on environmental policy and international competitiveness prepared and presented by the secretariat and invited the secretariat to prepare a second paper with a focus on low-income economies for possible submission to the Belgrade Conference.
- Adopted its programme of work for 2007-2008, taking into account the evaluation of the Biennium 2004-2005.

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Introduction

1. The thirteenth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy took place in Geneva on 9–11 October 2006. Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) chaired the session.
2. The session was attended by delegates from 38 UNECE member countries: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States and Uzbekistan.
3. Representatives of the European Commission (EC) attended the session.
4. Representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP/Vienna), the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also took part.
5. The following non-governmental organizations and regional environmental centres were also represented: European ECO-Forum, the Regional Environmental Centers for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), for Central Asia (CAREC) and for Russia (RREC), and Youth and Environment Europe (YEE).

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Committee adopted the agenda for its thirteenth session as contained in document ECE/CEP/131.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE REFORM AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF CONCERN TO THE COMMITTEE

7. The Committee considered the information that the secretariat had provided on the decisions taken by the Commission at its ad hoc session in December 2005, with the adoption of the Work Plan on ECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1), as well as at its sixty-first session, held in Geneva on 21–23 February 2006 (E/2006/37 – E/ECE/1444).

A. The UNECE reform and its implications for the Committee's activities

8. Delegations appreciated the outcome of the reform, which demonstrated UNECE member countries' political support for the environmental activities within the organization. They also welcomed the prioritization of the UNECE environmental activities as outlined in the Work Plan on ECE Reform (paras. 31–34). They deemed it important that the deployment of staff as well as the allocation of staff time follow these priorities.
9. In order to monitor the implementation of the reform's recommendations, the Committee requested the secretariat to provide it with information on both regular and extrabudgetary resources in a clear and concise format well in advance of its next session.

B. The outcome of the second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development and the regional input to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

10. The Committee noted the information provided by the secretariat on the outcome of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) (New York, 1–12 May 2006), which addressed energy for sustainable development, industrial development, atmospheric/air pollution and climate change.

11. It welcomed the input of UNECE to CSD-14 via the organization of a second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development to assess the region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the above areas (15–16 December 2005) and with the submission of the Chair's summary on the outcomes of this discussion to CSD-14.

12. At CSD-14, the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was specially highlighted in the Secretary-General's report as "a model for reducing transboundary air pollution". In the margins of the CSD discussions, UNECE together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held a side event on education for sustainable development, which is one of the cross-cutting issues on the agenda of the CSD.

III. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2007–2008

A. Environmental Performance Reviews

Environmental Performance Review of Ukraine

13. Ms. Ann-Sofi Israelson, a member of the Expert Group on Environmental Performance, presented the outcomes of the Expert Group's discussion of the draft Environmental Performance Review (EPR) report of Ukraine (5–6 October 2006) and submitted the recommendations of that report to the Committee for adoption. Mr. Svyatoslav Kurulenko, First Deputy Minister of the Ukrainian Ministry of Environmental Protection, approved the directions given in the recommendations on policy priorities, strategic directions and specific actions. He also assured participants that the country would strive for the timely implementation of the recommendations, especially those in the areas of environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, environmental safety and spatial planning. He mentioned the progress made and the measures undertaken in Ukraine since the EPR mission and the country's willingness to make further improvements.

14. The Committee considered the information and concluded the peer review by adopting the recommendations of the EPR of Ukraine as amended (ECE/CEP/133).

15. In this context the Committee also discussed how peer reviews are conducted and suggested that more of its time be allocated to these discussions. The bureau, at its next meeting (in February 2007), will discuss alternative ways to organize peer reviews at the Committee sessions. The results of this discussion will be presented at the special session of the Committee in May 2007 and possibly put into practice at its session in 2008.

Interim report on the implementation of the first Environmental Performance Reviews and ongoing reviews and second reviews

16. Delegates from Montenegro (Ms. Marija Vugdelic) and Serbia (Mr. Mihailo Djukic) presented voluntary interim reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the first EPRs on their countries. The Committee took note of this information (which is available at <http://www.unece.org/env/epr/interimreports.htm>) and of the preparations for second reviews of the two countries.

17. The Committee noted the decisions by the delegations of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uzbekistan to volunteer for a second EPR. Interested countries were requested to send an official letter to the secretariat to confirm their willingness to be reviewed a second time.

Information about other activities conducted in the framework of the EPR programme

18. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the delegates of Moldova (Ms. Violeta Ivanov) and Belarus (Mr. Alexander Rachevsky) about the launch events organized in their countries, in July and September 2006 respectively, to increase the visibility and dissemination of the EPR reports. Both countries highlighted the value of having the reports available in their national languages and indicated how they intended to implement the recommendations. In Moldova this would happen through a Government Resolution for Implementation of EPR Recommendations and in Belarus through a Plan of Implementation of EPR Recommendations.

Discussion on the proposed EPR paper for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”

19. The secretariat introduced an informal note (CRP.3) on critical issues involved in the implementation of environmental policies as highlighted by EPRs, as a basis for a possible paper for the Belgrade Conference.

20. The Committee approved of the outline of the document and of the five key issues of concern identified as major bottlenecks hampering improvements. Suggestions were made for developing and expanding the document further, in particular with regard to the needs for good governance in central and territorial environmental administrations, for sustainable development as an overarching policy encompassing environmental goals, for strengthening multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships with civil society, and for a consistent approach in the development of economic instruments in sectors of activities and their effects on the environment. The Committee recommended that the paper showcase success stories and challenges through case studies, with the latter being the basis for recommendations and further improvements in environmental management.

21. Delegations were invited to send their written comments to the secretariat by 31 October 2006. The Committee invited the secretariat to circulate the draft document to the delegations in advance of the Committee’s Bureau meeting scheduled for 13 February 2007 to allow for feedback.

B. Environmental monitoring

(www.unece.org/env/europe/environmental_monitoring.htm)

22. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the Chair of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and by the secretariat on the outcome

of the sixth session of the WGEMA (12–14 June 2006; ECE/CEP/AC.10/2006/2) and on the expected contributions of the WGEMA to the Belgrade Conference (informal document CRP.7). The European Environment Agency (EEA) circulated written information on progress in preparing the Belgrade Assessment report.

23. Proposed contributions to the Belgrade Conference that will be further discussed by the WGEMA in November include: (a) inputs to the Belgrade Assessment report on Europe's environment; and (b) preparation of three sets of Guidelines – for the Application of Environmental Indicators, for Indicator-based Environmental Reporting and for Strengthening Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises. UNECE Member Governments and EEA through the TACIS Programme of the European Commission have supported the activities of the WGEMA financially and in kind. In spite of this, the objectives agreed on for 2006–2007 can be accomplished only if further extrabudgetary funds are available.

24. The delegations were in favour of strengthening the environmental monitoring and assessment pillar of the Committee's programme of work further, with a particular focus on the WGEMA's capacity-building activities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). These activities would help countries to: (a) adapt their national monitoring and data collection systems to reflect international standard classifications and reporting requirements; (b) use the internationally agreed core set of indicators as a policy tool; (c) make their national environmental assessments comparable with each other and with those of other United Nations member countries; and (d) provide data for pan-European environmental assessment reports.

25. To ensure the ongoing efficiency of the work of the WGEMA, and taking into account the smooth conduct of its work thus far, the Committee saw no need to change the leadership of the WGEMA before the Belgrade Conference, especially as the WGEMA is currently preparing major contributions to the Conference.

C. UNECE multilateral environmental agreements

Ongoing activities related to the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements which need special attention

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)

(<http://www.unece.org/env/eia/welcome.html>)

26. With its recent ratification by Belarus, the Espoo Convention now has 41 Parties. The fourth meeting of the Parties to the Convention will be held in Bucharest in 2008, possibly together with the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which is expected to enter into force in 2007.

27. Romania required the establishment of an Inquiry Commission to investigate whether the construction of a navigation canal in the Ukrainian sector of the Danube Delta was likely to have a significant transboundary impact. The Inquiry Commission unanimously found that the building of the canal was likely to have such an impact, in which case the Convention should apply. The secretariat has been seeking funding for the cooperation programme between the two countries, as recommended by the Commission.

28. Capacity-building activities under the Convention include workshops to be held in Armenia and Ukraine and in the Central Asian countries, with financial support from Switzerland, as well as a workshop in Morocco for the countries on the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which will be held with financial support by Italy. A resource manual to support the application of the Protocol on SEA has been prepared with the support of the REC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO.

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

(www.unece.org/env/lrtap/welcome.html)

29. The current work of the Convention focuses mainly on the first reviews of the three most recent protocols to the Convention. The review of the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants was completed in 2005, and now additional substances are being considered for inclusion in the annexes to the Protocol; options for updating and amending the Protocol are being explored. The Parties to the Protocol on Heavy Metals are expected to complete the first review of the Protocol in 2006; further work to reduce emissions of mercury, lead and cadmium is planned. The review of the 1999 Protocol on Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone is underway and scheduled for completion in 2007; the review will consider possibilities for controlling particulate matter as well as looking at the feasibility of linking air pollution and greenhouse gas emission control strategies. In addition, the Convention's Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution, led by the United States and the European Community and involving experts from countries outside the UNECE region, will provide an interim report assessing the importance of intercontinental transport of air pollution. These regional/global links were emphasized at CSD-14.

30. The Executive Body for the Convention, at its twenty-third session in December 2005, adopted the Action Plan for EECCA to extend work already under way on capacity-building in countries with economies in transition. The aim is to facilitate these countries' involvement with the work of the Convention and enable their accession to the more recent protocols to the Convention.

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)

(www.unece.org/env/water/welcome.html)

31. The Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention was held on 20–22 November 2006 in Bonn (Germany) to discuss the implementation of the 2004–2006 workplan and activities for 2007–2009. Moreover, in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Convention this year, the Meeting evaluated the successes of the past 10 years and the challenges ahead.

32. The Meeting adopted UNECE Rules on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management, prepared to help decision makers find efficient solutions to water management problems that take into account environmental, economic and social concerns. To support the Rules' implementation, capacity-building activities, technical guidance and pilot projects are planned for 2007–2009.

33. A draft assessment of the status of and trends in transboundary waters in the UNECE region is being prepared to evaluate the progress in reducing transboundary impacts (including on human health and safety). The assessment will also constitute an input to the Belgrade Conference. To complete the information, all Parties and non-Parties, in particular in Western and South-Eastern Europe, are urged to contribute to the assessment in a timely manner. Two workshops have been organized in the past year to facilitate cooperation and exchange of experience and good practices regarding implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive in transboundary basins shared by EU and non-EU countries. There will be an increasing focus on activities to transfer experience and promote implementation of the Convention outside the UNECE region. It is essential that Parties ratify the amendments to the Convention allowing United Nations member countries from outside the UNECE region to join the Convention.

34. The first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health will take place in Geneva on 17–19 January 2007.

Convention on Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)

(www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html)

35. The Working Group of the Parties to the Convention accepted the invitation of the Government of Latvia to host the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, which will be held in June 2008, coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. The Working Group adopted a plan of consultation on public participation in international forums, and a questionnaire was sent to an agreed list of international forums during the summer of 2006. The Convention's Compliance Committee met four times during the past 12 months and concluded four cases. A new publication, *Your Right to a Healthy Environment: A Simplified Guide to the Aarhus Convention*, jointly prepared by UNECE and UNEP, was published in 2006 in English, French and Russian.

36. The Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers has continued preparations for the instrument's entry into force, which is likely to be in 2007 so that the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol can be held back-to-back with the third meeting of the Parties to the Convention in 2008.

37. The Convention has 39 Parties. The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers has two Parties, including the European Community.

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention)

(www.unece.org/env/teia/welcome.htm)

38. The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention took place on 15–17 November 2006. The Conference discussed the Assistance Programme for the countries of EECCA and SEE to support their implementation of the Convention. A report on the results of the Programme’s preparatory phase, based on the outcomes of the High-level Commitment Meeting (Geneva, 14–15 December 2005) and the fact-finding missions (ECE/CEP.TEIA/2006/3), and an action plan for the Programme’s implementation phase served as a basis for the discussion and decision-making. At the high-level Meeting, 17 out of 19 countries of EECCA and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) had expressed their commitment to implementation of the Convention. This commitment was reiterated by most of these countries when they were visited during the fact-finding missions.

39. On the basis of the work carried out by the Working Group on the Development of the Convention to review the Convention’s annex I on hazardous substances, the Conference of the Parties amended this annex. In addition, the Conference of the Parties endorsed the Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines. These guidelines were developed by a Steering Group under the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, which was established for this purpose by the governing bodies of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions.

Follow-up and support to the UNECE environmental conventions and protocols

40. The Committee took note of the report (ECE/CEP/2006/2) provided by the Chair on the fifth informal consultation meeting between the representatives of the bureaux of the Committee and of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions (27 June 2006). The meeting aimed at sharing experiences and seeking synergies and areas of cooperation, as well as assessing and promoting the implementation of environmental legal instruments in the region. The informal discussions focused in particular on preparations for the Belgrade Conference and on the contribution of the UNECE environmental conventions to the Conference agenda.

41. The Committee welcomed and provided comments on the draft structure of a paper on “Implementation of UNECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements” that the secretariat is preparing for submission to the Belgrade Conference. The paper will focus both on obligations arising from the conventions and on the incentives they provide for building capacity and sharing good practice, in particular in EECCA. It will assess the progress achieved and problems encountered in the effective implementation of the conventions and will give an overview of the various capacity-building activities in the UNECE region. Delegations considered the paper a useful basis for ministers to make policy recommendations to foster the effective implementation of the conventions by governments.

42. The delegations were invited to provide written comments to the paper by 31 October 2006. On the basis of the feedback received, the secretariat will prepare and circulate a new draft.

D. Environment Strategy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

43. The Committee took note of the information provided by the OECD Environmental Action Programme (EAP) Task Force secretariat on the draft outline for a report to the Belgrade Conference on the implementation of the Environment Strategy for Countries of EECCA. The Committee invited the EAP Task Force to complement the report with options for the way forward or with future perspectives for better accomplishing the Strategy's objectives for consideration by ministers in Belgrade.

44. The Committee took note of the activities carried out in the framework of the Strategy, including: (a) the launch of a database with information in English and Russian on partnerships in EECCA that support the accomplishment of the Strategy's objectives (<http://www.eecca.net/>); and (b) outcomes of the Regional Meeting held on 18–19 May 2006 in Kiev, where representatives from EECCA Environment Ministries, donor countries, and international and non-governmental organizations met to discuss progress in achieving the objectives of the Strategy.

E. Activities of the UNECE Regional Adviser for Environment and his contribution to the Committee's programme of work

45. The Regional Adviser on Environment presented his work, which is carried mainly out in the EECCA region. The activities of the Regional Adviser are related to the core programmes and expertise of UNECE and are implemented in close cooperation with the secretariats of the UNECE regional conventions. Only projects with strong support from recipient countries and sufficient donor financing are implemented. Synergies with other relevant actors are sought whenever possible. Currently the Regional Adviser liaises with and participates in activities of the EU Water Initiative, the EECCA Environmental Strategy and the Initiative on Environment and Security (ENVSEC). He highlighted the need to improve cooperation and coordination between international organizations and donors and the low administrative capacity in certain recipient countries.

46. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work of the Regional Adviser on Environment and its contribution to the Committee's programme of work.

F. Environment, Water and Security Partnership in Central Asia

47. The Committee took note of the information provided by Mr. Alzhan Braliev, vice-minister of Kazakhstan, and by representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding steps taken and problems encountered in developing the partnership and carrying out activities to achieve its objectives.

48. The Committee commended the Central Asian countries for their active cooperation and coordination of activities.

G. Environment and Security Initiative

(<http://www.envsec.org/>)

49. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the UNECE Regional Adviser on Environment, by UNEP and by EECCA and SEE delegations on the joint UNDP-UNEP-OSCE-UNECE-REC Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). This initiative aims to improve

understanding and management of issues that might increase the probability of conflict, such as environmental degradation, inequitable access to natural resources, and transboundary movement of hazardous materials in the region. It builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform key functions such as assessment and monitoring of environment and security linkages, capacity-building and institutional development, and integration of environment and security concerns and priorities into international and national policymaking.

50. UNECE contributes to ENVSEC in particular through projects supporting the implementation of the Espoo Convention in Central Asia; the Industrial Accidents Convention in EECCA and SEE; the Central Asian Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB) project; and the development of transboundary cooperation in the Dniester River basin.

51. ENVSEC provides a broader political framework for cooperation with the member countries and access to a broader spectrum of donors. Member States stressed well-coordinated donor and country work as a crucial ingredient for making the initiative more effective.

H. Other cross-sectoral activities

Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)

(<http://www.thepep.org/en/welcome.htm>)

52. The Committee noted the information provided by the UNECE secretariat about the outcomes of the fourth session of the Steering Committee of THE PEP (10–11 April 2006) and the preparations for the third High-level Meeting (to be held in 2008). The main objectives of the Meeting are to: (a) strengthen Member States' commitment to the integration of transport, environment and health policies and to sustainable transport at the national level; (b) assess the progress achieved by THE PEP and reinforce its role as the regional platform for promoting these objectives through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, focusing in particular on EECCA and SEE; and (c) secure the necessary resources and political support to achieve these goals.

53. The activities of the Steering Committee that were reported on included:

- (a) Organization of a South Caucasian workshop on sustainable urban transport and land-use planning (Tbilisi, 18–20 October 2006) as part of a series of workshops focusing on EECCA;
- (b) Maintenance and updating of the Clearing House on Transport, Environment and Health, launched for the general public in December 2005 (<http://www.thepep.org/CHWebSite/>);
- (c) Preparation of a “toolbox” on transport, environment and health, with policy briefings for policymakers and more technical information for practitioners;
- (d) Preparation of guidance on institutional arrangements for policy integration; and
- (e) Exchange of good practice on safe walking and cycling in urban areas.

Education for sustainable development (ESD)

(<http://www.unece.org/env/esd/welcome.htm>)

54. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the secretariat on the first meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee for ESD (13–14 December 2005) and on its follow-up. Countries had reported on actions taken to implement the UNECE Strategy for ESD, which involved the incorporation of ESD into policy documents and legislation, the translation of the Strategy into the national languages, the nomination of national focal points and the establishment of consultative mechanisms. The Steering Committee adopted a workplan for 2005–2007 for the Strategy's implementation, with coordination and information-sharing mechanisms, capacity-building projects and a procedure for reviewing implementation. It called for long-term solutions to ensure the financing of the implementation activities.

55. A workshop for the countries of SEE took place on 28 November 2005 in Athens, and a workshop for EECCA countries was held on 8–9 November 2006 in Moscow, to identify priority needs and an effective mechanism for cooperation on ESD for each subregion. A conference on ESD on 13–15 March 2006 in Vienna, under the EU presidency of Austria, adopted a resolution recognizing the importance of the UNECE Strategy and calling on EU governments to implement it. A compilation of good practice in ESD prepared jointly by UNECE and UNESCO will be published in May 2007.

56. The UNECE Expert Group on Indicators, led by the Netherlands, completed its work in May 2006, coming up with indicators to measure both the implementation process and its effectiveness. On the basis of information provided by member countries, a progress report on the implementation of the ESD Strategy will be prepared for the Belgrade Conference. Preparations for a high-level segment on ESD at the Belgrade Conference are also underway and may include the adoption of a draft Ministerial Statement.

Environment and health

<http://www.euro.who.int/eehc>

57. The Committee took note of the information provided by WHO/EURO about:

(a) The outcome of the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) meetings held in December 2005 and May 2006 to monitor the implementation of the commitments made at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment (Budapest, June 2004), related notably to the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) adopted by the Conference. The meeting on 27 November 2006 in Szentendre (Hungary) focused on Regional Priority Goal 1, which is to "prevent and significantly reduce the morbidity and mortality arising from gastrointestinal disorders and other health effects, by ensuring that adequate measures are taken to improve access to safe and affordable water and adequate sanitation for all children", with a focus on the joint UNECE-WHO Protocol on Water and Health;

(b) Preparations for the Intergovernmental Midterm Review on environment and health to be held in 2007 in Vienna. The objectives of this meeting are to ensure reporting on implementation since the Budapest Conference; to evaluate progress to date, including identification of difficulties and outstanding issues; and to establish a provisional agenda for the Fifth Ministerial Conference (to be held in Italy in 2009).

IV. IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION ON MAJOR POLICY ISSUES: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

58. The Committee welcomed the background paper (ECE/CEP/2006/4 and Add.1) on environmental policy and international competitiveness that was prepared and presented by the secretariat. In general terms, the Committee considered the incorporation of economical expertise into the activities under the Committee's programme of work to be very beneficial.

59. Delegations commented on the discussion paper, recommending more emphasis on the following issues:

(a) *The cost of environmental degradation.* The study carried out by the European Commission on the new accession countries showed how much these countries had benefited from the adoption and implementation of environmental legislation.

(b) *Differences in the pollution intensity of the various industrial sectors.* Pollution-intensive activities are proportionately more affected by the impact of tighter regulations and higher environmental taxes on their competitiveness, which in turn has traditionally led governments to introduce mitigation tools, including exemptions from certain legal provisions, to cushion these anticipated adverse effects.

(c) *Eco-efficiency ("Less is more").* This was the central theme of the informal ministerial meeting organized by the Finnish presidency of the European Union. Economic development does not necessarily increase environmental pressures, as is illustrated by the experience of the Nordic countries, which in international comparisons are often ranked among the top performers as regards economic growth, technological advances and environmental protection.

(d) *Energy security and energy efficiency.* These important areas are closely linked with the issues of environmental protection and competitiveness. In this context the paper should also take into account the corresponding discussions at the recent G-8 summit.

(e) *Economic and monetary integration and the harmonization of norms and standards.* These processes play an important role in the European Union and in its relations with neighbouring countries.

60. The Committee invited the secretariat to prepare a revised draft on the basis of the comments received. A second paper to be produced will focus on low-income economies in the UNECE region. Many delegations suggested submitting the background documents on this topic for discussion at the Belgrade Conference. The Chair invited delegations to initiate a discussion on this issue at the next Working Group of Senior Officials meeting in February 2007.

V. ADOPTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2007–2008 AND ITS REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

61. On the basis of the information provided by the secretariat and the ensuing discussion, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2007–2008, taking into account the evaluation of the biennium 2004–2005 (ECE/CEP/2006/7). The Committee welcomed the

review and the evaluation of the performance of all the UNECE subprogrammes, especially with regard to the discussion and adoption of the current programme of work. It highlighted the importance of developing appropriate “indicators of achievement” to allow effective measurement of progress.

62. The Committee was informed about the discussions held by its Bureau in June and October 2006 to revise the Terms of Reference of the Committee (ECE/CEP/2006/5) as requested by the Commission. After the discussion it agreed that further comments should be sent to the secretariat by 10 November 2006.

63. The Committee invited the Bureau to discuss the revised Terms of Reference further at its next meeting in February 2007 and submit the text to the Commission for possible adoption at its next session 23-27 April 2007.

VI. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION AND COUNTRIES' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNECE TRUST FUNDS

64. The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat and approved the updated criteria for financial support as included in the annex to this report.

VII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

65. The Committee took note of the replies to the questionnaire for the consultation process on issues addressed by the Aarhus Convention's Almaty Guidelines as drafted by the secretariat following the request by the Bureau.

VIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FOURTEENTH SESSION

66. On the basis of consultations between countries, the Committee elected the following members to its Bureau: Chair: Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia); Vice-Chairs: Ms. Narin Panariti (Albania), Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan (Armenia), Mr. Bert-Axel Szelinski (Germany), Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland), Mr. Jon Kahn (Sweden), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway) and Mr. John Matuszak (United States).

IX. CLOSING OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

67. The decisions of the Committee at its thirteenth session were summarized by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair and distributed to delegations at the end of the meeting. The Committee entrusted the secretariat with finalizing the report in consultation with the Bureau.

68. The fourteenth extraordinary session of the Committee on Environmental Policy will be held on 29 May 2007. The following session of the Committee is preliminarily scheduled for March 2008.

ANNEX

CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its thirteenth session, 9-11 October 2006

Country	GDP per capita (US\$)	Eligibility note: Threshold set for financial support for 2006-2007 = US\$3,000; countries with GDP per capita below \$2,500 are eligible for financial support (travel expenses and DSA <u>1</u>); countries with GDP per capita between \$2,500 and \$3,000 are eligible for financial support (DSA only).			
Kazakhstan	2874	Eligible for financial support (DSA only)			
Montenegro	2794*				
Serbia	2794*				
The FYR of Macedonia	2642				
Turkmenistan	2584				
Albania	2350				
Belarus	2355				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2158				
Ukraine	1373				
Georgia	1187				
Armenia	1175				
Azerbaijan	1026				
Moldova	721				
Uzbekistan	456				
Kyrgyzstan	437				
Tajikistan	309				
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE		16			
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR DSA ONLY		5			
COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES + DSA		11			
<u>1</u> / DSA - daily subsistence allowance.					
* \$2,794 is the GDP per capita for the former Republic of Serbia and Montenegro. Data were not available for Montenegro and Serbia separately.					