



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/2006/3  
27 July 2006

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Thirteenth session  
Geneva, 9–11 October 2006  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair

**I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

1. The Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy met in Geneva on 28 June 2006. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) and attended by Ms. Narin Panariti (Albania), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway), Mr. Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland), Mr. Jon Kahn (Sweden) and Mr. John Matuszak (United States). Mr. Szelinski (Germany) and Ms. Stepanova (Russian Federation) could not attend.

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

2. The Bureau was informed about the decisions taken by the Commission at its ad hoc session in December 2005 and at its sixty-first session on 21–23 February 2006, as outlined below.

**A. The UNECE reform**

3. Mr. Kaj Bärlund, Director of the UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, informed the Bureau about the encouraging results of the UNECE reform for the work of the Division, including the allocation of an additional six staff members to the Division, of whom three work on environmental issues.

**B. UNECE contribution to CSD cycles**

4. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 15–16 December 2005) to assess regional progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the areas of energy and sustainable development, atmosphere/air pollution, climate change, industrial development and cross-cutting issues. Information was also provided about the regional input to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), which took place in New York in May 2006.

5. The chair's summary from the Regional Implementation Forum, which highlighted priorities from the region, had been presented at CSD-14. Regional input had also been provided through a panel discussion about challenges in the region, with the focus on air pollution and atmosphere. The outcomes of the regional discussions were reflected in the final report of CSD-14.

**III. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

6. The secretariat introduced the draft terms of reference of the Committee, which the secretariat had revised at the Commission's request as part of the UNECE reform.

7. The Bureau commented on the draft document and invited the secretariat to amend it accordingly. The revised draft will be presented for discussion and adoption by the Committee at its thirteenth session in October 2006, and for approval by the Commission through the Executive Committee (EXECOM).

**IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE "ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE" CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE**

8. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the preparatory work for the sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, October 2007) based on the document ECE/CEP/AC.11/2006/3 and on the agendas of the meetings of the Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) and the Executive Committee (EXECOM) on 29–30 June 2006.

9. The Bureau commented on the draft outline of the agenda for the Conference that the secretariat had prepared on the basis of feedback from the WGSO and the Executive Committee (EXECOM). It recommended structuring the agenda around broad and cross-cutting themes, such as implementation, capacity-building, partnerships and monitoring and assessment, in line with the document presented by the European Commission. The question of the future of the

“Environment for Europe” process after Belgrade was also identified as a crucial one to be addressed. To facilitate the negotiation process, the Bureau favoured drafting a short ministerial declaration with a limited number of items and incorporating the rest of the decisions into a chair’s summary.

10. The secretariat informed the meeting about the input of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to the Belgrade Conference, which involved in particular:

- (a) A contribution to the preparation of the Belgrade Assessment report;
- (b) Guidelines on the application of environmental indicators for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA);
- (c) Guidelines on strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises in EECCA countries;
- (d) A report on the state of environmental reporting at the territorial level.

These documents will be prepared for approval by the Committee’s extraordinary session in May 2007 and thereafter submitted through the WGSO to the Belgrade Conference for endorsement.

11. The Bureau invited the secretariat to circulate the informal document “Table on the follow-up to the Kiev Conference” to the relevant international organizations for completion and submit it for information to the WGSO in June 2007.

## **V. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2007–2008**

### **A. Environmental Performance Reviews**

#### Information about EPR programme activities

12. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the organization of the peer review of Ukraine to be conducted by the Committee at its thirteenth session as well as of the meeting of the EPR Expert Group that will be held on 4–6 October 2006. She also provided information on the launches of EPR reports in Belarus and the Republic of Moldova.

13. Armenia and Kazakhstan have withdrawn their request to be reviewed at this stage. Instead, the next reviews will be carried out in Montenegro and Serbia. Expert missions to both of these countries will take place in October 2006. The Bureau was invited to propose expertise on energy and on water to round out the EPR team of experts. Mr. Matuszak proposed to look into finding national experts in these fields. Ms. Panariti proposed to identify an expert on energy.

14. The secretariat reminded the Bureau that since the EPR programme was functioning on an extrabudgetary basis, future activities depended on the resources made available by member countries. The secretariat was invited to provide an overview of budget needs for all UNECE environmental activities in 2007–2008, and to inform the Committee, at its thirteenth session, of regular and extrabudgetary funds available.

In-depth discussion on major policy issues: environmental policy and international competitiveness

15. The secretariat presented the Bureau with the outline of a document reviewing the potential impact of environmental policies on the international competitiveness of domestic industries. The paper focuses on the complex relationship between these two areas. There is limited evidence that regulation and other policy instruments have adversely affected the competitiveness of polluting firms. The environment should not be seen as a barrier to development, but increasingly as a factor for competitiveness. The secretariat suggested holding an in-depth discussion based on the document at the next session of the Committee.

16. The Bureau welcomed the draft outline. It recommended focusing the document, as well as its possible policy recommendations, on countries in EECCA and South-Eastern Europe (SEE). It also suggested making use of competence in the OECD, which combines expertise from the economic and environment sectors. Delegations participating in the Committee's sessions were encouraged to consult with national experts on environmental economics to prepare for the Committee's discussions.

17. The Bureau decided that the discussions should take place as a separate item on the Committee's agenda.

**B. Multilateral environmental agreements**

18. The Chair gave the Bureau an overview of the informal discussions held between the Bureaux of the Committee and the UNECE environmental conventions on the previous day (27 June). The discussions focused on: (a) preparations for the Belgrade Conference; (b) the Second Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development: outcome and follow-up; (c) and the online questionnaire for reporting on the implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution as an example for the other UNECE conventions to follow.

19. The Chair noted the benefits of such informal discussions with convention bodies and encouraged the Committee's Bureau members to participate in them.

20. The Bureau was informed about the ongoing consultation process on the Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums, which had been adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in Almaty in May 2005 (ECE/MP.PP/2005/Add.5). The Bureau noted that the Committee had a long history of allowing participation by non-governmental organizations in its sessions. It decided that there was no need for the Committee to discuss the issue at its next session. Instead, it authorized the secretariat to answer the factual questions put forward and invited it to inform the Committee about the replies provided.

**C. Activities of the Regional Adviser and his contribution to the Committee's programme of work**

21. The UNECE Regional Adviser for the Environment presented a background paper reviewing his activities. The environmental projects are developed directly at the request of

countries, mainly in EECCA but also in SEE, and are implemented with the support of extrabudgetary contributions. Projects are carried out in collaboration with secretariats of the UNECE conventions on water, air pollution and environmental impact assessment as well as with other organizations such as OSCE and UNEP. The focus is on activities facilitating the development of environmental cooperation between countries.

22. The Bureau welcomed the work of the Regional Adviser and highlighted the importance of the concrete environmental projects for EECCA. It invited the secretariat to submit the background paper on the activities of the Regional Adviser for discussion by the Committee at its next session (see document ECE/CEP/2006/6).

#### **D. Transport, environment and health**

23. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the ongoing activities on transport, environment and health that the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) had reviewed at its fourth session, in April 2006, as well as about the Steering Committee's decision to hold a third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment in early 2008. The Bureau welcomed the progress report and took note of the information.

#### **E. Health and environment**

24. The Bureau noted the information provided by Ms. von Schweinichen on the activities of the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC). The EEHC had held two meetings (in Helsinki in December 2005 and in Oslo in May 2006) to review the implementation of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan, CEHAPE, and to prepare for the Intergovernmental Midterm Review on Environment and Health to be held in 2007.

#### **F. Education for sustainable development**

25. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the first meeting of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), held in Geneva in December 2005, and about the roundtable organized together with UNESCO during CSD-14 as a regional response to the UN Decade on Sustainable Development.

26. The Bureau took note of the progress report and welcomed the active support of the education sector for this activity. It referred decisions on ESD's position on the Belgrade Conference agenda to the following day's meeting of the WGSO.

### **VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DATES OF UPCOMING MEETINGS**

27. The Bureau decided to hold its next meetings on 9 October 2006 and 9 February 2007.

28. The fourteenth extraordinary session of the Committee will take place on 29 May 2007, back to back with the WGSO meeting. The fifteenth session of the Committee is preliminarily scheduled for March 2008 to allow for discussion of decisions taken at the Belgrade Conference and for their incorporation into the Committee's programme of work.