



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/CEP/2008/1  
11 February 2008

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Fifteenth session  
Geneva, 21–23 April 2008  
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008–2009**

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008**

Note by the secretariat

*Summary*

At its fourteenth session (29 May 2007), the Committee on Environmental Policy provided substantive input to the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) and decided that the CEP programme of work for the period 2007–2008 would remain unchanged until the “Environment for Europe” Conference. At its fifteenth session, the Committee is invited to revise its programme of work for 2008.

1. At its fourteenth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) provided substantive input to the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (EfE) (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) and decided that the CEP programme of work 2007–2008 would remain unchanged until the Belgrade EfE Conference
2. The Committee is invited to revise its programme of work for 2008. The CEP Bureau decided that the work programme for 2009 would be re-elaborated once the reform of the EfE process was decided upon by the Committee at its next session and endorsed by UNECE Executive Committee.
3. The Committee on Environmental Policy carries out work in accordance with its strategic goals as contained in the “[Future UNECE strategic directions for the Environment](#)” (CEP/2004/2), adopted in 2003 to structure and adapt its programme of work. Specific activities in the draft programme of work for 2008 relate to the following main processes and strategic goals:
  - (a) **Goal 1: Contributing to the “Environment for Europe” process;** programme activity 1; the “Environment for Europe” reform;
  - (b) **Goal 2: Improving environmental governance;** programme activities 2 and 3; Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) and environmental monitoring;
  - (c) **Goal 3: Improving the effectiveness of international legal instruments;** programme activity 4.1; Implementation of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
  - (d) **Goal 4: Integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies;** programme activity 4.2; Environment and security;
  - (e) **Goal 5: Contributing to regional implementation of the environmental pillar of sustainable development;** programme activities 5, 6, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3; Sustainable development in the UNECE region; education for sustainable development; transport, environment and health; and environment and health.

## **SUBPROGRAMME 01 – ENVIRONMENT**

### **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 1**

#### **THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE REFORM**

4. Ministers in Belgrade agreed to undertake a reform of the EfE process to ensure that the process remained relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness as a mechanism for improving environmental quality and the lives of people across the region. They decided that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

- (a) The format, focus and priorities of the EfE process and Ministerial Conferences;
- (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the EfE 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 EfE process and the effective allocation of available resources;
- (h) Future secretariat arrangements.

5. Ministers invited UNECE and CEP to develop, by the end of 2008 in consultation with EfE partners, a plan for EfE reform so that it could be endorsed by the UNECE at its next session in spring 2009.

#### Work to be undertaken

6. The Bureau at its meeting in January 2008 decided that the secretariat would send out a letter on the basis of paragraph 38 of the Belgrade Declaration to solicit views from Governments and, on the basis of responses, compile an options paper in advance of fifteenth CEP session. The Committee is expected to have a first substantive discussion, taking into account the options paper as well as possible contributions from stakeholders. It will also have to decide about the next steps for the development of a reform plan, including the schedule of consultations and meetings up to the end of 2008.

## **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2**

### ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

7. The EPR programme will continue its second cycle of reviews on the basis of the recommendations adopted by the Fifth EfE Conference (Kiev, 2003) and by the Committee. The second review focuses on the particular environmental concerns of countries, with emphasis on integration (sustainable development), implementation and financing. The Sixth EfE Conference invited reviewed countries to implement recommendations of their national EPRs in accordance with their national needs and priorities.

8. Countries being reviewed a second time provide voluntary interim reports on the implementation of the first review's recommendations to the Committee for its consideration.

### Work accomplished

9. The EPR Expert Group continued to support and offer advice for the preparation and conduct of the EPRs, to carry out detailed expert reviews prior to the Committee's peer review, and to report back to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the drafts of the second EPR reports of Montenegro and of Serbia and adopted the recommendations they contained (May 2007). Since then, the launches of the EPRs of Montenegro (November 2007), Serbia (November 2007) and Ukraine (February 2008) have been carried out, and the second review of Kazakhstan was undertaken.

10. The Committee provided a contribution on EPRs to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference on "Critical Issues in Implementation of Environmental Policies". The report included recommendations with directions for creating the preconditions to achieving a better environment in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) countries.

### Work to be undertaken

11. At its fifteenth session, the Committee will peer-review the draft report and the recommendations of the second EPR of Kazakhstan. In autumn 2008, this EPR will be finalized. A launching event could be organized by Kazakhstan.

12. The second review of Kyrgyzstan (2007–2008), now under way, will be finalized and the draft report ready for review at the next Committee session in winter 2008/2009.

13. Uzbekistan and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are the next countries to be reviewed in 2008.

14. At the request of the Committee, the secretariat in consultation with the EPR Expert Group suggested several options to modify the Peer Review procedure so as to involve the Committee more deeply in the process. Depending on the results of the discussion, modifications of the Peer Review process will be introduced in 2008 and will apply to the next EPR.

15. The Committee will provide guidance to countries on how to implement the recommendations contained in the report on "Critical Issues in Implementation of Environmental Policies" submitted at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference.

## **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3**

### ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

16. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) will help countries in EECCA and SEE to strengthen their environmental information and observation capacities. It will focus on areas emphasized by the ministers in Belgrade, in particular indicator-based assessment, environmental monitoring and reporting by enterprises, and support for preparation of the pan-European assessment report for the next Efe Conference.

Work accomplished

17. At its eighth session (12–13 June 2007), the WGEMA discussed the communication and dissemination of the Belgrade Assessment report, specific activities supporting the preparation of the report, related products on monitoring and assessment for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, and lessons learned for future pan-European assessments. It agreed on its report on the implementation of its mandate. WGEMA organized a Workshop on the Interaction between Air Quality Monitoring and Air Protection Strategies in EECCA Countries on 11 June 2007 in Geneva. A feasibility study was prepared on the development of guidelines on environmental monitoring programmes in the chemical industry for enterprise management and relevant public authorities in EECCA (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2007/2).

Work to be undertaken

18. The WGEMA, subject to the renewal of its mandate (see ECE/CEP/2008/6), will:

- (a) Continue strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting capacities of EECCA and SEE countries by:
  - (i) Promoting the implementation of the *Indicator Guidelines* by training experts responsible for state-of-the-environment reporting and the publication of environmental statistical compendiums;
  - (ii) Initiating online data reporting on indicators by EECCA countries, following the example of the European Environment Agency Indicator Management System;
  - (iii) Assisting individual countries, at their request, to establish legal and regulatory procedures and institutional arrangements for the publication of regular indicator-based environmental assessment reports on the basis of the *Indicator Reporting Guidelines*;
  - (iv) Reviewing the state of the art and countries' experiences with integrated and ecosystem-based assessments, with a view to preparing possible recommendations in due time;
  - (v) Promoting the implementation of the *Enterprise Monitoring Guidelines*, by developing practical, industry-specific guidance material;
  - (vi) Revising these countries' ambient environment monitoring programmes to make monitoring a practical tool for policy target-setting, pollution abatement strategies, and measuring progress in achieving policy targets and in effectiveness of abatement measures;
- (b) Working to further strengthen and harmonize environmental data collection, and promoting comparability of environmental statistics to support future pan-European assessments, as well as to coordinate other international environmental

assessments and data collection activities of relevance to the pan-European assessments.

#### **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4**

##### **BUILDING CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS**

###### **4.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF UNECE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

19. Since the 1970s, five regional environmental conventions and 12 protocols have been negotiated and adopted in the framework of UNECE. The responsibility for implementation activities lies with the governing bodies.

20. All the protocols have entered into force except the three protocols adopted at the Kiev Efe Conference, namely the Protocols on Strategic Environmental Assessment, on Civil Liability and Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters, and on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

21. The Committee provides a catalysing forum in which all government representatives, including the governing bodies of the conventions, can share their experiences in promoting and assessing the implementation of these regional environmental instruments as well as identifying means of improving compliance with them. Furthermore, the Committee supports, as appropriate, the implementation of the conventions and their protocols.

###### **Work accomplished**

22. The fifth informal meeting between the Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental conventions was held on 27 June 2006 at the invitation of the Chair of the Committee Bureau. The meeting's aims were to continue sharing experiences and seeking synergies and areas of cooperation, and to assess and promote the implementation of environmental legal instruments in the region.

23. A paper on "Implementation of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements" was prepared by the secretariat and submitted by the Committee through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The paper assessed the progress achieved and problems encountered in the effective implementation of the conventions and provided an overview of capacity-building activities in the UNECE region. It also provided a basis for ministers to make policy recommendations for enhancing the effective implementation of the conventions by Governments.

###### **Work to be undertaken**

24. It is envisaged that informal meetings between the Bureaux of the Committee and the governing bodies of the conventions will continue to be held annually. The next informal meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 2008, and it was agreed that participants would

discuss the outcomes of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference related to the UNECE conventions, and in particular the EfE reform process.

#### 4.2 ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

25. The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE) and UNECE that builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform three key functions: (a) assessment and monitoring of linkages between environment and security; (b) capacity-building and institutional development; and (c) integration of environmental and security concerns and priorities into international and national policymaking. One component of the Initiative's activities is to strengthen the implementation of UNECE regional environmental conventions.

##### Work accomplished

26. To date, assessments of environment and security risks have been made for: Southern and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Southern Caucasus and Eastern Europe. In addition, further assessments have been initiated in Eastern Europe, specifically in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Based on the assessments, the ENVSEC Initiative has developed and implemented specific work programmes aimed at reducing tensions and solving problems identified (see [www.envsec.org](http://www.envsec.org)).

##### Work to be undertaken

27. UNECE will continue to collaborate within the framework of ENVSEC, in particular through projects supporting the implementation of UNECE regional conventions. Examples of ongoing and planned projects where the UNECE is engaged are: (a) pilot implementation in Central Asia of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; (b) regional cooperation project on dam safety in Central Asia; (c) support to the development of water cooperation in the Kura-Aras river basin; and (d) development of cooperation between Moldova and Ukraine on the Dniester River.

### **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 5**

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION

28. Building on Agenda 21 (Agenda for the Twenty-first Century) and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) invited the Regional Commissions to consider organizing Regional Implementation Meetings, within the framework of the two-year implementation cycles of the CSD.

### Work accomplished

29. In preparation for the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16), the Third UNECE Regional Implementation Meeting on Sustainable Development was held on 28 and 29 January 2008 in Geneva. UNECE member States, representatives of civil society, United Nations specialized agencies and other international bodies met to review the region's progress in implementing WSSD commitments regarding the following thematic clusters: agriculture, rural development, land management, drought and desertification, and Africa.

30. The purpose of the Regional Implementation Meeting was to evaluate the progress achieved as well as obstacles and constraints remaining in the above areas. The Meeting also specifically discussed linkages between thematic priorities and cross-cutting issues such as sustainable production and consumption patterns, education for sustainable development (ESD) and finance.

31. As a basis for the discussions, the secretariat had prepared two background documents (ECE/AC.25/2008/3 and 4). Contributions were made by various partners in and outside the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

### Work to be undertaken

32. The outcome of the discussions reflected in the Chair's Summary will be submitted to and presented at CSD-16 (New York, 5–16 May 2008), contributing the UNECE regional perspective to the debate at the global level.

33. In cooperation with the CSD Secretariat and the other Regional Commissions, the UNECE Secretariat will organize an interactive discussion during CSD-16, focusing in particular on region-specific barriers and constraints as well as lessons learned and good practices.

## **PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 6**

### INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

34. Integrating environmental concerns into the activities of other sectors, whether economic or social, is one of the key challenges for the effective implementation of environmentally sound sustainable development principles. Since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, actions and programmes in the UNECE region have moved towards that goal, but significant efforts are still needed through a wide range of policy, legal, institutional and financial measures, and incentives.

35. The Committee on Environmental Policy has established cross-sectoral linkages, activities and cooperation with other UNECE committees (e.g. Transport, Housing and Land Management) and the conventions' governing bodies, as well as with other international

organizations such as the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe). UNECE environmental cross-sectoral programmes should be further encouraged to ensure effective support for national and regional initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in order to promote social and economic development.

## 6.1 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

36. At the Kiev Efe Conference, ministers agreed on the preparation of a UNECE Strategy for ESD and invited UNECE to work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe on a regional ESD strategy. The High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005) adopted the UNECE Strategy for ESD and established a Steering Committee on ESD to decide on the Strategy's implementation and to review its progress.

### Work accomplished

37. The Steering Committee on ESD has held two meetings thus far (in December 2005 and December 2006) with major outcomes such as the adoption of the Work Plan for 2005–2007 and the decision to hold a joint high-level segment on ESD during the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. A number of activities have been carried out: subregional workshops on ESD; the establishment of a comprehensive reporting mechanism (36 national implementation reports were received during the pilot reporting exercise); and a collection of good practices in ESD. The fulfillment of Phase I (2005–2007) for the implementation of the ESD Strategy is well on its way; most countries are showing commitment to establishing the necessary policies and institutional structures to implement the Strategy. The culmination point in the implementation of Phase I was a joint high-level segment on ESD held during the Belgrade Ministerial Conference that was attended by ministers and high-level officials from both the education and environment sectors. Achievements, lessons learned, challenges, and the way ahead were considered at the joint segment. A joint Statement on ESD, expressing commitment to further implementation of the Strategy throughout its implementation phases and beyond 2015, was adopted by acclamation. The mandate of the Steering Committee to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy was extended until 2015.

### Work to be undertaken

38. The Steering Committee on ESD will hold its third meeting from 31 March to 1 April 2008 to consider and adopt a Work Plan of Implementation for Phase II of the Strategy (2008–2010), including its substantive content, time frame for implementation, and financial implications (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/5). As a prerequisite for the successful implementation of ESD, the two key priorities for Phase II are: (a) the development of National Action Plans for ESD; and (b) the development of competence in ESD. The plan comprises a variety of activities aimed at coordination, capacity-building and the sharing of experience to support and further the implementation of ESD in the region, including workshops and trainings, sharing good practices and case studies, strengthening the use of electronic tools, awareness-raising, and review of implementation.

## 6.2 TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

39. The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) was established in 2002 under the joint auspices of UNECE (the Environment and Transport Divisions) and WHO/Europe. THE PEP aims at promoting policy integration and sustainable transport development, notably in urban areas, through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. It focuses on and brings particular benefits to countries in EECCA and SEE.

### Work accomplished

40. At its fifth session (16–17 April 2007), the Steering Committee of THE PEP assessed the progress made in the implementation of its work programme and provided guidance on further implementation. It welcomed in particular the continued operation of the Clearing House on Transport, Environment and Health; the preparation of a brochure on supportive institutional conditions for policy integration; and the results of the workshop on sustainable urban transport and land-use planning (Tbilisi, 18–20 October 2006).

41. The Steering Committee of THE PEP discussed preparations for the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, to be held in 2008. The Steering Committee agreed that the main objectives of the High-level Meeting should be to:

- (a) Strengthen Member States' commitment to the integration of transport, health and environment policies at the national level, with a special focus on the challenges faced by EECCA and SEE countries;
- (b) Reinforce the role of THE PEP as the platform for promoting such policy integration and secure the necessary resources and support.

### Work to be undertaken

42. THE PEP Steering Committee will continue the preparations for the Third High-level Meeting (Geneva, November 2008) including the finalization of the key documents: a Review of Trends and Developments in the UNECE-WHO Pan-European Region (1997–2007), an Assessment of THE PEP, and a draft declaration. So far, elements for the draft declaration have been prepared based on discussions held at the last Bureau meeting (Rome, December 2007). Although the draft declaration covers a wide-range of topics relevant to THE PEP, the section on "Future Commitments and the Way Forward" needs particular attention and input by the Steering Committee in order to gain political impetus and to re-launch THE PEP.

43. The Committee on Environmental Policy is invited to further encourage, support and coordinate efforts in the transport, environment and health sectors to prepare for the Third High-level Meeting.

### 6.3 ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

44. WHO/Europe Ministerial Conferences have been organized since 1989 and bring together ministers of health and environment and other stakeholders to strive for consensus and make political commitments to promote a safe and healthy environment.

#### Work accomplished

45. The Intergovernmental Mid-term Review was held from 13 to 15 June 2007 in Vienna. This review was planned to follow up and monitor progress on the implementation of the commitments made at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Budapest in 2004. The meeting was also an opportunity for countries to further contribute to the development of the agenda of the Fifth Ministerial Conference.

46. The Committee on Environmental Policy elected five members to represent the environment sector on the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) for a period of two and half years, i.e. until the next Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, to be held in Italy in 2009. The first resumed EEHC meeting was held in October 2007 in Bonn, Germany. The main item on the agenda was the preparation of a workplan for the period 2007–2009, looking forward to the next Ministerial Conference in 2009.

#### Work to be undertaken

47. EEHC will continue its activities in accordance with its workplan and will report annually on progress to WHO/Europe and CEP. The next meeting of EEHC will be held in conjunction with the first (of three) high-level meetings, and will further discuss preparations for the Ministerial Conference in 2009, with focus on Regional Priority Goals 1 and 2.

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