

Report on the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy

27 January 2009, Geneva, Palais des Nations
(preceding the special session of the CEP)

I. Opening of the meeting and participation

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) was held on 27 January 2009 in Geneva. The following Bureau members participated in the meeting: Mr. Zaal Lomtadze (Georgia) Chairman, Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Sinisa Stankovic (Montenegro), Mr. Adriaan Oudeman (Netherlands), Ms. Eldrid Nordbo (Norway). Mr. Charles Ashley and Ms. Lisa BrodeY (United States) also participated. Members of the secretariat were: Mr. Marco Keiner (Director), Ms. Christina von Schweinichen (Deputy Director), Ms. Monika Linn, Ms Catherine Masson, Mr. Mikhail Kokine, Ms. Angela Sochirca and Ms. Brinda Wachs.

II. Environmental performance reviews (EPR)

2. The secretariat informed the Bureau on the results of the review of Kyrgyzstan conducted by the EPR Expert Group (EG) on 26 January 2009. She noted it was the first time the meeting had an extended participation of CEP delegations, following the decision of CEP in April 2008 transforming the EPR EG into an open-ended working group. The EPR EG amended the set of recommendations of the second EPR of Kyrgyzstan to be submitted to CEP for adoption. In addition, CRP.1 on -the need to strengthen the national environmental authority of Kyrgyzstan- would be discussed under the same agenda item. This topic corresponded to one of the five critical issues in implementation of environmental policies identified at the Belgrade EfE Ministerial Conference.

3. The Bureau was informed that Mr. Sinisa Stankovic (Montenegro) would report to CEP on how the EPR EG had functioned as an extended group and would consult CEP to know whether this arrangement had met their expectations.

4. Concerning next countries that had forwarded their request to carry out an EPR, the secretariat would undertake a review of Uzbekistan in April 2009, to be followed in late 2009 and beginning 2010 by a review of Turkmenistan and later Georgia.

5. The Bureau agreed to have a first exchange of views on the future content of the third round of EPRs at its next session. To that end it requested the secretariat to prepare a paper for the next session of CEP (October 2009) with preliminary thinking on the EPR programme beyond the second cycle.

6. The secretariat informed that the UN regional commissions were engaged in an exchange of information on their major programmes and in particular that several of the regional commissions had expressed interest in the EPRs. Based on a concrete request by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to start an EPR in its region, the ECE was invited to transfer its know-how. The Economic Commission for

Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) were also interested in the EPR programme. The Bureau took note of the information.

III. Environmental monitoring

7. The secretariat (Mikhail Kokine) informed the Bureau about developments since the last meeting, in particular regarding the outcome of discussions of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) at a meeting held in Washington on the establishment of a joint intersectoral task force on environmental indicators. The CES Bureau had approved the Terms of Reference for the proposed task force with a mandate of two years. The issue would be put before the Committee. Bureau members had a preliminary exchange of views related to future cooperation with the CES and the question was raised as to whether it was the appropriate time for a full-fledged task force, or if there was work needed first at national level. The secretariat emphasized that a joint task force would be a useful mechanism to pressure national authorities to harmonize and cooperate with the aim of developing better data in EECCA.

IV. EfE reform plan

8. The Chair suggested that at the CEP session he would proceed using the compromise proposal as a basis for further negotiations, with the understanding that section V on implementation had not been discussed and that general comments would be sought. The Bureau agreed with the proposal of the chair and agreed to go through the text, paragraph by paragraph, to single out issues that needed further discussion for assignment to a smaller group, if necessary.

V. Election of officers and other business

9. The Bureau discussed its composition. In addition, it was informed that the secretariat would make THE PEP publications prepared for the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment as well as the Amsterdam Declaration adopted at the same meeting (22-23 January 2009, Amsterdam) available to CEP Delegations.