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## Economic Commission for Europe

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**The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana**

**Conference main outcomes: multilateral environmental agreements**

## **Assisting countries in joining and implementing the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe multilateral environmental agreements**

### **Note by the secretariat**

#### *Summary*

At the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, 21–23 September 2011) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) ministers invited countries to ratify and implement the relevant ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). They also underlined the role of ECE in assessing the obstacles to ratifying the MEAs and in assisting countries to ratify and implement these agreements (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1, para. 5).

Following up on that strategic direction from ministers, at its eighteenth session (Geneva, 17–20 April 2012) the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) requested the secretariat to prepare a summary report to demonstrate its work to assist countries to join and implement ECE MEAs, as well as to highlight obstacles to joining MEAs (ECE/CEP/2012/2, para. 25 (1)). The present document responds to that request and aims to facilitate the discussion by CEP during the mid-term review.

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## Introduction

1. For over 20 years now United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (see box) have been providing the normative basis for many national and transboundary actions to protect human health and the environment and aid sustainable development in the region.
2. Since their adoption, the MEAs have triggered the development of national legislation and bilateral cooperation agreements, as well as the establishment of institutions, in ECE member States to implement and comply with their provisions. However, the results achieved in this work have not been uniform. While some member States made the necessary adjustments to their national legislation and institutions before joining the MEAs, including signing bilateral cooperation agreements, where necessary, others — in particular States with economies in transition — have been facing challenges in undertaking these measures. As a consequence, they have either refrained from joining ECE MEAs or joined them without taking the steps necessary to ensure their implementation and compliance.
3. To change this situation and ensure a high degree of implementation and compliance with the MEAs throughout the ECE region, the ministers attending the Fifth “Environment for Europe” (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Kyiv, 21–23 May 2003) requested that greater emphasis be given to implementation and compliance with the MEAs’ provisions, and that proper assistance or support be provided to member States. This request has been reiterated by ministers at the subsequent conferences, including at the Seventh EfE Conference (Astana, 21–23 September 2011).
4. In response to that request, various dedicated assistance or support activities to strengthen countries’ capacities to overcome obstacles to implementation and compliance, or to share good practice, were designed.
5. Such activities have been further improved over the years, based on various lessons learned, to offer a more effective and better tailor-made support to ECE member States.
6. At the same time, member States have been helped in handling new, emerging issues or circumstances, e.g., linked with climate change or economic downturn, in order to prevent negative impacts on implementation and compliance.
7. In addition, in response to requests from outside the region, increased emphasis has been placed on raising awareness of the MEAs among non-ECE countries, so that other regions could also benefit from the effective ECE framework for protecting human health and the environment that the MEAs provide. These efforts have accelerated with the inclusion or addition of legal provisions opening some of the MEAs to all member States of the United Nations, such as the amendment to open the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) to accession by all United Nations Member States, which entered into force on 6 February 2013.
8. All these activities were part of the MEAs work programmes or plans endorsed by their governing bodies or Bureaux by consensus.
9. The present report provides information about the achievements and impacts of the recent activities to strengthen countries’ efforts to overcome obstacles to implementation of and compliance with the ECE MEAs, and sharing of good practice in that regard, as well as efforts to address new and emerging issues and circumstances related to implementation and compliance.

10. In addition, the report lists the lessons learned from the recent activities implemented in times of increased austerity, economic slowdown and recession in many ECE member States. It also informs of actions undertaken by the secretariat to respond to existing challenges and to deliver even more effective support to member States in an efficient way. Finally, it contains a few questions for the consideration of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) on how it could best assist and advise the governing bodies and the secretariat in addressing the existing challenges to implementation and compliance of MEAs.

**Box**

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe MEAs in force**

- 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) and its last three Protocols: the 1998 Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Protocol on POPs), the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals and the amended 1999 Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol). (For earlier Protocols, see [http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/status/lrtap\\_s.html](http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/status/lrtap_s.html).)
- 1991 Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its 2003 Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Protocol on SEA).
- 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its 1999 Protocol on Water and Health.
- 1992 Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention).
- 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and its 2003 Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs).

## **I. Impacts of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe work, main achievements and key findings**

11. The ECE secretariat has undertaken numerous activities over the past three years to further strengthen countries' implementation of and compliance with the MEAs provisions, as well as to address new and emerging issues and circumstances that relate to implementation and compliance.

### **A. Implementation of and compliance with the provisions of Economic Commission for Europe multilateral environmental agreements**

12. With regard to improving implementation and compliance, the work continued to focus on addressing particular legislative, procedural or technical challenges presenting obstacles to joining, implementing or complying with MEAs, as well as building awareness among national experts and decision makers on the provisions of MEAs and their benefits.

13. As a result of these activities, a number of member States have improved or are in the process of improving or adjusting their legal systems to bring them into greater conformity with the provisions set out in the MEAs, e.g.:

(a) Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, benefiting from the Western Balkans project of CLRTAP, adopted laws and by-laws dealing with air quality and emission standards stipulated under the Convention's Heavy Metals, POPs and Gothenburg Protocols. In particular, these actions resulted in bans on marketing leaded petrol and heavy fuels with a sulphur content above 1%, as well as bans on the use of certain POPs, which in turn led to immediate improvements in air quality;

(b) A number of countries, including Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Spain, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, through the Aarhus Convention compliance mechanism, have been able to clarify their obligations as Parties under the Convention and to adjust their legal systems to further support the right of members of the public to obtain information, to participate in decision-making and to have access to justice in environmental matters;

(c) Azerbaijan is in the process of improving its law on environmental impact assessment (EIA) based on the recommendations of the Espoo Convention's Implementation Committee. This process when completed should allow proper application of the EIA procedures and limit the impact on the environment from economic activities. In addition, further to compliance submissions brought before it, the Espoo Implementation Committee has also issued findings and recommendations to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine to fully comply with the provisions of the Convention. All of these countries have taken steps to further develop their legislation;

(d) Turkmenistan is revising its water legislation to implement fully the provisions of the Water Convention following its accession in 2012. The accession process and current activities to improve water legislation are supported by the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in the framework of European Union (EU) Water Initiative and the Water Convention work programme. The revision, when completed, should allow the introduction of integrated water resource management in Turkmenistan;

(e) Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, following their participation in a project on safety reporting under the Industrial Accidents Convention, are in the process of further developing their national systems, including legal acts, for improving risk management at hazardous industrial installations.

14. Several member States participating in the different pilot projects under the MEAs have been able to review and improve their national procedures and strengthen institutional capacity, including for cross-border dialogue under the MEAs, e.g.:

(a) Belarus has benefited from a recent pilot project under the Espoo Convention in which a transboundary EIA was undertaken for the planned construction of a hydroelectric power plant on the Neman River in cooperation with Lithuania, and with the full involvement of the public in the planning and execution of the project. During the pilot activities the Belarusian authorities were able to strengthen their understanding of the EIA application, review national procedures and develop practical guidelines on EIA application, including on involvement of the public and cooperation with neighbouring countries;

(b) The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are cooperating with Romania under the Industrial Accidents Convention's Danube Delta project to learn about each other's respective procedures for industrial hazard and crisis management and to enhance cross-border dialogue in the Danube Delta on these matters. The project further aims at streamlining the procedures, in particular joint response actions, for handling industrial accidents in the Delta;

(c) The authorities from the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia were able to extend their knowledge and acquire good practice on the legal, institutional and technical procedures for pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) following recent subregional workshop trainings provided under the Protocol on PRTRs. In follow-up to the workshops, these countries are developing national procedures for collecting reliable data on the release and transfer of pollutants;

(d) Through a CLRTAP project, national experts from the Republic of Moldova improved their knowledge and skills with regard to collecting and reporting emissions data, as well as the data required for integrated assessment modelling on air pollution;

(e) By means of a CLRTAP trilateral project, national experts from Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation strengthened their capacities in developing national air pollutant emission inventories in accordance with the Convention's standards;

(f) Member States participating in joint meetings of the Aarhus Convention with the Protocol on Water and Health and with the Protocol on SEA clarified specific provisions of these MEAs and were able to review their national procedures leading to the coherent implementation of these provisions;

(g) The Republic of Moldova, taking advantage of a recent Protocol on Water and Health pilot project, set targets regarding the supply of safe drinking water and sanitation to comply with the country's obligations under the Protocol. Armenia is embarking on a similar process.

15. The MEA activities, in particular those supported by the Regional Adviser for Environment under the Water Convention, but also under the Espoo and Industrial Accidents Conventions, have resulted in the conclusion of bilateral treaties, the signing of memorandums of understanding on cooperation, the establishment of joint institutions for cooperation, or the start of negotiations or discussions on bilateral agreements in order to further facilitate the implementation of the transboundary provisions of these MEAs, e.g.:

(a) The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine signed the Dniester River Basin Treaty to further improve the joint management of the Dniester Basin;

(b) Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan established a Chu-Talas Commission to cooperate on the management of water infrastructure located for their shared waters;

(c) Albania, Greece, Kosovo (United Nations administered region, Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)), Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Understanding, "Shared Vision for the Management of the Drin Basin";

(d) Azerbaijan and Georgia are negotiating a bilateral agreement on the Kura River;

(e) Belarus is negotiating bilateral agreements with its neighbouring countries on EIA and, where relevant, to supplement existing agreements with provisions for post-project analysis of transboundary EIAs;

(f) The Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine are discussing the need for an agreement on joint response to man-made disasters in the Danube Delta.

16. A number of activities were focused on explaining the requirements of the MEAs, and informing national experts and decision makers of the benefits of applying the MEAs in order to build the necessary support and capacities for their implementation and subsequent ratification or accession, e.g.:

(a) During awareness-raising missions to Central Asia, experts and decision makers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were informed of the

benefits in terms of improved air quality to be derived from the application of the Heavy Metals, POPs and Gothenburg Protocols, as well as of the benefits of implementing other ECE MEAs. The countries have been invited to work out national plans with actions to be undertaken for accession to and compliance with ECE MEAs;

(b) Experts and decision makers in Turkmenistan were familiarized with the benefits of applying the Espoo and Industrial Accidents Conventions in a workshop organized under a joint ECE-German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) project. The benefits were illustrated by a detailed scenario in which the two Conventions were applied during the life cycle of an industrial facility. They were further explained with regard to water resources management;

(c) Experts from the Central Asian countries, through some 15 capacity-building activities of the ECE-GIZ project, have been helped to better understand the legal frameworks needed for inter-State cooperation on water as required by ECE MEAs. ECE also elaborated and made available to the Central Asian countries the publication, "Strengthening Water Management and Transboundary Water Cooperation in Central Asia: the Role of ECE Environmental Conventions";

(d) Uzbekistan was informed of benefits from and possibilities for using the Protocol on SEA as a tool in strategic decision-making in a training workshop organized under the SEA Protocol and the Espoo Convention;

(e) National experts as well as industry in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were informed of the role that proper identification of hazardous industrial activities plays in saving peoples' lives and protecting their health, as well as in protecting the environment from the effects of industrial accidents. This awareness building has been provided by training sessions under the Industrial Accidents Convention;

(f) Experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were trained on the Aarhus Convention's three pillars, with a special session for high-level members of the judiciary.

## **B. Emerging issues and circumstances related to implementation and compliance**

17. With regard to emerging issues and circumstances related to implementation and compliance, the work focuses on addressing particular issues or circumstances that can pose challenges to Parties to the MEAs, as they emerge. It sometimes also addresses issues emerging from discussions on sustainable development or on further improving health and environmental protection. Climate change impacts on water resources, decreasing budgets, in particular for inspection authorities, the interrelation between human rights and the environment, greening the economy and air pollution from particulate matter and black carbon are all examples of such emerging issues or circumstances.

18. The Water Convention secretariat has been continuing to promote the exchange of good practice and experience on policies for adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins. A *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change*<sup>1</sup> was developed and made available to member States. The Guidance focuses on climate change adaptation that takes into account the transboundary dimension of water management. It provides advice, based on the concept of integrated water resources management, on how to assess impacts of

<sup>1</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. 09.II.E.14; available from <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html>

climate change on water quantity and quality, how to perform risk assessment, including health risks, how to gauge vulnerability and how to design and implement appropriate adaptation strategies in transboundary basins. A global programme of pilot projects under the Water Convention aims at creating positive examples to demonstrate the benefits of and mechanisms for transboundary cooperation in adaptation.

19. The secretariat supports countries in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation for all, in particular the poor, vulnerable and socially excluded, under the Protocol on Water and Health, with a view to making the human right to water and sanitation a reality. A self-evaluation tool (or “scorecard”) on assessing progress in achieving equitable access to water and sanitation was elaborated to assist Governments and stakeholders in the achievement of equitable access. In 2013, this scorecard was tested in France, Portugal and Ukraine.

20. The Industrial Accidents Convention secretariat, in cooperation with the Industrial Emissions Unit of the European Commission, offered to discuss with member States and to foster the exchange of good practice and experience between them on how to respond to the challenge of decreasing inspection budgets through exploring cost-effective options for major accident prevention. In the follow-up to this discussion and exchange, it is planned to elaborate a guide on the methodology for hazard rating as a means of prioritizing site inspections.

21. In 2012, the Aarhus Convention secretariat commenced cooperation with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council regarding the interrelation between human rights and the environment. In this respect, the secretariat contributes to the work of the United Nations Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, by helping to clarify the scope of those rights. Synergies are also being established on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, on the basis of the implementation and impact of the Protocol on PRTRs.

22. Synergies have also been intensified between the Aarhus Convention secretariat and the international financial institutions, especially the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, as well as with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in the framework of the review of their accountability mechanisms and the immediate relevance of the principles of the Convention in the promotion of environmentally and socially responsible investment initiatives in the region and worldwide.

23. The CLRTAP secretariat assisted member States in negotiating requirements limiting air pollution from fine particulate matter, including black carbon. The revised Gothenburg Protocol includes national emission reduction commitments for fine particulate matter to be met by 2020, which, when met, should bring positive effects for human health and the environment in the ECE region and beyond. Currently, air quality standards are notoriously exceeded in the ECE region when it comes to particulate matter concentrations in ambient air. In addition, reduction of black carbon emissions is critical in the climate change context, as it is a strong short-lived climate forcer.

24. The Espoo Convention secretariat assists member States in applying strategic environmental assessment (SEA) as a key planning tool for transitioning to a green economy. It has also developed draft guidance for Parties in the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities, further to the construction of a large number of nuclear power plants in the region, and extension of the operational life of the existing ones.

25. MEA activities, as presented through the examples above, have resulted in clear and concrete outcomes that foster improved air and water quality, enhance the management of

water resources or environmental risks, including for nuclear-energy related activities, and strengthen the rights of the members of public in environmental matters. These impacts are valid for all member States across the whole ECE region.

## II. Lessons learned

26. While offering and providing different activities, whether addressing the legal, institutional or technical challenges of member States or responding to new and emerging issues or circumstances, the secretariat has been collecting valuable lessons learned in order to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities. A number of lessons learned are of particular relevance. Among them are:

- (a) A long-term approach to capacity-building delivers sustainable results. Pilot projects belong to the most effective kinds of capacity-building;
- (b) Benchmarks are very useful in helping to track progress in implementation;
- (c) Awareness and commitment at the political level are important prerequisites for implementation and compliance;
- (d) Cooperation between relevant line ministries and levels of government (national and local) is key to effective and efficient implementation;
- (e) Regular reporting is important for assessing progress in implementation and compliance;
- (f) Lack of participation in activities decreases the potential for exchange of knowledge and good practice and weakens the recommendations for the way forward.

### A. Capacity-building

27. One-time capacity-building activities often do not bring the expected results, since knowledge, skills and competence building is a medium- to long-term process. Therefore, pilot projects that allow putting into practice knowledge acquired during training are among the most effective kinds of capacity-building. Pilot projects have been successfully organized under all the MEAs, e.g.: the Espoo Convention pilot project on the Neman River in Belarus; the Industrial Accidents Convention on-site inspections of industrial facilities; the Aarhus Convention project on access to justice in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (focusing on issues of legal standing) and in countries of South-Eastern Europe (focusing on standing, remedies and costs); and the Water Convention pilot project on river basin management and climate change adaptation in the Neman River Basin.

28. Capacity-building needs to be sustained in the long term, for which adequate funding is required. Therefore, the long-term commitment of the secretariat and the countries involved to capacity-building is crucial.

### B. Benchmarks

29. Benchmarks are tools that allow member States to carry out self-evaluations of their performance and act as guideposts for improvement. Therefore, they can be very useful in advancing the implementation and enhancing compliance with the MEAs. Some examples are the self-evaluation tool or “scorecard” under the Protocol on Water and Health or the benchmarks for the implementation of the Industrial Accidents Convention.

30. At the same time, a number of member States lack the necessary capacity to properly apply the benchmarks. Therefore, further steps need to be taken to ensure long-term support. This, in turn, requires the long-term commitment of the secretariat.

### **C. Commitment and awareness at political levels**

31. Lack of awareness and commitment at the political level can cause the loss of organizational and substantive knowledge and competence with regard to MEAs. Such losses can occur, for example, when the national focal points responsible for implementation of MEAs are changed if Governments do not ensure the transfer of knowledge and competence. Unfortunately, in a few member States where there is a recurrent reorganization of ministries and institutions or reassignment of staff within relevant government departments, transfer of knowledge and competence is not ensured. Changes in governmental structures or nomination of new focal points should not affect the continuity of the MEA work. There is thus a necessity for additional actions and adequate awareness building at the political level to address this issue.

### **D. Cooperation**

32. A lack of or limited cooperation between ministries responsible for the MEAs and between the central and local governments cause ineffectiveness and inefficiency in implementation and compliance. On the one hand, there is often lack of cooperation on the subject of joint interests between the ministries involved, e.g.: for the Aarhus Convention, between ministries of environment and ministries of justice; for the Industrial Accidents Convention, between ministries of environment and ministries of the interior. On the other hand, there is lack of cooperation among ministries and national focal points responsible for different MEAs. Both of these situations create a risk of overlap and duplication of efforts, where work is done on parallel tracks without coordination and mutual reinforcement. In addition, many of the treaty obligations are implemented by local authorities, e.g., assessment of environmental impacts of infrastructure projects or land-use plans in line with the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA. Information sharing, coordination and cooperation between the various levels of government is therefore key for ensuring the proper implementation of the MEAs.

33. The secretariat works to improve cooperation and promote the coherence of efforts, as well as to prevent overlaps and duplication of efforts, among others, by:

(a) Organizing capacity development activities with the participation of experts from all relevant ministries, and targeting also local authorities;

(b) Establishing partnerships and coordination/cooperation mechanisms that bring together all the main organizations dealing with the same subjects in the ECE region, such as, e.g., UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the EU, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and EBRD;

(c) Holding regular consultations among chairs of the MEA governing bodies;

(d) Conducting joint MEA activities where there is a demand for it, such as the joint meetings of the Aarhus Convention with the Protocol on Water and Health and with the Protocol on SEA.

34. Additional activities may, however, be designed and implemented to further enhance cooperation and coherence in activities aimed at improving implementation and compliance with the MEAs.

### **E. Regular reporting**

35. Requirements for regular reporting to the MEA governing bodies — especially on national implementation, application of recommendations and other outcomes of technical assistance, where applicable — provides a means of measuring whether expected results are achieved and helps to design corrective actions where they have not. In this sense, reporting helps ensure progress in implementation and compliance. Reporting requirements have been established under most of the MEAs: e.g., under the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions, Parties have to report to the Meeting of the Parties and to the Implementation or Compliance Committees; and, under the Industrial Accidents Convention, member States participating in the Assistance Programme have to submit self-assessment reports to the Working Group on Implementation.

36. At the same time, despite these requirements, some member States fail to report or provide poor quality reports or self-assessments. Further work in these areas is needed, therefore, to improve implementation and compliance through building commitment and awareness at the political level.

### **F. Lack of participation**

37. The lack of participation in some MEAs activities, in particular by Western and South-Eastern and Central European countries, often due to lack of funding, decreases the potential of exchange of experience and good practice. This has a twofold effect: on the one hand, absent member States are not able to benefit from the direct exchange of knowledge, experience and good practice; on the other, the experience, knowledge and practice of absent member States is not provided to design and further harmonize actions and demanded outputs.

38. Steps to prevent absence of Parties in relevant MEA activities need therefore to be taken, whether through organizing activities in partnership with other organizations, which is already being done, or through other means.

## **III. Addressing challenges and further steps**

39. There are a number of challenges that need to be addressed to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of activities to strengthen Parties' implementation of and compliance with MEAs. These challenges are directly linked with the lessons learned presented in chapter II.

40. Among the major challenges encountered are:

(a) Difficulties in ensuring long-term commitments due to short-term financial planning and unpredictability of funding;

(b) Insufficient political support for the work needed to improve implementation and compliance in a number of member States;

(c) A lack of cooperation and coordination at both the national level (between ministries and between levels of Government) and the international level (between ministries of neighbouring member States, between organizations);

(d) Insufficient follow-up to and reporting on capacity-building or assistance activities by some member States;

(e) Inadequate follow-up to the decisions of the governing bodies of MEAs by some Parties, in particular with regard to non-compliance;

(f) The absence of some Western, Central and South-Eastern European member States in MEA activities.

41. At the same time, following consultations of the MEA governing bodies, the secretariat is taking actions to address these challenges, as set out in sections A to D below.

## **A. Funding**

42. Under each MEA, actions are being considered to make the financing of activities more predictable and sustainable. Also, partners to finance activities are being sought, for example, the Water Convention secretariat is working with the Global Environment Facility. The issue of sustainable funding is also a subject of discussion at the informal consultations of chairs of the MEA governing bodies.

## **B. Insufficient political support**

43. The secretariat pursues joint missions to foster awareness and political support for implementation of and compliance with the MEAs within an integrated approach, including ECE missions to Central Asia or under the ECE-GIZ project “Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia”.

44. For member States interested in the transition to a green economy, the implementation of and compliance with MEAs is promoted as an effective means for achieving the transition. The avenues for effectively promoting such an approach need to be further explored. A first example is assisting Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to enhance the application of SEA in line with the Protocol on SEA. This is done within the Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP Green) Programme, which is sponsored by European Union and jointly managed by OECD, ECE, UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

45. Also, opening up of the MEAs can be viewed as an avenue to enhance political support for the application of MEAs by member States, including those that have common borders with non-ECE member States. The opening of MEAs to global accession is also often an opportunity to attract new donors to the work of the MEAs, such as development cooperation agencies. However, the process also brings new challenges, as it will require a significant increase in secretariat capacity to ensure the operation of these new global mandates.

## **C. Cooperation, coordination and lack of participation in activities**

46. The secretariat is further expanding sectoral and subject-related partnerships and cooperation. Such partnerships ensure coherence in delivery of activities to member States and prevent duplication of efforts. They contribute to increasing the efficiency and impact of the work and help to ensure greater participation in the activities organized.

## D. Insufficient follow-up and reporting

47. The secretariat is talking with the European Environmental Agency about potential synergies that can be found in implementing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) for data collection and sharing. Reporting practices are being reviewed to make them simpler. Also, ways to use the Environmental Performance Review Programme to assess progress achieved by the member States with economies in transition in the topic areas of the MEAs are being explored, e.g.: with regard to the water sector for the Water Convention; the industrial sector for the Industrial Accidents and Espoo Conventions; and air protection for CLRTAP.

## IV. Questions for discussion

48. While the secretariat and the governing bodies of MEAs are working on, discussing and searching for solutions to the challenges mentioned in chapter III, including through joint activities or in cooperation with partners, CEP provides a forum that can assist the MEAs governing bodies in identifying ways to better address some of these challenges.

49. CEP may wish therefore to consider the following questions in the discussion on how to assist the MEA governing bodies and the secretariat to address the existing challenges:

(a) How can CEP support strengthening implementation of and compliance with MEAs?:

(i) What further measures could ensure stable political support for MEAs?;

(ii) How can MEAs be further promoted through relevant bi- and multilateral mechanisms in the region and beyond (e.g., EU accession process and neighbourhood programmes, member States' foreign policy assistance programmes)?;

(b) How can CEP support the strengthening of synergies between the MEAs: are there further suggestions for strengthening coordination and cooperation among MEAs and among MEAs and other relevant institutions?;

(c) How can CEP support the MEA governing bodies in ensuring predictable funding for MEA activities?:

(i) How can voluntary financing schemes be made more predictable?;

(ii) How can longer-term financial commitments be ensured?;

(iii) How can the shortage in the United Nations regular budget resources vis-à-vis the needs of MEAs be addressed?

## Annex

### Ratification status of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe multilateral environmental agreements

<i>ECE member States</i>	<i>Aarhus Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on PRTRs</i>	<i>CLRTAP</i>	<i>Protocol on POPs</i>	<i>Protocol on Heavy Metals</i>	<i>Gothenburg Protocol</i>	<i>Espoo Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on SEA</i>	<i>Industrial Accidents Convention</i>	<i>Water Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on Water and Health</i>
Albania	27/06/2001	16/06/2009	02/12/2005	—	—	—	04/10/1991	02/12/2005	05/01/1994	05/01/1994	08/03/2002
Armenia	01/08/2001	—	21/02/1997	—	—	—	21/02/1997	24/01/2011	21/02/1997	—	—
Austria	17/01/2005	23/03/2010	16/12/1982	27/08/2002	17/12/2003	—	27/07/1994	23/03/2010	04/08/1999	25/07/1996	—
Azerbaijan	23/03/2000	—	03/07/2002	—	—	—	25/03/1999	—	16/06/2004	03/08/2000	09/01/2003
Belarus	09/03/2000	—	13/06/1980	—	—	—	10/11/2005	—	25/06/2003	29/05/2003	22/04/2009
Belgium	21/01/2003	12/03/2009	15/07/1982	25/05/2006	08/06/2005	13/09/2007	02/07/1999	—	06/04/2006	08/11/2000	29/06/2004
Bosnia and Herzegovina	01/10/2008	—	— 01/09/1993	—	—	—	14/12/2009	—	20/02/2013	03/12/2009	13/10/2011
Bulgaria	17/12/2003	15/01/2010	09/06/1981	05/12/2001	28/10/2003	05/07/2005	12/05/1995	25/01/2007	12/05/1995	28/10/2003	—
Canada	—	—	15/12/1981	18/12/1998	18/12/1998	—	13/05/1998	—	—	—	—
Croatia	27/03/2007	14/07/2008	21/09/1992	06/09/2007	06/09/2007	07/10/2008	08/07/1996	06/10/2009	20/01/2000	08/07/1996	28/07/2006
Cyprus	19/09/2003	05/11/2012	20/11/1991	02/09/2004	02/09/2004	11/04/2007	20/07/2000	—	31/08/2005	—	—
Czech Republic	06/07/2004	12/08/2009	30/09/1993	06/08/2002	06/08/2002	12/08/2004	26/02/2001	19/07/2005	12/06/2000	12/06/2000	15/11/2001
Denmark	29/09/2000	13/10/2008	18/06/1982	06/07/2001	12/07/2001	11/06/2002	14/03/1997	04/06/2012	28/03/2001	28/05/1997	—
Estonia	02/08/2001	15/08/2007	07/03/2000	11/05/2005	24/03/2006	—	25/04/2001	12/04/2010	17/05/2000	16/06/1995	09/09/2003
European Union	17/02/2005	21/02/2006	15/07/1982	30/04/2004	03/05/2001	23/06/2003	24/06/1997	12/11/2008	24/04/1998	14/09/1995	—
Finland	01/09/2004	21/04/2009	15/04/1981	03/09/2002	20/06/2000	23/12/2003	10/08/1995	18/04/2005	13/09/1999	21/02/1996	03/03/2005
France	08/07/2002	10/07/2009	03/11/1981	25/07/2003	26/07/2002	10/04/2007	15/06/2001	—	03/10/2003	30/06/1998	06/05/2005
Georgia	11/04/2000	—	11/02/1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Germany	15/01/2007	28/08/2007	15/07/1982	25/04/2002	30/09/2003	21/10/2004	08/08/2002	22/02/2007	09/09/1998	30/01/1995	15/01/2007
Greece	27/01/2006	—	30/08/1983	—	—	—	24/02/1998	—	24/02/1998	06/09/1996	—
Hungary	03/07/2001	13/07/2009	22/09/1980	07/01/2004	19/04/2005	13/11/2006	11/07/1997	26/11/2010	02/06/1994	02/09/1994	07/12/2001
Iceland	20/10/2011	—	05/05/1983	29/05/2003	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Israel	—	14/01/2013	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

<i>ECE member States</i>	<i>Aarhus Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on PRTRs</i>	<i>CLRTAP</i>	<i>Protocol on POPs</i>	<i>Protocol on Heavy Metals</i>	<i>Gothenburg Protocol</i>	<i>Espoo Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on SEA</i>	<i>Industrial Accidents Convention</i>	<i>Water Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on Water and Health</i>
Ireland	20/06/2012	20/06/2012	15/07/1982	—	—	—	25/07/2002	—	—	—	—
Italy	13/06/2001	—	15/07/1982	20/06/2006	—	—	19/01/1995	—	02/07/2002	23/05/1996	—
Kazakhstan	11/01/2001	—	11/01/2001	—	—	—	11/01/2001	—	11/01/2001	11/01/2001	—
Kyrgyzstan	01/05/2001	—	25/05/2000	—	—	—	01/05/2001	—	—	—	—
Latvia	14/06/2002	24/04/2008	15/07/1994	28/10/2004	09/06/2005	25/05/2004	31/08/1998	—	29/06/2004	10/12/1996	24/11/2004
Liechtenstein	—	—	22/11/1983	23/12/2003	23/12/2003	—	09/07/1998	—	—	19/11/1997	—
Lithuania	28/01/2002	05/03/2009	25/01/1994	16/06/2006	28/10/2004	02/04/2004	11/01/2001	22/03/2011	02/11/2000	28/04/2000	17/03/2004
Luxembourg	25/10/2005	07/02/2006	15/07/1982	01/05/2000	01/05/2000	07/08/2001	29/08/1995	02/07/2008	08/08/1994	07/06/1994	04/10/2001
Malta	23/04/2002	—	14/03/1997	—	—	—	20/10/2010	—	—	—	—
Monaco	—	—	27/08/1999	—	13/11/2003	—	—	—	28/08/2001	—	—
Montenegro	02/11/2009	—	23/10/2006	09/02/2012	30/12/2011	—	09/07/2009	02/11/2009	19/05/2009	—	—
Netherlands	29/12/2004	11/02/2008	15/07/1982	23/06/2000	23/06/2000	05/02/2004	28/02/1995	08/12/2009	06/11/2006	14/03/1995	25/06/2009
Norway	02/05/2003	27/06/2008	13/02/1981	16/12/1999	16/12/1999	30/01/2002	23/06/1993	11/10/2007	01/04/1993	01/04/1993	06/01/2004
Poland	15/02/2002	25/09/2012	19/07/1985	—	—	—	12/06/1997	21/06/2011	08/09/2003	15/03/2000	—
Portugal	09/06/2003	08/10/2009	29/09/1980	—	—	16/02/2005	06/04/2000	04/09/2012	02/11/2006	09/12/1994	06/09/2006
Republic of Moldova	09/08/1999	—	09/06/1995	01/10/2002	01/10/2002	—	04/01/1994	—	04/01/1994	04/01/1994	16/09/2005
Romania	11/07/2000	26/08/2009	27/02/1991	05/09/2003	05/09/2003	05/09/2003	29/03/2001	08/03/2010	22/05/2003	31/05/1995	05/01/2001
Russian Federation	—	—	22/05/1980	—	—	—	—	—	01/02/1994	02/11/1993	31/12/1999
Serbia	31/07/2009	23/11/2011	12/03/2001	26/03/2012	26/03/2012	—	18/12/2007	08/07/2010	31/07/2009	27/08/2010	16/04/2013
Slovakia	05/12/2005	01/04/2008	28/05/1993	30/12/2002	30/12/2002	28/04/2005	19/11/1999	29/05/2008	09/09/2003	07/07/1999	02/10/2001
Slovenia	29/07/2004	23/04/2010	06/07/1992	15/11/2005	09/02/2004	04/05/2004	05/08/1998	23/04/2010	13/05/2002	13/04/1999	—
Spain	29/12/2004	24/09/2009	15/06/1982	15/02/2011	21/09/2011	28/01/2005	10/09/1992	24/09/2009	16/05/1997	16/02/2000	24/09/2009
Sweden	20/05/2005	15/10/2008	12/02/1981	19/01/2000	19/01/2000	28/03/2002	24/01/1992	30/03/2006	22/09/1999	05/08/1993	—
Switzerland	—	27/04/2007	06/05/1983	14/11/2000	14/11/2000	14/09/2005	16/09/1996	—	21/05/1999	23/05/1995	27/10/2006
Tajikistan	17/07/2001	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

<i>ECE member States</i>	<i>Aarhus Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on PRTRs</i>	<i>CLRTAP</i>	<i>Protocol on POPs</i>	<i>Protocol on Heavy Metals</i>	<i>Gothenburg Protocol</i>	<i>Espoo Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on SEA</i>	<i>Industrial Accidents Convention</i>	<i>Water Convention</i>	<i>Protocol on Water and Health</i>
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	22/07/1999	02/11/2010	30/12/1997	01/11/2010	01/11/2010	—	31/08/1999	—	02/03/2010	—	—
Turkey	—	—	18/04/1983	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turkmenistan	25/06/1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29/08/2012	—
Ukraine	18/11/1999	—	05/06/1980	—	—	—	20/07/1999	—	—	08/10/1999	26/09/2003
United Kingdom	23/02/2005	31/07/2009	15/07/1982	02/09/2005	06/07/2005	08/12/2005	10/10/1997	—	05/05/2002	—	—
United States of America	—	—	30/11/1981	—	10/01/2001	22/11/2004	—	—	—	—	—
Uzbekistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	04/09/2007	—