

**Item 2
Germany**

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Untertitel:	The "Environment for Europe" process: 20 years of pan-European cooperation"
Redner/in:	Guido Herz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kazakhstan
Anlass:	Plenary session on September 21, 2011, 4-6 pm during Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference
Ort:	Independence Palace in Astana, Kazakhstan

Ladies and gentlemen,
Colleagues,

First of all I should like to thank our host, the Ministry of Environment Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, for the reception here in Astana and the excellent preparation of the conference.

In the twenty years of its existence the "Environment for Europe" process has triggered important environmental changes and political processes.

In times of transition and new beginnings the process helped to build bridges between East and West. The fact that the 7th Conference of Environment Ministers is taking place on the twentieth anniversary of the "Environment for Europe" process emphasises the importance of the region at the interface between Europe and Asia.

The lion's share of transformation achievements over the past 20 years has been accomplished by the target countries themselves and the "Environment for Europe" process supported them in their endeavours. Germany contributed within the framework of its possibilities and will continue to do so. For the future it will above all be important to take into account a mounting differentiation in the target region.

We believe that cooperation under the auspices of UNECE will continue to be successful if the new environmental challenges are accommodated and concrete steps towards solutions can be found.

The two topics we will be discussing during the next few days will provide valuable input.

Over the next few years it will become necessary to restructure our energy and resource intensive economies and build systems based on an efficient use of resources and sustainable growth. The German government welcomes the efforts made by Kazakhstan and its "Green Bridge" initiative which contributes to increasing the integration of the European-Asian region and boosting "Green Growth". We support this initiative and its further development as a contribution to the UN conference on sustainable development due to take place in Rio de Janeiro next year. It would send out an important signal if efforts undertaken in the UNECE and ESCAP regions in this context could be pooled through targeted supra-regional projects and an exchange across borders.

The management of water resources is another topic of special importance in the Central Asian region. Through its "Water Initiative Central Asia" the German Foreign Office has contributed to greater transboundary cooperation and a strengthening of regional institutions in this sector as part of the EU Central Asia Strategy since 2008.

By way of conclusion I should like to express the wish that we use the opportunity provided by this conference with its multifaceted participation of representatives from government, industry and civil society, to have an open, frank and thorough dialogue and give a fresh impetus to cooperation.

Thank you very much for your attention.