



# Environment for Europe Bulletin

A summary report of the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”

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## SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”: 10-12 OCTOBER 2007

The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” convened at the Sava Centre in Belgrade, Serbia, from 10 to 12 October 2007. The event was the sixth meeting to be held in the Environment for Europe (EfE) process. The process was initiated in 1991 and is a unique partnership of the member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations system represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations, regional environment centers, non-governmental organizations and other major groups.

The high-level meeting, attended by over 1000 delegates from over 50 countries, provided a forum for participants to consider the future of the multilateral EfE process. Participants of the conference also addressed various topics, including: assessment and implementation of commitments; the state of the environment; implementation of multilateral environment agreements; findings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) environmental performance reviews; education for sustainable development; biodiversity; capacity building; perspectives of South East Europe; environmental policy and international competitiveness; and environmental finance and partnerships.

Outcomes of the meeting included a Ministerial Declaration on the future of the EfE process and Ministerial Statements on education for sustainable development and biodiversity, respectively.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PROCESS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was established in 1947 to encourage economic cooperation among its 56 member states. It provides a forum for communication; brokers international legal instruments addressing trade, transport and the environment; and supplies statistics and economic and environmental analysis. The UNECE has five legally-binding Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs): the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention); the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;



Group photograph prior to the beginning of the opening session.

the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents; and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention).

The First Ministerial Conference in the “Environment for Europe (EfE)” process was held in 1991 at Dobris Castle, Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia). Environment Ministers from 34 European countries, the United States,

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Brazil, Japan, various UN bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions were present. The conference addressed ways to strengthen cooperation to protect and improve the environment, and long term strategies toward an environmental programme for Europe. The conference set guidelines for pan-European cooperation and requested the Commission of European Communities to prepare, in cooperation with UNECE, a report describing the state of the environment in Europe (“Europe’s Environment: the Dobris Assessment” of 1995).

The Second EfE Ministerial Conference convened in Lucerne, Switzerland, in April 1993. A Ministerial Declaration that set out the political dimension of the EfE process, which aimed to harmonize environmental quality and policies on the continent, and to secure peace, stability and sustainable development. The Lucerne Conference also endorsed the broad strategy contained in the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP) and set up a Task Force to implement the Programme. The conference also decided to establish a Project Preparation Committee to focus on environmental investments as a networking mechanism to improve coordination between international financial institutions and donors wanting to invest in environmental protection in central and eastern Europe.

The Third EfE Ministerial Conference convened in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 23 to 25 October 1995. In the Ministerial Declaration from the meeting, ministers reaffirmed their commitment to cooperation in the field of environmental protection in Europe. They underlined the urgent need for further integration of environmental considerations into all sectoral policies, to ensure that economic growth occurs in accordance with principles of sustainable development. The meeting also recommended the European Environment Agency (EEA) should carry out further work on the pan-European state of the environment assessment.

The Fourth EfE Ministerial Conference convened in Aarhus, Denmark, from 23 to 25 June 1998. The report on “Europe’s Environment: The Second Assessment” was presented at the meeting. It identified the main areas of achievement and concern in the state of the European environment and based on the reports’ findings, ministers decided to strengthen support within the EfE process for the newly independent States and those countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were not part of the European Union’s accession process. The conference also adopted the Aarhus Convention. Two new Protocols to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, on Heavy Metals and on Persistent Organic Pollutants, were also adopted and signed by 33 countries and the European Community. Ministers also adopted a Declaration on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, and endorsed several documents including the Pan-European Strategy to Phase Out Leaded Petrol, a resolution on biological and landscape diversity, and a policy statement on energy efficiency.

The Fifth EfE Ministerial Conference convened in Kiev, Ukraine, from 21 to 23 May 2003. The Ministerial Declaration underlined the importance of the EfE process as a tool to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the region, thus contributing to wider peace and security. Ministers also endorsed the Guidelines for Strengthening Compliance

with, and Implementation of, MEAs in the UNECE region. Governments of the Carpathian region also adopted a Convention on Environment Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, which was opened for signature on 22 May 2003 and was signed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine. Ministers also requested the EEA prepare a fourth assessment report for the next ministerial conference, building on new partnerships, especially with UNECE and the UN Environment Programme (UNE, and they expressed their support of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and its activities.

At the Kiev Conference, three new Protocols to UNECE Conventions were adopted and opened for signature. These were: the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, to the Espoo Convention; the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters; and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention.

In preparation for the Sixth Ministerial Conference, a number of preparatory meetings were held from 2005 to 2007 by UNECE/Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO), the Executive Committee of the WGSO, and the Drafting Group for preparing the Ministerial Declaration.

## REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment For Europe (EfE)” convened from 10 to 12 October 2007. Throughout the meeting, participants listened to keynote presentations, roundtable discussions and interventions from states, UN organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). On Wednesday, 10 October, delegates addressed issues of assessment and implementation, education for sustainable development and biodiversity. On Thursday, 11 October, discussions were held on progress and perspectives in implementation of the environment strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and on the perspectives of South East Europe (SEE). Delegates also addressed partnerships and environmental financing. On Friday, 12 October, discussions were held on the future of the EfE process and delegates adopted a Ministerial Declaration. The conference closed on Friday afternoon.

This report provides a summary of conferences proceedings, arranged according to the conference agenda.



Dancers welcomed participants during the opening ceremony.



Marek Belka, Executive Secretary of UNECE during his keynote address.

### **OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Conference Chair Saša Dragin, Minister of Environmental Protection, Serbia, welcomed delegates to the Sixth EfE meeting. He introduced, and delegates adopted, the draft provisional agenda for the conference.

#### **WELCOMING ADDRESSES**

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Serbia Boris Tadic welcomed delegates and noted the Conference was the biggest event since Serbia's democratic changes in 2000. He said Serbia had invested significantly in the environment and that the relationship among environment, peace and security are becoming increasingly evident. President Tadic proposed that Ministers consider the introduction of a tax exemption for transport with zero emissions with the goal of achieving 20% of vehicles being zero emission by 2020.

Sviatoslav Kurulenko, First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection, Ukraine, passed the "Environment for Europe torch" from Kiev to Belgrade. He noted the opportunity to improve the efficiency of the process and called for enhancing efforts to improve environmental democracy.

#### **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

Marek Belka, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), noted discussion on policy coherence is common and that the EfE process has exemplified this. He said identifying ways the process can reduce disparities between European countries should remain foremost in delegates' minds. Belka advocated for economic models that value environmental resources, and for building environmental concerns into development strategies.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), remarked that climate change has brought to the forefront the fundamental truth that technology has not allowed humanity to escape resource constraints, but on the contrary, it has shown what happens when humanity fails to understand the linkages. Steiner said the ability to respond to environmental change phenomena is predicated on cooperation to identify opportunities and to address constraints. He highlighted that the development path of the 20th century does not need to be followed in the current century, and that the environment is a resource for development, not an asset to be stripped. He said that, taking into account the opportunity cost of development, the environment is more important than ever before.



Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director

### **ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Conference Chair Dragin introduced discussion by explaining that during the previous decade much work had been done to strengthen the general framework of environmental monitoring and that the session was an opportunity to review such progress.

#### **STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

**Presentation:** Jaqueline McGlade, Executive Director, European Environment Agency (EEA), introduced the findings of the fourth pan-European assessment report on the state of the environment (the Belgrade Assessment). She said remaining threats include air, water and soils pollution, as well as biodiversity loss. McGlade stressed that climate change exacerbates these concerns and that there exists significant scope to improve production and consumption patterns. She noted remaining challenges would serve to undermine both security and livelihoods if they are not addressed. McGlade highlighted the need to close data gaps and as an example, said drinking water statistics are currently incomplete and incomparable.



Jaqueline McGlade, Executive Director, EEA

She noted remaining challenges would serve to undermine both security and livelihoods if they are not addressed. McGlade highlighted the need to close data gaps and as an example, said drinking water statistics are currently incomplete and incomparable.

**Keynote Addresses:** Humberto Rosa, Secretary of State for the Environment, Portugal, on behalf of the European Union (EU), said the meeting was an opportunity to address key issues, including poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an integrated manner.

Leonty Khoruzhik, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, said environmental monitoring data is needed for policy makers and for the public. He explained that Belarus has made significant investment in establishing an environmental monitoring system.

Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of Environment, Finland, stressed that environmentally-friendly practices could create a competitive advantage in European markets. He noted that as global trade accelerates it is vital that economic growth and environmental achievement are achieved concurrently.



Daniel Reifsnnyder, State Department, US

Daniel Reifsnnyder, State Department, US, noted the interest in establishing a sub-regional climate change center in Serbia and said the US would consider how it can contribute to such a center.

Victoria Elias, European ECO-Forum, welcomed the Belgrade Assessment Report and said sustainable consumption and production must become a focus of the EfE process in order to achieve results.

**Discussion:** Poland highlighted that dynamic modeling can be helpful in anticipating environmental impacts, while the Czech Republic underscored the need for a more coordinated approach to implement soft and legally binding instruments. The World Bank highlighted the degrading water and sewer infrastructure in many European areas, and said improvement needed sustained commitment and catalytic donor support. Germany stressed the century of cheap resources has come to an end, and Serbia described its efforts to establish a record of information about polluters.

Croatia explained its most recent state of environment report had for the first time used an indicator approach. Romania supported the establishment of a sub-regional center for climate change in Belgrade. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia underscored its desire to become a full member of the EEA, and Estonia announced it has successfully met its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol.

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF MEAS AND FINDINGS OF UNECE EPRS

Raimonds Vejonis, Minister of Environment Protection, Latvia chaired the session and introduced the discussion on implementation of multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) and the findings of UNECE Environmental Progress Reviews (EPRS).

##### Keynote Addresses

Dzhevdet Chakarov, Minister of Environment and Water, Bulgaria, discussed the broad nature of MEA implementation, which involves local authorities, NGOs and scientific institutes.

Giuliava Gasparrini, on behalf of Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, Minister for the Environment, Italy, said the five UNECE MEAs represent a unique set of instruments that raise public awareness and catalyze action. She said the synergies among UNECE Conventions should be reinforced.

Constantin Mihailescu, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Moldova, said that although Moldova was an economy in transition, it recently requested its second EPR.

Sviatoslav Kurulenko, said the Ukraine had undertaken measures aimed at resolving and fulfilling all tasks and objectives, and that by late 2007 further progress will be made.

Rut Bizková, Deputy Minister Environment, Czech Republic, said EPRS were an essential tool and an outstanding instrument for economies in transition to tackle environmental discrepancies. When undertaking EPRS, Bizková noted that countries set their own priorities and timetables, and that donors are attracted to this.

**Discussion:** Montenegro explained that its second EPR was recently approved by parliament and the results would be integrated into environmental policy. Germany said the UNECE MEAs are one of the backbones of environmental progress in Europe and an important tool to respond to the challenges presented in the Belgrade Assessment. Romania stressed capacity building and prioritized strengthening partnerships. Belgium highlighted the importance of the Environment and Security Programme and said it should be further developed. Kyrgyzstan noted a polluted cloud was present over Kyrgyzstan and called for precise research for its investigation. Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE) highlighted the need for further ratification of UNECE MEAs in the CEE region. European ECO-Forum said UNECE MEAs form a solid legislative foundation and that is essential all UNECE member states ratify them and their associated protocols.

#### SPECIAL SESSIONS

##### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On Wednesday afternoon, Joint Session Chair Evripidis Stylianidis, Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs, Greece, welcomed delegates to the Joint Session on education for sustainable development (ESD) and introduced seven keynote speakers.

**Keynote addresses:** Zoran Loncar, Minister of Education, Serbia, stressed the importance of education in eradicating poverty and increasing economic competitiveness.

Edward Picco, Minister of Education, Canada, addressed challenges facing educators in designing curricula and in monitoring progress.

Agnieszka Bolesta, on behalf of Jan Szyszko, Minister of Environment, Poland, drew attention to the need for comprehensive ESD approaches, including social and economic aspects.

Alzhan Braliev, Kazakhstan, noted Central European cooperation strategies.

Åsa-Brit Karlsson, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Sweden, called for multiple actors to take responsibility in sustainable development, including businesses, NGOs, researchers and politicians.

Engelbert Ruoss, Director, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, highlighted his organization's efforts to catalyze, coordinate and lend support to the global ESD process. He noted agency-level contributions in knowledge transfer among stakeholders.



Zoran Loncar, Minister of Education, Serbia

Jacqueline Cramer, Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands, presented key findings of the report on progress in implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, including the need for: economic incentives, further research on ESD, development of additional content and teaching materials, mutual exchange of information among countries, and greater emphasis on informal learning.



Jacqueline Cramer, Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands

**Discussion:** Tajikistan, on behalf of Central Asian countries, discussed increased coordination with international organizations and donor countries. Lithuania, on behalf of SEE countries, noted the shortfall of economic and technological support.

Moldova, supported by Lithuania, called for formal as well as non-formal and informal ESD strategies. Hungary underscored the importance of attitudes and behaviors modeled by educators, parents, families and state institutions. Armenia drew attention to state scholarships and short-term trainings for ESD.

Latvia pointed out the need to prioritize ESD in government policies and create a core set of training materials. Norway called for leadership in ESD by wealthy countries. Romania noted achievements in her country, including access to ESD education for migrant workers and disadvantaged groups. Italy stressed his country's inclusion of institutions and relevant stakeholders as a key part of their development of a national action plan for ESD.

Toyota Motor Europe stated that his company emphasized environmental education of employees and management, particularly with regard to reduction of waste and energy use. Belarus called for well-trained teachers. France noted the importance of paving the way for students to consider sustainable development in their future careers.

Austria welcomed the development of indicators and proposed to strengthen the communication between the economic and education sectors. Cyprus highlighted the creation of networks in civil society. Israel discussed outdoor activities and creating tools and resources in multiple languages.

Kyrgyzstan highlighted its interest in supporting a government education programme for ESD. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia noted that investing in knowledge means investing in education. Denmark explained that this event is a unique chance to link education for sustainable development and climate change issues. The German Commission for UNESCO highlighted the need to move ESD from the margins to the mainstream and announced an international conference on the UN Decade of ESD will be held in Germany in 2009.

**Statement:** Session Chair Stylianidis presented the draft ministerial statement on ESD on Wednesday, 10 October, and it was adopted without amendment.

In the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development by the Ministers of Educations and of the Environment of the UNECE Region (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/14), Ministers and Heads of Delegation stated that they:

- strongly support the continuation of this endeavor;
- agree that the further process should seek to build a broad political platform for regional and sub-regional cooperation and partnerships;
- urge their governments to take part in the further work on fostering national processes, ensure that appropriate resources are made available, monitor the implementation process on the basis of indicators developed by the Expert Group, and report on national progress to UNECE;
- invite UNECE to further strengthen cooperation with UNESCO and to continue providing secretariat support;
- decide to extend the mandate of the Steering Committee until 2015 and request it to prepare a Work Plan of Implementation for Phase II of the Strategy;
- invite stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to contribute to and support the implementation process; and,
- decide that future ministerial segments should be held on a regular basis, preferably at the EfE conferences.

### BIODIVERSITY

In introductory remarks, Session co-Chair Helen Oddveig Bjørnøy, Minister of the Environment, Norway, noted a number of promising developments in pan-European efforts to halt biodiversity loss, while co-Chair Rob Wolters, Executive Director, European Centre for Nature Conservation, added that several additional efforts will be necessary to achieve the 2010 biodiversity targets.



Helen Oddveig Bjørnøy, Minister of the Environment, Norway

**Keynote Address:** In her keynote address on managing biodiversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Jacqueline Cramer called for countries to step up biodiversity preservation efforts to counter the challenges of water stress, deforestation, ecosystem fragmentation, and climate change. Agnieszka Bolesta added that biodiversity protection does not necessarily hinder sustained social and economic development.

In his keynote address, Achim Steiner called for more synergy between biodiversity and climate change issues. He suggested that even though climate change involves the atmosphere, human responses to climate change involve the biosphere, citing the examples of adaptation and mitigation.

**Roundtable Discussions:** During the roundtable discussion on managing biodiversity for human well-being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Azerbaijan reflected on historical factors causing biodiversity degradation. The Council of Europe discussed the need to protect a complete system of ecosystems, habitats, genes and landscapes of European importance, and drew attention to documents they compiled to aid individual countries in this effort. The Biodiversity Conservation Centre, the Russian Federation, called for small-scale action at the municipal level. BIOTECA Ecological Society, Moldova, presented results from a study of High Nature Value Farmlands (HNVF). The World Bank presented results from its agro-environmental efforts in HNVF, wetlands and coastal areas, particularly in Romania and Turkey.



Participants during the roundtable discussion on managing biodiversity for human well-being in the 21st century

During the roundtable discussion on society in nature, nature in society roundtable discussion, Switzerland underscored that biodiversity has an economic use value, direct and indirect commercial value, and also an opportunity value. The EU highlighted that it is focusing on bringing biodiversity criteria into business strategy. Finland described a multi-stakeholder project called “Saving Nature for People.” The EEA explained that a first set of streamlined European biodiversity indicators has been developed and encouraged delegates to help extend spatial and temporal coverage by using them. The Province of Noord-Brabant, Netherlands described a multi-stakeholder project initiated for the countdown to 2010, that includes knowledge exchange on biodiversity.

The European Landowner’s Organization called for a long-term perspective, highlighting that landowners will be vital in implementing policies on the ground. GEOTA, Portugal, cautioned against viewing humans as separate from the natural world and noted the discrepancy between rhetoric and biodiversity policies. The “Gradac” Ecological Society, Serbia, discussed the role of NGOs in creating biodiversity policies. WWF Russia reported on the low priority given to environmental agencies by governments. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) stated that a trisected model of sustainability, with environment, economy and society weighted equally, does not give enough value to the environment. The UNECE representative for Youth called for intergenerational justice and increased education to combat biodiversity loss.

**Statement:** At the close of the Session, delegates adopted the Belgrade Statement on Biodiversity with a minor textual amendment (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/15, ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/15.Corr.1). In the Statement Ministers and Heads of Delegation:

- reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity and of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;
- welcome the formation of a Group of Experts on Biodiversity and Climate Change under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats;
- stress the need for an intersectoral approach to climate change;
- indicate that they will continue to support the implementation of the Pan-European Ecological Network as an important means for protecting biodiversity in Europe;

- emphasize that it is necessary to reconcile land use and development needs with the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem services;
- pledge to cooperate actively with all stakeholders and support the further cooperation between Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe on joint priorities concerning forest biological diversity;
- express their conviction that the cooperation and support of all PEBLDS and the donor community is crucial to address the challenges of the conservation of biodiversity while taking into account the diversity of needs, priorities and conditions of the region; and
- commit to promote the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into national sectoral policies. In the Statement, Ministers also recognize:
  - the strategic framework endorsed in 2006 by the Environment Council of the EU;
  - the progress in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and the initiatives;
  - activities carried out at the pan-European level in order to assist in the achievement of the Kiev biodiversity targets; and
  - interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change, aware that important drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide include governance failures and the failure of conventional economics to recognize the economic value of natural capital and ecosystem services.

In the Statement, Ministers also note:

- with concern the finding in the Belgrade Assessment that the 2010 biodiversity target will be difficult to attain unless considerable additional efforts are made; and
- with satisfaction that since 2003, regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local activities have been ongoing to address the 2010 biodiversity target.

## CAPACITY-BUILDING

### EECCA STRATEGY AND THE CENTRAL ASIA INITIATIVE

Session Chair Constantin Mihailescu welcomed delegates to the discussion on the Environment Strategy for EECCA countries and on the Central Asia Initiative for Sustainable Development.

**Presentations:** Lorents Lorentsen, Director of the Environment Directorate, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), presented findings from the OECD Environmental Action Programme (EAP) Task Force report “Policies for a better environment: Progress



Constantin Mihailescu, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Moldova

in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia”. He noted critical challenges, including weak incentives for consumers and producers and environmental enforcement capacities. To move forward, he said, improved institutional frameworks and a comprehensive approach to financing were necessary.

Arstanbek Davletkeldiev, State Agency of Environmental Protection and Forestry, Kyrgyzstan, presented a report on the implementation of the Central Asia Initiative on Sustainable Development. He supported the proposal of Kazakhstan to have the next pan-European conference in Kazakhstan, and suggested including this in the Ministerial Declaration.



Arstanbek Davletkeldiev, State Agency of Environmental Protection and Forestry, Kyrgyzstan

**Keynote addresses:** The Co-chairs of the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe gave keynote addresses. Alzhan Braliev, on behalf of Nurlan Iskakov, Minister of Environmental Protection, Kazakhstan, welcomed the identification of good practices; while Soledad Blanco, the European Commission, indicated her organization would continue to support environmental reform in the region, particularly regarding water and sanitation services.

Aram Hatutyunyan, Minister of Nature Protection, Armenia, noted his country as the first in the region to initiate a comprehensive programme on water resources management.

Rut Bizková said the Czech Republic was ready to share the experience of transition with other countries.

Michael Müller, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, underscored that ecological modernization is an opportunity, not a burden and stressed that the use of resources should be decoupled from economic growth.



Rut Bizková, Deputy Minister Environment, Czech Republic

Michael Kozeltsev, Executive Director, Regional Environment Center for the Russian Federation, explained that the EECCA environmental strategy should be adaptable to subregional and national levels.

Olga Ponizova, Executive Director, ECO-Accord, Russian Federation, called for the support of international organizations and noted that remaining issues included weak government sectors and lack of energy efficiency.

**EECCA Environment Strategy discussion:** Norway highlighted the need to focus the EfE process on biodiversity. Kyrgyzstan proposed new avenues of cooperation with the private sector, while Poland stressed international collaboration in the EECCA region. Sweden cautioned that donors should be attentive to individual needs for countries, Switzerland called for an ongoing exchange of ideas, and the US emphasized improving efficiency. Romania discussed the exchange of information in water management, while the Russian Federation noted his country's complicated heritage. United Nations Institute for

Training and Research reflected upon its assistance to EECCA countries in training and capacity building, and the European ECO-Forum drew attention to partnerships as a powerful tool.

**Central Asian Initiative discussion:** Kazakhstan reaffirmed his country's preparedness to host the next EfE process and underscored the importance of the sub-regional aspect of the process. Tajikistan said the outcomes of the Kiev meeting assisted countries to analyze and form environmental databanks, while Uzbekistan highlighted its readiness to cooperate with donors, countries and international organizations. ECO-Forum of Uzbekistan, on behalf of Central Asian NGOs, stressed the need to empower civil society.

### SEE PERSPECTIVES

**Presentation:** Conference Chair Dragin welcomed delegates to a discussion of SEE perspectives and presented the Belgrade Initiative to Enhance Regional Cooperation in the Field of Climate Change. He reflected upon issues facing SEE countries, particularly the need to continue developing and increasing vulnerability to climate extremes, and introduced the three primary recommendations of the Belgrade Initiative: to develop a climate change framework action plan, to create a climate change center in Belgrade, and to pursue regional and international partnerships.

**Keynote addresses:** Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, discussed the role of human activity in climate change, as well as disaster risk reduction and water management in the SEE region.

Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio highlighted future challenges concerning water resources, ecosystem protection, forest productivity, energy efficiency, economic development, and public health.

Predrag Nenezic, Minister of Tourism and Environment, Montenegro, discussed his country's efforts to develop and follow an economic model based on efforts to reduce risks of unsustainable production and consumption.

Lufter Xhuveli, Minister of the Environment, Forests and Water Administration, Albania, said the Albanian government had recently approved 25 small hydropower plants.

Nikola Ružinski, State Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, Croatia, said her country systematically implements the polluter-pays principle and expressed support for a subregional climate change center in Belgrade.

Sonja Lepitkova, Deputy Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, highlighted her country's role in the protection and sustainable development of mountains in the SEE region.

Vilim Primorac, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina, stressed sub-regional cooperation in environmental protection is important for strengthening economic and political stability.



Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization

Stavros Kaloyannis, Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, Greece, underscored that the Water Framework Directive could act as a guideline for international cooperation.

Kori Udovički, UNDP, said building capacity in SEE merits the most urgent, concerted, and long term attention and called for the EfE process to be utilized for this.

Soledad Blanco noted the drastic change in the landscape of SEE countries over the last four years, particularly in regard to EU membership. Corrado Clini, REC-CEE, underscored the role of REC as the engine of networking among countries and different organizations in civil society.



Soledad Blanco, EC

**Discussion:** Romania called for deeper absolute emission reductions and an extended carbon market, Slovenia discussed cooperation in the Sava River basin, and the Commission for the Protection of the Danube River drew attention to their efforts to improve navigation while taking into account environmental concerns. Poland noted the need to change consumption and production patterns while the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia highlighted ESD gaps that need to be addressed in SEE countries.

Sweden underscored his country's commitment to institutional strengthening and capacity building with partners in the region. Serbia reflected on its experience translating national strategies for application in local municipalities, and the World Bank introduced its new publication "Journey to a Cleaner Future," containing lessons learned and challenges observed during reforms in SEE. Highlighting that governments are still focused on developing non-renewable resources, the European ECO-Forum suggested the EfE process should be utilized to address this.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: CAN WE AFFORD A BETTER ENVIRONMENT?

Session Chair Bruno Oberle, State Secretary to the Environment, Forests and Landscape, Switzerland, introduced the session and highlighted the importance of lasting environment regulation, the emerging market in energy efficiency, and the increasing price of natural resources.

**Presentation:** Marek Belka presented key findings on Environmental Policy and International Competitiveness in a Globalizing World: challenges for low-income countries in the UNECE region. He emphasized the main conclusion that there



Bruno Oberle, State Secretary to the Environment, Forests and Landscape, Switzerland

is no trade-off between growth and environmental protection by underscoring the enormous costs of reversing environmental degradation.

**Roundtable discussion:** Delegates then took part in a roundtable discussion on integrating environmental policy concerns into economic development strategies. Arunas Kundortas, Minister of the Environment, Lithuania, explained that institutional cooperation can be more complicated than attracting funds, and can take years to achieve. Constantin Mihailescu noted that Moldova is highly dependent on external suppliers for raw materials for the energy sector. Sviatoslav Kurulenko explained Ukraine has established a body mandated to deal with the effects of climate change. Shiego Katsu, Vice-President, World Bank, cited the EU Environment Directives as significantly influencing domestic consensus on the environment.

Poland highlighted the financial success of sustainable development in its economy, and Montenegro drew attention to the importance of involving stakeholders in the decision-making process. Romania called for short, medium, and long-term perspectives for economic incentives to achieve public policy objectives, while Serbia noted its experience with sustainable agricultural practices on large farms.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, REC-CEE, chaired the session and welcomed delegates to a discussion on environmental finance. Delegates then took part in a roundtable discussion on partnerships.

**Keynote addresses:** Brigita Schmögenerová, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), noted that the responsibility for financing the environment does not belong only to the government and advocated for public-private partnerships and structured funding.

Kimmo Tiilikainen

discussed the global carbon market, highlighting that price is an effective way to generate awareness.

Douglas Menarchik, US Agency for International Development (USAID), explained his organization's role in catalyzing partnerships between governments and private lenders.

Gunner Oleson, European ECO-Forum, cautioned that although private investment is important it can shift the focus to profit optimizing, particularly in the monopoly industries of heat, gas and water.

**Discussion on environmental finance:** Poland described its system based on a non-budgetary earmarked fund that provides assistance for environment initiatives in the form of grants or soft loans, while Ukraine discussed efforts to address issues of environmental migration. OECD outlined the findings of a recent report on environmental financing in EECCA, saying it found there are very high rates of return on investments in the water sector; but that environment expenditure needed to increase.



Marta Bonifert, Executive Director, REC-CEE

The Project Preparation Committee (PPC) explained that thanks to generous donor support it has supported international finance institutions and broken new ground in biodiversity projects. The World Bank described its work with Bulgaria to develop a green bond and said coupling assigned amount units trading with Joint Implementation occasions will provide opportunities to raise funds. Serbia outlined the progress made in integrating environmental concerns into the privatization process.

**Roundtable discussion on partnerships:** Session Chair Bonifert, presenting on behalf of Ros Tennyson, International Business Leaders Forum, highlighted that Tennyson's organization strives to foster common goals, mutual trust, and joint activities. Giuliana Gasparrini said partnerships work best with a broad range of actors at different levels of responsibility. Hussein Baghirov, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan, noted the increasing importance of environmental security concerns.

Amb. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, discussed his organization's role in raising awareness of environmental security in national and international political agendas, particularly with regard to land degradation, soil contamination and water management.

Predrag Nenezic reported on initiatives within Montenegro to address climate change, consumption patterns, energy security and efficiency, and sustainable development of mountainous regions. Åsa-Brit Karlsson called for additional private sector support, donor coordination, and sustainable consumption and production. Rut Bizková said the Czech Republic has adopted a framework on consumption and production in 2005 and highlighted the use of soft instruments, such as voluntary initiatives.

Douglas Menarchik proposed a new international clean technology fund, called for six remaining SEE countries to eliminate lead from their gasoline, and drew attention to the "Methane to Markets"



Åsa-Brit Karlsson, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Sweden

partnership. Session Chair Bonifert discussed a public-private partnership to decrease pollution from transport by phasing out lead and reducing sulfur levels in fuels. Piet Steel, Toyota Motor Europe, discussed multi-stakeholder partnerships to deal with sustainability challenges and drew attention to his company's commitment to strong corporate citizenship. Janis Brizga, European ECO-Forum, said his organization hoped outcomes of the meeting would include a framework for cooperation between stakeholders and among countries and subregions.

Moldova explained that his country still faces a multitude of environmental problems and is seeking new partners, and Romania noted that although action starts with governments, the assistance of civil society groups and the private sector is necessary. France explained new forms of production need to be accepted and their competitiveness addressed. Israel described a partnership between civil society and some members of parliament to develop a clean air act. Baltic 21 underscored that participation of multistakeholder partners in the Baltic 21

initiative occurs on an equal footing and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce highlighted that responsible business can play a major role in improving resource efficiency.

### **THE FUTURE OF THE EFe PROCESS**

On Friday, Conference Chair Dragin introduced discussion on the future on the EFe process.

**Keynote address:** Francisco Nunes Correia, Minister of Environment, Portugal, on behalf of the EU, reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the continuation of the EFe process in a manner that accounts for the new political, economic and social landscape in the region.



Francisco Nunes Correia, Minister of Environment, Portugal

**Discussion:** The Russian Federation advocated a more genuine pan-European process, stating that the current process focuses heavily on individual sub-regions. Switzerland cautioned against newly emerging challenges, and called for the constant, continuous involvement of Environment ministers. Finland noted that countries have a responsibility to their citizens to achieve real results, called for more coordinated efforts on behalf of donors, and drew attention to the role of NGOs. Ukraine discussed a need to empower the architecture of the EFe process with new financial mechanisms, education and institutional integration. Sweden reflected that the EFe process has been the starting point for numerous environmental processes and conventions and said implementation of these should be the core focus for the coming years. The US highlighted the power of partnerships and said members should look to the private sector as a way forward. Germany said environmental centers must assert themselves more strongly in the market as external funding will not be permanent. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification recognized EFe as an outstanding forum and said it could be mobilized to address land and soil management. European ECO-Forum expressed disappointment that the meeting did not move forward on a UNECE process or initiative on sustainable production and consumption and Women in Europe for a Common Future urged governments to establish concrete measures to protect the biosphere. Youth and Environment Europe urged governments to continue implementing commitments and to involve youth.

### **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

On Friday morning, Conference Chair Dragin introduced the Ministerial Declaration which delegates adopted without amendment.

#### **Statements on the Ministerial Declaration**

Marek Belka thanked delegates for making the conference a success and expressed excitement that the EFe process will be continued and strengthened. He said necessary changes would be



Conference Chair Saša Dragin, Minister of Environmental Protection, Serbia

made and, quoting Achim Steiner, noted that the EfE is an exemplary process that could be followed by other regions. Belka thanked the Serbian government and colleagues from the Secretariat.

Turkey underscored that while the Ministerial Declaration highlights both opportunities and challenges for the EfE process, it omits mention of renewable energy. European ECO-



Alzhan Braliev, Kazakhstan

Forum suggested the EfE process needed to be more practical, but that his organization would continue to contribute constructively. Kazakhstan proposed the assessment report to be prepared one year in advance of the next EfE conference to allow time for practical recommendations. He reiterated a desire for his country to host the

next EfE conference in song.

**Declaration:** In the Ministerial Declaration (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/L.1), Ministers and Heads of Delegation:

- confirm their strong commitment to cooperation on environmental protection among countries in Europe, North America, Caucasus and Central Asia;
- reconfirm their recognition of the important interlinkages between trade and environmental policies;
- reaffirm their commitment to continue supporting the efforts of countries of the region to improve their environmental situation based on their specific needs;
- affirm their commitment to the World Summit on Sustainable Development goal to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010;
- reiterate their commitment to eliminating lead from petroleum;
- stress the need to further improve indicator-based environmental assessments and reporting;
- invite SEE and Central Asian countries not party to the UNECE MEAs and protocols to continue progress in acceptance and implementation of these instruments;
- call for the development of national programmes, strategies, implementation plans and sub-regional and regional partnerships;
- agree that UNECE/Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) should regularly consider and assess progress achieved under the EfE process, invite OECD to continue providing the EAP Task Force Secretariat, and agree that the functions and activities of the PPC should be internalized within the EBRD;
- consider the EfE process as an important framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the UNECE region; and,
- express gratitude to the Government of Serbia for having hosted the Conference in 2007.

In the Statement, Ministers also commit to:



Marek Belka, Executive Secretary, UNECE

- further environmental improvement in countries of the UNECE region;
- strive to achieve and maintain a healthy environment for present and future generations; and,
- make optional use of all available sources of environmental financing.

Ministers also recognize:

- the importance of capacity building and the role that the EfE process has played in including environmental NGOs in its various processes;
- the need to address the urgent challenge of climate change and to integrate policies on climate change, the environment, sustainable development and energy in the region; and,
- the need to improve the management of chemicals; and,
- that adequate funding is necessary for environmental improvement.

Ministers also acknowledge:

- a report on the implementation of UNECE MEAs and recognize the role MEAs have played in addressing environmental problems; and,
- that the speed of progress varies across policy areas.

Ministers also note:

- various initiatives aimed at building the capacities of EECCA countries and the achievements in SEE countries;
- opportunities to diffuse tension amongst governments via environmental collaboration;
- achievements while recognizing challenges that remain to the 2010 Kiev objective; and,
- the Fourth Assessment Report on the State of the Environment, the “Policies for a Better Environment: Progress in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia” report, and the First Assessment of the Status of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE Region.

Ministers also emphasize:

- the goal of international competitiveness; and,
- the importance of multistakeholder partnerships.

Ministers also agree:

- to use delivery as a major criterion of the effectiveness of the EfE process;
- and, to undertake a reform of the EfE process in order to ensure that the process remains relevant and valuable, inviting UNECE/CEP to develop a plan for EfE reform by the end of 2008 so that it can be endorsed by UNECE at its next session in spring 2009.

Ministers also pledge:

- to ensure that a future EfE process remains appropriate for, and fully aligned with, the needs of the region; and,
- to actively seek partnerships with civil society.

Ministers also welcome:

- the achievements of the UNECE EPR programme, the efforts to meet the objectives of the UN Decade for ESD and the Statement on ESD;
- mountain partnerships and the efforts of Central European countries in achieving sustainable development goals; and,
- the offer of the Government of Kazakhstan to host the next Conference in 2011.

## CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

Conference Chair Dragin introduced and outlined his Chairperson's summary (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/9) and thanked delegates for fruitful and productive discussions in Belgrade. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 1:07pm.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY:

This conference will take place from 12 to 13 November 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal. It is organized in collaboration with IUCN. The meeting will focus on improving understanding of the competitive advantages gained from preserving biodiversity and will provide guidance to the European's Commission's Initiative on Business and Biodiversity. For more information, see: Internet: <http://www.countdown2010.net/business/workshops>

### SHARED VISIONS, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND CULTURES:

This conference will take place from 16 to 18 November 2007 in Nicosia, Cyprus. It is co-sponsored by UNESCO, the University of Cyprus, the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus, and the Mediterranean Information Office for the Environment, Culture, and Sustainable Development. The meeting will focus on the finalization of the Mediterranean Strategy using the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development as a blueprint. For more information contact: Anastasia Nikolopoulou; tel: +35799327235; e-mail: [nikolo10@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:nikolo10@ucy.ac.cy)

### THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE

**ESPOO CONVENTION:** Hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, COP-4 of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment will take place from 20 to 21 May 2008 in Bucharest, Romania. For more information contact: Daniela Piueto; tel: +40213166154; e-mail: [piueto.daniela@mmediu.ro](mailto:piueto.daniela@mmediu.ro); or Angela Filipas; tel: +40213167735; e-mail: [angela.filipas@mmediu.ro](mailto:angela.filipas@mmediu.ro); Internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/eia/bucharest.htm>

### SECOND MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF

**THE PARTIES - CARPATHIAN CONVENTION:** Hosted by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, COP-2 of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians will take place on 17 June 2008 in Bucharest, Romania. For more information contact: Silviu Megan; tel: +402131166492; e-mail: [silviu.megan@mmediu.ro](mailto:silviu.megan@mmediu.ro); or Carmen Damian; tel: +40213160531; e-mail: [carmen.damian@mmediu.ro](mailto:carmen.damian@mmediu.ro)

### THIRD MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AARHUS

**CONVENTION:** MOP-3 to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters will be held in Riga, Latvia, from 11 to 13 June 2008. The Meeting is expected to consider the adoption of a long-term strategic plan for the Convention. For more information, please contact: Aarhus Secretariat; tel: +41 22 917 2682, e-mail: [public.participation@unece.org](mailto:public.participation@unece.org); Internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop3.htm>

## SEVENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

**"ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE":** This conference is scheduled to take place in 2011 in Kazakhstan.

## GLOSSARY

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
EAP	Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEA	European Environment Agency
EECCA	Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
EfE	Environment for Europe
EPR	Environmental Performance Review
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
HNVF	High Nature Value Farms
IUCN	World Conservation Union
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPC	Project Preparation Committee
PEBLDS	Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
REC-CEE	Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe
SEE	South East Europe
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNECE/CEP	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Committee on Environmental Policy
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WGSO	Working Group of Senior Officials



Oh Thursday morning, ministers attended a tree-planting ceremony in Friendship Park, New Belgrade.