

BELGIAN STATEMENT -ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION¹

10/10 - 10.00 AM/1.00 PM

This Conference in Belgrade is an important milestone. Only the Ministers can have the political will to give the necessary guidance for tackling the challenges and saving our future and common inheritance.

Despite all the efforts already done, we have to admit that:

- ° There is lack of significant progress in the Pan-European region on environmentally sound sustainable development, according to the 4th Pan-European State of the Environment report produced by the EEA.
- ° The targets of the Kyoto Protocol for the region will not be achieved without reversing these trends and removing the threats. Climate change is also a pan - european common concern. The EfE process has a role to play in order to help develop national, regional and pan european strategies, actions and projects to limit global warming by improving energy efficiency and promoting energy- savings and sustainable renewables energy sources.
- ° The transport sector is the fastest growing contributor to green house gases and air pollution in the region. We already called for more fuel efficiency and for fuel quality. Now we should move to a responsible policy on bio-fuels. Besides structural policy changes regarding for instance demand management will be required through ia integration of environment and health within transport policy like recommended by Transport/Health/environment Program for the Region.
- ° Socio-economic and environmental justice: are still uneven all peoples and communities especially the vulnerable ones must prosper in a safe and health environment. *Every person of present and future generations has the right to live in an environment adequate to his health and well-being*", as laid down in the Aarhus Convention.

And we still need a ministerial momentum with a view to giving new impulse for the environmental policies.

BE sees a great role for UNECE and a related- ministerial impulse to implement, comply and further develop MEA'S.

La Belgique tient à mettre l'accent sur les RESULTATS engrangés sous l'égide de UNECE, qui a été à l'avant garde sur certains thèmes et défis à relever avant et pendant le processus Un Environnement pour l'Europe.

2 exemples incontestés:

- 1979: the Long Range Transboundary Air pollution adopted by the Ministers themselves well before the launch of the EfE process. The on going efforts on air pollution should be pursuit in the future: the POP's are of high concern and new substances should be added, Particle Matters (PM) have to be tackled urgently when reviewing the Goteborg Protocol.
- 1998: the Aarhus convention strengthened the effectiveness and legitimacy of environmental policies by establishing international standards regarding to the public's rights, thanks to a strong political support of the Environment Ministers themselves.

According to Belgium, we still need environmental convergence and harmonization throughout the whole Region by setting standards and adopting other complementary instruments, for environmental and health purposes but also for economic and social considerations.

BELGIUM WISHES a dynamic way FORWARD on DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE,

Participatory democracy and involvement of civil society in particular the NGO's should be a pillar of the EfE process .The Aarhus Convention is one of the most important achievement of the EfE process. A LONG TERM STRATEGIC PLAN should be quickly adopted.

We should work firstly towards full implementation of the Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and encourage and support their use by the public. The Compliance Review Mechanism and the Clearing House are key priorities in this area.

We need actually to move forward as well: on one hand to expand the influence of the Convention by increasing the number of Parties within the ECE Region and encouraging States outside the Region to accede to the Convention or implement its principles, and on the other hand to further develop the provisions and principles of the Convention

¹ The present document is a scanned copy of a statement received on 10 October 2007 during the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007). The document has not been formally processed by the UNECE.

Civil society plays an important role in strengthening environmental policy in EECCA by stimulating government. A specific program dedicated to the civil society and the NGO's should be created and funded on a voluntary basis through the EfE process.

BELGIUM CONSIDERS EfE AS A TOOL FOR RETURNING TO HUMAN VALUES, PEACE AND SECURITY

A safe environment through a strong regional cooperation is essential to sustainability, to decrease tensions and to increase safety and stability in people's daily lives. We welcome the increase interest for the environment-security nexus in several non-environmental organisations. For instance, we attach importance to the strategy on environment that is in negotiation under the OSCE, and is for adoption in the December ministerial in Madrid. We furthermore consider that the cooperation between OSCE, UNDP, UNEP and NATO on the environment and security programme is an excellent example of this recognition and furthermore of an excellent inter-organisation coordination. We consider that such an approach has merits and could usefully be followed by other regions in the world. Belgium, as one of the participating countries of the ENV/SEC initiative, pleads on its further development. Furthermore, let us be conscious of the fact that the European Council has in its conclusions on climate change explicitly made the link with the security policies. In conclusion, this revived interest in the environment-security links is more than timely if one realizes that the Helsinki agreements in 1975 already explicitly dealt with this.

BELGIUM STILL SEES AN ADDED VALUE OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE MINISTERIAL PROCESS AND WISHES A STRENGTHENED AND MORE EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE PROCESS

For us it is essential that it maintains and develops the essential elements from its core agenda, implementing existing commitments and ensuring political will

The process must deliver commitments through the most appropriate and cost-effective instruments such as legal instrument, programs through differentiated approaches and projects through relevant financial instruments. It needs to strengthen its links and co-operation with other processes, such as the WHO environment and health ministerial process, THE PEP, and the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe. Moreover, the UNECE might need to adapt to the conclusions that will follow from the current New York process on SYSTEM WIDE COHERENCE.

The political situation in the UN-ECE region has changed with the enlargement of the EU to 17 countries, but we shouldn't limit the geographic scope of the EfE process. The European region for economic and social reasons still need more environmental convergence and harmonization, including through the Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The EfE process should officially make sustainable production and consumption an "overarching objective" for the region, in order to be coherent with the Johannesburg Declaration. We pledge for a new pan european Initiative to be elaborated with all the relevant partners and to be endorsed in 2011 at our next Conference. There is some urgency, since it needs to feed into the 10 year programme on SCP on the global level before 2012. We should, therefore promote integration of policies, environmental and social corporate responsibility and accountability, environmental standards, access to information and other legally binding as well as market based instruments.

Nous avons plus que jamais besoin du processus Un Environnement pour l'Europe, un modèle qui a fait ses preuves, celui lancé à DOBRIS en 1991 et d'une bonne collaboration sur pied d'égalité entre partenaires.

Ce modèle doit être rendu plus performant, plus efficace et basé sur des résultats. Il est préférable au modèle de relations de « voisinage », basé sur le bilatéralisme et les conditionnalités afférentes.

Nous devons rénover le processus grâce à une volonté politique forte. Pour ce faire, une réforme est nécessaire et un rôle – clé devra toujours être réservés aux Ministres de l'Environnement à des moments charnières. Belgrade en est un et nous remercions vivement le dynamisme et la volonté de notre pays - hôte la Serbie.

Chargeons aujourd'hui le Comité Environnement CEP d'évaluer régulièrement les progrès engranges à partir de ce jour, de préparer des recommandations pour une saine réforme et de les soumettre à UNECE pour adoption d'ici 2009.