



**MINISTRY FOR ENVIRONMENT, SPATIAL PLANNING
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Department for International Affairs

Options for the reform of the Environment for Europe process

Portuguese Comments

Portugal believes the main added value of the Environment for Europe process is its contribution to enhance the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and national environmental policies.

The EfE process should have as a main purpose to be a forum for broad horizontal environmental cooperation, sharing information and providing political guidance towards environmental protection and capacity building. Its main objectives should be providing a framework for improving environmental policies, conditions and cooperation in the UNECE region and bringing an added value to for improving the environment in the region and bridging gaps between countries.

The process should become more focussed on a limited number of priorities and major environmental needs, concentrating on areas not entirely addressed by other processes, while promoting synergies between different existing instruments, processes and programmes in the region.

While remaining open to emerging relevant issues, the main priorities of the process should be issues as:

- Environmental governance, strengthening environmental institutions, policy instruments and their implementation and improving environmental decision making;
- Mainstreaming of the environment in general policy documents;
- Enhancing environmental monitoring, raising public awareness of environmental issues and strengthening environmental education within the context of education for sustainable development;
- Transboundary cooperation in the region,

Although maintaining the process' pan-European scope, it should take an approach based on specific needs and priorities, due an to the different patterns of development in the region. As such, a stronger focus should be given to sub-regional initiatives and cooperation accordingly to the different need of assistance of different countries or sub-regions.

We believe the preparatory process leading up to the ministerial conferences should be rationalised and their agendas should be more focused. Regarding the role of the CEP, its mandate should be revised, providing it the strategic coordination of the process by focussing on the following tasks:

- Secretariat functions for preparation of future ministerial conferences;
- Assessment of the progress and efficiencies between Ministerial Conferences through the presentation of mid-term reviews;



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- Implementation of and cooperation with the existing UNECE Conventions and Protocols;
- “Soft” measures, such as Environmental Performance Reviews and cross-sector activities, that support improvement in EECCA countries;
- UNECE implementation of WSSD commitments

Due to limited financial resources, the process should focus on strict priorities and strive for better coordination of donor's activities and by building synergies among programmes, strategies and other tools aimed at providing assistance to EECCA Countries in protecting their environment.

The financial burdens of ministerial conferences should be rationalised, as well as the preparatory process by aiming at the co-ordination and simplification of meeting structures and having joint and back-to-back meetings.