

Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Subregional training workshop for strengthening capacities in Central Asia for understanding and implementing Espoo Convention and, in particular, Convention's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, with focus on water sector

Almaty, 28 March 2011

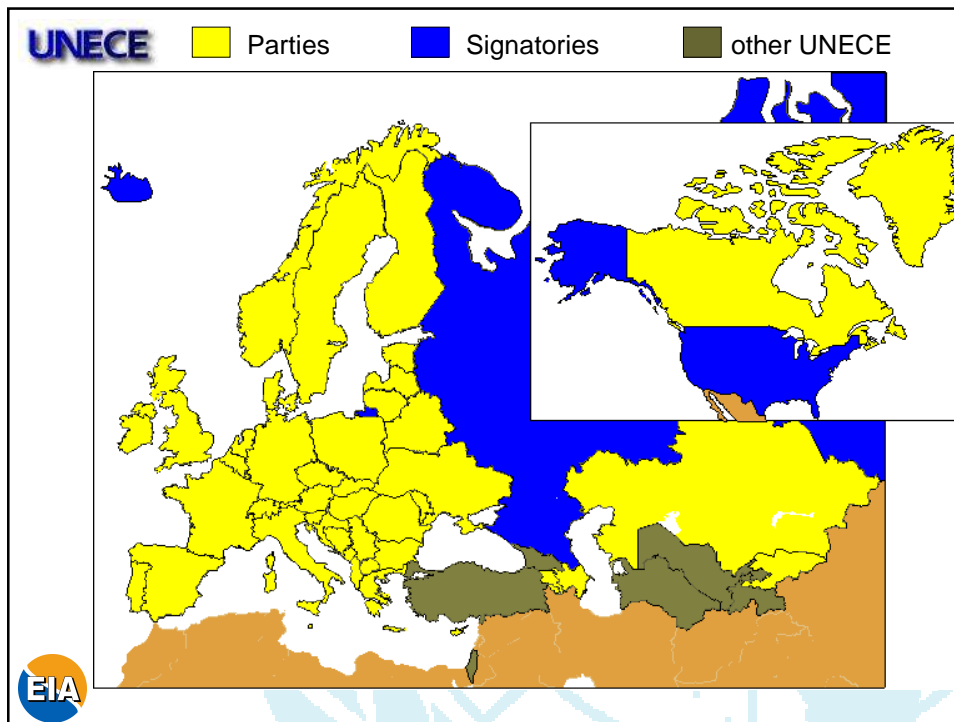
Nick Bonvoisin
Secretary to the Espoo Convention, UNECE



Espoo Convention

- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Adopted and signed in Espoo (Finland) in 1991
- Came into force in 1997, with 16 Parties
- Now has 45 Parties
- Supplemented by Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment





UNECE

| <i>State</i> | <i>UNECE</i> | <i>Espoo</i> | <i>Caspian</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Kazakhstan | Yes | Party | Yes |
| Kyrgyzstan | Yes | Party | X |
| Tajikistan | Yes | - | X |
| Turkmenistan | Yes | - | Yes |
| Uzbekistan | Yes | - | X |
| Afghanistan | No | X | X |
| Azerbaijan | Yes | Party | Yes |
| China | No | X | X |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | No | X | Yes |
| Russian Federation | Yes | Signatory | Yes |

Convention amended to open it to all Member States of the United Nations – amendment will perhaps come into force within 3 to 4 years

EIA

“Objectives”

- To enhance international co-operation in assessing environmental impact, in particular in transboundary context
- To give explicit consideration to environmental factors at early stage in decision-making process by applying environmental impact assessment
- To improve quality of information presented to decision makers so that environmentally sound decisions can be made paying careful attention to minimizing significant adverse impact, particularly in transboundary context

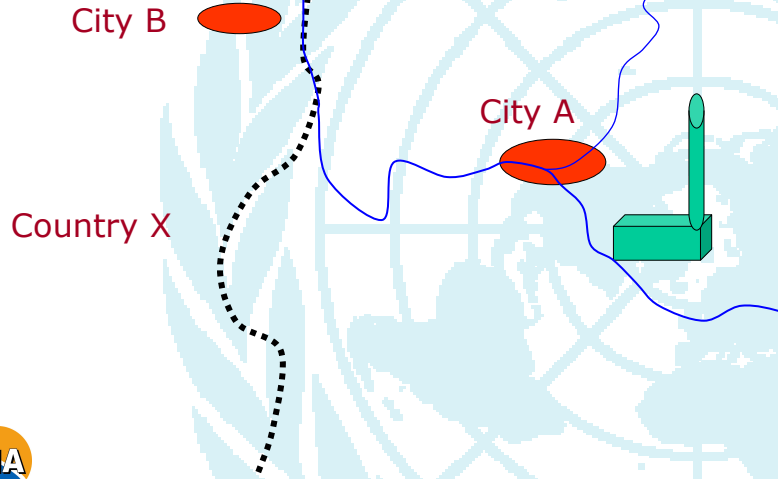


Procedure

- Requires Party to notify & consult on planned activity likely to have significant environmental impact across borders
- Requires preparation and sharing of assessment of environmental impacts
- Allows affected Parties – authorities & public – to comment on planned activities and on assessment of environmental impacts
- Provides for bilateral consultations between concerned Parties
- Party of origin makes final decision, taking into due account:
 - comments received (authorities & public of affected Party)
 - outcome of environmental impact assessment
 - outcome of bilateral consultations
- Final decision is sent to affected Party



Taking into account ...



Practical application

- Over 700 cases to date
- Common examples
 - Power plants: nuclear, coal, hydropower, gas, wind
 - Cross-border infrastructure: road, rail, power lines, pipelines
 - Mining, major quarries & on-site processing
- Examples include:
 - Mining in Kyrgyzstan
 - Hydropower development in Belarus
 - Port development in Republic of Moldova



Technical assistance



- Technical advice
 - Comprises review of current legislation, legal drafting
 - Used for Armenia (2008-9), Azerbaijan (2011), Tajikistan (2010), Ukraine (2009-...)
- Pilot projects
 - Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan (mining)
 - Belarus-Lithuania (hydroelectric power)
- Subregional cooperation workshops
 - Exchanges of experiences
 - Dialogue
- Guidance documents



Espoo Convention

- Widespread and widely used – useful
- Sovereignty of decision-making
- International cooperation
- Better decisions

